The image shows a dense, black and white marbled paper pattern. The pattern consists of irregular, rounded shapes of varying sizes, some containing smaller circles or dots, creating a complex, organic texture. A white, rounded rectangular label is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image. The label contains the text 'F-33' on the top line and 'C6596d' on the bottom line, both in a bold, sans-serif font. The background of the entire image is the marbled paper, which is dark in some areas and light in others, creating a high-contrast, intricate design.

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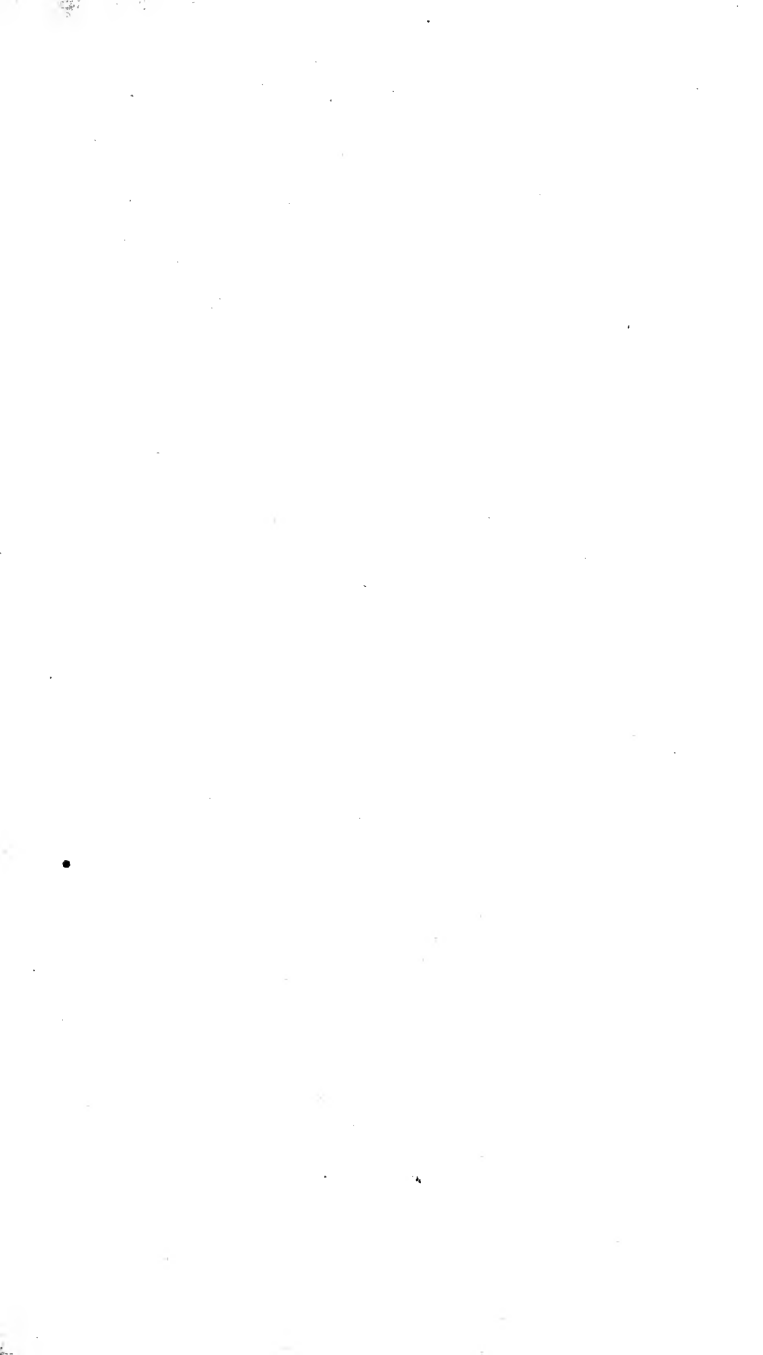
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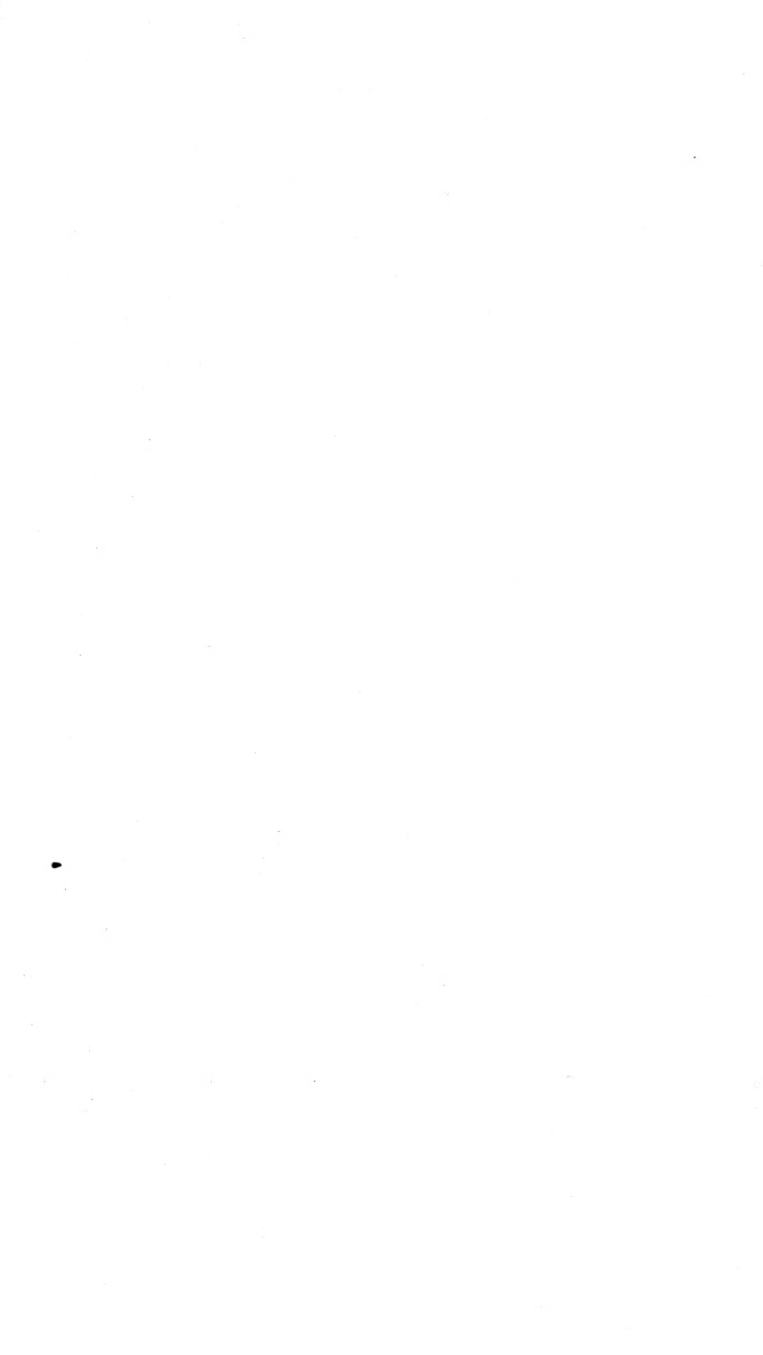
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DISCOURSES:



DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

BY

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New-Brunswick, N. J.

J. TERHUNE'S PRESS, 27 ALBANY STREET.

1847.





## P R E F A C E .



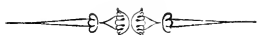
The author of the following Discourses, feeling deeply interested in the religious welfare of our New States, and unable to visit them as a missionary, has prepared this volume to be presented by the Presbyterian Board, to such Christian families, as may be disposed to receive and read it, with his sincere desire and earnest prayer that it may in some degree aid in the promotion of the cause of truth.

# CONTENTS.



	PAGE.
DISCOURSE I. The Church the light of the world.—Math. v. 14.	5
DISCOURSE II. The resources of the church.—Isaiah lii. 1.	19
DISCOURSE III. Union is strength.—Acts xxiii. 12, 13.	32
DISCOURSE IV. Wrestling with God.—Gen. xxxii. 26.	45
DISCOURSE V. The existence and works of evil Spirits.— 1. Peter v. 8, 9.	61
DISCOURSE VI. Death by Adam and life by Christ.—1. Cor. xv. 22.	77
DISCOURSE VII. The Heavy Laden.—Math. xi. 28.	91
DISCOURSE VIII. Dependence of Christian Ministers on God for success.—Luke v. 5, 6.	104
DISCOURSE IX. A broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.— Psalm li. 17,	119
DISCOURSE X. By the terror of the Lord men persuaded to re- pent—2 Cor. v. 11.	133
DISCOURSE XI. Christian perseverance and growth in grace.— Math. xiii. 33.	149
DISCOURSE XII. Divine Sovereignty.—Rom. ix. 15, 16.	167
DISCOURSE XIII. The power of the word of God.—Jer. xxiii. 29.	183
DISCOURSE XIV. The Christian name.—Acts xi. 26.	201
DISCOURSE XV. The account every one must render to God.— Rom. xiv. 12.	217

# DISCOURSE I.



## THE CHURCH THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Ye are the light of the world.—MATH. v. 14.

This address of Christ to his disciples was not intended for them alone, but for all Christians in all countries and in all succeeding ages of the world. Christ is himself in the highest sense the light of the world; for he is the head of the church, and all spiritual life and light are derived from him. Ministers of the gospel are with peculiar propriety denominated the light of the world, because they not only make known the will of God to the impenitent, but instruct and guide his professed friends. Communications made to them are intended for the benefit of all, with whom they are connected and for all among whom they labor. God speaks by them to his church and also to the world. And by them the wants of the church and the world are spread before him, whose goodness is infinite.

In the following discourse I shall endeavor,

I. To show in what sense the church is the light of the world.

II. To give Christians a view of their obligation to fill the world with light.

I. I am to show in what sense the church is the light of the world.

Christians are denominated the light of the world because their *lives* are illustrations of the doctrines of revelation and the precepts of the divine law.

In them as in a glass, the world may see how the truths and precepts of the gospel are understood, and what fruits they produce. It is indeed to be lamented that in too many instances it is hardly possible to perceive any difference between the conduct of professed believers and men of the world. Did we not know some to be members of the visible church; we should never from their conversation suspect them to be Christians. Such persons can hardly be considered lights in the world—much less safe lights. It is certainly dangerous to follow them. Men of the world will be more ready to embrace their errors than to imitate their virtues. They do not clearly point out the way to heaven. Many are misled by them, who desire an excuse for a life of transgression. Among real Christians there is a great diversity of character.

Some are greater and brighter lights than others. Such is the clear and powerful light of the most pious as to disturb and alarm those around them, who remain impenitent. Though this is not an age of violence, there are individuals, who possess a martyr's spirit. Such are some, who have gone to distant lands to spend their days among pagans. And such are some, who have gone to the remote parts of our own country to preach the gospel, where they have submitted to great hardships and privations. The sufferings of

our home missionaries are greater, it is believed, than those endured by our missionaries in foreign lands.

The time is coming when the distinction between the church and the world will be more clearly seen and more universally acknowledged. The time is coming, when every branch of the true church will be visible to every one, and when believers will enjoy a perpetual revival. When the Lord of glory will thus address the daughter of Zion. 'Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem; terrible as an army with banners.

Though we discover different degrees of holiness in Christians, yet all, who are such in reality, do tremble at God's word and have respect to all his commandments. Their life is a life of faith, not that faith, which is produced by human reason, but which is wrought in the heart by the power of God.—Worldly men are not governed by the principles of Christianity; but by selfish considerations. The volume of revelation is the supreme law of the Christian.

Those, who have been most gay, when they become Christians, forsake places of amusement. They live in some degree as strangers and pilgrims in the world. True religion produces a great change in all, who embrace it. This change is most striking when it is effected in the young.

Behold a young man devoted to all the amusements of the gay and fashionable—profane and otherwise immoral—accustomed to make light of the gospel, the church and the most pious members. An arrow at length pierces his heart—he trembles—he cries, God be merciful to me a sinner. No sooner is he made a subject of grace than he bids farewell to all places of

mirth and folly—he avoids his former companions, is discovered among the people of God, and is heard with a broken heart offering prayer to him, whose name he had profaned.

When such changes are noticed in those, who before were the votaries of worldly pleasure, the impression is powerful. Christians are crucified to the world and the world, to them. Good men of talents, temperance, industry and frugality may as well as others be successful in business. The sincerity of their piety will appear in their readiness to part with their gold and their silver for the cause of their divine Lord.

True religion requires something more than reformation of conduct and liberality in the promotion of benevolent objects.

The life of a Christian is humble, prayerful, and spiritual. Some of the most interesting portions of his life are concealed from the world.

Go to the habitation of the Christian—whether it be a palace or a cottage—there from his family altar the morning and evening sacrifice of his heart ascends to God. The volume of revelation, he values above all other books. He is never more animated than when conversing on the things of the kingdom of Christ. He mourns when religion declines, and rejoices when God revives his work. The life of a devout Christian is an exhibition of all that is interesting and precious in religion.

2. Christians are denominated the light of the world, because they publish and defend, or cause to be published and defended, the truths of revelation. What they believe and have cordially embraced, they

can sincerely recommend to others. Their own experience, which is the result of the teachings and operations of the Holy Spirit enables them to understand the method, which God has adopted for the salvation of men. The concurrent testimony of a cloud of witnesses—witnesses of every grade and country, must be regarded.

The doctrines of faith, which Christians make known to the world, are not discoverable by the light of nature. In the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. The mind of man, however well cultivated, could never have devised such a plan of salvation as that revealed in the gospel. It is too grand and too glorious to be the production of any finite mind.

To the church chosen from among men are committed the oracles of God. Go ye into all the world, said Christ to his disciples, and preach the gospel to every creature. He could not expect them to accomplish his purpose without the co-operation of his church. Christians, if we except the apostolic age, were never more liberal and active, than at the present time in sending missionaries—copies of the scriptures—tracts—and various religious publications to the destitute, in different parts of the world. Since the commencement of the present century the spirit of Christian enterprise and liberality has been constantly increasing. Those benevolent societies whose object is the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, are bright lights in the world, which are constantly increasing in number and splendor.

3. Christians are denominated the light of the world, because they manifest their regard for the institutions

of God. To them the Sabbath is a delight, holy of the Lord, and honorable. They are ready to make sacrifices for the support of the gospel and the public worship of God, not only where they reside, but where, without their aid, such privileges cannot be enjoyed. The fidelity of Christians in these particulars has influence on many others.

The more exact Christians are in the observance of the Sabbath, the more this institution will be respected by men of the world. When the professed friends of God are known to neglect the public worship of God, and to desecrate the Sabbath, infidelity and vice triumph. But when they return to their duty, many will follow them. It is the influence of the pious, which moves many to visit the house of God on the Sabbath, and to discontinue their labors on this holy day. And it is their example, which induces not a few to contribute for the support of the gospel among the destitute. The more scrupulously particular Christians are in the observance of divine institutions, the more liberal they are in promoting benevolent objects, the more powerfully they operate on men of the world. In this way they prove the sincerity of their professions. The time has come, when argument and example must accomplish what cannot be effected by the authority of civil government. It seems to be the will of God to give men an opportunity to act freely, influenced only by motives drawn from the Scriptures, and the considerations of enlightened reason. That obedience, which does not flow from love of God and his law, cannot be acceptable in his sight. Much of what passes for religion is of no value. Trials separate the chaff from the wheat, and give beauty and influence



to the true church. The true church is now advancing in knowledge, liberality, zeal and influence.

II. I shall now proceed to give Christians a view of their obligation to fill the world with light.

I. When Christ said to his disciples, ye are the light of the world, he added; let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. When any are converted, their happiness is not the only or the chief object God has in view. They are called to be saints that they may be lights, by which those, who walk in darkness may find the way to heaven. A solemn and fearful responsibility rests upon them. Christians were the only witnesses of the resurrection and ascension of their Lord. To them God made known his will that they might make it known to the world. None but Christians were chosen and inspired to complete the volume of revelation. If it be the duty of those, who are called of God to preach the gospel, to make known to every creature the truths of Christianity; it is manifestly the duty of the church to sustain them. The propagation of the gospel is a common concern. It is the duty of every member of the church, according to his ability, to assist in this benevolent work. The glad tidings Christians have received ought to be published as extensively as possible. How can the millions, and hundreds of millions who are ignorant of the way of life, be saved, if those who have found it refuse to make it known? Their blood will be required at your hand, brethren, if you refuse to communicate to them the knowledge you possess, and which has been made effectual by the operation of the holy spirit to your salvation.

- Is that man innocent, who sees his neighbor's house in flames and refuses to alarm him, and to assist in rescuing those, who are in danger of perishing? Can that man be innocent, who sees his neighbor perishing with hunger, and neglects to afford him relief, when he can do it without injuring himself? God has committed to his church the bread of life. The most extensive circulation of the scriptures does not diminish the value of a single book. Such is the nature of Christianity that those, who are most faithful in the performance of its duties, enjoy most of its benefits.

2. Why God did not make a particular revelation to every nation, as well as to the Jews, we know not. It was his pleasure to distinguish them from all other nations, and to make them for a time the light of the world. It may be remarked, the most important inventions and discoveries which have been most extensively useful, have been made by individuals. The improvements made in the arts and sciences, when traced to their authors, will not be found to originate in many minds equally excited at the same time. A single thought, occasioned by some trifling circumstance, may lead to important consequences. The truths of Christianity have not been discovered by human reason, but have been made known to us by revelation.

To Christians much is given, and of them much will be required. The work assigned them requires the exercise of all their powers. It will never be finished till the scriptures are translated into every language, and circulated among all nations. But a small portion of the world is now favored with the light of the gospel. The depraved heart is opposed to the truth; but error is readily received.

3. As Christians have been chosen to be the light of the world, it is their duty, not only to know, but also to contend for, the faith once delivered to the saints. It is not a matter of indifference what doctrines they believe and what they consider important. Their practice will correspond with their belief. The influence of the doctrines they profess will depend very much on the purity of their lives. If in their conduct they do not differ from worldly men, the doctrines they profess to believe will have no influence on account of their profession. What can the most faithful preacher accomplish, if he cannot appeal to his church for a proof of the excellency of the doctrine he teaches? The more distinguished Christians are for piety and zeal, the more their influence is felt by the unrenewed. How can a church be a visible light, if not distinguishable from the world where she is established? Christians are accountable to God, for the impressions they make on the minds of those, with whom they have intercourse. Few can meditate on this subject without feeling condemned. Let them do their duty faithfully—let their light shine clearly; and the unrenewed will be unable to rest quietly. It may be added, the character of a church will correspond with the character of her pastor. They mutually influence each other.

4. The glory of God should be the chief and ultimate end pursued by Christians. The chief end which God has in view in the conversion of men, is not their happiness but his own interest and honor. They are called and chosen to work for him. While thus employed they are supported, and have the assurance, if faithful, of a rich reward. God is himself

one with his people and dwells in the midst of them. They are one community. Now, when one member of a community is guilty of any improper conduct, all, with whom he is associated, are dishonored. The neglect of proper discipline in a church renders her efforts to do good and her influence powerless. So long as the unrenewed can point out any members of the church, who are no better than themselves they rest quietly in unbelief, and the glory of Christ is obscured.

Much of the zeal, manifested by Christians, who are most active in the service of God, is produced, not so much by intense love of God and his cause, as by a view of the exposure of their fellow creatures to endless misery. In many of the most impassioned and eloquent discourses the interest of God is overlooked. Rivers of waters, said the inspired Psalmist, run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law. My zeal hath consumed me; because mine enemies have forgotten thy words. When the professed people of God are remiss in the performance of their duty; divided among themselves, and in spirit conformed to the world, God is dishonored and sinners are not converted, and various errors are suffered to prevail. Should Christians meditate on the character of God and the great things he has done for the salvation of men till their hearts are affected; their prayers would be answered and their services would be accepted.

There is a fearful responsibility resting on every Christian, which is great, and of which he can in this world have no adequate conception. On their fidelity under God depends the knowledge of the truth in the world.

## APPLICATION.

The subject under consideration requires a serious application.

What Christian can review his life with a proper sense of his responsibility to God, and not feel that he has been deficient in the performance of his duty? These ought to be the inquiries of every professed believer—Have I been a light in the world? Has my life been a safe light? Have I done as much as I could to honor God, and to point out the straight and narrow path to heaven? Herein is my Father glorified, said Christ to his disciples, that ye bear much fruit. It is an undoubted fact, that the most pious are most sensible of their defects, and the most ready to abase themselves before God. The more closely we walk with God, the more clearly we shall discover our faults. The indulgence of any sinful propensity darkens the understanding and conceals our defects. With what decision and boldness may the preacher declare the most solemn truths, when his church are willing to sustain him? His yoke then is easy and his burden light. But his spirits droop, and his labors prove unsuccessful when his church are not prepared to sympathise with him. In the one case preaching is a delight, and in the other it is a painful task. The success of the gospel depends as much on the prayers and holy conversation of the church as on the preached word. Were churches more faithful no doubt more would be converted. What can be more distressing to the Christian than the reflection that some are now suffering the wrath of God in consequence of his neglect of duty?

Christians are bound to watch over one another. Their love of Christ and of his church should move them to do this. In proportion to their love of their divine Lord, so will be their solicitude that all the members of his visible church manifest a holy life. Those, who reprove the faulty with humility and tenderness of heart, are the true friends of Christ and of his cause. It is hardly possible for us to have any just conception of the change, which will be witnessed, when every true Christian faithfully performs his duty. Few Christians, I am persuaded, properly understand their individual responsibility. However defective their conduct they are not disposed to censure themselves. While they excuse themselves they are ready to blame others.

2. In view of the great good which may be accomplished by the united, harmonious operation of a church, no pains should be spared to influence every member to do his duty. No good man can suffer from the most discriminating exhibitions of divine truth and the most rigid scrutiny of his conduct. Indeed the most pious are most willing to be examined. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. The following inquiries are proper—Does any one unnecessarily absent himself from the house of God, or neglect the means employed for the conversion of sinners? Good men are afraid of offending God. It is not necessary to urge Christians, whose life is holy to do their duty.

Nothing can be more evident than this, when mem-

bers of a church become remiss in the performance of their duty, they have departed from God and have lost their relish for divine things. The beginning of declension should be discovered and counteracted. A word spoken in season may prevent distressing evil.

Does any one neglect the duty of prayer? How can he indulge the hope that he is a Christian? A spirit of prayer is essential to the Christian character. Does any one indulge hatred toward a brother? If any man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar, said the apostle John, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen! Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. This is a subject on which professing Christians should meditate till they perceive their affections flow out toward one another. How much can a church accomplish when united! How little when divided!

When Christians love one another as they ought—when their light shines clearly and powerfully; the impenitent will be alarmed and submit themselves to their Redeemer. Then converts will spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

I must close with a short address to those, who have been baptized and who are in a qualified sense members of the church, but who have not made a confession of Christ before men.

You have been given to God by prayer—baptized into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For you prayer has been offered from day to day, and every Sabbath in the sanctuary. You have been brought near to the kingdom of God—and are

now sitting at the very gate. All your feelings—your objections to the truth, and your excuses for the neglect of your duty are carefully noticed by him, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men. Christ himself, though invisible, is near you by his spirit. He is now speaking to you, though you hear him not. Listen—his words are—Come, for all things are now ready—Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out. Can you longer refuse—can you again turn your back upon him? He sees you pursuing the broad way, that leadeth to destruction—and his arms are stretched forth to save you. He calls you to-day. Will you not to-day become his disciples?

“ Now is the time ;—he bends his ear,

“ And waits for your request ;

“ Come, lest he rouse his wrath, and swear

“ Ye shall not see my rest.”

Amen.



## DISCOURSE II.



### THE RESOURCES OF THE CHURCH.

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.—ISAIAH LII, 1.

The messages, which God sent by his servants the prophets, to his ancient covenant people, corresponded as well with their actual condition as with his gracious purposes concerning them. They were also intended for his church in every age and in every country, when in like circumstances. And the situation, in which Christians are placed by the providence of God, leads them to the choice of proper subjects of meditation.

The text is a message from God, communicated by the prophet Isaiah to the Jewish church, and consisting of exhortations and encouragements. The language is figurative, but forcible and perfectly intelligible. At what time the message was delivered it is of no consequence for us to determine. This is evident, it was intended for the church of God, whenever remiss in the performance of duty, timid, and inactive from whatever cause. The Jewish church, when God

sent them the message, I have chosen for the subject of our present meditations, was not only inactive but ignorant of her resources. Instead of faithfully performing their duty they were afraid even to attempt it. They were looking for a mighty change to be effected without their exertions, which they thought would result in a better state of their affairs. They did not appear to understand that system of means, which God has adopted for the accomplishment of his purposes. Their efforts to do good had probably for a long time been unsuccessful. Errors both in faith and practice prevailed, and their enemies were numerous, bold and powerful. But their weakness and timidity were occasioned by the decline of piety in their own hearts. Had the true friends of God, trusting in him, been disposed to do their whole duty; they might have bid defiance to all their enemies. Such is now the situation of this church that the text seems to be a suitable subject for our meditations.

Its exhortations and encouragements will be the divisions of this discourse.

I. Its exhortations will first be considered.

1. The first exhortation, awake, awake, implies a state of deep slumber, and exposure to great danger. The word awake is repeated to give it force and effect. Jehovah thus addresses his people, when he comes out of his place to visit them, or when dwelling in the midst of them he reveals himself to them. Sometimes his voice is heard in the most alarming and distressing events of his providence, and sometimes his Spirit is sent to revive his work in his church.

What would be your feelings, my brethren, could you be made sensible that God is now in the midst of

you—and that he is carefully observing the feelings you exercise toward him and toward his beloved Son? Should a solemnity suddenly come over this congregation; you would know that God is near—that his all piercing eye is upon you and that he is now speaking to you by one of his servants. Is not God now calling upon every professing Christian, and with a loud voice, saying, awake—a great work remains to be done—subtil and powerful enemies are in the field—many are ignorant of their danger—many are captives—and many are perishing? Surely, were professing Christians susceptible of being moved, when contemplating the scene passing before them; their eye, would affect their heart, and they would be willing to labor for the salvation of souls.

2. Put on thy strength, O Zion, is the second exhortation.

This implies that the church was, and is still ignorant of her own power, the power which God has secured to her by promise. It is a fact that Christians generally live below their privileges. Neither individual Christians, nor churches know what they may accomplish by the faithful use of appropriate means. They do not appear to understand the vast provisions of God's covenant of grace. His infinite perfections are pledged for their protection and support. If God be for us, said the Apostle, who can be against us? If God be for us, who can successfully oppose our progress? Such is the connexion between God and his people, that they are one family—one in interest and one in honor.

God is the wisdom and strength of his people—and his grace is sufficient abundantly to supply all their

wants. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation, is a beautiful passage in the song of Moses. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength, said the Psalmist. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. When God calls upon his people to put on their strength, he would doubtless be understood to call upon them to take hold of his strength, pledged to them in his covenant, and to cease to trust in an arm of flesh, and to trust in him alone for all needed support and help. His people have always erred and greatly displeased him when they have trusted in themselves, or in the most distinguished of their fellow creatures. But when they have depended on him alone for needed aid, he has manifested himself to them according to their necessities. What more can we desire than God has secured to us by his covenant, of which Christ is the surety? Christians ought not to be afraid to commence the performance of any known duty—and no discouragements should induce them to neglect it. Their only inquiry should be, what has God required? When this is ascertained, they have nothing to do but to go forward, looking to God for success.

The resources of the church, which God has made sure to them by covenant, are sufficient for every occasion. It is his pleasure that his people should depend on them.

Those trials and changes, which have weaned the church from her attachment to the world and separated her from the state have proved beneficial. The less the church depends on the power and influence of

worldly men—the greater will be her strength—and success: the more closely she walks with God the more she will be respected. Nothing does more than a worldly spirit to obscure the light of the church, and to diminish her power.

3. Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city. This is the third exhortation of the text.

The beautiful garments of the church are robes of righteousness, which consist of the Christian graces. Though sinless perfection is not made a condition of our justification in the sight of God; yet there is a degree of holiness, without which we cannot be accepted. When Christians so live, whether churches or private members, as to enjoy the earnest—the anointing and sealing of the Holy Spirit; they can approach the throne of grace with boldness, confident that their performances are pleasing in the sight of God. Should Christians faithfully perform the duties required of them, as well their secret as their social and public duties, they would enjoy a revival of religion in their own hearts, whether sinners are converted or not.

The imperfections of professing Christians have furnished the unconverted with many excuses for their delay of repentance. “What need of conversion,” they say, “if we see no important difference between professing Christians and others?” The most important difference between true believers and others is not seen in the street, or in the public assembly. The former maintain a life of prayer, and worship God in their families. The scriptures do not authorize us to expect perfection in this world. If we say that we are perfect that will prove us perverse. It is impos-

sible to determine, how far the impenitence of any may be attributable to the faults of the professed friends of God. If we make the scriptures our guide, we must believe that all in the visible church are not what they profess to be.

You profess, brethren, to be dead to the world. Have you given evidence of your sincerity? In the transaction of business have you given proofs that you regard the interest of your neighbor as well as your own? Have you made it manifest by your liberality and attention to duty that you regard the interest of God as much as your own? How can we with good reason hope for salvation, if our life do not correspond with the standard, which Christ himself presented to the minds of the multitudes, who followed him? And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. If, therefore, we do not make it manifest that we love Christ more than all other persons, we cannot give satisfactory evidence that we are his disciples. True religion is a reality not a mere profession. What can the most faithful ministers effect without the co-operation of the churches, with which they are connected? Their discourses must be powerless, if they cannot appeal to the professed friends of God for illustrations of the doctrines they teach. What can the ablest commander of an army accomplish without the united and vigorous efforts of those, who are placed under his authority? What can any one effect, who directs the labors of others, if they neglect their duty? In the

same sense, in which sinners are saved by the instrumentality of Christians, by the unfaithfulness of the latter they may be left to perish.

Do any now ask, how may we know whether we are accepted of God or not? God gives the earnest of his spirit to those, who faithfully discharge their duty. This token of his love God always grants to his most faithful servants, whether successful or not in their labors for the conversion of sinners. May it not be just as true that some are now lifting up their eyes in torment in consequence of the unfaithfulness of professing Christians; as that others are lifting up their voice in praise to God in consequence of the fervent prayers and untiring labors of the pious for their salvation? This is indeed a solemn and ought to be an affecting consideration. Have you brethren, been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; and can you be satisfied without making some return to him for the great things he has done for you? Can you see your fellow creatures exposed to everlasting ruin and make no effort to save them? Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his. Should the church put on her beautiful garments, consisting of Christian graces—humility—meekness—benevolence, forgiveness, prayer—and the like; she would be a bright light in the world and would be terrible to her enemies as an army with banners.

II. Your attention will be directed to some of the encouragements found in the text to the performance of duty.

1. It is pretty clearly intimated that the accessions made to the church will correspond with her purity. The greater her advancement in holiness; the better

will be the character of her converts. The greater her advancement in holiness the more intense will be her love of the distinguishing truths of Christianity. The text is a prediction of accessions to the church, consisting of true converts. For, it is written, there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. The promises of the text, it is believed, correspond with facts. Those churches, which are most distinguished for their piety and benevolent acts are usually most highly favored. This might reasonably be expected. The greater the advancement of any church in holiness, the more abundant are the communications of the spirit made to that church. Great care in the admission of members to a church is essential to its continued purity. In a church, which is eminently holy, there are bright illustrations of the truths and precepts of the gospel. The influence of such examples must be salutary. The consequence must be that those, who become Christians, have a high standard of piety before them—and they will aim at higher attainments than those, whose thoughts are fixed on a lower mark. Besides, when the standard of piety in a church is high there will be greater caution among the serious in indulging hopes of salvation. Though the number pronounced pious may be small, yet more than all, who have good ground to hope will be received into the church. Where hopes are easily obtained they are easily lost, or, if not lost, they soon cease to have influence. The most impartial examination by no means injures those, who have a good hope; but on the other hand strengthens and brightens it. Hopes indulged without a good foundation shield the subjects of them from the influence of



the truth, and almost certainly exclude them from heaven.

2. It is implied in the predictions, or promises which the text contains, that when the church awakes from a state of slumber and inactivity—when Zion puts on her strength and Jerusalem her beautiful garments, that then additions will be made to the people of God of such as he will approve. There is probably as much reason to expect a spiritual harvest when a church performs all her duty; as to expect a temporal harvest when the husbandman as such performs all his duty. There are seasons, when the expectations of the husbandman are cut off. His labors may be as great as at other times, but God may be pleased to teach him a lesson of dependence. So there are times, when God is pleased to withdraw his Spirit from his churches, to teach them their dependence on him. Such a time as the present, since the commencement of the present century, it is believed, has not been known, when the Holy Spirit has been withdrawn from the churches of the different denominations.\* It is not true that Christians have done less of late years than formerly for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Their liberality and their spirit of enterprise have been constantly increasing. But they have depended too much on human instrumentality. The wonderful improvement in the arts has led some to believe that conversions might be increased in number by improved measures and means. Influenced by this opinion they have depended more on the perfection of human instrumentality than on the power of God. When they cease to depend on their own

\*1846.

power for success in the faithful discharge of their duty and rely alone on God; then may they confidently look for refreshing seasons.

Christians do not labor in the pursuit of spiritual objects, as men of the world in the pursuit of objects which are temporal. This accounts for the greater success the latter have in temporal than the former in spiritual things. The husbandman is active, diligent, persevering—his whole heart is engaged in his efforts to obtain a temporal harvest. Nothing is left undone, which can be done for the accomplishment of his object. But professing Christians, when most in earnest are but half in earnest—when most active are comparatively inactive. They are inconstant, irresolute and easily discouraged. It is not, therefore, difficult to account for the different results, attending the means, used by professing Christians for the conversion of sinners and the means used by worldly men for the possession of temporal objects. It may here be added, Christians, even the most spiritual are sanctified but in part. They have within a constant warfare to maintain.

#### APPLICATION.

God is calling upon us at this time, brethren, and saying to us, awake, awake! Is not our actual condition a sufficient proof that God is speaking to us? Because our sleep is deep he calls with earnestness—with a loud voice and repeats the word, awake. Is it not high time for us to awake and to be more in earnest in laboring for the conversion of our fellow men?

The age, in which we live is peculiarly interesting, and the country, in which we dwell is more highly

avored than any other on the globe. We are not called to labor without hope. We are assured that in due time we shall reap if we faint not. It is true God can convert the world without us. He may cut us down, if unfaithful, and raise up others to fill our places. But we know that the plan he has adopted includes human instrumentality. We have, therefore, a part to perform in that great enterprise, the object of which is the conversion of the world. Ought not the church to be as willing to furnish a good number to assist in conquering the enemies of God as the state to furnish, at far greater expense, large armies to conquer the enemies of our country? Wide fields are now open for Christian enterprise, and the call now comes from every quarter for more help. It is noble, it is honorable to assist in this work! Much land remains to be possessed. Millions and hundreds of millions have gone down to the regions of misery without any knowledge of the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. What we, who are upon the stage of life, do, must be done soon. Soon we must stand before his judgment-seat, who though rich became poor for our sakes and who suffered death that we might live.

If we look around us, around the place, where God in his providence has cast our lot, we shall find many, who are still unrenewed, under sentence of death and exposed to unutterable misery. Could they be made sensible of their guilt, and feel their danger; they would start, tremble, and cry, men and brethren, what must we do? Why do they remain so thoughtless? It is true there is no excuse for their impenitence and conformity to the world. But is it not true that they

would not remain so much at ease, if Christians lived more like strangers and pilgrims in the world? How little, my brethren, we think of the everlasting punishment we hope we have escaped—and how little of the inheritance we hope to enjoy? How little too we think of our indebtedness to our great Redeemer?

Some may be ready to say, O that we could feel as we once did, and converse with as much boldness as we once could! Draw near to God by sincere and deep repentance and faith, and God will draw near to you by his Holy Spirit. Without the performance of these duties you could not enjoy God in the midst of a revival of religion in the church. Break off from every known sin—the most besetting—return to every neglected duty—mortify your love of the world by increased liberality in the cause of Christ—persevere in the performance of duty till you find him, whom you have forsaken. Our first business is to seek God till we find him in our own hearts. If we find him there we shall find him every where, and we shall see God in every event. We ought not to depend on mere excitements. They soon pass away and leave no permanent good effect. The proper cultivation of our own hearts is hard work. They require constant attention and watchfulness. They are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Too many look out of themselves—to the church, or to some distant place to find God, while they neglect the vigorous performance of those duties, which are connected with precious promises. And too many overlooking their own deficiencies persuade themselves, that if others would perform their duty religion would prosper. The inquiry should be, Lord is it I? Am I not the

faulty person—or at least one of the faulty persons, who have by a self-righteous spirit grieved away the Holy Spirit? When Christians esteem others better than themselves and feel condemned for their own deficiencies; then the work of God begins to be revived.

Let me now ask, brethren, are you doing all you can for God and for the souls of men? Do you sometimes offer the agonizing prayer for the conversion of those, who are associated with you? Are your hearts tenderly affected, when you contemplate the condition of those, who are living without any good hope of future happiness?

Trusting in God there is nothing too great for us to expect—nothing too great for us to attempt. Whether our number be great or small, the fulfilment of the promises of God does not depend on our number but on Christ, who is the surety of the covenant. God can save as well by few as by many. It may here be added, prayers offered here, which are acceptable will not be in vain. They may be answered in some remote part of the world, if none are converted where they are offered. God hath never said to the seed of Jacob—Seek ye my face in vain;

“Nor, when his saints complain,

“Shall it be said that praying breath

“Was ever spent in vain.”

Before I conclude, let me say to the sinner unconverted, think not to offer as an excuse for your unbelief and impenitence the imperfections of professing Christians. Should they all prove to be hypocrites and perish, this would be of no advantage to you. They are a light in this dark world. If the light be not as splendid as it should be and as is desirable, do not extinguish it. You have a soul to be saved or lost. One

perfect light is before you. Vast provisions have been made for your redemption. You have the offer of pardon and eternal life. The offer is made without money and without price. It is made without any respect of persons. It is, therefore, made to you and to every sinner unconverted. This is the invitation of our Lord—Come, for all things are now ready. Him that cometh unto me, he said, I will not cast out.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE III.



### UNION IS STRENGTH.

And, when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty, which had made this conspiracy.—Acts xxiii, 12, 13.

The union and zeal, the boldness and perseverance of those, whom we often see engaged in the accomplishment of the basest of purposes, show us what men are capable of doing, and how they ought to act when objects of the greatest magnitude and value are presented to their minds. Such, however, is the state of the church, so imperfect and feeble are the graces of Chris-

tians that we find among them much less union and zeal, decision and boldness in their labors for the salvation of their fellow creatures, than in the ambitious for their ruin and destruction.

The time has come, when Christians ought to be united by the firmest ties, when with zeal, decision and boldness they ought to fight the battles of their Lord—when their efforts to do good ought to correspond with their ability and opportunities. They must not look for rest till death closes their life. The objects exhibited to their minds are infinitely great and glorious. They are of sufficient importance to call into exercise all their powers. Their own happiness, which is not to be overlooked, is not to be so much regarded as the conversion of millions.

When one nation feels that she has been injured by another nation, or when she has a fair prospect of obtaining some desirable object; her wisdom, physical strength, and treasures are all united and made subserviant to the defence of her rights and honor, or the measures, adopted for the execution of her designs.

Here we see the harmonious operation of schemes, sometimes the most extensive and complex—an enthusiastic ardor manifested by all, who approve them, and a settled purpose not to abandon them, however great the labor and expense required, till the end sought is attained. Thus men feel and thus they act, when seeking temporal aggrandizement, and also when butchering their fellow creatures. Surely the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. Ought not Christians to blush, when they compare their exertions in the best of causes with the exertions of those, who are

only seeking fading honor and perishing riches? When a plan is proposed for the benefit of our fellow men, though approved, too frequently it only awakens repulsive feelings in them, who profess to love their neighbor as themselves. The great good, which might be done, is too often left undone because not attempted. One and the same spirit seems to influence the enemies of the truth, while its friends are divided into various contending parties.

When Saul of Tarsus was at the head of a company, who were determined, if possible, to annihilate the infant church of Christ, and to murder his innocent and peaceable disciples; there were found enough to cooperate with him, who instantly caught the flame, burning in his breast, and did not refuse to meet any danger and to submit to any privation in the perpetration of the most cruel deeds. But the change, effected in the views and feelings of this man by the mighty and special operations of the Spirit of God, occasioned an entire change in the treatment he received from his former companions, and also a change in the treatment he received from those, whom he had wickedly persecuted. His old friends, though he had been their favorite, became his bitter enemies, and those, whom he had endeavored to destroy, received him with a forgiving spirit and heart-felt joy.

The infant church, though hunted, as if they had been a band of robbers, or the vilest malefactors, were so far from exercising a revengeful spirit, or from seeking in any way to injure those, who had endeavored to imbrue their hands in their blood, that when most exposed to suffering, they only sought to conceal themselves, or resolved to die as martyrs for the honor of



the gospel. As soon as they were satisfied that Saul of Tarsus had become a Christian, they did not hesitate to bid him welcome to a participation of all the privileges they enjoyed.

But as soon as the fact of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus was known to the Jews, a host of enemies rose up against *him*, *whom* they had highly esteemed and whom they had willingly followed. Had he kindled fires in their beloved city and been the cause of its destruction and of the destruction of many of its inhabitants, or had he raised the standard of rebellion and labored to subvert their government, they could not have been more enraged against him than they were on account of his conversion. They had no reason to fear that he would take from them their gold and silver, or that he would injure their persons. His only aim was to labor for the salvation of men, especially for the salvation of his own people the Jews.

It is interesting to notice the wide difference between the humble followers of Christ, and those, who, at the commencement of the present dispensation, continued in unbelief. The former were gentle, kind, pacific and forgiving in their disposition, the latter violent, contentious, cruel and revengeful.

The exertions of the unbelieving Jews to destroy the life of Paul the Christian were great, because it was believed that a man of his rank, talents, and learning, could do much to advance the kingdom of Christ. But to enter into such a conspiracy as is mentioned in the text to destroy the life of a man, whose only aim was to do good, and whose character was without a fault worthy of notice, was a proof of deep depravity of heart. Such was the enmity of the Jews,

awakened by his conversion, that forty desperate persons bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him. Here we have an exhibition of the character of the unrenewed heart. We see that men can be excited—what things can move their feelings and unite them—for what they are willing to make great sacrifices, and for what object they can without murmuring labor with untiring zeal.

Why should not men of real piety manifest a similar spirit in the best of causes? Do not sincerity and fidelity demand this of them? Did they as sincerely and ardently desire the salvation of their fellow creatures, as the enemies of Paul desired his destruction; they would think nothing too great to do or to suffer, to accomplish their object.

That Christians may have a proper view of their deficiencies, and may be stimulated to greater fidelity in the cause of Christ; I shall in the following discourse more particularly notice the points of difference between their conduct and that of men of the world, when engaged in the pursuit of objects, of acknowledged importance.

1. *Union.* We cannot but notice a great difference between Christians and others with regard to *union*. When meditating on the history of the church, we are almost forced to conclude that Christians cannot for any long period act together. The history of the church is the history of different sects, and of their various struggles for influence and ascendancy. And should we separate the true church from that, which is merely nominal; still we should find among the real friends of the truth a diversity of sentiment re-

specting things not essential, and one party arrayed against another.

It is an undeniable fact that some of the sharpest controversies have arisen from a diversity of opinion respecting things not essential.

But men of the world in the transaction of business, by which they expect to promote their interest, can form companies and bind themselves together, and harmoniously act. So likewise the lovers of pleasure and amusement are ready to unite in the adoption of any plan, by which they hope to obtain the object of their pursuit. It may be added those, who have embraced the most pernicious errors, are always inclined to unite in opposition to the most faithful servants of God. It is a remarkable fact that, extensive as is the papal church all its members breathe the same spirit and cheerfully assist each other in the furtherance of the welfare of that great community. There must be local interests in this church and various obstacles to harmonious operation; but zeal for the great objects of pursuit overcomes every hindrance. Christians, who are agreed in regard to the distinguishing truths of the gospel, and the means, the faithful use of which is connected with the prosperity of the church, ought not to neutralize their forces by disunion; but rather to concentrate them, and to employ them in the execution of plans, which must fail without this union. There are, we know, very many cases, in which individuals laboring separately cannot effect what may easily be accomplished by a union of many. When a number are united in any enterprise, one stimulates another by his example, encourages and strengthens another by his conversation—one more bold than the

rest may induce them to attempt what without his influence they would not dare attempt. In all societies the influence of every one is felt.

The power of union is like that of a mighty river, formed by the waters of many smaller streams. The largest ships may ride upon the mighty river, but cannot upon the little streams that flow into it. A bad man may successfully contend with an individual, but may be overcome by a number. Now the salvation of one soul, and the soul of one whose case is most hopeless, is an event of greater importance, and an object more worthy of pursuit, than that which covered the Persian empire with the armies of Greece, or than that, which united the States, which were once the colonies of Great Britain in their struggles for independence. And are there not Christians, who may be excited by a view of cases the most unpromising? There are often found men who are pleased to attempt what is difficult, and whose zeal rises in proportion to the number and the greatness of the obstacles to be overcome. When we see any of our fellow creatures, who have embraced dangerous errors, pursuing with rapid steps the way, which leads to destruction; ought we not to labor to pluck them as brands from the burning? Were Christians more holy, they would be more willing and more ready to unite, and firmly to unite in the execution of every benevolent enterprise.

When it was proposed to slay Paul, more than forty were ready at once to unite in this dreadful work. It was their hatred of Christianity, which influenced them. But with all the professions of Christians their love of the truth is but a feeble principle, compared with the strong feelings, which moved the enemies of

Paul to destroy his life. Should a neighbor's house be in flames, and should one of the family be discovered in great danger of perishing, would not all present unite in efforts for his rescue? Why not then discontinue all disputes respecting things not essential, and unite for the deliverance of such as are about to fall into that furnace, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched?

2. *Perseverance.* The perseverance of Christians in the accomplishment of the most important objects may be compared with the perseverance of worldly men in the pursuit of objects they desire to obtain. Two things always urge men to persevere in their pursuits—a high valuation of the object sought, and a reasonable prospect of obtaining it. Where an object is not highly valued and the desire of obtaining it is but feeble, there will be no persevering zeal in the pursuit of it. We may have such a sense of the necessity of obtaining an object, as to call into exercise all our powers, and to continue them in operation till we actually possess it, or perish in the attempt. Such were the views, which the enemies of Paul had of his death. They were afraid of the consequences of his ministry. Why should Christians be so easily discouraged in their efforts to do good, if unsuccessful for a time?

They may take hold of infinite wisdom—almighty power, and boundless grace. To them many precious promises are made and many facts are on record to encourage them to continue their labors for the salvation of men. Take away all hope of success and exertions will be impossible. The enemies of Paul did not hesitate to submit to self-denial in effecting

his death. They bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him. Should those, who profess religion in this place, unite and bind themselves, not under a curse, not, that they will neither eat nor drink, but that they will not cease to pray and labor with all their powers for the conversion of men, till a revival of religion is commenced, might we not, relying on the power and grace of God, hope to witness such an event? The conversion of one soul occasions joy in the presence of the angels of God. How great must be their joy when fifty or a hundred are converted! As there is no bound to the goodness of God, so we may expect of him great things as well as small things—the conversion of many as well as the conversion of a few. Indeed the more enlarged and exalted are our views of the liberality of God, and from these views the more we ask and expect of him the more ready he is to bless us. Open thy mouth wide, saith the Lord, and I will fill it. We ought not to confine our thoughts to the misery those who are converted, may escape, and the happiness they may enjoy; but we should fix them more especially on what Christians may do to promote the glory of God.

Who can calculate the amount of good, which has resulted from the conversion of Saul of Tarsus? His own salvation, though an important event, was only one of the thousands connected with it, and flowing from it. Who can calculate the good, which has resulted from the conversion of Luther, or of Whitfield—or of Edwards—or of Nettleton? When we pray for the conversion of an individual, our prayers would doubtless be more acceptable to God, should we view its con-

nexion with his exertions in the cause of truth. Wide is the field now open to the view of the church, denominated the light of the world. Her prayers should constantly ascend to God that he may, by the conversion of men, raise up laborers to go wherever a way is prepared for the preaching of the gospel. We must persevere in the performance of duty till death terminates our life. Him that overcometh, said our ascended Lord, 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.

3. *Boldness.* It cannot be doubted that the unbelief of many is strengthened by the timid manner, in which some exhibit the truth. The impression is often made on the minds of the unrenewed that the truths exhibited are not fully believed by those, who exhibit them. There certainly is a way of so presenting the truth as to convince the hearer that the preacher not only believes the truths he proclaims but that he believes them to be of great importance. When Christians as well as Christian ministers in discoursing on religious subjects appear deeply to feel them they make a good impression. True piety, when in vigorous exercise, will produce earnestness and boldness of manner. But that boldness of manner, which is produced by the power of grace in the heart, will always be softened by tenderness of feelings. If we do fully believe what we profess, why should we not be decided, and so speak as to convince those who hear us that we have no serious doubts respect-

ing the truths we recommend to others? The enemies of Paul were earnest and bold, because they sincerely hated Christianity and felt it to be of great importance to destroy the life of one, who might do much to advance its interest. What would Luther, or Knox have effected had not they boldly declared and defended the truth? The proofs our pilgrim fathers gave of their sincerity, of the firmness of their faith, when they left their own country and exposed themselves to the dangers of the wide ocean that they might find a place, where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, left an impression favorable to the truth on the minds of their posterity, which has not been obliterated even to the present day. They were earnest, decided and bold defenders of the truth. They could not endure hypocrisy, they could not view with indifference the propagation of dangerous errors.

It may be added the affectionate boldness of the speaker excites a spirit of sympathy in the heart of the hearer; so that the latter, without being aware of it at the time, adopts the views of the former. Affectionate boldness is persuasive and produces the most important results.

#### APPLICATION.

In view of the subject under consideration Christians, who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who have a knowledge of the worth of the soul—and to whose mind the most sublime and glorious objects are presented, and which demand of them the exercise of all their powers, must feel condemned for their disunion—their want of zeal—de-



cision—boldness and perseverance in the cause of their Lord and Redeemer. They are the light of the world. Their life is the standard, to which men of the world look, and by which they judge of the importance of religion and the necessity of immediate repentance. The state of the world is always affected by the state of the church. In the government of the world, God always fixes his eye on his church. Even in times of persecution, the firmness of Christians and their willingness to part with their property and to suffer a martyr's death for the sake of Christ have been instrumental of the conversion of numbers, who by embracing the truth could expect nothing but a life of suffering. The strong proofs they have at such times given of their sense of the importance of religion have overcome the fears of many and convinced them of the truth.

The enterprise in which we are engaged is one which interests Christ himself and all holy beings. Let us often look to him, who once dwelt in the most delightful place in the universe, but came to this rebellious province of his Father's empire, where he knew he should suffer death that he might save us. Can we hope that we are christians, when we are so unlike our Savior? Can we be Christians, if unaffected when we see how men transgress the law of God, and neglect their own souls? Can we be Christians, if we think more of the externals of religion—outward ordinances, and modes of government,<sup>s</sup> than of the essentials of salvation—true repentance and saving faith? Why is it, that when we meditate on the condition of one who is under sentence of death and liable every moment to fall into that furnace, where the worm

dieth not and the fire is not quenched, that our hearts are like the unfeeling marble? Have we not reason to fear that some, who have a place in the church, are still without any good hope of life? The feelings of those who live near to God are easily excited. Their hearts never become hard as they once were. It is the neglect of those secret duties on which the life of the Christian so much depends, which occasions his insensibility and inactivity.

If Christians do not labor with all their powers for the salvation of their fellow men, many will perish through their neglect. How painful the thought that any, who have themselves been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ should be instrumental of the ruin of their fellow creatures! But, if souls may be saved by the instrumentality of Christians, by their neglect they may be left to perish. Christians cannot do too much to express their love to him, who gave his life to redeem them. But none can plead as any valid excuse for their unbelief the unfaithfulness of the professed friends of God. If those, who are now without any good hope of salvation were as earnest in seeking eternal life, as were the enemies of Paul in seeking his death; they would not, it is believed, fail of obtaining a good hope of heaven. While they are making excuses for their delay of repentance and thus quieting the reproofs of conscience, one after another is dropping into the abyss of woe. You have, sinner, a great work to do, which must be done or you will be lost. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE IV.



### WRESTLING WITH GOD.

And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.—GEN. XXXII. 26.

THAT Jehovah, in his nature, his purposes, and his whole character is of all beings in the universe the most immutable and at the same time the most susceptible of being moved, are positions, each of which the scriptures fully support. The following passages prove his immutability. He is of one mind, and who can turn him? What his soul desireth, even that he doeth. (Job xxiii, 13.) I am the Lord, I change not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. (Mal. iii. 6.) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James i. 17.) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. (Heb. xiii. 8.) From the following passages it is manifest that of all beings in the universe Jehovah is most susceptible of being moved. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. (Ps. ciii. 13) But he being full of compassion forgave their iniquity and

destroyed them not: yea, many a time he turned his anger away and did not stir up all his wrath. (Ps. lxxviii. 38.) And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear. (Is. lxxv. 24.) Who was ever so susceptible of being moved as Christ, who was God manifest in the flesh. The gospels abound with various proofs of his compassion. His life and sufferings afford the clearest evidence of the depth of his love and pity.

Thus it appears that the two positions, which have been mentioned, can be fully established by the scriptures. But how to reconcile them we know not. Who can understand the mode of the existence of God—or many things in his government of the world? There are truths, contained in the volume of revelation, which, when separately considered may be understood and proved; but the harmonious union of which we cannot understand. There are some facts in the material world equally mysterious. Philosophers assure us that two rays of light entering a room from different points, and converging produce darkness where they meet. The immutability of God and his readiness to be moved by our tears and prayers must both be admitted, though we cannot understand their agreement.

From the general and acknowledged truth that God is immutable in his nature and purposes some have drawn conclusions inconsistent with a proper view of his other attributes and of their duty. Is there not good reason to believe that the inactivity of some Christians may be attributed to their erroneous conceptions of the character and decrees of God?

There is a representation, though imperfect, of the immutability of God in the character of a firmly established Christian. His piety may be so deep as not to suffer him to do wrong, and to sustain him in the severest trials. Though firm, yet he may be compassionate. The Christian most distinguished for firmness may be most susceptible of being affected by a view of the suffering state of the church, or of any of his fellow creatures. This is true, the greater the advancement made by any one in holiness, the more he is distinguished for stability of character and the more susceptible he is of being moved by the cries of the suffering. And it may be added, the more any are influenced by the spirit of Christ the more they are like God.

Though the principles by which God is influenced in the government of the world are always the same; yet his treatment of men must vary according to their conduct. His love of holiness is perfectly consistent with his hatred of sin. Were God to treat all men alike, however different their conduct, how could his true character be exhibited? In the administration of his government he expresses his hatred of the wicked and his love of the righteous. He frowns upon his own covenant people, when they disobey his commands and makes the way of the transgressors hard. The scriptures teach us to expect changes in the treatment we receive from God corresponding with our treatment of him and his cause. If faithful in the performance of our duty, we can boldly approach the throne of mercy and plead the promises of the covenant of grace, expecting deliverance from evil and the posses-

sion of needed favors; but, if we neglect the duties we owe to God, we must look for chastisement.

There is a connexion between the events of divine providence and the conduct of men; but the righteous receive in this world only an earnest of that happiness they will enjoy hereafter, and the wicked a fore-taste of that bitter cup, which beyond the grave they must drink to the very dregs.

Though immutable, God is perfectly free, and his freedom consists in the undisturbed exercise of all his powers. Is it any abridgment of his liberty that he cannot do wrong? Does not the good man consider it the perfection of his freedom to be able to discharge his duty without any hindrance? Will he not be perfectly free, when perfectly holy, and unable to sin? In bestowing or withholding his favors God is perfectly free. His freedom corresponds with his unchangeable purposes.

Had not the patriarch Jacob, when he wrestled with God, been fully persuaded that he is immutable in his purposes and promises and at the same time susceptible of being moved by the prayers and tears of his people he would not have dared plead with him and adopt the strong language of the text. In this case we have a most interesting and instructive view of the successful importunity of the patriarch Jacob in his endeavors to move the unchangeable Jehovah to deliver him from impending evil and to secure to him and his family covenant blessings. That Jacob did in reality move by his prayers and tears the immutable God is certainly the impression made on the mind of every one, who carefully reads the passage, from which the text has been taken. And the plain and

obvious meaning of the scriptures is the true meaning. Indeed it is the unchangeable nature, purpose and promise of God to be moved, when his people in their distress approach him with a proper spirit and proper feelings. His susceptibility of being moved is essential to his immutable nature—which is compassionate. No man can offer acceptable prayer to God, who does not believe that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Prayer offered to God is but mockery unless we expect to obtain by it what we cannot obtain, if we neglect the duty.

The scriptures every where teach us that God grants favors in answer to the supplications of his people, as really as any earthly parent bestows favors on his children in answer to their earnest request. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, said our Lord, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or, if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him! (Luke xi. 11-13.) Indeed, when we offer prayer in a proper manner, we have more reason to expect a blessing, than the most beloved children have to expect of the most affectionate parents the things they seek. God, who is infinite in wisdom, does not always grant the very things asked. He knows what is best for us, and what is most for his own glory. Earthly parents must have a regard as well to their own interest, as to that of their children. Should they grant some things requested, they might injure themselves and ruin their children. As we do not

know what is most for the glory of God and our own happiness; so our prayers ought always to be offered to God with a spirit of submission.

The scene passing before the patriarch Jacob, when he wrestled with God, was inexpressibly solemn and affecting. There was a moral sublimity in his action, which we cannot contemplate without seriousness and admiration. It is impossible for us to have any adequate conception of the feelings of the patriarch, when God revealed himself to him, and spoke to him. There are times, it is true, when God reveals himself by his Spirit to the devout Christian. How solemn the scene, when he is alone with God!

Dare any of you, my brethren, approach God and take hold of his almighty arm, as did the patriarch Jacob? Does not the very thought make you tremble, start back, and seek to hide yourselves from his presence? How few are now to be found, who are mighty in prayer to God? But there has been no change in God since the patriarch Jacob wrestled with him and prevailed. We have now as much encouragement to hope for a blessing as Jacob had, if as earnest and faithful in the performance of our duty as he was. This will be evident by a more particular consideration of the case, from the description of which the text has been taken.

1. The circumstances, in which the patriarch Jacob wrestled with God, will now be mentioned.

1. The wrestling of Jacob was in a place of retirement, where he was unobserved by any of his fellow creatures—even by any of the members of his own family. No one but God knew where he was, or how he was employed. He did not depend for excitement



on the presence of any of the human family. The occasion was of sufficient importance to call into exercise all his powers. He had a great work to perform, which none but himself could perform. When we have any very difficult task to accomplish, which requires the uninterrupted concentration of all our thoughts, we choose to be alone. And surely no business is more difficult and important than that we have to transact with the great Jehovah. He is infinitely excellent, hates all hypocrisy and sin, and there is we know a mixture of selfishness in our very best services. He demands the sacrifice of the heart.

2. It was night, and perhaps not far from midnight, when Jacob wrestled with God, or when the action commenced. We can hardly suppose that he rushed into the presence of God as the unthinking horse rusheth into battle. No doubt he spent sometime in meditation to prepare his mind for duty, before he attempted to address the most high God, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men. The scene passing before the patriarch was suited powerfully to affect his mind. The stillness of the night, interrupted, probably, only by the howling of wolves and the roaring of lions made the occasion one of deep solemnity. But as he draws near to God by prayer he forgets that it is night and that he is exposed to be devoured by wild beasts. The object before him and his request occupy his thoughts.

3. It is hardly possible to conceive of the agitation and distress the patriarch experienced, when he understood that his brother Esau, who had threatened to destroy his life after the death of his father, was coming to meet him with four hundred men. He selected

from his herds and flocks a liberal present to be presented to his brother Esau with the hope of appeasing his anger. He gave his servants directions how to proceed and lodged that night in the company. And he rose up that night and took his two wives and his two women servants, and his eleven sons and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them and sent them over the brook and sent over that he had—hoping that, if he himself fell a sacrifice, some of his family might make their escape. And Jacob was left alone. Jacob felt that his brother had cause to be angry with him. He had obtained by improper means the blessing, which his father intended to bestow on Esau, who had previously sold his birth right to him for a mess of pottage. Such was known to be the hatred of Esau, as to awaken in the mind of the patriarch the most fearful apprehensions.

4. Such were the circumstances, in which Jacob was placed, and such was the state of his mind, when he ventured to make known his distress and his wants to God. And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. That the person was divine, with whom the patriarch wrestled, is manifest from the testimony of the scriptures themselves. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, he said, I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved. (Gen. xxxii. 31.) In reference to the wrestling of Jacob with God—we find the following testimony in the prophecy of Hosea; and by his strength he had power with God. As the person, who wrestled with Jacob assumed a human form it is highly probable that he was the Son of God, God manifest in human flesh. It was the will of God that the Patriarch

should act freely and manfully—that he should bring forward all the arguments proper to be used. The words of the text and context are a sufficient proof that the struggle was not maintained by physical power alone, that strong reasons were offered by each of the persons engaged in wrestling to support the positions, respectively assumed.

4. I will now endeavor to show, how we must understand the wrestling of Jacob with God.

Wrestling is an action, which requires the most vigorous exercise of all our powers of body and mind. In a spiritual sense it requires the exercise, not only of all our graces, but of the employment of all our mental resources. When two persons are engaged in wrestling—they oppose each other—the one endeavors to overcome the other. The ground on which the two persons mentioned in the text stood was the covenant of grace. Whether Jacob was really interested in this covenant seemed to be the question to be decided.

When the patriarch endeavors to enter the presence of God to present his request to him and to make known his distress; he finds a person ready to oppose him and to offer objections to his near approach to the holy one of Israel. Such as the following objections might be offered. You come to God, when in distress. But how often in prosperity you have forgotten him, or worshipped him with your lips when your heart was unmoved! What but selfish motives now have influence? You are afraid of being slain by your brother Esau, and of losing your possessions. In reply to these objections Jacob might say, Am I not in covenant with God, and has he not made many

precious promises to his people? Has he not said, Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me? Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee and were not confounded. Has there been any change in God? True, may the person with whom the patriarch is wrestling reply—God is unchangeable and all his gracious purposes expressed in his covenant, are sure. But what proof can you bring that you are interested in the covenant of grace? None can appropriate the promises of God to themselves but such as walk in his covenant and maintain a conscience void of offence.

Call to recollection the fraudulent manner, in which with the aid of your mother you obtained of your aged father the blessing he intended for your brother Esau. His hatred is not without cause and he comes with an army to slay you and to take from you all you possess. He has long sought an opportunity to put you to death for your cruel treatment of him. Now he is near and feels sure of accomplishing his purpose. The patriarch now sensible of his guilt and unworthiness—with many tears, unwilling to be overcome, replies—Is not the unchangeable God, a forgiving God? If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. With the Lord there is mercy and with him there is plenteous redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. My hope is not on myself but on the surety of the covenant.

5. It was, doubtless, the object of the person, with whom Jacob wrestled, to give him enlarged and just views of the character of God, and of his hatred of all sin; and also to bring to his remembrance the transgressions of his youth and likewise of his riper years. The memory of Jacob was quickened, and when all his imperfections and sins were set in order before him; he was overwhelmed with grief on account of his ingratitude to the best of all beings. He could but feel that the blessings bestowed upon him were unmerited, that he deserved rather the frowns of God than his smiles. To give him a strong sense of his weakness the man that wrestled with him, touched the hollow of his thigh and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. But the patriarch, though humbled in the dust, and sensible of his weakness and unworthiness, still clung to the person with whom he wrestled. How great must have been his distress, when thus disabled and without any encouragement to hope that his request would be granted! His agony was most heart-rending, when the man with whom he had been so long wrestling, said let me go for the day breaketh—we must now part—other objects demand attention, the duties of the day are returning. Man's extremity was God's opportunity. Just as the man was about to leave the patriarch, the latter held him fast and with deep feelings of heart said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And the man said to the patriarch, 'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, (which signifies supplanter,) but Israel: for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And he blessed him there. It was the will of God that Jacob

should understand and feel that he was indebted to unmerited grace for all he possessed, and for all the blessings promised him. The fulfilment of the promises made to him did not depend on his merit but on the surety of the covenant, the Messiah. Before God bestows any great favors on a Christian he usually humbles him—especially before he makes any special communications of his grace. As it was his unalterable purpose to do great things for the family of Jacob, it was important that he should feel his obligation to God for his distinguishing grace.

6. The wrestling of Jacob was of great advantage to him. It gave him a more perfect knowledge of the divine character than he had before possessed. He had clearer views of the holiness of God than he had before obtained. He likewise became more fully acquainted with himself. He had new discoveries of the remaining depravity of his heart. When his heart was dissolved in penitence and he became sensible of his demerit—when he had an affecting view of the forgiving love of God and of the rich promises of his covenant; then he became bold and could say, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. In the exercise of true repentance and faith strength was given to the patriarch to plead the promises of God. When Christians are penitent then they can approach a Holy God with confidence. However deep our views of the depravity of our hearts, and however affecting our views of the imperfection of our lives; if grieved and broken hearted on account of the injury we have done to God we may with great boldness approach him and with great importunity may plead for covenant blessings. The sacrifices of God are a broken

spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. The earnest and importunate prayers of Christians, when anxious to be delivered from distressing evil, either experienced or apprehended; or when desirous of obtaining some object of great value, are not unlike the wrestling of the patriarch Jacob. Severe trials humble and soften the hearts of Christians—purify their faith, and increase the strength of all their graces.

The patriarch Jacob felt that he must obtain his request or must be ruined. For a time his prospect was dark and he had reason to fear that he should be denied. But the more gloomy his prospect the more earnest and importunate was his prayer. Such in some respects are the feelings of worldly men, when they are convinced that they must obtain a certain object or be ruined. They become more earnest and increase their exertions just in proportion as the difficulties to be overcome appear to be more formidable. God we know is as able to bestow upon us blessings of great value as blessings of small value. Giving doth not diminish the treasures of his goodness, nor does withholding increase them. His unwillingness to grant some of the things we ask does not arise from any want of liberality on his part, but from a regard to our happiness and to the interest of his kingdom. His withholding for a time blessings he is determined finally to grant does not arise from an unwillingness to part with them, but from a regard to the best good of those, who ask for them.

#### APPLICATION.

In the description of the wrestling of the patriarch Jacob we may see as in a glass how the immutability

of God harmonizes with his perfect freedom and his susceptibility of being moved—we may see too the only proper foundation, on which rest our hopes of success in our attempts to do good. Are there not, brethren, some objects, which you feel that you must obtain, however great the labor and hazzard in your attempts to possess them? Obstacles in your way only increase your exertions. But the objects, you seek, are only temporal. The church, of which you are members, is denominated the light of the world and the salt of the earth. In the administration of his government God always has regard to the state of his church. A fearful responsibility rests upon you. Do you feel that the salvation of those around you is an object, which must be obtained at any sacrifice? This is a great object, the value of which no created being can fully estimate. It is an object the Son of God came from heaven to secure, or effect. Though rich he became poor for our sakes. He suffered death that we might live. There is an object before you of infinite value. You have been called—not merely that you might escape misery and obtain happiness, but that you might be lights in the world and the salt of the earth—and that you might labor for God and for the advancement of his kingdom. You have seen how the patriarch Jacob wrestled with God, and how he finally obtained the blessing he sought. How, let me ask, can your prayers be compared with his wrestling with God? Can you not then account for the withholding of the Holy Spirit, the promised blessing? The promises to you are as immutable as were the promises to Jacob and God is now as susceptible of being moved as he ever was. Nothing is more



pleasing to God than to notice the earnestness and the boldness and perseverance of his people when pleading for the conversion of sinners, and when they have a deep sense of their demerit and of their entire dependence on his power and grace.

2. It is impossible to contemplate the struggle of Jacob, without admiration and without feeling condemned for our own deficiencies. Have you not reason to believe, brethren, that God would revive his work in this place and convert those, who are still unrenewed, were you to wrestle with him for the object sought, as did Jacob for what he sought? You see that some objects may be obtained by importunity, which cannot otherwise be obtained. Is it not the fact, that while you admit the doctrine of decrees, and believe that God is immutable that you overlook his susceptibility of being moved by the prayers of his people? How can you expect sinners to be alarmed and to inquire, what must we do to be saved, while the church is not distinguished from the world except on sacramental occasions? Can you, who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, contemplate with cold indifference the condition of those around you, who are under sentence of death, and exposed to endless and unutterable misery? Must we have severe trials to prepare us for our duty? If we remain at ease and continue without chastisement, have we not reason to conclude that we are not what we profess to be? For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. To day—let us review our life, confess our sins, and depending on God resolve to imitate as far as possible the example of the patriarch Jacob. Let it be fixed in our

minds that the unchangeable God has established a connexion between the importunate and persevering prayers of his people and the conversion of sinners.

While Christians are admonished and urged to discharge all their duty—and those duties which have reference to the conversion of sinners, let the latter understand that they have something to do. The unfaithfulness of the professed people of God will afford no excuse for others, who neglect their duty. All who listen to the sound of the gospel are under infinite obligations immediately to repent and believe in Christ. In his sermon on the mount he said to the multitude—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 that go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it. Should many professing Christians prove to be hypocrites; how can this benefit any that perish? A great object is before you, sinner, which you must obtain or be lost—lost forever—and which you never will obtain unless you seek it with all your heart and wrestle in the pursuit of it, as did Jacob for the blessing, which he sought. While you remain at ease, forgetful of God, and devoted to the world; you are pursuing the broad way, which ends in destruction. Your prospect of future happiness is becoming darker every day, yet you are not alarmed—you neglect to call upon God. Is it a matter of indifference to you, whether you are saved or lost? Strive, I pray you, to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in—when too late, or not with all their heart, and shall not be able.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE V.



### THE EXISTENCE AND WORKS OF EVIL SPIRITS.

Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour : whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.—I PETER v. 8, 9.

THE earth on which we dwell is the field, where are fought those battles, the results of which will affect us and the vast empire of Jehovah forever. Here the Son of God was condemned and crucified. For a moment his enemies triumphed and his friends wept. Very soon the scene was changed. Those who wept rejoiced and those, who triumphed, found that they were defeated. The death of Christ was a conquest. But his enemies, though overcome, did not cease to oppose his cause. Some indeed by the power of the Holy Ghost became his friends. They are few in number compared with the multitudes, who refuse to submit to his will. The most subtil, powerful, and dangerous of the enemies of Christ and of his church are invisible. Such is the manner, in which they operate on the minds of men, that many are unwilling to admit that they are ever influenced by the tempter.

Indeed not a few deny the existence in the world of evil spirits, who operate on the minds of men. This is not strange, if we notice how seldom their number, their character and works are mentioned in the pulpit. Some truths gradually cease to be believed, if never made prominent, or if treated as unimportant by those, who minister in holy things. Those, who are the willing captives of the adversary, are ignorant of their condition and of their danger.

Christians have but a very imperfect knowledge of the warfare in which they are engaged. Put on the whole armour of God, said the apostle, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.

The scriptures teach us that the warfare we have to maintain is difficult, not only on account of the deceitfulness of our hearts, but on account of the power of our enemies. To ensure a victory all our powers of mind and all our graces must be exercised to the highest degree. It does not become us to make light of the difficulties we have to overcome, and the dangers we must meet. Mariners do not make light of those storms, which have buried thousands in the deep. The soldier is serious, when he speaks of those battles, which covered the fields, where they were fought, with the bodies of the slain.

Christians ought to be anxious to know all that may be known of that contest, on the issue of which depends their future happiness. He that overcometh, said Christ, shall be clothed in white raiment; and

I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He that hath an ear to hear: let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.

The text brings to view an intelligent, subtil, active, persevering, and powerful enemy, which every Christian must meet and overcome on his way to heaven. It shows us how we must treat him in order to prevail.

1. The existence of evil spirits will first be considered.

The possibility of the existence of immaterial and invisible spirits both good and bad must be admitted, unless we deny the existence of God, who is an immaterial and invisible Spirit. That the souls of men exist after the dissolution of their bodies has been generally admitted by heathen as well as Christian nations. The scriptures are explicit on this subject. God in great mercy has made known the fact that evil spirits do exist, and that they attend us and exert all their power to ruin us. A knowledge of our danger is essential to our security. From the beginning to the end of the volume of revelation we have occasional notices of the existence of evil as well as of good angels or spirits. The apostacy of the human race is attributed to a distinct being, who by his subtilty corrupted one, who was before perfectly innocent and holy. The serpent beguiled me, said the woman, and I did eat. To be able to reason as he did, insinuating that God was a hard master, or that she could not rightly understand his prohibition, and then assuring her that she should not surely die, must prove him to be a distinct being.

Micaiah, a man of God, said to Ahab, a wicked king of Israel, I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne and all the host of heaven standing by him, on the right hand and on the left. And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead! And one said on this manner and another on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him, and the Lord said, wherewith? And he said, I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said thou shalt persuade him and prevail also: go forth and do so.

In the book of Job, Satan is represented as holding a discourse with God himself. Now there was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said—From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it.

When Christ was about to commence his ministry he was tempted forty days of the devil. And he was there forty days tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts: and the angels ministered unto him. As Christ was tempted, so all his followers experience the temptations of Satan. It was Satan, that persuaded the Jews and Romans to condemn and crucify the Lord of life and glory, not understanding that his death would ruin their cause. The scriptures afford abundant evidence of the existence of evil spirits and of their influence on the minds of men.

2. The number of evil spirits, engaged in opposing the cause of Christ and in corrupting the minds of

men will next be considered. The number, who came out of two men, whom Christ found in the country of the Gergasenes, we are assured was two thousand. There were two thousand swine, into which they entered. The unclean spirit, that wandered about in dry places, returned to the person in whom he formerly resided with seven others more wicked than himself. Eight, therefore, made their abode in this one person. Seven devils were cast out of Mary Magdalene.

The number of invisible evil spirits must be very great, if to the wicked angels, who kept not their first estate, we add the spirits of all who have died impenitent for nearly six thousand years. We have abundant reason to conclude that a very large portion of the human race have died in their sins. A very large proportion have been idolaters, and the scriptures assure us that no idolater shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Is it not probable that they are united with other evil spirits—the angels that kept not their first estate? The disposition they manifested in this world still remains unchanged, and is now without any restraint. And is it not also probable that the spirits of all the pious dead are ministering to Christ and to his church? But how small the number compared with the number of evil spirits? We have the testimony of Christ himself that but few comparatively enter heaven. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Again. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. We must, therefore, conclude that the world is full of evil

spirits—and that the peculiarities of their character are the same as they were, when they were in the body. Can it be doubted that the prince of devils employs the most fit ones to operate on the minds of men? Those, who when on earth were ambitious, are no doubt, employed to influence ambitious men. Those, who were covetous, operate on the minds of the covetous. The thought is startling that we are in the midst of innumerable invisible enemies, who can operate on our minds without our perceiving it, and who are exerting all their powers to ruin us—to ruin us forever. Could we look behind the curtain and see how many are appointed by their chief to corrupt and watch a single individual; it would not appear strange that so many are made the captives and slaves of Satan. It cannot be doubted that there are many evil spirits in this worshipping assembly—many suggesting to every unrenewed person objections, such as once influenced them, to the most important truths of the gospel, and plausible excuses for the delay of repentance. They not only enjoy quiet possession of many hearts; but perplex, and trouble those, whom they cannot devour. Much of the opposition experienced by the most devout Christians and the most faithful preachers proceeds from the wicked one. What causeless malice has been expressed by the persecutors of those, whose only offence was a sincere and consistent belief of the truth, according to their understanding of it!

### 3. The character of evil spirits.

It may first be observed, the knowledge of evil spirits—especially of those, who have existed for the longest period must be great. No doubt those spirits,



which once dwelt in earthly bodies, have made rapid progress in knowledge since the union was dissolved. Great is the wisdom of evil spirits, though made subservient to the basest purposes. They can lay their plans deep, and look forward with patience to remote consequences. The most ruinous errors, when first introduced, appear to favor the more rapid advancement of the kingdom of Christ. On this account they are most readily embraced by Christians of warm feelings, and who are more distinguished for zeal, than for sound knowledge.

The angels who kept not their first estate, must have a very great knowledge of human nature, and also of the operations of the church. With minds inconceivably more active than ours they must in nearly six thousand years have acquired vast treasures of knowledge. For this long period they have been continually opposing the church of God. The great enemy of men sits in council, when kings and their ministers deliberate on measures, which affect all over whom their authority extends. He moves them to engage in those terrible contests, which occasion the death of many valuable members of society—which clothe many families with mourning, and load the people with heavy burdens. He helps the poet to weave into his productions corrupt thoughts, makes the orator and historian popular, who extol the irreligious and revile the true friends of God. He can appear to be a zealous advocate for morality and religion, when he can in this way the better accomplish his purposes. He magnifies things, which are not of essential importance, to make the impression on the minds of many, that those, who are influenced by him,

are persons of uncommon piety. We may trace to him all those extremes in morality and religion, which are not according to the scriptures. Where revivals of religion are in progress he introduces fanaticism to bring them into disrepute. Those, whose zeal does not correspond with knowledge, are for a time highly praised till the consequences of their measures are seen.

To notice some particulars of the means he employs to obtain his object.

1. Our adversary the devil is a *liar*. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it.

No being in the universe can with so much boldness and such an appearance of friendship and sincerity tell a deliberate lie. He seldom directly contradicts a plain declaration of scripture, for in such case he could not be regarded. Where religion is respected and has influence he does not directly oppose it. But he perverts the scriptures, and in this way counteracts the influence of the truth. Various schemes have been devised to remove objections to the truth, overlooking the enmity of the heart, which is always most excited when the truth is most clearly exhibited. Remove all the objections to the truth which exist in the minds of the unregenerate, and they can need no radical change. Churches may be filled, but filled with the unrenewed. If any man be in Christ, said the apostle, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. Those measures which multiply converts, who experience no radical change, may for a time be approved; but when the results are fully known they are condemned.

2. Our adversary the devil is a *murderer*. He was a murderer, said our Savior, from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. He is proud, envious, jealous and revengeful. He cannot endure to see his fellow creatures, far inferior to himself in intellectual powers and knowledge, happy while he is miserable. He hates with the most deadly hatred God, who punishes him. The justice of his punishment makes it the more intolerable. That God should provide no Savior for the angels that sinned and send his Son to redeem rebellious men excites his enmity to the highest degree.

He indulges peculiar hatred toward Christ, because he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly triumphing over them. In the obedience and sufferings of Christ he has the clearest discoveries of the excellence of the divine character. As the gates of hell can never prevail against the true church, it is the policy of the adversary to produce divisions and thus make Christians unhappy and unsuccessful in their attempts to do good.

3. Our adversary the devil is a *calumniator*. This is the import of the name devil. By his false accusations he destroys the influence of Christians, or greatly diminishes it. He finds many ready to believe what they wish to be true. Christ himself was falsely accused and condemned. The adversary attributes *to selfish motives the most benevolent actions of Christians*. This was the charge Satan brought against Job. And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the

Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Now, if this counteracting influence were not constantly in operation, it is impossible to calculate how much good might be accomplished. Churches are declared to be the light of the world—and ministers in particular are the light of the church. Though their object is the salvation of those, committed to their charge; yet they hardly commence their labors before they meet with opposition in some form. The common charge against them is that they are influenced by worldly motives. There is a class of nominal Christians, who by a bitter, censorious, denunciatory spirit co-operate with the adversary.

4. It may be added, our adversary is *ever active* and *never weary*. When disappointed and confounded he is always ready to renew the contest. In the pursuit of the most distant objects his exertions continue so long as any prospect of success remains. This is manifested in his attempts to destroy those, who are most decidedly opposed to his interest. Those, whom he cannot deceive and lead astray, he labors to destroy. By the power of his influence many have suffered a martyr's death. The most pious are the objects of his peculiar hatred.

5. The works of our adversary the devil, though visible and easily known, are accomplished by an invisible agency. He never allows himself to be seen. If discovered and exposed, he changes his place and his mode of attack. He endeavors to make the impression that there is no such being—or that he is not concerned in what is attributed to him. It is hardly possible to enumerate all the works of the devil. He is the cause of domestic quarrels—divisions in socie-

ty—bloody and destructive wars—robbery—profanity—slander—murder and violations of the seventh commandment. Seldom a revival commences, which is not interrupted by the arts of the adversary. The attention of the serious is diverted from subjects of essential importance to subjects not essential. Their attention is not directed to worldly objects—here the adversary would not succeed, but to things, which pertain to religion. Some of the sharpest controversies, which have disturbed the church in different ages, have respected only outward ordinances.

So long as the attention of a congregation can be kept fixed on the great and essential truths of religion so long a revival commenced will continue. But as soon as a controversy springs up, which has reference only to outward ordinances, conversions cease to be effected. Nothing ought to be permitted to occupy the thoughts of Christians or awakened sinners, when the Holy Spirit is working, but the essential truths of Christianity. As the power of Christians depends much on their secret intercourse with God; so nothing should prevent them from faithfully maintaining it. Every Christian—especially the most pious, must confess that they have experienced peculiar trials in the performance of secret duties.

In revivals of religion Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and by imperfect representations of the truth induces many to indulge false hopes. Here he does great injury. Those who indulge a false hope are in a most dangerous state. They usually retain it till death. They rest on their past experience, and make no progress toward heaven. They are so fortified against the most faithful exhibi-

tions of the truth that they never seem to be moved. Some who indulge hopes in time of unusual excitement, soon fall away or become dead weights in the church. Now, as the human heart is naturally opposed to the character of God, it is by no means difficult to persuade the awakened sinner to lay hold of something, which may quiet his mind. The relief experienced is attended usually with great joy and peace, much greater than real converts experience, who are acquainted with the deceitfulness of their hearts.

II. Our duty and our safety require us to resist the devil.

I. In order to detect the artifices of the adversary, we must endeavor to ascertain the tendency of the opinions and measures recommended and must look at the remote as well as immediate consequences. Is the tendency to produce divisions, to counteract the influence of the most distinguishing truths? Is it to influence any to break their most solemn covenant engagements? Does it influence any to think more of things not essential to salvation, than of things which are essential? By such inquiries as these we may ascertain the truth.

The operations of the adversary are powerful—they affect the imagination and passions more than the operations of the Holy Spirit. A view of their danger greatly alarms, distresses, and even overpowers some, who have no sense of the injury they have done to God. All they desire is relief. And, as the mind cannot long endure a high degree of excitement; the quietude which necessarily follows is believed to be good evidence of conversion. As the Holy Spirit always operates with the truths, so the adversary al-

ways operates with error, and enlists the feelings of the unrenewed in its favor. Hence we find that the advocates of a defective system are popular with the impenitent. Their arguments appear to be powerful, because they are agreeable to the reasoning of the unrenewed. On the other hand, the most faithful preachers, because they declare the whole counsel of God, meet with repulsive feelings in the impenitent, because their hearts are full of objections to the distinguishing truths of Christianity. When the Holy Spirit operates on the mind of any one, a deep solemnity rests upon it—vast objects appear before it. The injury he has done to God is that, which troubles him. He thinks more of this than of his exposure to misery. He dwells on his guilt—his ingratitude—his love of the world—his disobedience to that law, which is holy and just and good. His mind is well balanced—his views are extensive, and he is bowed down with a weight of his guilt. His distress is too great to be expressed or to be relieved by a flood of tears. When a subject of grace he is calm and peaceful, obedient to all the commands of God and of a broken and contrite spirit. The true convert has a respect to all the truths and precepts of the gospel; but those who have indulged a false hope—though influenced by strong passions, may in some things manifest great zeal and may in other things be very deficient.

It is impossible to determine, what would become of the Christian, with the same assistance of the spirit he now has, were he without the volume of revelation. Many erroneous opinions, supported by plausible arguments, and agreeable to the remains of sin in

the heart, would be embraced—and many improper customs would be adopted. We can now search the scriptures and know what is taught us by the Holy Spirit; and must conclude that all theories, opinions and practices, which are condemned by the word of God are wrong and are from the wicked one.

2. We are exhorted to be sober—and to be vigilant.

To be sober is to have the mind well balanced by a thorough knowledge—a sincere love, and a firm belief of the truth. We must know our duty or we cannot, if disposed, perform it. We must love it or we cannot acceptably perform it—we must firmly believe that the object is lawful, important, and attainable or we shall not resolutely pursue it. This is always necessary, when a great and difficult work is to be performed, or when a powerful enemy is to be overcome. What officer is qualified to enter the field of battle, who has not a well governed mind, and who is not ready for every emergency? Because Peter lost his self possession by the influence of the tempter he denied his Master. He could, therefore, with great propriety exhort others to be sober. Paul, the most eminent of the apostles, who experienced a great variety of the most severe trials, used strong language in reference to this subject. Put on, he said, the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Vigilance is necessary to success in contending with subtil and able warriors. The neglect of a proper degree of watchfulness has ruined many an army, and occasioned the destruction of many a city. One object of the adversary is to persuade us that we are secure. It is when we feel secure that we are made captives. Some expose them-



selves to temptations to gratify a vain curiosity, and are caught in the snares of the wicked one before they are aware of it. They trust in their own strength and find by painful experience that it is but weakness. The Christian that can say *no*, with decision, when tempted to depart from the right way is soon free from danger and trouble. Steadfastness in the faith must result from a clear understanding of the truth and a sincere love of it. That faith, which is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, may be severely tried but cannot be eradicated. The more it is tried the more firmly it becomes established. Those, who are steadfast in the faith are not carried about by every wind of doctrine. They are unlike those, who are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They remain steadfast when others are led away by the error of the wicked.

3. The only weapon, by which Christians can resist the devil is the word of God. This is the weapon, by which when properly used Christians can overcome the tempter. This is the weapon Christ used, when tempted of the devil. However great the variety of opinions, which prevail, however learned the men, who defend them; they must all without the least hesitation be rejected, if found to be contrary to the word of God. A thorough knowledge of the word of God is our great security. And the plain and obvious meaning of the scriptures is the true meaning. Much of the perplexity many experience is occasioned by their ignorance of the scriptures.

Finally. If Christians, who have new natures and the teachings of the Holy Spirit to aid them, have such a severe struggle to maintain with the adversary

and evil spirits; how dreadful must be the condition of the unrenewed! They are slaves and they do not know it. The old serpent is coiling himself around them and drawing himself tighter and tighter. When the light of divine truth aided by the Holy Spirit breaks in upon their mind; they are alarmed and cry—men and brethren what must we do? What a scene of distress would pass before us; should the Holy Spirit accompany with his mighty power this discourse! The object of the tempter is to persuade anxious sinners that he is their friend—desirous of their happiness—that their feelings ought not to be wounded—that doctrines ought not to be preached, which do not appear to them reasonable, that they can become Christians any time, when they have leisure to attend to the subject of religion.

Evil spirits great in number, knowledge and power are leading sinners to perdition. Because they cooperate with their corrupt propensities they are not sensible of their danger. Think of this, ye who are impenitent, that you are slaves. This you are taught in the word of God by him too, who is your best friend—who gave his life to save you. Admit the truth and meditate upon it till you discover your danger. By receiving the truth you may resist the tempter.

By receiving more and more of the truth, you may make progress in driving evil spirits from your heart. Every truth you cordially receive will be a deadly weapon pointed at some evil spirit, that is strengthening some evil propensity. There is a way, which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Now is the time, sinner, to make your escape from

the bondage, in which you are held, infinitely more dreadful than that of the poor Africans. You have the sure word of God to show you the way—Christians ready to assist you—and the Holy Spirit to lead you to the kingdom of the free. Decide at once—with all your heart to become a follower of Christ, who will certainly prevail and make you a partaker with him of that inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE VI.



### DEATH BY ADAM AND LIFE BY CHRIST.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—  
1. COR. xv. 22.

It is a fact well known to every Christian, that the greater the advancement he makes in holiness, the more clearly he sees God in every event of his providence. When churches enjoy a refreshing season, God appears to be in the midst of them speaking to them by his servants; and every instance of conversion is viewed as one of his wonderful works.

And it is a fact that those, who have departed

farthest from God, are most atheistic in their reasonings and practice—most disposed to trust in their own knowledge and wisdom, power and goodness. They seldom trace effects, in the production of which human agency is concerned, to the purpose of God; but endeavor to account for all the phenomena they witness by reference to philosophical principles, derived from their knowledge of the laws of nature. The denial of a particular as well as a general providence proceeds from an atheistic spirit. Some, who occupy a place in the church of God, attribute to his power in the conversion of sinners as little as possible, and as much as possible to the perfection of human instrumentality. They persuade themselves, that by showing the sinner that his salvation depends on himself, they can make him more deeply feel his obligation to repent immediately, than by showing him that it depends on the will of God. They imagine that a denial of the doctrine of native depravity reflects honor upon the character of God and exhibits the guilt of the transgressor in the strongest light. But however unwilling we may be to attribute any thing wrong to God, and however anxious we may be to vindicate his character; yet we must view things as they are, not for a moment doubting that God is righteous in all his ways, whether we are able to understand them or not. Can we for a moment believe that God, who is infinite in all his attributes, would suffer one of his creatures, whom he can annihilate in an instant, to defeat his purposes, and change the plan adopted for their accomplishment? In the administration of the divine government, there are many things, which we do not now and which, perhaps, we never shall fully under-

stand. God is not under obligation to give us any account of his matters. Two very important facts are clearly made known in the text, which it is not difficult to prove from a great variety of passages of scripture; but which without the teaching of the Holy Spirit we cannot satisfactorily understand. These facts will be separately considered.

1. It is expressly asserted by the inspired writer that in Adam all die.

The fact that all die no one acquainted with the history of the human race can deny. That all die in Adam implies that all were in some sense viewed as connected with him and as one with him. There is a sense too in which they are all viewed as distinct subjects of the divine government, accountable for their own conduct, according to which they will be acquitted or condemned.

That all mankind have proceeded from Adam the scriptures assure us. As a confirmation of this testimony all, of whom we have any knowledge, are alike by nature, and when properly instructed feel condemned by the same law—need the same Savior—and when converted experience in every essential particular the same change of character. The omniscient God appears to view the whole human race as existing at the same time, so united as to constitute one family—having a common parent as the representative of the whole.

That God had a perfect right, when he made Adam to establish such a connexion between him and his posterity that the acts of the former should affect the latter as well as himself no one can question. This no one is disposed to deny except in one particular.

God had a perfect right to appoint Adam to be the representative of his family—their teacher priest and governor. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south: But God is the judge: he putteth down one and setteth up another. Has not God established such a connexion between parents and children as to make it the duty of the latter to submit to the former, and to make the acts of the former affect the latter? How can children prevent such connexions and relations? It is not asserted that the act of our first parents can become the act of every one of their posterity; so that as a fact they can be conscious of having eaten the forbidden fruit. But is it not as much our act as the act of parents is the act of their children—or as the act of a sovereign is the act of his subjects?

When war is declared by the constituted authorities of a nation, this is considered the act of the people—every one is considered an enemy, and his property, if taken, is deemed a lawful prize. So, when a treaty is ratified, the whole nation is bound to observe it. The scriptures certainly teach us that the act of our first parents, by which they ruined themselves, is in such sense ours, that its effects extend to us and to the whole human family. No one can with any propriety deny this, who admits the doctrine of native depravity, or the necessity of regeneration. If we come into the world depraved, or if we are depraved when we begin to be; how can we by any personal act of ours be the cause of it? We cannot act before we begin to exist. The depravity, therefore, with which we begin to be, must be traced to our federal head. It was the apostacy of our federal head, which

produced that change in his nature, by which he lost the image of God, and became depraved. As we derive our physical nature from our parents so we derive our moral nature from them.

2. The text assures us that all die in Adam.

Death is the penalty of the law. The wages of sin is death. As all die so all are sinners. By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned. The government of God would be defective, if the innocent were to suffer and die. Suffering and death can be no more extensive than sin. As infants die so it follows that they are depraved. Death is the inheritance of all the posterity of Adam, for all derive a depraved nature from him.

As Adam by his apostacy became an enemy of God, so all his posterity are by nature enemies of God. The carnal mind, said the apostle, is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Men in their natural state have no love of the service of God, and are unfit for the society of holy beings in heaven.

The posterity of Adam, when they enter the world, are not to be viewed merely as unfortunate beings, but as enemies of God. Though their enmity may not at first appear; yet we find that all mankind do sin and manifest an aversion to the holy character of God till renewed by the Holy Spirit. They do not suffer as innocent but as guilty persons. Though it may be difficult to conceive of that enmity to God, which is not in exercise; yet it is perhaps no more difficult to conceive of it in this case than in many

other cases. Who can conceive of that enmity, which exists in the heart of a murderer, while he is sleeping? The enemy of a person, who leaves his country for a number of years, may forget the object of his hatred, believing him to be dead; but his return may excite the enmity which had been so long dormant. Now, if as some suppose, there is nothing wrong back of action; what is that enmity, which is not in exercise for so long a time and which is awakened by a sight of its object?

3. There is another view of the subject, still more difficult to reconcile to the justice of God. The scriptures teach us that the unrenewed are dead in trespasses and sins—that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Now one of the consequences of that depravity, with which we begin to be is that blindness, which renders it impossible for the unrenewed to discern the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, or to discern the excellency of the divine character. But this blindness is no more excusable than that of a dishonest, revengeful, or intemperate person, who does not discover the deformity of his besetting sin. The blindness, we know, of the vicious is just in proportion to the strength of their vicious habits. So far is it from being excusable it is considered a proof of extreme depravity and guilt. No one will deny that they are under obligation immediately to repent and to break off from their ruinous habits. And no one, will deny that we are under obligation to love God with all our heart and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here the inquiry is naturally suggested, if mankind in their natural state are unable to discern the things



of the spirit; how can they be under obligation to do the will of God? or, how can God be righteous in condemning them for not doing what they are not able to do? How can they be under obligation to love an object, of which they can have no just conception?

The Pelagian maintains that men in their natural state are able to do all that is required of them, or that they could not be under obligation to do it. He denies the doctrine of native depravity and teaches that the posterity of Adam, when born, are as free from sin as he was when created. But had Adam been created with a depraved nature, such as that with which his posterity are born, how could God appear righteous in demanding of him, as the only ground of justification, perfect obedience to that law, which requires *holiness of heart* as well as of life? But Adam was created holy and with power to discern spiritual things and to do the will of God. His obligation, therefore, to do the will of God was perfect, and for disobedience he was justly condemned. His apostacy did not free him from his obligation to do the will of God, though it rendered it impossible to satisfy the demands of the divine law. By his apostacy his nature became depraved: and the consequence has been that all his posterity have come into the world with a depraved nature. This depravity is hereditary. Were it not so, how could God appear righteous in permitting infants to suffer and die? Were not infants depraved, with what propriety could they be baptized?

The obligation of the unrenewed to satisfy the demands of the divine law cannot be shown from any ability *they now have* to do what is required of them, but must be shown from their connexion with their

covenant head, who was created with full ability to do the will of God. This is the only true and scripture explanation of the subject. All other explanations are derogatory to the character of God. If all mankind are so born, that in all the appropriate circumstances of their being they will sin and only sin till renewed by the Holy Spirit; how can God appear righteous in requiring of them perfect obedience, unless we admit their connexion with their federal head, who was created holy and with full ability to satisfy the demands of the divine law?

4. Here it may be asked, are not sinners active in their conversion? It may be answered they are never more active than when subjects of the mighty operations of the Holy Spirit. Their activity is occasioned by a discovery of their guilt and danger. Their only desire is to escape the punishment to which they are exposed, and to obtain a good hope of future happiness. They do not love holiness and hate sin. Not one holy thought springs up in the unrenewed heart. Can it be then that the heart, which is enmity against God, is the cause of that love, which is the fulfilling of the divine law? Nothing can be farther from the truth than the supposition that the activity of the sinner arises from his desire of holiness. As conviction precedes conversion, the sinner by searching the scriptures may do much to extend this preparatory work.

5. The history of the world confirms the truth contained in the clause—in Adam all die. In all ages and in all countries mankind in their natural state have been found to be depraved and dead in trespasses and sins. Death is the inheritance of all.

The heathen, though ignorant of the written law, when favored with the instructions of Christian missionaries and subjects of the operations of the Holy Spirit, feel condemned for the violations of the moral law, which is written in their hearts. This affords a strong proof that they have all descended from the same common parents—are under obligation to keep the same law, and have been ruined by the apostacy of their federal head. Wherever Christian missionaries labor they find mankind in their natural state depraved—in need of the same Savior. When converted by the Spirit of God their characters are in every thing essential the same. Death, which is the wages of sin, is the common lot of all mankind. Wherefore, said the apostle, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Whether we are able to understand all the ways of God or not; it becomes us to receive the truths he has revealed and which are confirmed by innumerable facts.

II. The second clause of the text is sometimes incorrectly interpreted. The proper meaning of the text is this—as all the posterity of Adam die, so all *vitally united to Christ* shall be made alive. The connexion God established between Adam and his posterity involved the latter in his guilt and the consequences. So also the connexion between Christ and all true believers makes the latter partakers of his righteousness and joint heirs with him to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.

The connexion in the one case is hereditary—in the other it is by faith. The scriptures assure us that all, who believe shall be saved; but that all, who

believe not shall be damned. The chapter from which the text has been taken has particular reference to the resurrection of believers. Here it may be remarked, the connexion between Christ and believers is effected by the Holy Spirit. It cannot be dissolved without the second death of the Son of God. Because I live, said Christ to his disciples, ye shall live also. Believers, being vitally united to Christ, and being one with him, his righteousness, which is of infinite value, and spread over them and imputed to them, protects them from the wrath of God, and is the foundation of their justification and of their hope of life and glory. All their springs are in him, and their life is hid with Christ in God.

2. That faith, by which the connexion between the Christian and his Redeemer is perfected, is an exercise of a new heart. Regeneration prepares its subject to discover a loveliness in the character of Christ, which results in cordially receiving him in all his offices. No one, who comes to Christ by faith, will be rejected. Him that cometh unto me, he said, I will in no wise cast out. And no man, he also said, can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. Now we are no less dependent on the Holy Spirit for strength to come to Christ, than on the latter for righteousness to satisfy the demands of the divine law.

3. Hence it is natural to inquire, as the righteousness of Christ is of infinite value, why are so few of the human race saved? How can we reconcile this with his infinite benevolence? That but few of the descendants of Adam, compared with the whole number, have been saved is evident from the scriptures and

from a view of the conduct of men, as described by faithful historians. Enter ye in at the strait gate, said Christ, 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, which leadeth unto life, and *few there be that find it*. Here we have the testimony of one, who could not be deceived and who could have no motive to deceive any of the human family. Few exhibit the character, which is required of those, who expect to obtain heaven. Why the number is so small none can determine. Why hundreds of millions remain ignorant of the gospel, we know not. No real Christian, who has a correct view of his obligations to God for his distinguishing grace, will maintain that he has made himself to differ, or that he converted himself. Why God has chosen such persons as are the subjects of his grace, we know not. God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. For he saith to Moses—I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion, on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that showeth mercy. God is no respecter of persons. Salvation is freely offered to all on condition of repentance and faith, which are reasonable duties. Men pursue the way they choose. They are not compelled to sin. More than eighteen hundred years have rolled away since Christ commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It is true, the church has not done all she might have done. But when she has been most active, her activity was caused by the mighty operations of the Holy

Spirit. The fulfillment of the promises of God, depends not so much on the fidelity of his people as on Christ, the surety of the covenant of grace. Why God, the Father has not as yet given to his Son the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession—why he has not caused his own law to be more universally respected—and why he has not given the Holy Spirit in greater measure to his church, we know not. Since the relations sustain to their Creator is much closer than that which children sustain to their earthly parents; why, it is natural to inquire, since he is infinite in benevolence, and can by a word effect their salvation, does he suffer multitudes to perish? The work of redemption is his in a more important sense than it is ours. What can we do without him, and what can we not do with him? Though clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. When we meditate on his ways, we are ready to exclaim with the apostle, 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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or, who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him and through him and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever, Amen.

#### REFLECTIONS.

From the view which has been taken of the subjects considered, it is manifest that the government of the world extends to all events, and is in the hands of one

who can bring good out of evil and cause the wrath of man to praise him. It is not the fact, as some have asserted, that it is at our option, whether the kingdom of God come or not—or whether it come soon or not. Duty is ours, events are the Lord's. When he moves by his Spirit upon the minds of his people they move. They never lead. They are not more benevolent than God.

Christians may rejoice that the government of the world is in the hands of the best of all beings, and that the salvation of their fellow creatures depends on his mere pleasure. They are never more happy than when most submissive to his will, and when they can give up all their cares to him. How can Christians feel happy, if they feel that the conversion of their fellow creatures depends on them and find that all their efforts are ineffectual? But when they have discharged their duty, depending on God for success, they may enjoy peace of mind. At the great day we shall see that the temple God, now building of living stones will then be complete in all its parts, finished according to his original plan, and glorious in view of all intelligent beings.

2. The view taken of the subjects under consideration is suited to alarm the unrenewed and to encourage a spirit of prayer in the church of God. While a proper sense of dependence on God for converting grace alarms the sinner; it is a powerful motive to induce Christians to plead with God for the effusions of his Spirit. The situation of a sinner unconverted may be compared to that of a mariner, who has suffered shipwreck. Cut off from the possibility of helping himself, the longer he continues in this state the

greater is his distress. Nothing can be farther from the truth than to maintain that a view of our entire dependence on God is suited to produce a state of inaction. So long as the mariner imagines that he can help himself and make his escape he is not greatly troubled. The more clearly men see their entire dependence on God for salvation, the more they are alarmed. So long as they can persuade themselves that they can at any time repent and make sure of heaven they delay repentance. Great is their distress, when they feel their guilt, find themselves in the hands of an angry God and unable to satisfy the demands of justice. To him whom they have offended they must look for help. And with him there is forgiveness that he may be feared, and with him there is plenteous redemption. To the free, rich and sovereign grace of God Christians are wholly indebted for their hope of justification and salvation. This is the theme on which they delight ever to dwell.

They ought ever to feel that they cannot do too much to express their love to him, who has done so much for them. However great their privations and sufferings in this life they will be of but short continuance. Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.

Since the conversion of men depends not on the perfection of human instrumentality, but on the power of God, and since he has connected the most important results with the prayers and labors of his people, a fearful responsibility rests on them. When they are filled with all the fulness of God their prayers are answered. Unless fully convinced of their entire dependence on him how can they offer acceptable



prayer to God? The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, we are assured, availeth much. When God had made many precious promises to his ancient church he added—Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the Lord.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE VII.



### THE HEAVY LADEN.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—MATH. xi. 28.

The word of God may be compared to a perfect mirror, in which we see things as they are. In this particular it is an invaluable treasure. As we are partial in our judgments respecting ourselves; so we should never in our sinful state have a just view of our character and condition without an unerring standard and a faithful teacher.

In the volume of revelation we see what man is by

nature, the tendency of his conduct and whither he is going. We see also in the scriptures what God is, how his government is administered—how he feels toward those, who disobey his laws and make light of the gospel of his Son. Who can meditate on the sublime truths of revelation till time, when compared with eternity, appears to be but a point without noticing the amazing rapidity, with which the generations of men pass from the cradle to the grave? They enter the world ignorant of God and of the duties required of them—their powers are gradually unfolded, their choice of occupation is made—their character is formed, and they hasten to the places for which they are fitted, where they will praise and enjoy God forever, or forever blaspheme his name and suffer his wrath. As they pass over the stage of life, where the light of the gospel is enjoyed, Christ meets them—looks upon them with pity, offers to save them, and to guide them to heaven. Few only accept the offer—leave the broad way, and join themselves to his followers. They receive in this world an earnest of the happiness they will forever enjoy.

In my text we now discover Christ upon the stage—over which we are rapidly passing. He is here by his Spirit. Of this we are assured by his word. His words are so simple, that children may understand them. They cheer the hearts of his real friends and disturb the consciences of unbelievers. The indifference and stupidity of some arise from their neglect of the means used for their salvation. But there can be no neutrality. He that is not for me, said Christ, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

Think, my hearers, of the long journey the Son of God has performed with a view to offer you salvation. From the depths and darkness of infinity he has come to this world, not to execute vengeance on his Father's enemies, but to suffer and die for their redemption. Think what a price has been paid to save you from ruin. The glory of God in your salvation is the object he has in view. If we admire the philanthropy of the celebrated Howard, who visited the prisons of Europe for the purpose of diminishing the temporal sufferings of his fellow-creatures, and who died among strangers, when engaged in this work; how much more ought we to love and admire the name of him; who left the most delightful place in the universe to explore this dark rebellious province of his Father's empire, where men are bound with stronger fetters than those of iron, and not merely to diminish our temporal sufferings; but actually to effect our deliverance from the bondage of sin, and from the wrath of God—and who to accomplish all this took the sinner's place and suffered the death of the cross!

This is the person, my hearers, who is now addressing you. He looks upon you with pity, desirous of your salvation. Listen, I pray you, to his words, which are full of grace and truth, and which express the deep feelings of his heart. Come unto me, he says, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

In the following discourse I shall consider.

I. The character and condition of the persons addressed, and

II. The import of the invitation given them;

III. The motives, which should influence them to accept it.

Our Lord might have in view in the text three classes of persons—the disappointed, afflicted and oppressed men of the world—awakened sinners—and mourning Christians.

Among men of the world we find none, who are satisfied with their condition. They seek happiness where it cannot be found. Many are the cares, perplexities, afflictions and troubles of the rich. The poor envy them—the dishonest endeavor to defraud them. Their splendid habitations, costly apparel, and rich viands afford them no security against the most painful and fatal diseases. Those, whom worldly men most delight to honor, are, perhaps, among the most unhappy. Few, if any, who occupy the highest stations, are governed by the principles of religion. Men of piety are not the favorites of any worldly party. The struggle for power is full of anxiety. The object is not usually obtained without the sacrifice of the conscience. Thousands of lives and millions of money may be sacrificed to gratify the pride of a king, or the chief magistrate of a nation. The pleasure he experiences cannot be pure. Can it be wholly unlike that of the wicked one, when he gains a triumph?

Many are the sufferings of the poor—and many are the disappointments and afflictions of the present state. But worldly men believe that the world, if they can obtain what they seek, can make them happy. They look no where else for happiness, though they see no one satisfied with his condition. The passions which govern them keep the world in a state of perpetual agitation. The wicked are like the troubled

sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The way of transgressors is hard. All the impenitent are slaves, the slaves of the most cruel of all tyrants. Their consciences are constantly at war with their unsanctified feelings. When they have tasted of earthly pleasures, they have still found remaining a void the world cannot fill. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities all is vanity. Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The whole, he said, need not a physician but they that are sick. To all such as I have mentioned, though invisible, he is now speaking.

Awakened sinners form another class of persons, whom Christ in the words of the text is addressing. When they are roused from the slumbers of stupidity—become conscious of their guilt, and have an affecting view of their danger they hope to obtain relief by the deeds of the law. As the moral law is written in the hearts of all men, and is approved by an enlightened conscience, so a sense of justice moves them to attempt the discharge of the debt they owe to God. They continue to labor and to increase their efforts till they find that there is no help in themselves—that the fountain is impure, from which all their exercises proceed—and that their best performances are unholy. In the most important sense all the unrenewed—are poor, blind, without covering—hungry, thirsty, guilty, condemned, and every moment exposed to death. To them Christ speaks—assures them that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

It is the will of God that men should feel their

guilt, and be convinced that there is no help in themselves before they are made the partakers of divine grace. They must feel their need of just such a Savior as is provided for them before they can receive him. They sometimes labor for a long time before they are fully convinced that there is no help in themselves and that they cannot obtain relief by their own works.

So long as the awakened sinner is confident that by the deeds of the law he can obtain peace, his distress is not intolerable. But when convinced that all his efforts to save himself, produced merely by selfish considerations, only plunge him deeper and deeper in guilt, his courage fails him, his strength becomes weakness and he falls justly condemned before him, who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. His guilt is a heavy burden, and it seems to him that he is sinking into the abyss of woe. What must I do, he cries, when he finds that not a word, nor an action, nor a thought can be acceptable to God? When fully satisfied that there is no help in himself and his thoughts are directed to Christ; the sin of unbelief humbles him in the dust. It rises before him like a black and threatening cloud, ready to burst upon him and destroy him. It is a discovery of the injury he has done to Christ, which, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, breaks his hard heart and produces true repentance.

No one will or can come to Christ till cut off from dependence on his own works—internal as well as external. The character of our outward conduct depends on the feelings of our heart. Submission to Christ, or trust in him always presupposes complete renunciation of all dependence on self. For I through the law, said the apostle, am dead to the law, that I

might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Gal. ii. 19-21.)

Those, to whom the invitation of the text is welcome are not the self-righteous, but such as are satisfied that their efforts are of no avail, or that they are justly condemned. It finds them so far as respects their own efforts in a state of despondency. And no one, I am persuaded, is fully convinced that there is no help in himself till he has made many unsuccessful efforts to obtain peace.

The persons addressed in the text are not more affected with a view of their exposure to punishment, than with the sense of the baseness of their conduct. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear? A man may lose all his property and his friends—he may meet death and his proud spirit may remain unbroken. But the complete ruin of his character is too great an evil to be endured. What can be more intolerable than to be despised by one's self? The word and Spirit of God in preparing the sinner to accept of the invitation of Christ give him this view of himself. As all his refuges of lies are swept away—as he finds that he has without any cause or excuse injured God—that his obligations to love and obey him are infinitely great, so he cannot but condemn himself and view himself as one of the vilest of sinners. He is sorrowful, but

his sorrow worketh death. Every truth he hears is like an arrow, which pierces his heart.

Not unfrequently the sinner, when fully convinced of his guilt, for a time thinks that there is no mercy for him. Had he injured a fellow creature, he could have given his property or even his life to satisfy justice and obtain peace beyond the grave. Time appears to be short and the loss of earthly good and of his life appears to be unworthy of being named, compared with the loss of heaven and of his own soul. What have I done? he cries. Against God the best of all beings I have sinned! How can I satisfy the claims of justice? O how I have resisted the Holy Spirit—sent to shew me the way of life—and to deliver me from the power of sin! Can God pardon such a sinner? Is there any one able to restore me to the favor of God? The sinner thus sensible of his guilt is prepared to listen to the invitation of him, who is able to save the very chief of sinners.

Many are the dark hours of the Christian. When the objects and scenes of the world have drawn away his thoughts and affections from God; a review of his life makes him doubt the sincerity of his professions. The inquiry is suggested to his mind, can a Christian so far depart from God, and be so remiss in the performance of duty? He feels condemned—he condemns himself—yea even loathes himself on account of his ingratitude. He is grieved and his hard heart becomes tender. How descriptive of his feelings the words of the Psalmist! Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who shall



stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. Come unto me, is the invitation of Christ to all, who are grieved on account of their sins.

II. The import of the invitation given them, whom Christ addressed in the text.

If there be any present, whose character and condition I have described, to them Christ is now speaking. Behold him, heavy laden sinner. He is near, though you see him not. He is influenced by nothing good he discovers in any of the unregenerate. Your guilt and unhappy condition move the tender feelings of his heart.

The first object of the Savior is to direct the attention of sinners to one, who is mighty to save them. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to the Father through faith in him. There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. It is of immense importance that those, who are in distress should be directed to a proper object. Those cannot in the most important sense look to Christ for justification, who deny his divinity and view him as a mere creature. Some persuade themselves that it is sufficient to submit to God, a being of infinite attributes, whom they cannot successfully resist. But it is the cross of Christ, which humbles the pride of the human heart. Christ encourages none to hope for salvation, who are not sensible of their guilt and who are not disposed to come to him for righteousness. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

The invitation of Christ is sincere. It expresses

the deep feelings of his heart. He has by his sufferings given the most decisive proofs of this. You cannot direct your thoughts to his cross and have any doubts of his sincerity. You may, if you will, this day come to him and be saved. *He is no respecter of persons.*

The offer of life is made to the low as well as to the high—to the poor as well as to the rich—to the illiterate as well as to learned—to the Gentile as well as to the Jew. None are excluded from heaven on account of their condition in life.

The invitation is from the Son of God—the most distinguished person, that ever appeared on earth. Here we have an affecting view of his love and compassion. It may seem to the sinner, sensible of his guilt hardly possible that he should be noticed by a person of *such dignity*. It is indeed wonderful. Greatly aggravated must be the guilt of those, who treat him with disrespect.

Christ offers to do great things for the sinner—what no other person can do. He offers, not only to deliver him from the fear of future misery and to give him a hope of future happiness; but to deliver him from the bondage and shame of sin and to make him more honorable in the view of holy beings than he would have been had he never sinned. He offers, sinner, to wash out every stain in his own blood and to clothe you with a perfect and glorious righteousness. He offers to restore you to the friendship of his Father—to adopt you into his family—and to make you an heir of God and a joint heir with him to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.

The invitation of Christ can benefit none, who do

not accept it. He does not offer to save any in their sins. To accept the invitation of Christ is to depend on him for deliverance, not only from deserved punishment, but from sin. Looking implies a knowledge of his character—love of that law, which he magnified and made honorable, and humble trust in him for salvation. In coming to Christ there must be no reserve; he must be received in all his offices of prophet, priest and king. This is a great transaction. It is for eternity. It requires thought and knowledge. It must be perfectly voluntary. It must result from such enlarged and consistent views of the divine character and of the essential truths of the gospel, that trials however severe shall not exhibit the character of God in any new light. Many have entered the church with but partial views of the divine character; and when his whole character has been exhibited by faithful preachers, they have been offended. We see in Christ the true image of God. He is the brightness of his Father's glory and the exact image of his person. Loving and honoring him is loving and honoring his Father. In a word, coming to Christ is understandingly and without reserve giving ourselves up to him for time and for eternity.

III. The motives, which should influence sinners to come to Christ, or to accept the invitation in the text.

The chief motives should not be deliverance from misery and the enjoyment of happiness. The impression is often made on the minds of those, who hear the gospel that their happiness is the chief object God has in view. This is not the fact. His own glory is the ultimate end of all his works. When he calls any to be saints, it is that they may worship and praise

him. They are but instruments in his hands for the accomplishment of his purposes.

The sinner when he has a proper view of his guilt, feels that he has injured God. Christ has furnished him with the means of satisfying divine justice. A sense of justice and an affecting view of the great things done for him, to enable him to make satisfaction, move him to accept the invitation of Christ. Those, who see the justice of God in their condemnation must feel their obligation to return to him through faith in him, who is the end of the law for righteousness. To be restored to the friendship of God, the most excellent of all beings—to be at peace with him—to be adopted into his family, and to be in covenant with him must be desired by every sinner, who has a proper view of his demerit.

In Christ there is an infinite fulness of grace to enable us to discharge the duties, we owe to God and to our fellow men. Without him we can do nothing acceptable to our offended Sovereign. God loves all, who love his Son. All, who come to Christ have his spirit, which is a spirit of obedience. To be delivered from sin should be the desire of every one in coming to Christ. The promise in the text has special reference to this—to those, to whom sin is a burden. The rest promised is not a state of inaction; but deliverance from the burden of sin, that rest, which results from the commencement of a holy life. Who can describe the inward conflict occasioned by unholy feelings, condemned by an awakened conscience? The conscience has power to excite them but not to subdue them. The awakened sinner attempts to break the strong cords, which hold him, but he finds

himself unable to accomplish the work. It is Christ, who alone can deliver those that are bound.

He is willing to bear the burden of our sins and to give us peace. The excellency of his character and the honorable nature of his service should make us desirous of becoming his disciples. He is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. All his works prove him to be the friend, not of sin, but of sinners. One argument he uses to induce sinners to come to him is thus expressed—for I am meek and lowly. We may venture to approach him—assured that he will not frown upon us and treat us with contempt. Him that cometh unto me, he said, I will in no wise cast out. All who ever have come to him have found his word to be true. Indeed they are ready to acknowledge that the half was never told them. We have to this fact the testimony of all true Christians. His yoke is easy and his burden light. Love of his character and of his service makes it a delight to obey his commands. The more intense our love of his character the greater is our delight in his service.

I cannot close without exposing the ingratitude, folly and wickedness of those, who refuse to come to Christ. Has God so loved the world as to give his dearly beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life; and will any be so ungrateful, so foolish and so wicked as to refuse to come to him? Ingratitude is a hateful sin. What folly, when the sinner has an opportunity to obtain life without money and without price, to neglect it?

How must God the Father feel toward those, who reject his only begotten Son? Those, who do not in this life feel sin to be a burden and come to Christ for

deliverance will hereafter find it to be a burden, which will rest on them forever—and such a burden as will sink them lower and lower in the abyss of woe. Now, sinner, you may be delivered. Be persuaded, I pray you, to accept the invitation of Christ this day given you. And may God add his blessing to the word you have heard.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE VIII.



### DEPENDENCE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS ON GOD FOR SUCCESS.

And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing ; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done they enclosed a great multitude of fishes and their net brake.—LUKE v. 5, 6.

The important and sublime doctrines, which Jesus inculcated and the astonishing miracles he wrought, produced a general belief that no subject was too difficult for him to explain and no work too great for him to accomplish. Wherever he went his fame brought together multitudes. Some came to hear him preach, others to be cured of their diseases. His ap-

proach to any place made a solemn impression on the minds of those, who expected to behold his mighty deeds, or to listen to his heavenly instruction. Their thoughts of him were serious. No one could indulge a spirit of levity in his presence. Various were the motives, which actuated the people who followed him.

While Jesus continued to reside at Capernaum, and when at a certain time, doubtless for the purpose of meditation, he was walking on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret (called also the sea of Galilee and the sea of Tiberias) it came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake and saw two ships (such as we call boats) standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He was perfectly acquainted with their situation and knew how unsuccessful they had been in their attempts to take fish, on which their families depended for support. Though willing and ready to supply their wants, yet before he did this he chose to prepare their minds by a suitable discourse for the reception of the favor he was about to bestow on them. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land, and he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. The multitudes that followed him were collected on the banks of the lake and a fishing boat was the pulpit the Son of God was not ashamed to occupy. It was, probably, a little harbor where Simon's boat was moored, when Jesus was addressing the multitude. They might be before him and on each side of him. There must have been something wild and solemn in the scene, passing before them. Precipitous hills probably

surrounded the congregation except where the waves of the sea were breaking upon the shore. All these circumstances conspired to increase the effect produced by the preaching of the wonder-working Jesus.

Now when he left speaking, Jesus said unto Simon, launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught. Had not the mind of Simon by the discourse he had just heard been filled with exalted thoughts of the power of his Lord, and abasing views of himself; we can hardly suppose that he would without some hesitation have obeyed his command. He could not, however, help expressing his surprise when encouraged to expect success after toiling all night and taking nothing. It seemed too much for him to expect an abundant supply for himself and his companions, when the night was past, the most favorable time for taking fish. If unsuccessful during the night, he had much less reason to expect success during the day. He had exercised all his powers and left nothing undone, which might in any way aid him in the accomplishment of his object. Cut off completely from all dependence on his own knowledge, and wisdom, and deeply affected with a view of the fulness there is in God, nothing appeared too great for him to expect from Him, when he could rely on His word. We cannot suppose that Peter was never before this time sensible of his dependence on God, but he was never before so fully convinced of his insufficiency—never before so clearly saw that none but God could supply his wants and save his family from perishing with hunger.

When Jesus commanded him to let down his nets for a draught this was his reply. Master, we have



toiled all night and have taken nothing, nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net. The simple word of Jesus and not his own skill is now the foundation of his hope. The faith of Peter in this instance resembles that of the patriarch Abraham, who against hope believed in hope, and who on this account was called the father of believers. No sooner had Simon, depending entirely on the word of Jesus, let down his net, than he enclosed a great multitude of fishes. His unexpected success did not lead him to glory in what he had done, but gave him such a view of the goodness of God and of his own unworthiness as overpowered him. He fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes they had taken. The light of the glory of God's goodness gave Simon a most affecting view of his own unworthiness. How unlike was he to those, who attribute their success to the peculiar measures adopted by them!

The miracle, which is the subject of this discourse, was designed to prepare Simon and his companions for the great and arduous work of the ministry. Christ knew that they would sometimes meet with great discouragements and not on account of any defect in their ministry. It was his pleasure to prepare them for such times. And it was his will to make the impression on their minds that the conversion of sinners can be effected only by the power of God. The miracle, by which Simon and his companions, were so abundantly supplied with fish, illustrated the principles, by which Christians and Christian ministers should be governed in all countries and in all ages.

The doctrine taught in the text is the following:—The success of the most faithful ministry depends on the mighty power of God.

Few think, reason, and act correctly on this subject. Some do not sufficiently value human instrumentality. They are not anxious to render it as perfect as possible, though they feel this to be of great importance in the pursuit of any temporal object. Others rely upon it too much, not feeling as deeply as they ought their dependence on God. The former are ready to acknowledge their dependence on God, and on this ground excuse their neglect of plain duties. They are like a man, who is unable to perform a piece of work alone, and who, when a friend offers to assist will not do that, without which it cannot or will not be accomplished. Had not Peter launched out into the deep and let down his nets for a draught, according to the directions of his Master, he would have taken no fish and his family might have perished. The fact that God works is the reason why we should work and not the reason why we should not work.

Thus Paul understood the subject, when he said to the church at Philippi—Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

The other class of persons, already noticed, depend more on their own wisdom and skill than on the power of God. When unsuccessful they attribute this to some defect in the use of the means employed for the conversion of sinners, which defect they persuade themselves may be corrected. When they overlook in a very important sense their dependence on the mere pleasure of God, he in infinite wisdom withdraws

from them his Spirit that they may look to him alone for help. It is extremely difficult to feel our dependence on God and at the same time to feel the necessity of employing in the best possible manner all our powers for the accomplishment of the object of our pursuit. Nothing, however, can be more unreasonable than to excuse our inactivity on the ground that we cannot effect any thing without God. It is atheistic to depend on ourselves without any acknowledgement of God in all our ways. In all our pursuits the accomplishment of any object requires the use of appropriate means: Such is the tenor of the word of God,—such is the course of divine providence, and such is the structure of our own minds, that we cannot persuade ourselves that we shall obtain any object we ardently desire without such exertions, as correspond with its nature. As the present is an age of great activity, Christians are not so much disposed to deny the necessity of efforts, as to deny in a proper sense their dependence on God. This is the error, which the text is suited to correct.

There are seasons, when success in an enterprise, is followed by the use of appropriate means. But there are also seasons when the same means do not produce the same results. No doubt Simon had many times gone out in his boat on the sea of Galilee and returned with a supply of fish for his family. The uniformity of his success perhaps made him forget God and his own unworthiness, and rely too much on his own efforts. Jesus well knew that faithful preachers would sometimes labor for a long time without witnessing the conversion of their hearers: and amid painful discouragements. He knew too that

they would occasionally suffer persecution. He knew that there would be times, when, cut off from all other sources of consolation, they could depend only on the word of God. It was necessary that those, who were to be apostles, should be weaned from all dependence on themselves, and be led to trust in him, who alone can renew the hearts of men. Means the most appropriate, when used in the best possible manner, without the co-operation of the Holy Spirit are ineffectual. God has established a general law by which ends are connected with appropriate means. Were not this the fact we should not be able to accomplish any thing, because we should not know what to do, in order to obtain any object of our pursuit, and we could not be condemned for not using means of which we have no knowledge. But, since Christians in this imperfect state are inclined to trust too much in their own wisdom and power, were they always to experience success corresponding with their labors they would lose sight of the sovereignty of God and pride would reign in their hearts. God in preparing his people not only for the enjoyments of heaven, but for the reception of blessings in this world withdraws from them at times his Spirit that they may be sensible of their weakness and their unworthiness. From a view of the history of the true church it appears to be the plan, which God has adopted, to suspend from time to time the converting operations of his Spirit, giving his churches seed time and harvest—and summer, and winter, and cold, and heat. Were his people more holy this would be less necessary. As the church increases in holiness the operations of the Spirit will be less frequently suspended, and be more deeply felt. We

have no reason to expect that revivals of religion will be universal and perpetual till the commencement of the millenium, or till the churches are prepared for such rich blessings by advancement in holiness. Some of the most faithful missionaries have labored in some places for a long time before they have experienced a revival of religion. The history of the church furnishes very many facts of this kind. But it is believed that the pious do not usually labor so long as formerly without witnessing important results. Success usually attends the faithful exhibition of the doctrines peculiar to Christianity. In very many discourses Christ and the Holy Spirit are not made sufficiently prominent. When men, even good men, because highly favored are inclined to attribute their success to the peculiar measures adopted by them God confounds them before the world. He will not give his glory to another, or allow any one to receive with impunity that praise, which belongs to him.

In the administration of his government it is his pleasure that his whole character should be exhibited. When a particular church has been favored for several years and been distinguished from other churches by divine blessings; they may secretly believe that they are better than other Christians, have done more for God than others, and may thank him that they are not as his other professed friends. God may in faithfulness withdraw his Spirit in order to direct their thoughts to him. It cannot be doubted that the disappointment of Simon, who toiled all night without success was occasioned by a special providence of God, and was one means of preparing him for a bright view of the displays of Almighty power and bound-

less liberality. We never have such a clear view of our own vileness and weakness as when our very best performances appear to be of no avail. It is deep self-abasement, which prepares churches and individuals for visits of the Holy Spirit.

Should we carefully examine our motives of action we should be astonished to find how selfish we are in our desires of the conversion of sinners. Too seldom are we influenced by a disinterested love of souls and a sincere regard to the glory of God. We may desire our friends to escape misery and become happy—or we may desire the church with which we are connected to become large, powerful, and of great influence. The methods adopted to prepare churches for witnessing the displays of divine grace are different, and must be accommodated to their circumstances. The chief object should be, I am persuaded, to strip them of all trust in themselves and to lead them to God, by whose power the heart must be renewed.

When Simon was cut off from dependence on himself his hope rested on the word of the wonder-working Jesus. When his faith was thus purified and he was influenced by it to act, he soon obtained the object of his pursuit. It is the pleasure of God before he sends his Spirit to revive his work in any church to purify their faith and every grace, to wean them from the world and from themselves and to bring them near to him. He would have them clearly see his hand, when he blesses them. Does it not, brethren, add very much in your estimation to the value of a favor to know that it comes from an exalted person and is an expression of his love? When Christians are disposed to trust too much in themselves, and rely too

much on the measures they have adopted ; they may multiply their efforts without accomplishing the object of their pursuit. The more perfect the system of means, adopted by any church, which proves unsuccessful ; the more completely are they cut off from all dependence on themselves, and the more sensibly they feel their dependence on God.

The preaching of the word is the means, which God has appointed for the conversion of sinners. The object of every church should be to persuade men to be reconciled to the character of God. The more they meditate on the worth of the soul, and on the great things which have been done for the redemption of men, the more they are affected and the more they are willing to labor for the conversion of sinners. But should all the most pious, and learned and eloquent men on earth, and I may add should Gabriel himself attempt to effect the salvation of one soul, nothing could be done without the special operations of the Holy Spirit. It is the will of God that we understand and feel this. And this is the point to which we are sometimes brought before we obtain what we seek. When faithful ministers, anxious to experience a refreshing season, have left nothing undone, which they are able to do, then they look to God, who alone can make his word effectual to the salvation of men.

Can we doubt that, when churches with deep self-abasement offer the prayer of faith, which rests on the mere word of God, and which moves them to act vigorously, they will soon witness the displays of God's grace ? That faith, which occasions inactivity or cold insensibility cannot be of the right kind. It was when the Hebrews, on the margin of the red-sea

saw no way of deliverance except by the interposition of God that he did actually appear for them. They were commanded to go forward and could look only to God for a way of escape. They might have said, the Egyptians are behind us—mountains are on the right hand and on the left, and the sea is before us, nevertheless at thy word we will advance. The result was, that as soon as they commenced their march, relying on the simple word of God, the sea was divided and they found a safe passage through the deep. How often, when Christians seem to be in a state of despondency, having tried every suitable method for the accomplishment of their object, and directing their thoughts to God alone; how often in their extremity has God displayed his power for their relief? Their discouragement, if examined, will be found to be a discovery of their own insufficiency. This leads them to rely on the inexhaustible fulness there is in God.

There is, perhaps, no time, when believers and their devotions are more spiritual and acceptable than when every thing they attempt to do proves inefficacious. Such disappointments make them lose confidence in their own wisdom, power and goodness. They draw from them the acknowledgement that God alone can renew the heart of sinners, and that all the glory belongs to him. The purest faith in God is connected with the most earnest desire of the advancement of his kingdom. Those, who love the souls of men experience increased solicitude for their salvation, when they find their exertions unavailing. Their solicitude is strengthened when they see one after another dropping into the grave unfit to meet their God. Churches



never more earnestly cry to God than when convinced that their strength is but weakness and their wisdom but folly : and their prayers are never more acceptable.

How solemn and affecting is the prayer of the believer, when all the powers of his soul are moved, and his very heart speaks ! Then it is that his plea prevails with God—then it is that the breath of prayer overcomes the most formidable enemies. Churches and individual Christians from time to time experience such seasons as resemble in some respects the season of their conversion. As deep repentance is always followed by communications of divine grace to individual believers, so it is with churches. When they are disposed to abase themselves before God ; then he reveals to them his goodness and blesses them with his Spirit.

#### REFLECTIONS.

Churches are not in a state of preparation to receive special blessings, when preachers are disposed to excuse themselves and to criminate their brethren, and when the latter are disposed to excuse themselves and to criminate those, who preach the word. A spirit of fault-finding is always an indication of a bad state of feeling in a church. Those, generally, who are most disposed to censure others are most disposed to excuse themselves. They can see a mote in a brother's eye, while, perhaps, there is a beam in their own eye. But when professing Christians instead of censuring one another—have a deep sense of their own unworthiness—mourn over their own imperfections and the hidings of God's face ; then they look for a blessing near. Before the commencement

of a revival of God's work there is usually a solemn stillness—every one is willing to hear for himself and to receive reproof—every Christian sees much in himself to condemn and fears that he may be the one, who is most faulty. Who can witness such a state of things without the confident expectation of the return of the Spirit? If revivals of religion are granted in answer to prayer they are granted in answer to the prayers of those, who think more of their own faults than of the faults of others. It is the prayer of those, who think others better than themselves that God hears and delights to answer.

2. Churches are not in a state of preparation to witness the displays of God's power in the conversion of sinners, when instead of waiting on him in fervent prayer, they hope to accomplish their object by some improvement in the means used. Some persuade themselves that revivals of religion may be produced by human efforts—by the frequency of their meetings for prayer and religious worship. What time have those for meditation and secret intercourse with God, who are absent from their families and their closets almost every night in the week? And how tasteless are the public performances, which have not the unction of the Spirit. It is impossible to keep near to God without the diligent performance of those secret duties, which are known only to him and to ourselves. That deep state of self-abasement—simple trust in God—humble waiting on him, which precedes the most interesting revivals, seldom continues long after large accessions are made to the church. If we suffer our thoughts to be diverted from God, and become

proud of our success; we may expect that his spirit will be grieved away.

Finally. Should the inquiries now be made, what is our present state—what are our defects—what must we do? it would, perhaps, be difficult to give a satisfactory answer. It is probable, that some have such a perverted view of their dependence on God as to occasion the neglect of those duties the performance of which is intimately connected with the conversion of sinners. They are not aware that revivals of religion are granted in answer to prayers offered to God, when there is no religious excitement.

Those prayers, which are offered to God, when the prospects of Christians are most gloomy, are doubtless more acceptable than those offered when they appear to be most cheerful and happy. Some imagine, if all others were as much engaged as themselves, and would do as they would have them the showers of divine grace would immediately descend. Few are willing to condemn themselves.

What then, you may inquire, must be done?

The first thing to be done by Christians is to examine their own hearts, with great care and impartiality. Instead of searching for excuses for their defects they should take God's part against themselves. To aid them in the accomplishment of this necessary work preachers should often direct their thoughts to the operations of their own minds, and give them clear views of the essentials of the Christian character, distinguishing them from things not essential. Nothing alarms the unrenewed so much as those discourses, which most severely try the hearts of professed believers. They reason thus, if such things and so many

things are essential to the Christian character ; surely we are not Christians and are still under the condemning sentence of God's law. Solemn addresses to the church often have produced deeper impressions on the unrenewed than direct addresses to them. The manner, in which the latter are often addressed, produces repulsive feelings, and strong opposition. When Christ invited the weary and heavy laden to come to him, one argument which he used was the following— for I am meek and lowly. They might come to him without expecting to be treated with contempt, but with assurances of manifestations of love.

Seek places of retirement, I pray you, where you can without interruption review your life since you indulged a hope of salvation—and compare it with the word of God. Determine to give yourselves no rest till you find Christ reigning in your own hearts. Some seek God without before they seek him within. But how can any sincerely desire to see the glory of God in the sanctuary, unless they first find him in their own hearts? Be persuaded of this, as soon as you experience a refreshing season in your own hearts; you may expect to witness the displays of God's grace in his house—in the church and in the congregation. Could I persuade you to resolve that you will give yourselves no rest till you feel the power of divine grace in your hearts; I should expect soon to hear of the triumphs of Redeeming love in the midst of you.— Amen.

## DISCOURSE IX.



### A BROKEN SPIRIT, A BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEART.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—PSALM li. 17.

Such are the capacities of the human soul that the worship of God is essential to its highest happiness. A dependent being must look to one who is independent, not only for protection but for the supply of his numerous wants. An atheistic state of mind must be a state of darkness and wretchedness. Had man, created perfectly holy, never sinned, his submission to the will of God would have been without reserve, his obedience would have been constant, and his offerings the expressions of gratitude and love.

It seems to be the dictate of conscious guilt, connected as it always is with fearful apprehensions of evil, that something must be done to restore transgressors to the favor of God. Repentance, which is only a return to those duties, which would have been indispensable, had we never sinned, it must be evident to every man of reflection, can make no amends for past offences.

That mankind might have a view of the method, devised by infinite wisdom and adopted by infinite benevolence, by which God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, sacrifices were in the earliest ages of the world instituted. Though numerous and burdensome under the former dispensation, yet, except in times of declension, they were cheerfully and punctually offered by the professed friends of God. It may also be remarked, it was thought so reasonable to offer sacrifices to God, or the gods worshipped, in order to obtain deliverance from evils actually experienced, or apprehended, that all nations adopted the practice. To offer many and very costly sacrifices could not, therefore, be considered any proof of real piety, unless we admit that all mankind were the friends of the true God.

The psalmist seemed to have a clear discernment of the difference between that worship, which is spiritual, and which proceeds from right feelings of heart, and that which consists in the observance of external rites. Many were willing to worship God outwardly, who were not at heart his true friends. It has been found difficult in every age to persuade men to worship God in spirit and in truth. Selfdenial, which is one of the essentials of true piety, is the last thing to which they can be induced to submit. Great zeal may be manifested in the observance of religious institutions, when the heart is unmoved and unsanctified. Men are willing to be religious, if they can have a religion which is agreeable to their natural feelings.

If what passes for religion in the world were carefully examined by the light of revelation, and if the wheat were separated from the chaff; we should be

surprised to find so little of the former and so much of the latter. Without some motive, or stimulus which is not holy, few are disposed to maintain the worship of God with vigor. Religion, when stript of every thing not essential to it has no charms for those, who have not been born of the Holy Spirit. But, if our gospel be hid, said the apostle, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

As we must one day be judged by him that searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men; it is of immense importance that we carefully and impartially examine the foundation of our hope, and that we rest satisfied with nothing short of clear scripture evidence of its soundness. If any error have been embraced, it may now be corrected.

O Lord, said the psalmist, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

To explain and enforce the duty contained in the text is the design of the following discourse.

1. It has already been observed that there has been a disposition in all nations to offer expensive sacrifices to the god, or the gods worshipped. There has been a willingness to submit to great mortifications and privations to quiet a troubled conscience. These facts are noticed, where the light of revelation is not enjoyed. They are no evidence of a right state of heart.

In Christian countries, when any are excited and roused from the slumbers of stupidity by the mighty operations of the Spirit of God, they are anxious to do something themselves to obtain relief. Could they purchase salvation with money, they would in their extremity give all their possessions and even their life for an object of such value. This willingness to offer great sacrifices does not arise from true love of God, but from a slavish fear of future punishment and a hope of being justified by works. But a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet be destitute of real piety. That which men are most ready to offer to God is least acceptable to him; and that which they are most reluctant to give is the very thing required. There is something, which they are less disposed to part with, than all their property and their life. What then must we think of those, who give grudgingly for the support of the gospel, or who are unwilling to submit to any hardships or privations in their efforts to advance the kingdom of Christ?

2. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. The expression sacrifices of God, according to a peculiarity of the Hebrew idiom, may denote the most pure, holy, honorable and acceptable sacrifices. A broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart, which are essential to true repentance, and which are the most satisfactory evidences of true piety, are sacrifices, we are assured, God will accept. He does not need our flocks or our herds—our silver or our gold. These are not a substitute for piety. For thou desirest not sacrifice, said the psalmist, else I would give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.



Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Hear, O my people, saith Jehovah, and I will speak: O Israel, and I will testify against thee; I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt offerings to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fullness thereof. God requires our hearts. Our thoughts of his character should be honorable and our feelings should be such as express true penitence and love.

None but sinners, and none but those, who are penitent can offer to God the sacrifices of a broken spirit a broken and a contrite heart. Angels, who never offended, may have a humble spirit, but they cannot have a broken spirit. They may view their knowledge as ignorance—their wisdom as folly, and their strength as weakness, when compared with the infinite attributes of God. They may view themselves as vile, when they have a clear discovery of his holiness and mercy. Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth forever and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Can we doubt that God is perpetually revealing himself more and

more fully to holy beings in heaven and that they are growing in humility as they increase in knowledge?

An infidel, when meditating on the attributes of God, which are discoverable by the light of nature, or when contemplating his great and marvellous works—the planets rolling through the heavens, or those awful phenomena, which alarm great cities may feel his insignificance. He may feel that his own power, and wisdom and goodness are unworthy of being named, when compared with the power, wisdom and goodness of God, displayed in the structure of the world and in the vast provision made for the support of the whole human race. But he never offers to God the sacrifice of a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.

Awakened sinners before their conversion may be humbled. The world may appear to them to be but vanity, altogether insufficient to satisfy the desires of the soul. Its honors and pleasures may cease to charm. Awakened sinners desire nothing so much as to escape the wrath of God. When we see them weeping and trembling; and hear them cry, God be merciful to me a sinner; do they not give proof of deep humility, though not that, which is manifested by brokenness of spirit? They feel that they are justly condemned—and that they are in the hands of an angry God, who may at any time cut them down as cumberers of the ground. How many pass from this state of humiliation and distress to a state of self-exaltation, and indulge a hope of salvation without any sufficient reason! That sorrow, which worketh death, puts on the deepest mourning, is most rigidly exact in regard to outward conduct—separates its subjects in

a literal sense from the world, and by outward acts of self-denial encourages them to hope for life. Such was the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, the insufficiency of which was noticed by our Lord. For I say unto you, he said in his sermon on the mount, 'That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. A view of danger may bow the proud spirit of a man and cause his heart to become as water while he still loves the practice of sin, and is kept from outward transgressions only by the fear of future punishment. Among professing Christians we see some, who have a very flexible spirit, who can accommodate themselves to any circumstances, and can hold fellowship with professing Christians, whatever their opinions; but who after all give no satisfactory evidence of real piety. To offer the sacrifices described in the text we must have a knowledge of the extent and spirituality of the divine law, must feel our obligation to obey it—must be convinced of our guilt—and that we are without any excuse. Many, who discover their danger and their exposure to the wrath of God, do not cordially approve his justice in their condemnation. So long as the sinner depends on any thing he has done or expects to do as a ground of justification; so long as he is disposed to offer any excuse for his transgressions, and so long as he refuses to submit without reserve to God, so long his heart remains hard and his spirit unbroken. But, when fully satisfied that he has ruined himself, when all his excuses are swept away—when all his hopes of being saved, derived from his own resources are cut off, and he finds that there is

no alternative but either to perish or to give himself up to him, who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, with a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, he submits. But his submission is not the foundation or meritorious cause of his justification. It makes no amends for past transgressions. God would have a perfect right to require it, had he made no provision for the salvation of any of the human race. When the sinner is slain by the law and a saving change is wrought in his heart, the spirit that was before proud, obstinate, and rebellious is broken, humble, teachable, gentle and in union with the spirit of Christ. The heart, which was before hard—opposed to the truths, peculiar to Christianity, and enmity against God, is now tender and all its warmest affections are drawn toward him, who is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person. When Christ is revealed to the Christian in all his loveliness by the Spirit of God he is received without reserve and with delight. Now the partition wall is broken down—now there is fellowship and union with Christ. He sups with the believer and the believer with him. Christians speak to him—not as servants to their master, but as friends, who can make known all their feelings to a tried friend. Now they wonder that they did not love him before and that they could so long have neglected their immortal soul.

Christ is the model, according to which our character must be formed or we cannot be Christians. For I through the law, said the apostle, am dead to the law that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ

liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

If at any time, those, who have experienced the change, which has been described, depart from God, perceive a proud, self-righteous spirit springing up within them, and are sensible of some degree of hardness of heart; no sooner is Christ revealed to them by the Holy Spirit than their affections flow out to him, and they can offer the sacrifices of a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.

Strange it is that those, who have been forgiven, and who have tasted the sweets of redeeming love, should be willing for a day to forsake him, who is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. And it is still more strange that Christ should from time to time reveal himself to those, who, after being redeemed by his precious blood, can forget their obligations to him, and by their conduct make it manifest that they are not weaned from their attachment to the world. How many times, brethren, when such has been your sense of your unfaithfulness that you have been filled with apprehensions of evil has Christ met you—pardoned your sin and given you some fresh token of his love! Such surprisals have overpowered you and for a season you have been lost in wonder and rapture. Scarcely does the thought of returning to God spring up in our hearts after we have gone astray from him before his love is shed abroad in them by the Holy Ghost.

3. Those, who possess a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, approve the whole law of God—the administration of his government—and the plan

he has adopted for the salvation of men. They are on his side, among his friends, his interest and honor are dear to their heart. They are wounded and grieved when his institutions are neglected—when his name is profaned—and when his Son is treated with indifference or disrespect. When the sublime and distinguishing truths of the gospel are exhibited they receive them with satisfaction. A view of Christ and him crucified awakens all the tender feelings of their heart. When the true penitent contemplates the cross of Christ, and meditates on the love of God, manifested by the gift of his Son to this lost and perishing world, he feels that he cannot do too much to express his gratitude and sense of obligation to him, who has done so much for him. The true penitent discovers so much sin still remaining in his heart that he is suspicious of himself, seldom speaks of his hope without fear of being deceived, and hardly dares to declare himself to be a Christian. That change, which is essential to salvation appears to be a great work of God. The fear of God is impressed on the heart of the true penitent. He trembles at God's word and has respect to all his commandments. To this man will I look, saith the Lord, to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembleth at my word. The true penitent never mentions the name of God without reverence, and never speaks lightly of the truths of revelation.

Thus may the humble penitent express his feelings. Shame and confusion of face belong to me, for I have sinned against the best of all beings, and I daily offend him without any excuse. Though deserving of everlasting death, through faith in the Son of God

I am permitted to hope for immortal glory. Though I discover in myself nothing good, yet I know there is in Christ an infinite fulness. Were my hope of heaven taken away still I must love him, who is the most excellent and lovely of all beings. I see no defect in his character or in any of his ways. I am wholly in the wrong; but God is wholly in the right. What less can I do than give myself to him to be directed by his word and to be disposed of according to his pleasure?

II. Some of the motives, which should influence us to offer to God such sacrifices as are acceptable to him will be mentioned.

1. As a proof that God is well pleased with the sacrifices of a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart; we are assured that he dwells with such as offer them. For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Whatever the circumstances of any individual, however poor he may be, and however low his condition in life; he may offer as acceptable a sacrifice to God, as those, who occupy the highest places in the world. Here we have a most interesting view of the perfect plan of redemption. It is so comprehensive that no one of any class is on account of the circumstances of his life excluded from heaven. Those situations in the world, which are most desired can be occupied but by very few. The most splendid mansions—the most expensive apparel—and the richest luxuries can be enjoyed only by the opulent. But the language of

divine mercy is—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. Though the humble penitent can offer to God no costly sacrifices—though he have neither gold nor silver; yet he can offer to God a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, which will be accepted and entitle him to a mansion in heaven. And what is more honorable than for him, who is conscious that he has done wrong to confess it with sorrow and grief? There is more joy in heaven, we are assured, over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.

2. Great is the joy, experienced by those, whose hearts have by their unfaithfulness become hard, when they can again offer to God the sacrifices of a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. What reason have we to rejoice that with God there is forgiveness that he may be feared, and that with him there is plenteous redemption? The true penitent may approach the throne of mercy with the assurance of acceptance and may plead the promises of God relying on Christ as the surety. Never do Christians experience such fellowship with Christ—and never do they receive such communications of divine grace as when grieved and broken hearted on account of their sin against God. The hungry are never sent empty away. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

#### APPLICATION.

In view of the subject of this discourse, it ought to



be the serious inquiry of every professing Christian and of every one, who indulges a hope that he has been born of the Spirit, have I at any time offered to God the sacrifices of a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart? Not every one, said Christ, that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity. There is an essential difference between a flexible spirit, which yields to superior power, as a conquered person from necessity yields to his conquerer, and a broken spirit. In the former case there is no change of disposition, but in the latter there is a radical change from enmity to love and cordial submission. We cannot but notice some, who make themselves very conspicuous in the church, and who manifest great zeal in the cause of religion; but who never appear to exhibit any evidence of brokenness of spirit and contrition of heart. Can it be that they have ever experienced a saving change of heart? Have we not reason to believe that God does sometimes make use of men of talents and learning, who were never renewed by the Holy Spirit, to publish and defend the truths of Christianity? Men of the world, rationally convinced of the truth, have done much for the support and propagation of the gospel. It is not enough to believe all the leading truths of revelation and zealously to defend them—it is not enough to be exact and particular in our outward con-

duct—it is not enough to submit to great privations and to make great sacrifices, it is not enough to converse much on the subject of religion, and to be always ready to offer prayer in the presence of others. God looketh not on the outward appearance but on the heart.

There may be some present, who have such a sense of their unworthiness as to be afraid to confess Christ and, to approach the table of the Lord, and to receive the emblems of his broken body and shed blood. Those very considerations, which should encourage them to press forward, not being properly understood, deprive them of that happiness and peace they might enjoy. Is a table prepared and richly furnished with the most costly viands; and are you invited to partake of them freely without money and without price? Will you plead as an excuse for your refusal to come to it that you are perishing with hunger? For whom is any table spread? Not surely for those, who are full and have need of nothing; but for the hungry, who feel their need of something to support them. It is treating Christ with great disrespect to turn your back upon the feast he has prepared for those, who have a deep sense of their unworthiness. Are you grieved and broken in spirit and in heart on account of the injury you have done to God and to his Son; you are the very persons who are welcome to the feast prepared for his people.

Full of consolation is the thought, brethren, that Christ is now in the midst of you, that you have not to leave your seats to find him. He is listening to your sighs—he hears all your secret cries, and has a bottle for every tear. The truths of his word are now

operating upon your mind and your heart—directing you and urging you unworthy as you are to come to him, in the observance of all his commandments and all his ordinances. Behold him, in his word as in a glass, you may see him—his eyes are fixed on you—he is speaking to you—hear him—his words express the deep feelings of his heart. As a proof of his sincerity he gave his life to redeem you.

Behold, he says, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed and all things are ready, come unto the marriage. Say, with a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart we come Lord, to the feast.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE X.



BY THE TERROR OF THE LORD MEN PERSUADED TO REPENT.

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.—  
II. COR. v. 11.

THE inquiry is often suggested to the mind of the Christian, whose heart is warm with the love of God and of the souls of men, why, in this land where the gospel shines with unclouded splendor, and where religious books abound, are so few to be seen, who

give satisfactory evidence that they possess a good hope of salvation? It is by no means correct to reply, because there is not room enough in heaven for the whole human race—nor, because the atonement made by Christ is not sufficient for all, who are disposed to come to him, nor, because there is any thing in the circumstances of their life, which renders their case hopeless. May not this be a proper answer? Those subjects, which are suited to operate most powerfully on the mind of the sinner, because painful are not suffered, except for a few moments, to occupy his thoughts. Preachers of the gospel, unwilling to offend their hearers, or to give even momentary pain to those they love, but seldom attempt a description of the sufferings, to which all the impenitent are exposed. When they do make the attempt, the half is not declared, which may clearly be proved from the volume of revelation. They know that the most faithful are accused of cold insensibility and unfeeling severity. They choose, therefore, to dwell on Christian virtues and the joys of believers.

Why, it may be asked, was the apostle Paul so successful in his ministry? Did he preach smooth things? Did his discourses consist of beautiful descriptions of heaven, or, were they elegant dissertations on moral virtues? Did he endeavor so to modify Christianity, and so to accommodate it to human reason that it could be received without any radical change of heart? Did not the apostle strip the veil from the heart of the sinner, that he might discover and feel his guilt; and did he not uncover the place prepared for the enemies of God? It was his desire to obtain as near a view as possible of the place prepared for the wicked

that his own mind might be properly affected, when urging them to make their escape from the threatened wrath of God. For a similar reason it was his aim to shew the impenitent the furnace, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, that they might be affected by a knowledge of their danger. It was true benevolence, which influenced him. What should we think of a man, being informed that a family not far distant from him is in a suffering condition and must perish without immediate relief; should he say to the person giving the information I cannot bear to hear of the distresses of my fellow creatures? A man of true benevolence would be anxious to know all the circumstances of the suffering family, the aid needed, and, if possible, would visit them to see for himself their situation. Such was the benevolence of Christ, and such in some degree is the benevolence of his most faithful servants.

Why has the benevolence of Howard, the philanthropist, and the manner in which he expressed it, been so much and so universally admired? The celebrated Burke in one of his speeches thus mentions him and his labors. "I cannot name this gentleman," he says, when speaking of Howard, "without remarking that his labors and writings have done much to open the eyes and heart of mankind. He has visited all Europe, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces or the stateliness of temples; not to make actual measurements of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art, not to collect medals, or collect manuscripts; but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and

“pain ; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, “depression and contempt—to remember the forgotten, “to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and “to compare and collate the distresses of all men in “all countries.” It was not the object of Howard to gratify a vain curiosity, but to ascertain the nature and extent of the sufferings of his fellow creatures, that he might be instrumental of relieving them, or, by faithful representations of the consequences of transgression, that he might prevent others from committing those crimes, which must expose them to the most dreadful punishment. The course, which the warm feelings of his heart inclined him to pursue was highly approved by those, who viewed him merely as a philanthropist, and who were not themselves exposed to suffer the penalty of human laws.

Why may not Christians and Christian ministers in their labors for the salvation of men adopt similar means? We cannot indeed enter the prison, where are confined those, who died impenitent. We can do nothing to relieve them in their distress. But by the clear light of revelation we can obtain a just and a heart rending view of the place, prepared for the punishment of the wicked, and can meditate on their sufferings, till our feelings move us to make vigorous efforts for the salvation of those, who now have an opportunity to obtain salvation. It was the clear and enlarged view, which Paul obtained by meditating on the word of God, of the final doom of the impenitent, which made him speak with great plainness and earnestness, when warning sinners of their danger, and which sustained him when reproached and persecuted by those, whom he sought to save. His sufferings,

however great, he knew would be of short continuance, but the sufferings of such as die impenitent he knew would be inconceivably greater in degree and everlasting in duration. His life corresponded with the truths he delivered. His hearers could not remain at ease. To persuade men to be reconciled to God, the apostle though persecuted labored with unabated zeal. Had he not had an affecting view of the punishment to which the unrenewed are exposed he would long before his martyrdom have ceased to preach the gospel to those, who sought to destroy his life. He fully believed the doctrines he preached. The apostle constantly directed his own attention and that of his hearers to the holy character of God and to the fearful consequences of transgressions of his law. It was the strength of his love of God and of the souls of men, which made him bold in declaring the most painful truths. He did not speak with hesitation, he did not use obscure and equivocal expressions. He urged men by the most forcible arguments he could use to return immediately to God through faith in Jesus Christ that they might serve and enjoy him forever.

The more Christians dwell on the holiness of God, the worth of the soul, the sufferings of Christ, and the consequences of sin; the more willing they are to labor and to make sacrifices for the salvation of their fellow creatures. And the more the unrenewed dwell on these subjects the more anxious they are to obtain a good hope of life. How can any man of intelligence and of correct habits, who believes the truths of Christianity, meditate on the justice of God and the future and everlasting punishment, to which transgressors are exposed without being moved? Such is the struc-

ture of the human mind that it must be more or less affected by the subjects, which occupy its thoughts. Exclude from the mind that class of subjects, which are best suited to give a sinner deep views of his guilt and to awaken fearful apprehensions of future evil, and how can a saving change be effected? God makes use of such means as are suited to the end he has in view. That God that made us, and who knows perfectly well the opposition of the unrenewed heart to his holy character and government, surely knows what means are best adapted to humble the pride of the human heart and to influence us to accept of the offers of mercy. It must be evident to every one who believes the scriptures to be a revelation from God that our attention should often be directed to the solemn and awful realities of eternity. Time when compared with eternity is but a point, and life is short and uncertain. We are moving rapidly on to the places where we must remain forever. Here we tarry but a short time. Our chief business is to make preparations for our final and everlasting abode. When our life is terminated there will be no change in our nature or character.

Let us now extend our thoughts to the future world, and contemplate the scenes, which will soon pass before us.

Go now with me, my hearers, guided by the light of revelation, into the invisible world, and let us suppose that our life is ended and that we are standing before the judgment-seat of Christ. The time surely is coming and it is near when we must render a true account of ourselves to him, who cannot be deceived. We shall be allowed to keep nothing back. After we



leave the world none will be permitted to return back again to make preparations for their future state. Now we may in thought approach the tribunal of God, and from that lofty height may contemplate those vast and terrible objects discoverable by the light of revelation, and, after beholding them for a while, we may return back to the places we now occupy.

Contemplating objects of immense value awakens a desire of obtaining them, if possible; and witnessing the indescribable sufferings of any of our fellow creatures makes us careful not to do those things, which occasion them. The man who looks into the cells of a prison, or who is conducted into some gloomy and loathsome dungeon, would know the crimes of which the occupants have been guilty. When he sees one of his fellow creatures condemned, made an object of public contempt, and put to death by the hand of the executioner, his mind is filled with horror, and he asks himself the question, am I in danger? The more nearly such objects are viewed and the more clearly they are seen the more they affect us. It may be added, they ought to be kept before the mind for some time that they may have influence. The man who is perishing with cold may pass so rapidly by a fire as scarcely to experience any warmth. But let him remain there for a single hour and he will feel its power. It is the continued and intense application of the mind to subjects suited to affect it, which produces the most important results. Those, who will not permit the most solemn and important subjects to occupy their thoughts but a moment are guilty of that "suicide where more than blood is spilt."

We are now in thought still standing before the

judgment-seat of Christ. The light of his glory enables us to see every thing clearly. He, who when on earth was despised, rejected and crucified is now seated on a throne. The brightness of his glory is terrible. The highest orders of angels adore and worship him. They honor him as they honor the Father. His divinity, which when he was on earth was manifested by his miracles, now breaks forth with dazzling splendor.

How vast and boundless is the prospect presented to our view! How wide is the extent of the empire of Jehovah! How rapid and powerful the exercises of the mind, when objects of such magnitude and scenes so sublime are passing before us!

While wonder is constantly succeeding wonder before us, yonder on the right hand of the judge we discover the most delightful mansions. There day is perpetual—there every good, which can be desired is to be found. There we see a great company of saints constantly praising God, and saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing. We discover the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles—the martyrs—faithful ministers, and the pious of different nations and different ages, all active in the service of God and all unspeakably happy. We see some, whom we once knew, when they were in the world. But how are they changed! Once we saw them weeping, depressed, and rendered inactive by discouragements. Now joy unspeakable, and peace, which passeth understanding are expressed in their countenance. They are far removed from all temptations to sin.

Who can contemplate the dwelling place of departed saints, their employments, and their happiness, without earnestly desiring to be associated with them? Is it not because our views of heaven are so obscure and limited that we are so contented with this world? Let heavenly things occupy the thoughts for a considerable time and the mind cannot remain unmoved. Such inquiries as the following will be suggested to it. How did those, who are now unspeakably happy, obtain a place in heaven? When John made inquiry of the elders respecting those, whom in vision he saw in heaven, the following was the answer he received; These are they that 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 night and day in his temple.

Now let us direct our attention to the left hand of the Judge. At a distance from his throne we discover the place prepared for all his enemies, where many are receiving the wages of sin. As the scriptures are a revelation from God, who cannot himself be deceived and who can have no disposition to deceive us, we must believe things to be in reality as he has declared them to be. God has made to this world no unnecessary revelations. The same love, which moved him to give his only begotten Son to die for us, moved him to uncover the place, where the impenitent must forever suffer according to their works. Does not his benevolence appear in making known to us in season the whole truth that we may have an opportunity to secure our highest happiness? All the representations of the sufferings of the finally impenitent are designed

to give us the most exalted views of the holiness of God—his love of the world in providing an all sufficient Redeemer for lost men, and his fixed determination to execute his law on all, who persevere in unbelief till death. By the light of revelation we discover that the place, where the wicked are punished is a furnace of fire. It is a furnace of fire, Christ our beloved and adored Savior has assured us, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Were this not the fact, would he have repeated again and again his declaration? And were not this the fact, would he have come down from heaven, taken upon himself the form of a servant, and submitted to the death of the cross to save us?

The following are the very words of our divine Lord. The Son shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them, which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Who will dare say that the declaration of Christ is untrue? What could be his object but our happiness in making known to us the most painful truths? The most powerful motives are certainly best suited to induce the wicked to repent and to forsake their evil ways. It is Christ, who gave his life for you, my hearers, who shows you the furnace, kindled by the wrath of God, where his enemies must forever suffer. He points out the way and the only way by which you may escape the punishment of the wicked. Ought you not to love and follow him? Is there not something inexpressibly dreadful in thought of being cast into a furnace of fire—of fire unquenchable? But the fire kindled by the wrath of God must be as much

more terrible than any kindled by the wrath of man as God is greater than man. Now if any of you desire to be affected and to make your escape from the furnace of fire prepared for the punishment of all the impenitent and unbelieving; keep it before your mind till you perceive all your thoughts directed to Christ, the only refuge of your soul. See the smoke of the torment of the wicked, who are suffering the wrath of God, ascending, and which will continue to ascend forever and ever! Do you not discover in the place of punishment a great company of your fellow creatures—the profane—the intemperate—the dishonest, the licentious, the impenitent and unbelieving? Do you not see them weeping and writhing on account of their sufferings? Hark!—do you not hear their piercing and heart-rending cries—their bitter lamentations and the gnashing of their teeth? How they condemn and reproach themselves! Hear their lamentations. O that we had listened to the sound of the gospel, when we had opportunity! O that we had upon our knees sought for mercy, when Christ was ready and willing to save us! But now it is too late—our day of probation is ended, and an eternity of misery is before us.

Christ long after he had completed his work on earth and had taken his seat on the right hand of his Father, and had a perfect knowledge of all parts of his Father's empire still so loved the human race as to make additional revelations of the realities of the invisible world. He has assured us that there is a lake burning with fire and brimstone, where the wicked will be punished. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers,

and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars he said shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.—Now we must either reject the volume of revelation or believe the declarations and doctrines it contains. There is no other alternative. If there are any, who cannot now hear these things; how will they be able to endure the wrath of an angry God! Surely it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

As the wrath of God must be terrible beyond description, so the most forcible language used in describing it cannot exceed the truth. The very fact that sinners are alarmed, tremble and are troubled, when the most painful subjects are presented to their minds, is strong evidence, that if such subjects were allowed to occupy their thoughts for a considerable time, they would be forced to cry, men and brethren, what must we do? This the great apostle understood.

It was a knowledge of the terror of the Lord, which brought the Son of God from heaven to earth, and made him willing to suffer the death of the cross. He stands now to save perishing sinners between their offended Sovereign and the place prepared for the wicked to save all, who will look to him for deliverance. The great apostle never lost sight of the misery, to which his fellow creatures were exposed. The strength of his love and the power of his faith made him zealous and persevering in his efforts to save them. He was wholly devoted to the cause of his Redeemer.

Let us now return from the lofty height, we have

for a few moments occupied, and relying on the power and grace of God, let us determine that we will no longer neglect the great concerns of our souls. Every one of you, my hearers, who has not been born of the Spirit, is this moment under sentence of death, and nothing but the forbearance of God keeps you from falling into that furnace where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Had I any serious doubt on this subject I would not attempt to alarm you. But I see you in danger of being lost forever. I stand here to preach the preaching which I have received of the Lord, and I would persuade every sinner unrenewed without delay to seek refuge in Christ. While I am speaking to you, I see him who gave his life to redeem you, in the midst of you by his Spirit, and I hear him say to you, Come for all things are ready—him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Can you for a moment doubt the sincerity of him, who gave his life to redeem you?

There are some, who admit the truth of the doctrine under consideration, but who are opposed to a full exhibition of it. They contend against the very means God in love employs for their salvation. They can but know that the most powerful considerations are necessary to rouse many, devoted to the pursuits and pleasures of the world from their spiritual stupidity. Let the scripture doctrine of future punishment be excluded from the pulpit, or let it be introduced very cautiously, and it will not be long before it will be rejected.

Show me one, who gives satisfactory evidence that he possesses true piety, and I will show you one, who will acknowledge that a belief of the doctrine under

consideration operated powerfully on his mind, when his attention was directed to the subject of religion, and allowed him no peace till he found it in Christ. Let an awakened sinner, who appears to be in a fair way to become a Christian, only be made to entertain serious doubts with respect to the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment, and his alarm and distress will soon leave him. To the awakened sinner, convinced that he must have a new heart or perish; the most solemn discourses fall far below the truth.

There are some, who in health and prosperity, make light of death and its consequences. Is it any proof of true courage, not to be afraid when exposed to real danger? Are not the greatest and most successful warriors, the most cautious when about to meet powerful enemies? The prudent forseeth the evil and hideth himself; but fools pass on and are punished. Is there any one, who is so stout hearted as not to be afraid to meet that God, who to his enemies is a consuming fire? Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail, though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

Now let me say to the sinner before me, if you expect to be saved, you must use the means God has appointed, and which he is using for the accomplishment of this same object. The skilful surgeon, about to amputate a limb, the operation of which he knows must be painful, makes use of a sharp knife. Those truths which give you the most pain, should be made the subjects of your meditations till you are



forced to cry, men and brethren, what must I do? or, God be merciful to me a sinner. Can you dwell with devouring fire? Can you dwell with everlasting burnings? You cannot hide yourself, sinner, from God—you cannot conceal your thoughts from him. When as many years are passed as there are stars in the sky or sands upon the sea shore there will still be an eternity in prospect. Eternity! eternity! the word is to the thoughtful sinner full of terror. Your case, sinner unconverted, is not now desperate. How long your life may be spared, and how long the Holy Spirit may strive with you God only knows. You have had a good opportunity to make your peace with God. Why should you be spared for a longer period? You certainly have reason to fear that you will suddenly be cut down as a cumberer of the ground, or that the Holy Spirit will leave you and leave you forever. Salvation has been brought near to you—and is offered without money and without price. Christ is near you and waiting to be gracious. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation! Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. The gospel is now sounding in your ears—the church is praying for you—the Holy Spirit is striving with you, and the truth is operating on your conscience. Now is your time, if ever, sinner, to make your peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Will no one, who has been listening to this discourse, this day repent and commence a holy life, looking to Christ for strength to enable him to overcome all temptations? Shall the attending angel make

the report in heaven that no one is disposed this day to unite himself with the followers of Christ?

Why, my brethren, is it so difficult to persuade any to become Christians? Are not *we* faulty? Do we wrestle with God, as did the patriarch of old, who said with great decision, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. The promises of God to his church and to Christ the head of the church afford great encouragement to labor and to pray for the conversion of sinners. It is written—He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

Let this be the determination of every sincere Christian. For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE XI.



### CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE AND GROWTH IN GRACE.

Another parable put he forth, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till all was leavened.—*MATH. 13. 33.*

**T**HE text affords a good illustration of the doctrines of Christian Perseverance and Growth in Grace. In the text grace in the heart is compared to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till all was leavened. The following is the comment on it of a learned, pious, and much esteemed divine. “Thus the word of God, when received into the heart by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, gradually changes the judgment, affections, conduct, and conversation. Though these were before carnal, sensual, selfish, envious and ungodly they receive a heavenly savor: the thoughts, desires, pursuits, and discourse gradually become humble and holy and have a relish of heaven. The Christian learns to attend to his worldly possessions, comforts and relative duties after a heavenly manner: and this change is progressive till it is perfected in heaven.”

Those, who admit the truth of the doctrine of Christian Perseverance, believe that all who at any time become Christians will never so fall from grace as finally to perish. They believe also that the operations of grace are progressive, and will continue to progress till the end of life. These doctrines, which appear to be branches of the same subject, may with great propriety be viewed in connexion with each other. Most of the passages of scripture, which illustrate and prove the one doctrine illustrate and prove the other.

The operations of grace compared to leaven are hardly perceived at first; but by degrees the effects become more and more visible, till they are clearly seen in the whole character and life. It is grace, which produces that change, which is essential to salvation, and which is the commencement of a holy life. This change is usually denominated regeneration. Verily, verily I say unto thee, said Christ to Nicodemus, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God—he cannot understand and enjoy the things of the kingdom of God. Again, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God—This may mean, he cannot be a Christian without being born of the Spirit, and he cannot become a member of the visible church without being baptized, baptism being the initiatory seal. That which is born of the flesh, added our Lord, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

Christ came to his own and his own received him not; 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, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

God. Now those, who are born of the Spirit, are at first but babes. Their views of spiritual things are limited—their faith is weak, their strength is feeble, and their devotions are imperfect. In these particulars grace in the heart may be compared to leaven when first put into the meal. Those, who are born of God, though at first but babes, are children of God. They are adopted into his family. God acknowledges them as his children as soon as they are born of his Spirit. The Scriptures in various places teach us that new converts are but babes. And they would not be called babes were it not in reference to their growth so as to become men. Wherefore, said the apostle Peter, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies and evil speakings; as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may *grow* thereby: If so be ye have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. The ideas of growth and continued life are always suggested to the mind, when any become children of God, though but recently born of the Spirit. Growth in grace is brought to view in the following passage. Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love may *grow up* with him in all things, which is the head even Christ.

The new life of those, who are the children of God, and who are adopted into his family, as it is holy and hid with Christ in God, can never be destroyed. It is

a gift, which is of everlasting duration. And I give unto them, said Christ with reference to those whom his Father had given to him—And I give unto them eternal life.

The believer is *vitally* united to Christ. By faith he becomes one with him. He is so united to Christ that he cannot perish, unless Christ perish with him. The Spirit of Christ has his permanent abode in the heart of every true believer. I am crucified with Christ, said the apostle, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Christian perseverance and growth in grace depend on their union with Christ, rather than on the promises of God. The latter, however, correspond with the former. Because I live, said Christ, ye shall live also.

Those who are adopted into the family of God are made heirs of God. The Spirit itself, said the apostle, beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God: and if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together. They are joint heirs with him to that inheritance that he has purchased for them, and where they will ever dwell with him.

He said to his disciples not long before his crucifixion—In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also. As all believers are joint heirs with Christ to the inheritance, which

he has purchased, and for which he has paid the full price demanded, their claim has a good foundation. God will not in justice take from his beloved Son the inheritance he has purchased with his own blood. The price paid he values far more than the inheritance, which his beloved Son has purchased for his friends. And Christ will never take from his disciples that inheritance to which he has made them heirs.

It may be added in this connection believers are *sealed* and receive at the time of their adoption the *earnest* of the Spirit, which is an earnest of the inheritance, to which they are made heirs. In whom (i. e. in Christ) said the apostle, to the church at Ephesus, ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Here we are taught that believers are sealed with the seal of the unchangeable God—sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. The seal of the Holy Spirit applied to them signifies that the transaction is perfected and approved and can never be altered. To make the believer still more sure of obtaining possession of the inheritance to which he is made heir, the earnest of the Spirit is given, by which he receives a foretaste of the happiness he will experience, when all his trials in this life are terminated. The question of the believer is not, whether he will at last reach heaven or not, if a christian; but whether he have satisfactory evidence that he is, or ever was a Christian—whether God ever gave him the earnest of his Spirit. Now the earnest of the Spirit consists partly

in the joy and peace believers experience at the time of their conversion.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Just so far as any have evidence that they have the fruit of the Spirit they have evidence that they will finally be saved. And just so far as they have evidence of growth in grace they have evidence of its existence in their heart.

Grace in the heart is compared to a living fountain, which never fails. Christ said to the woman of Samaria, Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Here we can but notice how desirous the woman of Samaria was to obtain *living* water.

This is a good illustration of the doctrine of Christian perseverance and growth in grace. Living streams never cease to flow during the driest seasons. Other streams at particular seasons are noisy, overflow their banks, and sweep all obstructions before them. But if we search for them when most wanted we discover no water, but many proofs of the injury they did. It may also be remarked, no doubt Christ had reference to those living fountains, from which streams proceed, which constantly increase in width and depth till they are lost in the ocean.

Again, grace in the heart is compared to good seed planted in good ground. This is the truth—the good ground is the heart prepared to receive it. He that received seed in good ground, said our Savior, is he



that heareth the word and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty and some thirty. Many other comparisons, with which the scriptures abound, illustrate the same truths. Christians are often compared to sheep—new converts to lambs—Christ to a shepherd.

There are many texts, which directly prove the doctrine of Christian perseverance.

All that the Father giveth me, said Christ, shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will, which hath sent me, that of all, which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John vi. 38-40.)

My sheep, he said, hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. No language can be plainer than this.

Again. Being confident of this very thing, said the apostle to the Philippians, that he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. We can hardly suppose that God commences a work, which he does not mean to finish.

Who are kept, said the apostle Peter, by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The hope of

the Christian is an anchor to his soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil. If it were possible, the elect would be deceived. We may, therefore, conclude they cannot be so deceived as to be finally lost. He that believeth, we are assured, shall be saved. It is not said how long any one shall believe. The promise is to every believer and the moment he believes.

The doctrine of Christian perseverance is very clearly taught us in the closing part of the viii. chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. Whom he justified, said the apostle, he also glorified. Justification is not progressive like sanctification. It is never repeated. As it is by faith, the moment any one believes he is justified; and all, who are justified, we are assured, will be glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be, or who can prevail against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. He only has the right to justify. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is ever at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us. He has satisfied the demands of the divine law. Who can condemn those, to whom his righteousness is imputed? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed

all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For 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 us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here every thing is mentioned, which has any tendency to separate believers from Christ, and to occasion their apostacy. But God has made their perseverance to the end certain, while many for a time are believed to be Christians, but are overcome when more or less severely tried.

To the views which have been presented of the subject under consideration it has been objected, that many, who gave the most satisfactory evidence of piety for years and were the zealous friends of revivals of religion and of moral reformation, have fallen into sin and been excluded from the church as unworthy of the Christian name. In referring to an illustration already introduced, it was remarked that those streams, which for a time overflow their banks—are noisy, and bear down every obstruction, cease to flow when their waters are most needed. So we find in the church, where God revives his work and the general excitement is great, some, whose conversion does not reach their heart, appear to manifest greater zeal in the cause of God than real converts. The reason is obvious, true converts have such a knowledge of the deceitfulness of their hearts that they give the reason of their hope with fear and trembling. But unsound converts, ignorant of the state of their hearts, are con-

fidant, and experience no warfare within, which causes them to fear that they may be deceived. Some of the zealous advocates of moral reform are those, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

With respect to the first class, the following passage gives us the scripture view of their character.

Not every one, said Christ, that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you*: depart from me ye that work iniquity. Our Lord does not admit that they were *once Christians*; but afterward apostatized. He expressly declares that he *never knew* them, that they were never true Christians.

The parable of the ten virgins, who trimmed their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom, is thought to afford a very strong proof that Christians may fall away and perish, after sustaining a fair character for several years. It appears from the parable that their lamps were all trimmed and lighted, when they went out to meet the bridegroom, and that the lamps of the foolish virgins were gone out, when they most needed them. Now, if we carefully examine the parable, we shall find that those, who were ready to meet the bridegroom, *took oil in their lamps*, but that the foolish virgins *took no oil in their lamps*—in other words they never experienced a work of grace in their hearts. They did not fall from grace for they never were the subjects of it.

The following passage is thought by some to favor the objector.

And because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. The various trials, to which professed Christians are exposed, are designed to separate the precious from the vile. Those only who endure to the end give evidence that they were *ever* true believers.

The apostle John gives us a just view of such as fall away and finally perish. They went out from us, he said, but they were *not of us* ; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us : but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. In the parable of the sower, designed to illustrate the characters of different classes of hearers, those, who fell away were not those, who were compared to good ground into which the seed was cast—These were not overcome by persecutions, but continued to bring forth fruit.

The following passage is thought to favor the objector. For I testify again to every man, said Paul to the Galatians, that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.

Galatia, it may be remarked, was an inland province, inhabited by descendents of the ancient Gauls, and very ignorant of the true religion, when first visited by Christian teachers. They probably had very little knowledge of the Jewish religion, or of the reasoning of the apostle with Jewish converts. It was, therefore, by no means strange that in their ignorance

and weakness, as mere babes, that they should be perplexed and that some should be persuaded by Judaizing teachers to believe that they ought to respect some of the rites of the former dispensation. It was extremely difficult to convince those, who had been educated Jews, to receive the doctrines of Christianity without reserve. These were the persons, who troubled the Galatians, who were not prepared to meet them. The apostle, through his epistle, appears to view the Galatians, as real Christians and not as apostates. He reproves them for being influenced at all by Judaizing teachers. He shows them the impossibility of being justified partly by works and partly by grace. If justified by grace they must reject the doctrine of justification by works. If the Galatians depended on works, they must reject the doctrines of grace. Now, it is not asserted by the apostle that any had fallen from grace; or, if any had, that they had been more than nominal Christians. Christ has become of no effect unto you, he said, whosoever of you, in other words, if any of you, are justified by the law. We may well suppose that some of those, who so readily embraced Christianity, were not truly converted. It is not strange that they should be disposed to depend on their works for justification. This is the doctrine which is most agreeable to the unrenewed. In our own time some, who in a season of a revival appear to embrace all the doctrines of Christianity, not being renewed, become afterward opposed to the doctrines of grace, and depend on their works. No doubt the epistle to the Galatians was the means of establishing true believers in the essential doctrines of grace.

It is further objected to the views, which have been given of the doctrines under consideration that they take away the strongest motives to perseverance and growth in grace; but the reverse on a careful examination of the subject appears to be the fact.

Christians have no satisfactory evidence that they are Christians farther than they have evidence of their perseverance and growth in grace. How then can a belief of the doctrines mentioned encourage them to sin? Growth in grace, which implies perseverance, is essential to its existence in the heart. God makes no revelation to any one that he is a Christian except by the operations of the Holy Spirit in his heart producing the fruits of righteousness. If the most powerful motives, which operate on the minds of any, to persevere to the end are the fear of being lost and the hope of being happy; they are selfish and their religion is of no value. Their own happiness is their chief end. They are influenced by a slavish fear and a selfish hope.

It is the impression on the minds of the unrenewed, that if they once become Christians they shall certainly be saved. And the question presented to every Christian, when most doubtful respecting his future prospects is not, whether, if really a Christian he shall be saved, but whether he is a Christian indeed.

Now, let us consider by what motives men are usually influenced. In the pursuit of an object, its intrinsic worth and its durability are always considered. The price we are willing to pay for it, and the exertions we are willing to make to obtain it, depend on the considerations which have been mentioned. Why are we willing to pay a great price for some articles

and not for others? The answer must be, because we esteem them of greater intrinsic value, or more indispensably necessary to our happiness than other articles. Again, where two objects are of the same value, why are we willing to give more for one than for the other? Must not the answer be, because one is more durable than the other, and we can enjoy it longer than the other? Suppose a man is in pursuit of an estate; will he not give most for one, to which he can obtain a good title by which it may be secured to him and his heirs forever? Will he not be more willing to be at expense in putting it in order and in cultivating it, than if doubtful whether he shall be able to retain it more than a year?

The impression on every serious mind is that religion is something of great intrinsic value—that it is indispensable to our future life and happiness—and that if once possessed it will secure to us a good title to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away. And it is the common belief that any, who have made a profession of religion, and have become immoral in their conduct, were never born of the Spirit. This is the Scripture view of the subject.

Though we are allowed to have respect unto the recompense of reward; yet love of God is the fulfilling of the law and the spring of all right actions. The purest exercises flow from love of the holy character of God. The Christian is never so holy and happy as when he has such a view of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ that he forgets himself—and for the time is influenced neither by the fear of future misery nor the hope of future happiness. He is filled with all the fulness of God and can think of nothing else.



The inquiry may here be made, what are the considerations which give us the most affecting view of the intrinsic value of religion, and make it indispensable to our future life and happiness? There are several considerations, which deserve notice—our just exposure to everlasting misery—the *great price* paid for our redemption—restoration to the friendship of God—and an inheritance to which religion gives to its subjects a good title. Nothing can be more evident than this—that the deeper are our own views of human depravity the higher will be our estimation of that religion, by which we obtain deliverance from the bondage and consequences of sin. All attempts to show that men are not depraved, when they begin to be, tend to lower our estimation of the value of religion. They also tend to lessen our anxiety to become truly religious, and to diminish our efforts to secure a good hope of future life.

The same remarks are applicable to all attempts to limit our views of the price paid for our redemption. The Unitarian, who denies the divinity of Christ, and maintains that his death was only that of a martyr, denies the doctrine of native depravity and has very defective views of sin and of its consequences.

Now the value of the inheritance purchased for the redeemed must correspond with the price paid for it. For we cannot suppose that a being of infinite wisdom would pay more than its estimated value. How can those, who have superficial views of human depravity, or, who deny the divinity of Christ, have any just conceptions of that inheritance, to which true believers are heirs?

The everlasting duration of the inheritance, to

which the redeemed are made heirs adds much to its value. It may be added, as their capacities will be constantly enlarged, they will find the supply of their various wants corresponding with their desires. As they progress so their inheritance will appear also to increase in extent and excellence.

#### APPLICATION.

You have now before you, my brethren, an object, of the value of which we have no adequate conception. It is an object, which if once possessed you can never lose. It would be hardly worth pursuit, should you be liable to lose it as soon as obtained, or at any subsequent period. You may now obtain it without money and without price. More than this, you must receive it as a free gift, or you cannot receive it at all. One of the greatest obstacles to the salvation of those, who hear the gospel, is their unwillingness to give up all dependence on their own works. Here is much of the preacher's labor. Men are opposed to that view of depravity, which shows them that there is nothing good in their hearts by nature and that all the exercises of them are sinful. But they must come to this conclusion, or they cannot be saved. They will not however confess the whole truth till the light of God's Spirit shines in the dark chambers of their soul. The doctrine of native depravity teaches men that they are lost—under sentence of death, unable to help themselves, and that they must look out of themselves for justification. The gospel points them to the Lamb of God, whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

The hope of Christians rests on a sure foundation. They have the promise of God that he will be with

them in every trial till the end of life. And we know, said the apostle, that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.—Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son, whom he receiveth. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them, which are exercised thereby. My brethren, said the apostle James, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. We glory in tribulations, said the apostle to the Romans, 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.

Those trials through which Christians are called to pass, being sanctified, prove the means of purifying their faith and every grace, and of promoting their advancement in holiness. But the same trials occasion the apostacy of hypocrites. It is no certain proof that any one is a Christian that he has maintained a good standing in the church for many years. We are ourselves experiencing constant physical and mental changes, and there is a great variety in our trials. The circumstances of our life are constantly changing and our associates are different at one time from those at another. How can any one have a full assurance of salvation, when there are new and severe trials, through which he must pass on his way to heaven? Those, who speak of their hope with the greatest confidence, are the very persons, who most frequently

apostatize. They are ignorant of their own hearts, and of the warfare and trials of the Christian life.

In view, likewise, of the subject under consideration, I can with confidence assure all, who now listen to the sound of the gospel; if you once become Christians you will certainly be saved. One exercise of true faith unites you to Christ. This union can never be dissolved. It is not meant by this, that the one act of justifying faith is not to be followed by a life of faith. Grace has been compared to a living fountain which never ceases to flow—and which becomes broader and deeper till it is lost in the wide and fathomless ocean. I am not ashamed to urge you to seek for that religion, which, if obtained, will never be lost. It will deliver you from the curse of the divine law—from the fear of future punishment—reconcile you to the character of God, and make you heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to an inheritance incorruptible undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Think of the great things the Son of God has done to lay a broad foundation for your justification. His invitation to every one of you is—as really as if he were to call you by name—Come, for all things are now ready. He appears before you in the gospel as the most amiable of all persons and the most compassionate—as one too who possesses infinite resources—one who is the heir of all things, and who offers to make you joint heirs with him to the inheritance he has purchased with his own blood. Be persuaded, sinner, this day, and while you are listening to this invitation, to come. Say, I pray you, Lord I come—help me to come with a penitent, believing heart.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE XII.



### DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.—Rom. ix. 15, 16.

**THIS** passage of scripture, which presents to our view one of the brightest and most glorious features of the divine character, is thought by some to be one of the most discouraging in the whole volume of revelation to the anxious sinner. But when it is properly explained and he rightly understands it, he finds that it contains the strongest encouragement to return immediately to God. It may be, and, perhaps, is sometimes so explained as to produce repulsive feelings and strong opposition to the truth.

Whom, let me ask, does it discourage? It does indeed discourage those, who are seeking to be justified by their works—their obedience to the law of God, or by their own power and will. The doctrine of justification by works is agreeable to the unrenewed heart. By some kind of works, Jews, Mahometans, Pagans,

and Papists, hope to secure for themselves future happiness. It is this which makes them willing to offer expensive sacrifices—perform long pilgrimages, repeat many prayers, or submit to severe bodily mortification and suffering.

It is by no means difficult to account for this strong attachment to the doctrine of justification by works. The moral law, which contains no intimation of salvation by grace, is written in the hearts of all mankind. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law (i. e. the written law,) 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. Now the moral law demands perfect obedience as the only ground of justification. By this law works are the only foundation of hope for favor. The sinner thinks, till his attention is directed to Christ, if he cannot be justified by works, that there is nothing left on which he can rest. A state of conviction without any knowledge of the way of salvation by grace must be a state of distress and despondency.

The first effect of conviction is a sense of condemnation by the moral law. In this state the sinner is like a man, who has injured another, and is detected. To escape punishment he endeavors in some way to give satisfaction. Almost any one to escape capital punishment would give all his possessions. The attention of the awakened sinner is first directed to the law, which is a covenant of works. He hopes by reformation of life and a return to duty to obtain relief. He never comes to Christ till convinced that there is

no help in himself, and that all his works are of no value and his heart is depraved and wicked.

One important object of the apostle Paul in his labors for the conversion of the Jews, was to convince them that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in the sight of God; for, he said, by the law is the knowledge of sin. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Even at the present time, the most difficult part of the preacher's work is to convince men that their works, as a ground of justification, are of no value. When thus convinced by the Holy Spirit great is their distress till they find rest in Christ. When their foundation consisting of their works is taken away, it seems to them that they are sinking into the abyss of woe, till they find themselves in the arms of their Savior. But their hopes cannot rest on Christ till the old foundation is destroyed. For I through the law, said the apostle, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Whom does not the text encourage to hope for salvation?

1. Christianity places the Gentile on the same level with the Jew. The promise made to Abraham that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, was fulfilled, when Christ said to his disciples, the apostles, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. For many centuries the Hebrews were more highly favored than any other nation. Unto them were committed the oracles of

God. To them pertained the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, while all other nations were left to worship idols.

But now in Christ Jesus, said the apostle to the church at Ephesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ: for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. The Jews had long been accustomed on account of their peculiar privileges to despise the Gentiles, and to consider themselves superior to others, as they had been the chosen friends of God. But under the Christian dispensation all national distinctions are abolished. God claims the right to grant the same privileges to the Gentiles that he had granted to Abraham and his posterity. Abraham was living among idolaters, and for aught we know was himself an idolater, when called of God to leave his country and to go into the land of Canaan. Why God chose him rather than any other person we know not. It was not because he was better than others. He had no greater claim on God, when he was called, than the Gentiles had, when they were called by the preaching of the gospel. God had a perfect right to take from them the peculiar privileges, he had graciously permitted them to enjoy, and which they had abused. They might still by repentance and faith in the Messiah they had long expected be justified and saved. After the commencement of the Christian dispensation no Gentile could say, because I am not a descendent of Abraham, it is of no use for me to hear the gospel—I cannot hope for salvation. He might rejoice to know that God was



as ready to save the Gentiles as the Jews. Facts too made it evident, that the former were more ready to receive Christ than the latter—and that greater numbers of the former than of the latter were justified and saved.

2. Christianity places the poor on the same level with the rich. When John the baptist, while in prison, sent two of his disciples to Christ, to ascertain whether or not he were the long expected Messiah; he did not give them a direct answer, but referred them for proof to his works. Go, he said, and show John again those things, which you do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, *and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* Isaiah the evangelical prophet, had a distant view of the privileges, enjoyed under the present dispensation. He is represented as standing in some place frequented by persons of every nation, and calling to them to hear the joyful news—to hear every one for himself—Ho! see, hear, 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.—And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. What more can the poor desire? With respect to the good things of this world the rich have the advantage; but with respect to spiritual things they are not more highly favored than the poor. Verily I say unto you, said Jesus unto his disciples, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God. The care of this world,

and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and render it unproductive. As a matter of fact, not many wise men after the flesh—esteemed wise by the world—not many mighty and not many noble are called. The Christian church consists chiefly of those, who are neither very poor nor very rich. The poor cannot complain that they are excluded from heaven by their poverty, which prevents them from enjoying many privileges and comforts, which none but the rich can obtain. Indeed, as the poor have no possessions on the earth, powerful motives urge them to seek an inheritance in heaven. The rich and the mighty are less disposed than the poor to listen to the humbling truths of the gospel. So far as it regards substantial riches and permanent happiness the prospects of the poor are quite as encouraging as those of the rich. Silver and gold, however large the amount, cannot purchase a mansion in heaven.

3. The learned and the illiterate are placed on the same level. Though there are some things contained in the scriptures, which are mysterious; yet, every thing important for us to understand, and which is necessary to our salvation, is made plain, either by the most simple language, or by various familiar illustrations. Some of the most mysterious subjects are quite as well understood by the illiterate as by the learned. The former are more willing than the latter to receive on the testimony of God, doctrines they do not understand. Many of the corruptions, which have injured the church, may be traced to men of talents and learning, who, to make Christianity more acceptable to men of the world, have labored to accommodate it to the human reason. In every age some

new philosophical scheme has been invented with the hope of removing the objections of men of the world to Christianity. Overlooking the radical opposition of the heart to the doctrines peculiar to Christianity, the most distinguishing truths have been, either concealed or modified to suit the taste of worldly men. The impression is sometimes made on an audience that the preacher does not in his heart believe the doctrines of the approved confession of the church to which he belongs.

Splendid talents and extensive learning like great riches darken the spiritual vision, nourish the pride and strengthen the opposition of the heart to the simple and humbling doctrines of the gospel. It is hard for men of uncommon powers of mind to be satisfied with the reception of such truths as way-faring men, though fools, or illiterate, may understand. Hence we find few of the most learned as well as of the most wealthy give satisfactory evidence of true piety. The illiterate cannot complain that they are excluded from heaven, because they cannot understand those truths, the cordial belief of which is essential to their salvation. Many of the illiterate do understand, and some have cordially received the truths of Christianity, while some proud of their talents and learning remain in unbelief. The prosperity of the church does not depend on the most wealthy, or the most learned. Too many of these classes do more to impede than to advance the kingdom of Christ.

I might mention other particulars, which make it manifest that the plan God has adopted for the conversion of men is so perfect as to strip from the unbelieving all their excuses, and to convince them that

there is nothing *in the circumstances* of any one to prevent him from returning to his offended sovereign with as fair a prospect of forgiveness and justification as any one ever had, who did return to him and was forgiven and justified.

God is perfectly free, and is under no obligation to any one. Our works form no part of the righteousness, which is the foundation of our acceptance in the sight of God. The righteousness of Christ is of infinite value. It needs no addition, and will allow nothing to be taken from it.

This view of the subject corresponds with the experience of every Christian. And I appeal, brethren, for proof to your own experience. It must be admitted that the teachings of the Holy Spirit correspond with the scriptures, which were given by inspiration of God. The question then is, what are the convictions of the sinner, when a subject of the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit?

1. His conscience condemns him for his transgressions of that law, which is written in his heart, and which is holy, and just and good. He sees clearly that all its precepts are reasonable and that his obligations to obey all the commands of God are infinitely great. His sense of just condemnation is measured by his sense of obligation. The one cannot exceed the other. We cannot feel that we are justly condemned farther than we have a sense of our obligations to do the will of God.

When the conviction of any one is as perfect as it is before his conversion, he sees, not only that he is justly condemned, but that there is no help in himself, and that God is under no obligation to save him. He

sees, also, as salvation is of grace, and, as God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, that nothing in the circumstances of his life prevents him from hoping for mercy. He is assured by all Christians, of every variety of circumstances and character before their conversion, that as soon as they, with an unreserved confession of their sins, made an unconditional surrender of themselves to God, that they were received, forgiven and justified. Now, if we come to God divested of all dependence on our works and without any claim on his justice; we must feel that he is perfectly free to save us or to leave us to perish.

You can recollect the time, my brethren, when you felt condemned by the law of God, and when you felt that he had a perfect right to leave you to perish in your sins. Your only ground of hope was the free, rich and sovereign grace of God, who might have mercy on you as well as on others. The Holy Spirit taught you this. And as before remarked the teachings of the Holy Spirit correspond with his word. It was indeed this view of divine sovereignty, which preserved you from a state of complete despondency.

Now, let me ask what were your views and acknowledgements, when you first indulged a hope of salvation, before your mind was influenced by any human theory? Did it not appear to you that the change, you experienced, was the work of God—that grace, unmerited grace, saved you and made you differ from others? Had you any disposition to attribute to your own works the change, you experienced? Did not the following stanzas express your feelings?

“ When God revealed his gracious name  
“ And changed my mournful state,

" My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,  
 " The grace appeared so great.  
 " The world beheld the glorious change  
 " And did thy hand confess :  
 " My tongue broke out in unknown strains  
 " And sung surprising grace.  
 " Great is the work ! my neighbors cried  
 " And owned the power divine ;  
 " Great is the work ! my heart replied,—  
 " And be the glory thine !"

The humble Christian is willing to take shame and confusion of face to himself and to ascribe all the glory to God. When at the table of the Lord, with a penitent, broken but believing heart the following stanza expresses his feelings.

" Why was I made to hear thy voice  
     And enter while there's room ?  
 When thousands make a wretched choice,  
     And rather starve than come."

The views of those, who have experienced a work of grace in their hearts are essentially the same, when they first begin to hope. But as grace at the commencement of its operations is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal—much depravity remains to be influenced by human theories. It is not strange, therefore, that Christians not distinguished for piety embrace some opinions, which are more agreeable to feelings not mortified than to the word of God. They are by imperceptible degrees drawn from the simplicity of the truth, not so far indeed as to occasion their final ruin, but so far as to injure the cause of him to whom they are indebted for their hope of salvation.

The doctrine of divine sovereignty is the doctrine of salvation by grace. We every day see illustrations

of this doctrine. One is prosperous in the world, another meets with disappointments and losses—one is cut down in youth—another lives to old age. The seasons of the year are not subject to our control. God distributes his favors as he pleases.

Now as God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, the events of time must be the result of his eternal purposes. His knowledge has never been increased. Things future as well as things past are present to him. Though of all beings in the universe the most immutable; yet of all beings in the universe he is the most susceptible of being moved. He is now perfectly free to bestow or to withhold his favors. The considerations which now influence him in answer to our prayers to bless us, or to deliver us from evil, were always in his mind. If it be admitted that God is now perfectly free; why should any object to the immutability, or the eternity of his freedom? If God is not perfectly free and susceptible of being moved, of what use is prayer, and how are we to understand the promises made to those, who call upon him? Is not God as susceptible of being moved, and as perfectly free to grant us favors we need, as any earthly parent to be moved by the cries of his children, and to grant them the things, for which they ask? Let the scriptures be our guide in regard to this subject. Thus Christ taught his disciples to pray, and encouraged them to hope for a favorable answer. And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of

you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or, if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or, if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? There is a sense, in which there is no past time with God. He is influenced by present considerations at the present time, just as much as if his purposes were not eternal. With respect to us past events, which are matters of history, cannot be changed, and we never pray God to change them though we may pray that he may counteract their influence. But with respect to God his eternal purposes are his present purposes.

To many, the eternal and immutable purposes of God appear to be inconsistent with his freedom and his susceptibility of being moved by our cries and prayers at the present time. But he is immutably and eternally free and immutably and eternally compassionate. In this he differs from the gods of the heathen. Some not understanding the subject accuse the friends of truth of holding doctrines, similar to the doctrines of the fatalist. There is no ground for this charge; for we maintain that God is now perfectly free, infinitely compassionate—and is influenced by such considerations, as are present to his mind, when we confess our sins and offer prayer to him. Because God always has been what he is now—because his plans, decrees, and purposes always have been what they are now; some seem to think he cannot be influenced by present considerations. But they overlook the facts that God is perfectly



free now to act—and that he is infinitely benevolent, liberal and compassionate. It is his immutable purpose to hear and answer prayer—to pardon the penitent—to justify and save all, who believe in Christ. We need not, therefore, look back to perplex our minds with subjects which it is difficult to understand. The scriptures direct our thoughts to the future. Every one must admit, who believes that God is eternal and immutable that what he does in time and in the circumstances in which he does it, he always intended to do. He never intended to save any one in his sins—while impenitent and unbelieving. And he always intended liberally to reward those, who diligently serve him. No doubt erroneous views of the immutability of God have been injurious to the cause of truth. But we know that his treatment of men corresponds with their treatment of him. If they do his will, they will enjoy his favor.

## REFLECTIONS.

In view of the subject under consideration I can with great confidence exhort and encourage all classes of persons immediately to return to God.

1. The poorest persons, who own neither houses nor lands, and who by hard labor obtain but a scanty support, may obtain a title to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, an inheritance, which all the gold and silver in the world cannot purchase. If there be any of this class present, I can say to them, there is nothing in your condition in life, nothing in your poverty which excludes you from heaven. When you see the rich living in splendor and faring sumptuously every day, you should not envy them. Their cares and their company allow

them but little time for serious meditation. The company of the rich are usually, the gay, fashionable, and thoughtless members of society. Their rich viands and full cups unfit them for religious duties, and make them unwilling to hear the self-denying truths of the gospel. You are not liable to many interruptions when you have returned home from your daily labors. You can sit quietly by your fireside and search the scriptures, where you may find the pearl of great price. In your devotional exercises you can lift up your prayer to God, who is ever ready to hear you. For thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name alone is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

2. There is as much encouragement to the most illiterate as to the most learned to return to God—the way is as readily found by the former as by the latter—and as free for the one as for the other.

When we compare Christianity, as it appears in its greatest simplicity, with the philosophical schemes of the most learned of the ancients or moderns; we not only admire the grandeur of the objects it exhibits to view, but the more perfect adaptation to the most illiterate of the means used to obtain them. Many have been the attempts of the most learned to render Christianity agreeable to the unrenewed and intelligent. Some of the most distinguishing features, to which the human heart in its natural state is most opposed, have been concealed, and converts have been multiplied without receiving the whole truth. The dependence of the preacher should be on the clearest

and most simple exhibitions of the truth and the power of the Holy Spirit. God needs not the aid of learned men. He requires his servants to deliver his messages as they find them in the volume of revelation, adding nothing to them and taking nothing from them. Should they do this, their hearers would not remain at ease, the church would not be on such friendly terms with the world, and the unrenewed would not be unmoved. It is a remarkable fact, that while many of the learned are disputing about doctrines and systems—unable to come to the knowledge of the truth; the illiterate find no serious difficulty in understanding the essential truths of the gospel. If we look into our churches we shall find a greater proportion in them of the unlearned than of the learned. How must the learned at the great day feel when about to be finally condemned for their unbelief! Will they dare say they could not find the way to heaven, though endued with superior talents and favored with the best opportunities for information? The Judge may with great propriety appeal to multitudes of the illiterate, who found the way, as a proof of his justice in the condemnation of those, who were so blinded by their pride as to reject the simple truths of the gospel.

3. The gospel encourages the immoral to return to God without delay. They have no righteousness to cast off—no works which they value on which they can build a hope of salvation—and they have reason to fear, as they can but be convinced that God is angry with them every day, that they may be cut down suddenly. Powerful motives are presented to their minds to influence them to repent without delay.

The immoral cannot expect to enter heaven without repentance and an entire change of life.

Know ye not, said the apostle to the church at Corinth, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall enter the kingdom of God. *And such were some of you:* but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. In the accounts published of revivals of religion, when the classes of persons hopefully converted are mentioned, we find some who were previously immoral. Christ said to the Pharisees, who were selfrighteous and depended on their works as a ground of justification, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Finally. Be assured, my hearers, and I speak to every one present—to the poor as well as to the rich—to the illiterate as well as those, best educated—to the young as well as to the old, to the immoral as well as to the selfrighteous, there is nothing in your circumstances in life to prevent you from obtaining a good hope of salvation, if you will return immediately to God with a penitent and broken heart. He that forgave Mary Magdalene, and Saul of Tarsus can forgive the very chief of sinners. Why not with a noble manly spirit make full confession to the best of all beings that you have sinned against him without cause and are not worthy of the least of his favors—but deserving of his wrath? You must come to God

feeling that you have no claim to justification in his sight, and that you are justly condemned by his holy law—and you must depend on his sovereign grace for salvation. Those, who come to God in this way, will not be rejected. All, who now have a good hope of salvation, are ready to assure you that as soon as they made an unreserved surrender of themselves to God, who has a perfect right to bestow his favors on whom he pleases and to withhold them from whom he pleases, experienced that peace, which passeth understanding and that joy, which is unspeakable and full of Glory. Do as they did and you will become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE XIII.



### THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammar that breaketh the rock in pieces?—JEREMIAH xxiii. 29.

WHEN Jeremiah was called of God to the prophetic office, the Hebrew nation was exceedingly corrupt. Ignorance, error, and wickedness greatly abounded.

After Daniel and Ezekiel were led into captivity, Jeremiah was the only true prophet, of whom we have any account, who still remained in the land of Judea. Though he might have gone to Babylon with the assurance of kind treatment in that great city; yet such was his love of his country, and such was the deep interest he felt in the welfare of the remnant that was left, that he could not be separated from them. The abuse and cruel treatment he received from them, no doubt, drew many tears from his eyes; but did not harden his heart against them. He hoped that God would hear his prayers and cause them to repent. Had they regarded his admonitions they might have been spared and saved from ruin. After the murder of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had appointed to be over them, Jeremiah was forcibly taken to Egypt, where it is supposed he died, or was put to death by his enemies.

During his ministry the influence of Jeremiah was counteracted by a multitude of false teachers; the number of whom had increased in proportion to the increase of wickedness in the nation. So greatly was he hated on account of his fidelity in the discharge of his duty that the princes prevailed on Zedekiah to permit them to cast the prophet into a deep and miry dungeon, where he would have perished had not the pity of an Ethiopian sought and effected his deliverance.

The design of the false teachers was to deliver such discourses as would be most agreeable to the people with whom they were connected, and from whom they derived their support. But the first object of Jeremiah was to ascertain the mind of the Holy Spirit, and the

second so to exhibit the truth as to make the right impression on the minds of his hearers, regardless of the consequences. His duty in a corrupt age was extremely difficult. Though opposed, reviled and persecuted; yet he enjoyed peace of conscience, and a good hope of life and happiness beyond the grave. It distressed him exceedingly to see how ready those, whom he tenderly loved were to receive the most pernicious errors. Mine heart within me, he said, is broken, because of the prophets, all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man, whom wine hath overcome because of the Lord, and because of the word of his holiness. I have not sent them, saith the Lord, yet they ran, I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. They pretended to receive communications from God by dreams, and they said, the Lord hath said, ye shall have peace, and [they said to every one that walked after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you. God himself compared their preaching to chaff, which the wind driveth away. The prophet that hath a dream, he said, let him tell a dream, and he that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

The word of God, when made quick and powerful by the Holy Spirit, may with great propriety be compared to a fire and a hammer.

I shall notice some particulars.

1. As fire kindled in a dark place makes visible objects around it, so the word of God when faithfully preached makes distinguishable those who feel its

influence from those, who are the worshippers of idols. Light shines upon all our missionary stations, while all the world around them is involved in Pagan darkness. Thy word, said the psalmist, is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Christ, who is the Word of God is the light of the world. And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. Wherever the gospel is preached there light shines on those, who listen to the sound. Wherever a Christian church is established there the light is permanent. All those parts of the world, which are not favored with the scriptures, or the instructions of the Christian preacher are involved in darkness. And the ignorance and errors that prevail are productive of gross immorality and every abomination. Those who dwell in Pagan darkness cannot by the light of nature obtain any knowledge of the plan God has devised and adopted for the redemption of men. Neither the wise men of Babylon, or of Persia, of Egypt, or of Greece, neither the most learned of the Romans, or of modern nations have discovered any method, by which men can be saved from sin and restored to the favor of God. The world is indebted to the volume of revelation for all that is known of Christ, and the way of salvation through faith in him. For after that 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 more faithfully the word of God is preached, and the more carefully it is studied the more clearly the light of truth shines upon all, who have the scriptures and who enjoy the Christian ministry. Now, when we survey the wide world, we see but a



small portion made light by the truths of Christianity.

2. As fire placed in a dark room makes every part of it light, so the word of God when heard and understood by any one makes known to him his true character and condition. Such is the natural depravity of the human heart that it darkens the understanding. If the light that is in thee, said Christ, be darkness; how great is that darkness! The natural sun shining in meridian splendor does not enable the blindman to see the path, he desires to pursue. The word of God is a true light, which gives men a just view of themselves. But men in their natural state love darkness rather than light. And this is the condemnation, said our Savior, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. True Christians are perfectly willing to be tried by the word of God. Afraid of being deceived they are constantly trying themselves. But the unrenewed are easily persuaded by plausible arguments to embrace dangerous errors, which correspond with their wishes. Men of feeble powers of mind and of limited knowledge, if teachers of false doctrine, may be pronounced powerful preachers; while men much superior in every respect, if defenders of the essential truths of Christianity may be pronounced feeble and uninteresting.

3. The word of God is the brightest light when it is attended by the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit. The word of God is the word of his Spirit.

And when it is most honored by plain, serious and bold exhibitions of the truth then it is most honored by the teachings of the Holy Spirit. But few are disposed to depend on the word and Spirit of God. Many persuade themselves that they can so modify Christianity as to make it appear so reasonable to intelligent men of the world that they cannot but receive all those truths, the cordial belief of which is essential to their salvation. But its distinguishing features must be concealed in order to make it appear reasonable to unrenewed men. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us, said the apostle, who are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

All attempts to unite Christianity with some system of philosophy have proved injurious. They have corrupted it. As early as the third century, Origen, the most learned man of that age, did immense injury to the church by endeavoring to explain the doctrines of the gospel according to the principles of the Platonic philosophy. In every age there have been learned men, who have obscured the clear light of Christianity by the adoption of some philosophical system, on which they have depended more for success than on the word and Spirit of God. Men of superior powers of mind and of extensive learning, unless distinguished for piety are unwilling to depend for success on a simple exhibition of the truths of the gospel. But the plain preaching of a missionary, sent to a Pagan land, soon dispels the thick darkness around him. The dawn of day succeeds midnight darkness. The spot

which has been occupied by a devoted missionary only for a few years in a heathen country is like a well cultivated and fruitful field in a wilderness, or a beautiful oasis in a desert. It may indeed be compared to the land of Goshen, which was full of light, when thick darkness prevailed over Egypt.

4. As fire is one of the most powerful agents in the material world, so the word of God when accompanied by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit produces the most wonderful changes in the spiritual and moral world. How terrible are the effects of fire, when a dwelling house, a splendid palace, or a city is in flames! How difficult, and how unavailing sometimes all attempts to resist its progress! And how great are the changes produced by the word of God, when faithfully preached, and when it is applied to the consciences and hearts of men by the Holy Spirit! On the day of pentecost three thousand in a few hours were changed from enemies of Christ to firm and constant friends. As a spark of fire falling unobserved in some corner of a house may reduce it in a short time to ashes, so a word fitly spoken and clothed with almighty energy may occasion the commencement of a revival of religion, which may extend to many families and may embrace many individuals. Often it has been observed, when churches have hardly exhibited the appearance of life, and places of prayer have been almost deserted; God has come suddenly to his temple—and the place of prayer has soon been filled, and numbers have been made the subjects of renewing grace. When the Spirit of God visits a congregation it seems to them that he is actually speaking to them. Professing Christians feel reproved for their neglect

of duty, or their careless performance of it. Awakened sinners feeling that they are justly condemned and are without any good hope of salvation are alarmed and distressed. They feel like those, who have been guilty of some capital offence, and have been detected. The powers of their mind being quickened past transgressions rush upon their recollection, which their enlightened conscience condemns. Their own conscience is a witness within them, whose testimony they cannot dispute. The charges brought against them by the most faithful preacher they may reject. They may accuse him of cold insensibility, unnecessary severity, or of inability to exhibit the truth in the most favorable light. They may excuse their own conduct, and may quiet their minds by a belief that they are not so bad as represented to be till their conscience co-operates with the word of God, and with a voice more terrible than the loudest thunder repeats the words of the prophet, Thou art the man, thou art as guilty as represented to be by the preacher. The conscience of the sinner is the witness, which most alarms and troubles him. Till his conscience is enlightened and bears testimony against him, he hears the arguments of the faithful preacher without being distressed. Many of the unrenewed embrace opinions, not supported by the word of God, which afford them peace till the light of divine truth flashes on their conscience. Then false theories and dangerous errors are like chaff before a devouring fire. So long as the Jews believed that Jesus of Nazareth was not the true Messiah they thought they were doing God service by persecuting him. But when the charge was brought against them by Peter on the day of pentecost that they had crucified him, whom

God had made both Lord and Christ they were pricked in their heart and cried, men and brethren what shall we do? They saw at once by the light of the Holy Spirit shining on their conscience that their guilt was great and without excuse. The human heart is often in its natural state compared to a stone. The word of God may be compared to a hammer which breaketh it in pieces. A broken heart is the heart of a Christian.

To the finally impenitent, favored during life with the scriptures and the Christian ministry the word of God will be a consuming and an unquenchable fire. It will forever condemn their transgressions of that law, which is holy and just and good. Their conscience will approve the sentence. The impressions made on their mind at the judgment, when they hear the word, *depart*, will never be less terrible than when it is pronounced. The worm will never grow old and the fire will burn with increasing power.

The effects produced by the word of God are in very many passages of scripture compared to the effects produced by fire and by a hammer. The hard heart made soft and broken in pieces by the word of God, feels every truth and every command. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

The word of God, when faithfully preached strips from the sinner his excuses, which harden his heart, and fortify it against the truth. It is this which convinces him that he has destroyed himself and that in him there is no help. The truth when clothed with almighty power and understood is irresistible. It destroys that life, which the self-righteous man derives

from the deeds of the law. For I through the law, said the apostle, am dead to the law. By the law is the knowledge of sin.

The word of God, when exhibited in its simplicity by one of his most humble servants and attended by the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit accomplishes what cannot be accomplished by the most profound divine, or the most celebrated orator. How powerless are all the efforts of the most distinguished moralists, and the most zealous reformers, when they endeavor to persuade any one to repent and to forsake his sins!

It was in view of this subject that the apostle made use of the following bold language. Where is the wise?—where is the scribe?—where is the disputer of this world?—hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching—(the preaching which appears to the proud foolish) to save them that believe. It is the simplicity of the truth which offends proud men. The truth, when stript of every thing not essential to it, is like a sword drawn from its scabbard, sharp and glittering. It is the simple truth which wounds. When it is clothed with beautiful language and partially concealed under splendid imagery it makes no impression. The attention of the hearer is not fixed on the truth but on the language and imagery in which it is clothed.

In several other respects the word of God may be compared to a fire and a hammer. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth, was a prayer of Christ offered to his Father for his disciples. As fire

separates the dross from the pure metal; so the word of God enables the Christian to separate holy affections from those, which are unholy, and to form a correct judgment respecting himself. The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Beloved, said the apostle John, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that where he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope purifieth himself as he is pure. The work of self-examination continues through life. The true Christian is constantly searching the scriptures, and comparing his feelings with the word of truth, the standard by which he must try himself.

Sometimes the light of divine truth suddenly flashes upon his conscience and he has such a discovery of the remaining sin of his heart as to alarm and distress him. While in this state of mind he is led to abuse himself before God and to exercise afresh that repentance which is unto life. Though the work of self-examination, when faithfully performed, leaves but little in the character of the Christian, on which he can dwell with satisfaction, it is necessary to his advancement in holiness. It enables him to discover the sins, which most easily beset him. Having discovered these sins, which harden his heart, the word of God is the hammer, by which it is broken in pieces. Great is the joy of the Christian, and vivid is his hope when after the most careful examination he finds that his character in every thing essential corresponds with the pattern given in the scriptures. And how deep must be his sense of obligation to God, the giver of

every good and perfect gift when he meditates on his distinguishing grace! He feels that he as much deserves death as those, who are passed by and remain under sentence of condemnation. The Christian has no reason to look with contempt on those, who remain impenitent; for had he been left to himself he would have been no better than others. He must never forget that he hath not made himself to differ. If Christians were more humble they would doubtless meet with less opposition from the unrenewed and be more successful in doing good. Too often they manifest a censorious spirit, which produces in them, whom they would persuade to become Christians, repulsive feelings and opposition to the truth.

In all the trials through which the believer is called to pass the word of God is a true light, which points out the way he ought to pursue. When most severely afflicted his support and consolation are derived from the word of God. The promises of God correspond with all his wants. When most prosperous the word of God teaches him that riches often take to themselves wings and fly away. As fire cheers us when the season is cold and tempestuous, so the word of God, which assures us that he will accomplish all his purposes, quiets our troubled mind when the love of many has waxen cold and the enemies of the truth seem to prevail against its friends. The Christian, who dwells in an humble cottage, and daily walks with God, meditating on his word is far more happy than the prince, who lives in splendor and never experiences the power of religion. He can adopt the language of the psalmist. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through



thy precepts I get understanding, therefore, I hate every false way. The word of God is the light, which guides the Christian, while passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death. But how terrible it is to the sinner on a dying bed! What would he not give could he persuade himself that the scriptures are not a revelation from God? The power of the word will never cease to be felt, both in heaven, and in the dark regions of woe.

## APPLICATION.

From the figurative language of the text it is manifest that the word of God must be in contact with the mind, or must be understood, remembered, and made the subject of meditation, or it cannot produce its legitimate effects. Fire we know will not consume the most combustible substances unless it is in contact with it. The hammer will not break in pieces the flinty rock unless it strike it. Unless the word of God is read, or heard, and understood, how can the sinner feel condemned, and be alarmed? Would you see objects in a dark room you must place a light in it. God has given us powers of mind, by which with the help of his word we may know his will and our duty—by which also we may distinguish his true character from every false or perverted representation of it, and by which we may discover the way, which leads to life and unfading glory. But if men will not search the scriptures, or attentively listen to the sound of the gospel, whom can they blame but themselves if their ignorance occasion their ruin? Should the distinguishing truths of Christianity be made the subjects of meditation—daily and intense meditation; they would

produce an uneasiness, which would alarm the sinner, and make him anxious to obtain a good hope of salvation. It must be a just and constant view of the essential truths of revelation, which will produce the right impression. The system of truth contained in the volume of revelation is exactly suited to meet the wants of the sinner and to influence him to look to Christ for salvation. The conscience, when properly enlightened, will reprove and condemn the sinner for all his transgressions, and will urge him to make his peace with God.

Though the word of God is powerless, when not attended with the teachings of the Holy Spirit; yet the Holy Spirit dwells in the word and gives it power when applied properly to the conscience and heart. Who knows that the Spirit of God will not make his word effectual to his salvation, if he will treasure it up in his mind and heart!

When we consider how few read or hear the word of God with attention, how little they remember of the most solemn discourses; it is not strange that no more become truly pious. Worldly men are anxious to obtain information, which relates to their business. They never forget it. The following is the description given by our divine Lord of different classes of hearers. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not; then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he that receiveth the seed by the way side. But he that receiveth the seed in stony places, the same is he that heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation

and persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received the seed among thorus is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received the seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth—some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

The design of the Christian ministry and of all biblical instruction is to present the great truths of revelation to the human mind—that men may know the character of their Creator and rightful sovereign—the relation they sustain to him and the duties they owe him—also that they may know themselves and the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Success has attended the means employed for the conversion of men. In addition to the many converted by the Christian ministry; great numbers, belonging to our Sabbath Schools, have been made the subjects of renewing grace.

The word of God is the sword of the Spirit on which every preacher should rely in the discharge of his duty. This is the fire and the hammer by which his work must be accomplished. For though we walk in the flesh, said the apostle, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing, which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, and having in readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is ful-

filled. The scriptures furnish the preacher with all the weapons he can need in fighting the battles of the Lord. They are an inexhaustible treasure. There is such variety in the volume of revelation as to suit every possible case. The scriptures are themselves a miracle, or, an assemblage of miracles. The person, who carefully reads the volume of revelation must be as fully convinced by the internal evidence that it is of divine origin, as were the multitudes that saw the miracles of Christ that he was a divine person. The most bitter enemies of the truth must secretly believe what they openly deny, or they would be very foolish to contend against that, which they deny to have any reality. They cannot read or hear read the scriptures without feeling condemned. They cannot attentively listen to the sound of the gospel and feel happy while impenitent.

What did the apostle mean, when he said the weapons of our warfare are not carnal? Did he not mean that he did not depend for success on human policy—the power of argument, or of eloquence? He depended on the plain exhibitions of divine truth and the power of the Holy Ghost. And my speech and my preaching, he said to the Corinthians, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. He did not modify Christianity to make it agreeable to the taste and feelings of his hearers. Some not satisfied with the illustrations of divine truth, which abound in the scriptures spend much of their time in attempts to give a philosophical view to divine truth.

They seem to depend more on human reason and the authority of learned divines than the testimony of God and the inspired writers. By the aid of human theories and measures, not authorized by the scriptures converts may be multiplied and large additions may be made to the churches. But if their characters do not conform to the pattern given in the scriptures they will not be approved at the great day. The strength and influence of churches do not depend so much on numbers as on the character of its members. The more preachers love and reverence the scriptures the more the Holy Spirit will honor them. Thus saith the Lord, them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. The most scriptural views of the truth produce the most serious impressions and produce the most happy results.

The word of God is now in contact with the mind of every one who is a hearer of this discourse. Thus it is written, The righteousness, which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is to bring down Christ from above! or who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is the word of faith, which we preach. Salvation is brought near to every one of you, my brethren. Yea, it is brought to the very door of your heart. Open now the door, I pray you, that Christ, who is the word of life may enter and abide there forever. The consent of your heart will ensure your salvation. One right exercise of faith will unite you to Christ and entitle you to an inherit-

ance undefiled and that fadeth not away. The Holy Spirit, if not resisted will complete the work.

Endeavor to realize that the word you hear is the word of God, and that he is now speaking to you by his servants. Were he to reveal himself in all his glory, you could not with composure consider the truths declared. It is the will of God to give you an opportunity to act understandingly and freely. He carefully notices the feelings of every heart. You cannot conceal your thoughts and purposes from him. God calls on sinners to repent. Their hearts give the answer, which God understands and regards. When they acknowledge their obligation and confess their inability to satisfy the demands of the divine law, God directs them to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth in him. Sinners are furnished with the means of discharging the debt they owe to God, and might satisfy the demands of his law, if they would come to Christ. But they will not come to him that they may be saved. You have, my hearers, the offer of life, which you may obtain without money and without price. And there is no respect of persons with God. All of every nation and every grade are placed on the same level. But such is the depravity of the human heart that no one will come to Christ, unless drawn to him by the Holy Spirit. How deep must be the depravity, which chooses the way to endless ruin rather than the way to life and glory! Should men be left to themselves all would perish. They are as helpless as they are wicked. Those, who finally become Christians, resist the Spirit till overcome by his almighty power. We may then rejoice that God has determined to save

some of the human race. His purpose he will accomplish. The instrument—his word, is exactly suited to the work to be done. Paul, the apostle, whose success was great, depended on this in his ministry. He said—For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first and also to the Greek. You have, my hearers, the word of God. His word is the hiding place of the Almighty. It is quick and powerful—full of grace and truth. Receive it into your heart, and retain it; and you will receive Christ, who will pardon, justify and save you with a great salvation.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE XIV.



### THE CHRISTIAN NAME.

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.—Acts xi. 26.

THOUGH it may not appear to be of any importance to ascertain *where* the disciples of Jesus first received the Christian name; yet it has always been the desire of the intelligent to trace things to their origin, effects to their causes. We desire to know the place, where the most celebrated men were born—the very spot

where their bodies rest—the fields where the most terrible battles were fought, affecting nations for ages. Such a sanctity is connected with many villages and cities, which important events have rendered memorable, that we can hardly approach them without being inspired with profound reverence. What multitudes of pilgrims have visited Mecca the city, where Mahammed was born! And what multitudes have traveled to the holy land to see the very places, which once were made sacred by the presence of our Lord! Vast sums have been expended in all countries for monuments, on which have been engraved the records of important events. Must not every Christian desire to know where that name was first given to the disciples of Jesus, which 200, 000, 000 of the human race now claim, and also its original import? The text answers the first inquiry.\*

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\* Antioch was a great city, the capital of Syria. It was situated on the river Orontes, about 20 miles from the Mediterranean sea, being equally distant from Constantinople and Alexandria—700 miles from each place. “We cannot forbear,” says a learned writer, “observing that the gospel acquires credibility from its having been taught in the most populous, enlightened and learned cities, never shunning the public eye, but challenging full examination, and that in cities it obtained numerous converts by conviction without the aid of force or fraud.” Paul and Barnabas continued a whole year in Antioch and taught much people. St. Ignatius, one of the apostolic fathers, was born in Syria, educated under the apostles John and Peter, became bishop of Antioch, about A. D. 67. He continued his ministry about 40 years, then he was sent to Rome by the order of Trajan, and devoured by wild beasts, being found guilty of believing in Jesus Christ. The population of Antioch, when most prosperous, amounted to about 400, 000; but now it numbers only from 6, 000 to 10, 000. It was for a long time possessed by the Romans, second only to the city of Rome—taken several times, by the Persians—the Saracens—the Crusaders, and finally A. D. 1269,



As the Christian name is given to all, who admit the truth of Christianity, in distinction from Judaism or Mahometanism, it must betray inexcusable ignorance for us not to know its import. Among those who are denominated Christians we find a great diversity of sentiment and practice. While the Christian name is retained, we find a variety of other names, which are given to persons, on account of the particular system of doctrines, which they have embraced from a regard to its author—or, which are given to persons on account of the mode of ecclesiastical polity they prefer. The variety of sects, who differ in their views of doctrine or of church government, must be traced to the imperfect state of Christians in this present world. The best are sanctified but in part—they see spiritual things through a glass darkly.

That you may know, my hearers, whether you are Christians or not, I shall endeavor in the following discourse to describe the character of those, to whom the Christian name may with propriety be applied.

1. It may first be observed none are by nature Christians. Though descended from pious parents and ancestors and born in a Christian land; something more is necessary to constitute us in the most important sense Christians. Except a man be born again, said our Lord, he cannot see the kingdom of God. And again, Except a man be born of water and of the

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by the Sultan of Egypt. It has suffered much from repeated earthquakes. That in A. D. 588 it is said destroyed 60,000 persons. The city is now in a state of ruins without one Christian church—and only about one tenth of the inhabitants nominal Christians, and the same proportion of Jews.

Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Christ came to his own and his own received him not. 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; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. None need a Savior but those, who are actually guilty. None will or can in a proper sense come to Christ, who are not sensible of their guilt, and convinced that they must perish without an interest in him. Under the former dispensation, the person who put his hand on the animal, presented to be offered as a sacrifice, confessed that he himself deserved death, and that he could not be pardoned and saved without the death of him, of whom the victim was a type. The scriptures teach us that we, the descendents of apostate parents, have all come into the world depraved—under the curse of that law, which is holy and just and good; and that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

No one can be saved except in the way, which God has made known to us in the volume of revelation. Christ by his obedience and death has removed one great obstacle to our salvation. Were not our hearts depraved—were there nothing wrong back of action; who with a view of the uncertainty of life and his exposure to the wrath of an angry God would remain a day in unbelief after receiving the offer of pardon through faith in Jesus Christ? The plan which God has devised and adopted for our redemption, is the

result of infinite wisdom and benevolence. It is perfect and adapted to the work to be accomplished. He has given his Spirit to create in us a new heart, and to effect a vital union to Christ. We are no less dependent on the Holy Spirit than on Christ for justification. We must be united to Christ by the mighty operations of the Holy Spirit before we can be benefited by his righteousness.

Christianity in all its peculiar truths is a system of grace and of revelation. It is designed for a rebellious world. As all in Adam, the posterity of Adam die, so, we are assured, all united to Christ shall be made alive. In some way we all do partake of the apostacy. Innumerable facts, with none contradictory, afford abundant confirmation of the doctrine of hereditary depravity. No mere man has ever been found without sin. And the wages of sin is death. All, therefore, not united to Christ are exposed to everlasting death.

The tendency of sin is to destroy all good and to subvert the empire of Jehovah. Because its influence is counteracted and bounded, its nature and tendency are not on this account changed. The example of our first parents has, we know, been followed by all their descendents. Those, who condemn their conduct, tread in their steps, and thus make it manifest that their hearts are opposed to the holy law of God.

Such is the structure of the human soul that the natural consequence of sin is death. The state of man by nature is a state of guilt and misery. In himself there is no help. This is the view he has of his character and condition when awakened by the Spirit of God. In the following manner he expresses his

feelings. What have I done? I have destroyed myself, I have risen up against the infinite Jehovah—against his government—against all holy beings, and have exposed myself to unutterable woe. That God, who infinite in power and goodness, is terrible in justice. How can I expect to be treated better than the angels that sinned?—What fearful apprehensions, must distress the mind of an awakened sinner, who has no knowledge of the truths of the gospel? What can he expect but the most dreadful death? When he contemplates the extent and duration of the empire of Jehovah—its power and glory—his sins appear like mountains, ready to fall on him. To repent is only to return to the duties, which he would have been bound to perform had he never sinned. Repentance, therefore, however deep, if not connected with faith in Christ, does not ensure justification, because it makes no satisfaction for past offences. The sentence of death rests on every transgressor of God's law, who continues in unbelief. When the sinner understands and feels this, his distress exceeds all description.

Convinced that he must perish without the interposition of an Almighty Savior, he listens with interest to that gospel, by which life and immortality are brought to light. He becomes convinced that Christ is just such a Savior as he needs and as the law of God demands. He sees an exact correspondence between the demands of the divine law and the work performed by Christ. Provision he finds has been made for the salvation of men, but he also finds that it is beyond his reach without the aid of divine grace. His own powers are exercised to the highest degree but they do not enable him to obtain the prize. Indeed

his most desperate efforts only make him more clearly see that there is no help in himself—that he is spiritually dead—dead in trespasses and sins—and that without a new heart, for which he is dependent on the Spirit of God, he never can come to Christ. He now feels that he is wholly dependent on God, who is not under any obligation to save him, but who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. All dependence on self must be cut off before the sinner will submit without reserve to God. There must be a new nature, new moral power—a new susceptibility before there can be an exercise of saving faith. Therefore, said the apostle, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold all things are become new.

To be Christians in the scripture sense and to be recognized as such we must not only cordially receive Christ in all his offices, but must cheerfully and constantly obey all his commandments.

Some of the essential features of the Christian character will be separately and more particularly noticed.

1. Humility is essential to the Christian character. The Christian understands and feels that he as much deserves death as the angels that sinned, and as multitudes of his fellow creatures, who are suffering the wrath of God. The more clear his views of his demerit the more deep is his humility. The greater his progress in holiness the deeper are his views of his depravity and demerit—and consequently the more ready he is to abase himself.

The Christian also understands and feels that he has not made himself to differ, that he is wholly indebted to the distinguishing grace of God for his hope

of salvation. He looks upon those around him still unrenewed not with contempt, as if he had himself done something meritorious, but with pity and with prayer that God would have mercy on them and save them. No Christian is justified wholly or in part by his works. They all proceed from a corrupt source till God gives him a new heart. What! said the apostle, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, and which ye have of God! And ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit which are God's. The Christian feels that he is indebted to Christ for his hope of salvation. It cannot be doubted by any, who reason correctly on the subject, that Christians in heaven will feel that they deserve the wrath of God as much as those, who suffer it, and that they are wholly indebted to the grace of God for the places they occupy and the happiness they enjoy.

To some it may appear strange that those, who have such views of their demerit can be happy. It is a fact, which corresponds with the experience of every Christian, that the deepest humility is connected with the highest degree of happiness. To be emptied of self is to be filled with all the fulness of God. Whatever, therefore, tends to humble the pride of the human heart, and to eradicate a self-righteous spirit tends to promote the happiness of the Christian.

It may be added, the most humble, because they have the deepest sense of their dependence on God, are boldest and most decided in the performance of their duty. No man had a deeper sense of his unworthiness than the apostle Paul, who felt that he was

less than the least of all saints; but no man was more bold and decided.

With the humble God delights to dwell. For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

2. To be a Christian is cordially to receive the doctrines peculiar to Christianity. Divine grace prepares the heart to receive the testimony God has given of his Son, and to trust in him, as the Lord our righteousness. Very few at the time of their conversion have a full view of the doctrines of revelation. The church they enter is the school, in which they receive instruction, and where during their life they grow in knowledge as well as in grace. The pastor is the duly authorized teacher. It is his duty to teach all the truths of Christianity, depending on God for success. He has no right to withhold or conceal any.

There is a wide difference between such as cordially embrace the truths peculiar to Christianity and such as approve only the precepts of the moral law. We find some preachers, who take their texts from the scriptures and even from the New Testament, and yet never dwell on the doctrines of the cross. Though some of their discourses terrify sinners, they do not direct them to Christ. Now, it may be remarked, the serious infidel makes no objections to the moral law. Reason approves all its precepts. But to be a Christian we must understand and feel that we deserve death—that there is no help in ourselves—and that our dependence is on Christ for righteousness and on

the Holy Spirit for grace to come to him. To understand and feel these things is mortifying to the pride of the human heart. Many endeavor to obtain happiness in some easier way—without such deep self-abasement. But they cannot be Christians, and their hope at death will leave them.

To the true convert Christ appears to be precious, the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. We must not only understand the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, but we must approve them, acknowledge, support and defend them. The interest and honor of Christ must be our own. We find some who in giving an account of their religious experience, appear to be sound in the faith; but who have heard the very doctrines they believe and love caricatured and ridiculed. They believe the truth but not the perversions of it.

3. Submission to the will of Christ is essential to the Christian character. This submission is not merely for time. It is for eternity. This implies a belief that Christ is a divine person, and the most excellent and glorious of all sovereigns. No person can understandingly and without reserve submit to Christ without being satisfied that he is a divine person. It is a most important act to make choice of Christ for time and for eternity. We cannot do this unless we love his character, his cause, and his service. How enlarged and delightful must be the views of his kingdom; when any deliberately submit themselves to the authority of Christ, and solemnly engage to keep all his commandments!

Every true Christian has fellowship with his Lord in all the afflictions of his church, and rejoices with



him in her prosperity. When we meditate on the works he has performed, they appear to us to be great, and glorious, infinitely more grand than the mighty deeds of the most renowned of the human race. Such exalted views has the Christian of the character of Christ, that he feels that he cannot love and honor him too much, and that he cannot do too much to express his gratitude to him, who has done so much for him. It is his delight to commune with him. He is never more happy than when Christ reveals himself to him by his Holy Spirit. It is a privilege and an honor to be permitted to commune with him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

With Christ there is no respect of persons. He is as willing to notice and commune with the poor as with the rich—the illiterate as with the learned. He receives all at his table, who love him and the entertainment he has prepared for them. No other sovereign permits his subjects without any regard to rank to be familiar and intimate with him. But the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and he will show them his covenant. The more closely any walk with God the more perfectly he reveals himself to them. What consolation is derived from the reflection, that when the Christian is despised by the world and persecuted by the enemies of the truth; he can approach his Savior, and be assured he will sympathize with the humblest of his disciples! Nothing that affects his people escapes his notice. His eye is upon them every moment. 'Thou tellest my wanderings, said the psalmist; put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

4. To be a Christian is to possess the Spirit of

Christ. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, said the apostle, he is none of his. All, who are Christians, have been born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in them. However correct any may be in their views of doctrine, and in their manner of life; if they have not the Spirit of Christ they cannot be his disciples. As the Holy Spirit dwells in all true believers, so they do exhibit though imperfectly proofs of the fact. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, [gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of love. How Christians should express their love may be known from the manner, in which parents express their love to their children. They endeavor in every way in their power to do them good—to promote their reputation and happiness—to judge favorably of their conduct—to relieve them in distress, and to forgive them when faulty, unless obliged to punish them.

The Spirit of Christ was a spirit of benevolence, of forgiveness, and of meekness. No one can be a Christian, who has not a spirit of benevolence, especially when the cause of Christ requires its exercise. It must be admitted that Christians are constitutionally different. Some are much more than others susceptible of being affected by a view of the sufferings of their fellow creatures. The more any are distinguished for piety the more they will be distinguished for benevolence, and for every Christian grace. The Christian is pacific in his spirit, opposed to all contentions—and controversies, except necessary in defence of the truth. Though Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted

with grief; yet his Spirit, when dwelling in a disciple is a spirit of joy. The burdensome rites of the former dispensation, which continued till the death of Christ, were removed when the dispensation of the Spirit commenced. It is the will of Christ that his religion should be illustrated and recommended by the lives of his friends. They are compassionate—benevolent—joyful, pacific in their conduct—not soon angry—long-suffering—gentle, good in the most important sense—cordial believers of the truth, and faithful in all their engagements—meek, and temperate—in the government of their passions and mode of life. Now in every Christian we discover something of the Spirit of Christ. What law is there—against such a character? or, what objection can be made to the consistent life of a true Christian? Though his character consists of an assemblage of virtues and is worthy of all praise; yet because it is a constant reproof of the vicious, it is misrepresented that it may be condemned. Is not the Christian the most amiable and excellent member of the community—the most faithful head of a family, and the most worthy of confidence in all the relations of life?

Finally. The Christian is in action what he is in profession. What is the life of the Christian but a series of holy acts? Holiness to the Lord is written upon all his possessions. The true church is a living body. It has feeling and is active. The primitive church was always mourning or rejoicing.

## REFLECTIONS.

From the view we have taken of the subject under consideration it is manifest that of all names the Chris-

tian name is the most honorable. Has any one become distinguished for knowledge and wisdom? The Christian possesses the most valuable knowledge and wisdom. But what things were gain to me, said the apostle, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them of no value that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness, which is of God by faith; That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. The Christian knows by his own experience the excellence of true religion.

Has any one been renowned for his mighty deeds? The Christian by the grace of God has accomplished what the great men of this world were never able to effect. To overcome the god of this world, who holds in bondage those, whom men most applaud, is a great work, and must render every Christian honorable, when all actions are properly weighed. The Christian has conquered him, to whom worldly men are slaves.

It is thought honorable to be the subject of a great king, or sovereign. The Christian is a subject of the kingdom of him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Besides he is a child of God—and an heir of God, also a joint heir with Christ to an inheritance incorruptible undefiled and that fadeth not away. He is one of the number, whom God permits to commune with him, and whom the Son of God permits to sit

with him at his table. He is one to whom holy angels delight to minister. He is one chosen of God—chosen not on account of any goodness in him before his conversion. But God commendeth his love toward us, said the apostle, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified, we shall be saved from wrath through him. Ye have not chosen me, said Christ, to his disciples, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain : that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he may give it you.

2. Great are the responsibilities of those, who bear the Christian name. They are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. Christians ought to understand that their own happiness is not the chief object, which God had in view in their election and in their conversion. They have been chosen and renewed that they may serve and glorify him. Now, while Christ is constantly interceding for them in heaven, he expects them to labor for the promotion of his interest on earth. Did they feel their responsibility they would think less of themselves than of their Redeemer. It seems to be the only aim of some, perhaps I may say of many, to keep alive their hope of future happiness. How few do we find, who possess a martyr's spirit—who are willing to bear reproach for the sake of Christ? Important duties are neglected, the faithful performance of which would awaken a spirit of opposition in worldly men.

The most satisfactory illustrations of the principles of Christianity are the lives of its professed friends. They are seen in prosperity and adversity. Worldly

men cannot but approve the consistent character of a Christian. When such a person dies they are willing to admit that he has gone to heaven. The defects discoverable in the lives of some of the professed friends of God cause their sincerity to be doubted. God cannot be deceived and he will accept nothing, which is counterfeit. Who will dare enter the presence of God, who is terrible in holiness, if his heart have not been given to him? How dreadful must be the disappointment of those, who have only a name to live, when finally rejected! Who that has any knowledge of the deceitfulness of his own heart does not feel the necessity of the most impartial self-examination? Worldly men are very careful to see that the title to their possessions is good. Why should Christians be less wise with respect to their future inheritance? What can be more dreadful than the thought of being thrust from the presence of God, when expecting to enter heaven? Many said Christ, will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.

Be anxious, my hearers, not only to bear the Christian name but to honor it, and to give it influence. Strive, I pray you, to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.—Amen.

## DISCOURSE XV.



### THE ACCOUNT EVERY ONE MUST RENDER TO GOD.

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.—  
ROM. xiv. 12.

IN nothing did the true greatness of the apostle Paul appear more manifest than in his readiness to wave all disputes respecting things not essential to the salvation of men, that he might with the less difficulty and the greater certainty accomplish those objects, which he believed to be of infinite importance. So enlarged and so clear were his views of the character and government of God—the method devised and adopted for the redemption of men and the awfully solemn scenes soon to be disclosed to the whole human race, that all contentions respecting external rites and subjects, which cannot be settled by the most learned, were abhorrent to his feelings. It is well known that as Christians progress in holiness they gradually lose their relish for unimportant controversies. The more eminent any are for piety the more exclusively their thoughts are fixed on God, and on heavenly things.

The existence of parties and sects in the Christian

church the apostle viewed as a serious evil. To the Corinthians he thus wrote in his first epistle. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos: are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers, by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

Great has been the waste of time, of talents, and of treasure in the Christian church by the unprofitable discussions of learned divines, or men of different opinions, respecting things not essential. These observations are not intended to be applied to those, who from a sense of duty contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Those, who meditate on the condition of multitudes, who are under sentence of death, and who are rapidly passing down to the grave unprepared to meet their God, must feel that Christians have a great work to accomplish, which requires the most vigorous exercise of all their powers. They look to distant as well as to immediate results.

No man was less disposed than the apostle Paul to give up any essential truth, and no man was less inclined to contend for things not of essential importance. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the



more. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. It grieved him to see Christians divided into parties—to see them disputing about external rites—about meats, and holy-days. For none of us, he said, liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether, therefore, we live or die we are the Lord's. For this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or, why dost thou set at nought thy brother?—for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

1. There is in every man a sense of accountability to him, who created him, and on whom he depends for life and health and all things. God has a perfect right to require of us the perfect and constant exercise of all our powers in his service. He requires of us nothing inconsistent with our highest happiness. The relation we sustain to him is the foundation of his claim to our constant obedience. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The order which God has established many reverse. They acknowledge the claims of their fellow creatures, while they disregard the claims of God. They seem to aim at nothing more than to be just in their dealings with their neighbors and to contribute for the support of

the poor and suffering. And it may be doubted, whether those who have the fairest reputation for honesty are influenced so much by love of their neighbors as by a regard to their own interest and reputation. All their powers are sometimes exercised to the highest degree in their endeavors to obtain some advantage of those, with whom they transact business. When they succeed they rejoice. They do in fact rob their fellow creatures without exposing themselves to the penalty of the law. The commandment of God requires us to do them good in all the different ways in which we can benefit them. It requires us to relieve them, if in our power, when they are in distress—and to be as unwilling to wrong them as to be wronged ourselves. It is believed that very little of the honesty, which exists in the community, proceeds from the right principle. While many are just in their transactions with their fellow creatures, they neglect to perform the duties they owe to God, and treat him, as if not indebted to him, not dependent on him, and not accountable to him for their conduct. They live without God and without Christ in the world. Those, who love God, love his Son—love to worship them and to commune with them. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. He will one day call us to give an account of all our conduct to him.

2. We must render to him an account of the use we have made of *the powers of our mind*. God has given us understanding, affections, and conscience; by which he has distinguished us from all the lower orders of animals. Some undoubtedly have superior powers to others, and superior advantages for the culti-

vation of them. It is the duty of every one to cultivate the powers of his mind in the best possible manner, not that he may acquire fame but that he may be qualified to do good. The Christian, who has a proper sense of his obligation to God, endeavors to do this. Christians as well as others are often faulty in neglecting to cultivate the powers of their mind as much as possible, though the object they have in view is infinitely excellent and glorious. It is a remarkable fact that a large proportion of men of genius and learning are irreligious. It is not the pleasure of God that the success of the gospel should depend on human power of any kind. This may be the reason, why not many men of the most distinguished powers of mind are called. Their powers of intellect make them unwilling to submit to the humbling truths of the gospel. They cannot believe that objects of great importance can be obtained without a corresponding display of power.

Men of talents and learning, as well as men of wealth, are but stewards of what has been given them. This they seldom feel. They look down upon those inferior to them—often with contempt, forgetting that they are indebted to God for all their powers, and accountable to him for the use they make of them. Some, who might have done much to promote the cause of truth, have proved to be its greatest enemies. What excuse can they offer for their unbelief, when they see the illiterate—many perhaps themselves unable to read, entering the kingdom of God? Those, whom the learned despise as weak and illiterate are able to understand the doctrines peculiar to Christianity. They understand them because they are humble,

and on this account are favored with the teachings of the Holy Spirit. How dreadful must be the account, which learned infidels and corrupters of Christianity will be obliged to render to God! They will be allowed to keep nothing back. Trembling and in distress they will have nothing to object to the sentence—Depart ye cursed.

With what joy will the faithful and successful Christian, and especially the minister—surrounded by those converted by his ministry, render his account to God, giving him all the glory! And with what rapture will he hear the Judge say to him—Come thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!

3. We are commanded to love God with all our *strength*. The powers of our body as well as of our mind should be employed in the service of God. Some duties require great exertions of our physical powers. They should receive proper attention, and should be employed without complaining as well in the service of the church as in the pursuit of worldly objects. We do not often hear worldly men engaged in profitable business complain of fatigue. The complaints of some ministers of weariness without sufficient cause make the impression on the minds of many, either that religion is not important, or that they do not love their employment.

4. We are stewards of the *property* God has given us. Why God has given prosperity to some, while others meet with constant disappointments we know not. The ship of one merchant is lost, and that of another returns with a rich cargo. It seems to be the will of God to place men in different circum-

stances, that their character may exhibit every possible variety of shade—and perhaps to make it manifest that true piety does not depend on any condition in life. Neither riches nor poverty is sufficient to soften and change a depraved heart from sin to holiness. Great riches make the worldly man proud, haughty and overbearing. He associates with those, who are in like circumstances with himself. The poor envy the rich, and indulge, often, hard thoughts of God. But when any become the subjects of grace, whether rich or poor, we see a change in their conduct. The rich become humble—compassionate, and liberal in supplying the wants of the poor; and the poor cease to murmur—become contented with the allotments of providence, and grateful to their kind benefactors. The laborer, who obtains a competence for his support, enjoys more undisturbed happiness than the man, who possesses millions. It may be a question with one, who is prosperous, who has more than he needs for himself and family, how much he may retain for his own enjoyment. We know that at the commencement of this dispensation some did sell all they possessed, and had all things common. That was a time of persecution. The Christian church was established in the midst of hostile Jews and Pagans. To sell all and to have all things common at the present day would be ruinous to the church—demoralizing in its tendency, and destructive to the resources of those, who are disposed to contribute according to their ability for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. Christians, to whom God has given riches, and who feel that they are but stewards, will be ready to aid in the promotion of every object connected with the cause of their Re-

deemer. They will feel that his cause is their cause, and be anxious by economy and a wise management of their affairs to do what they can to promote it. Every one of us must give account to God of the manner, in which we use the property given to us. It is robbing him to use it for any unlawful purpose.

5. Rulers, whose influence is great in proportion to the number over whom their authority extends, must render an account to God of all their acts. They are indebted to God for the places they occupy. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south: but God is the Judge; he putteth down one and setteth up another. As a proof of this, not always the most meritorious are raised to the highest places. The promotion of individuals may often be traced to some particular events of providence, without which they would not have been raised to offices of trust and high responsibility. The more elevated the station of an individual and the greater his power; the more good or evil he can do—and most solemn must be the account he will be called to render to God. What is a king, an emperor, or a president but a creature of God, dependent on him every moment for life, and health and all things! He cannot protect himself from disease, from reproach, and from death. Where are now the mighty men, whose names terrified nations? Their bodies have returned to the dust and their spirits have gone to render their account to God.

6. We must every one of us give an account to God of the manner, in which we spend our time.

The value of time must be estimated by a consideration of the important duties to be performed during

its continuance. The work to be done by us while we are permitted to live is great, and is connected with consequences, which must affect us forever. The longest period of time is short, when compared with eternity. Indeed all comparison fails. What then is the life of man? Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. During our short and uncertain period of life, our chief business is to make preparation for our future state. For there is no work, nor devise, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are going.

In the contemplation of the work to be done we find that we are by nature depraved—enemies of God—exposed to everlasting death—our immortal soul in a state of ruin—and no help in ourselves. We find also from searching the scriptures that God in great mercy has provided for us an all sufficient Savior—no less a person than his only begotten Son, and that salvation is offered without money and without price, and too without any respect of persons. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. God has given us time to acquire a knowledge of his law and of his Son—of the method he has adopted for our salvation. He has given us the volume of revelation, which contains all the information we need. To neglect to search the scriptures is to provoke God to anger against us and to ruin our own souls. The object to be obtained du-

ring our short tarry in this world is of infinite value. It must be obtained now or never.

Deliverance from death everlasting and an inheritance incorruptible undefiled and that fadeth not away are offered to every one, who in time repents of his sins and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. These two great objects can never be separated. Who can form any conception of the greatness of the sufferings, which the believer will escape? or the greatness of the inheritance he will obtain? or, the value of the price paid for his redemption? What would those give, who are now suffering the wrath of God, and who once had an opportunity to hear the gospel, could they come back to this world and have one day more of trial? What would the angels give, who for their rebellion were banished from heaven and are now reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, could they be permitted to enjoy such an opportunity as you have to be delivered from the punishment they are suffering and to be reconciled to their offended sovereign? How indescribably and inconceivably precious is the time, when a sinner believes in Christ! That one act frees him from the bondage of sin and the fear of future misery, and secures to him the hope of future and everlasting happiness and glory.

The time allowed us includes all the privileges, which have been granted us. We have been distinguished from the angels that sinned, and for whom no Savior has been provided and no space for repentance has been given. We have likewise been distinguished from millions and hundreds of millions of the human race, who never heard of the method devised and



adopted for the redemption of men. It is impossible for the heathen by the light of reason to discover the way of salvation through faith in Christ and him crucified. The doctrines of Christianity have been made known to the world by revelation, but the light of Christianity has never extended to a large portion of mankind. They have come into the world depraved, and unable to discover the glory of God's forgiving love. Gloomy is their prospect and they know not what will become of them when they die. The scriptures assure us that no idolater shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

The opportunities most of you have enjoyed have been sufficient for the accomplishment of the work of preparation for heaven. This is evident from the fact that not a few children and youth have already chosen that good part which will never be taken from them. Much of your time has been lost when you might have made yourselves acquainted with the great truths of revelation. How precious the opportunities, which have been misimproved! How many years some have continued in unbelief—objecting to the most essential truths of Christianity, truths, which have been in many instances effectual to the conversion of sinners! Every one, who is still impenitent is under sentence of condemnation and the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth on Christ is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the

light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. The sin of unbelief by which Christ is rejected, is more aggravated in the sight of God than any transgression of his law. It is not so viewed by men. Open violations of the moral law—profane swearing, lying, intemperance—dishonesty—idolatry and adultery exclude those, who are guilty of these crimes from the church. But the sin of unbelief is hardly noticed. Many occupy places in the church, who are far from being sound in the faith. The most moral unbeliever, who hears the gospel faithfully preached every Sabbath is more guilty in the sight of God than the ignorant Pagan, who worships idols. Were the unbeliever sensible of his guilt he would be alarmed.

There is another sin more aggravated than the sin of unbelief. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a manifestation of the exceeding riches of divine grace and the strength of divine love. It is added to the gift of Christ. It has been bestowed upon those, who have rejected Christ. The rejection of Christ follows from unbelief. The sin of unbelief is in addition to the transgression of the divine law. The gift of the Holy Ghost after the rejection of the Son of God is a proof of more intense love of men than the gift of Christ after a refusal to obey the divine law. It would have been just for God to have punished rebellious

men without providing for them a Savior—and much more deserving were they of punishment when they put to death his only begotten Son. And still more deserving of punishment are those, who resist the Holy Spirit, and make light of his instructions. How many times the impenitent have broken the law of God, which is holy and just and good!—how many times rejected the offers of salvation through faith in Christ!—how many times resisted the Holy Spirit, sent to convince them of sin of righteousness and a judgment to come! The Holy Spirit in the most tender manner, when you have been reading the word or hearing it preached—or when you have been called to notice some affecting event of Divine Providence—has whispered within—all is not right—something must be done—no time is to be lost—now look to Jesus! You must every one of you give account to God of your striving against his Holy Spirit.

## APPLICATION.

In view of the subject under consideration let your thoughts, my hearers, carry you onward and upward to the judgment-seat of Christ. It may be that some of you will before many weeks or months be called into the presence of God. After death there can be no change in your character. You must be judged and rewarded according to the deeds done in the body.

You now in *thought*, and in view of the possibility that you may soon be numbered with the dead, stand before the Judge of the world. What account can you give of the use you have made of the powers of your mind? Are you illiterate? Look yonder to that shining and joyful group. Many of them were unable

to read. They heard the word preached, understood it, and gratefully received the offers of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. They are about to enjoy that inheritance purchased for them by their Redeemer.

Have you enjoyed the advantages of a good education and become more or less learned? Could you not understand the doctrines peculiar to Christianity? Did you embrace dangerous errors, which have proved your ruin? Look you to that shining group, whom you despised as weak and illiterate. Why could not you with superior powers of mind and far greater advantages understand the truths of revelation as well as they? Besides, so plain are the truths of God's word that way-faring men, though fools, or illiterate, need not err therein. They received the simple truths of revelation; but you would receive nothing on the mere testimony of God.

You preferred the testimony of reason, the reason of a transgressor, who is always disposed to justify or to excuse himself, to the testimony of God. Instead of exercising your reason in ascertaining what the scriptures teach, you have exercised it in determining what they ought to teach and what God ought to do. Your reason, intended for your good, you have made the instrument, by its perversion, of your destruction.

Are you poor? God has wise ends to be accomplished by placing some in circumstances of poverty. If contented with the allotments of providence, they are a constant reproof to those, who live in great splendor and at great expense, when so much remains to be done for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. Do you say you had no time to attend to the subject

of religion? You see among the saved some, who were as poor as you, and who were obliged to labor daily for the support of their families.

Are you rich? How have you used the bounties of God's providence? Have you felt that you were but stewards and that the gold and silver committed to you were the Lord's? Has not the Lord's money been spent more freely to gratify pride—and for the pleasures and amusements of the world than for him? The rich often do more to corrupt than to benefit the public. Their wealth is in many instances a burden to them. Their pride may be gratified while they are made unhappy by their various cares. They rob God by withholding from him his due. The way of all transgressors is hard.

Are you rulers or magistrates? What has been your influence? Have you regarded the claims of God? Have you endeavored to promote the virtue and happiness of the people, or have you been wholly selfish? How fearful must be the account, which rulers will be required to render to God? While they themselves live in splendor, they encourage their people to engage in bloody wars, which might be prevented by the exercise of a Christian and pacific spirit. Millions, the hard earnings of the people, are spent, and thousands of valuable lives are sacrificed, while the authors have no share in the sufferings. What immense debts have accumulated, and burdens laid upon the people in Europe by the custom of war? The popularity of conquerors is a proof that nations delight in military operations. The history of the world would hardly be read, if it were not the history of bloody battles. It is undoubtedly the duty of rulers to restrain and

counteract the influence of such as seek for military glory.

To all classes the question may be proposed, how have you spent your time, allowed you for making preparations for your future state? Though depraved, and condemned, you have had an opportunity to obtain pardon and justification through faith in the Son of God. Salvation has been offered many times to every one of you as a free gift; but you have made light of the offer and persevered in unbelief and impenitence. You could not expect that God would look with indifference on your neglect and rejection of his Son, sent into the world to suffer and die that you may live. Now the day of grace is forever ended—time is no more—you will have no more offers of pardon. You must receive your rewards according to your conduct.

Now let us come back to our proper places and while we may, let us make sure of heaven.

Now, as you are all still living and may be laying up treasures for eternity, let Christians consider that their reward in heaven will correspond with what they do and suffer for Christ in this world. Be not contented merely to obtain admittance into heaven. Be as anxious to obtain a large inheritance in heaven as worldly men to obtain a large inheritance on earth. You are sure that the captain of your salvation will be victorious. When the book of life is opened it will appear that every one whose name was ever recorded there has been delivered from all his enemies—and that all their victories have been ruinous to them and their cause. Great indeed must be your joy, when you hear the Judge, with the most benignant look, say

to you, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

And let the impenitent, while they have an opportunity, make their peace with God. You are furnished with the means by which you may satisfy the demands of the divine law. Christ has by his obedience and death magnified the divine law and made it honorable. You have only to look to him, confessing your sins with penitence—acknowledging your dependence on him, and trusting in him. You must do this or you must be lost. All hope of future happiness while you continue in unbelief must be cut off. You know this that the more impartially you study the scriptures; the more anxious you are respecting the concerns of your souls.

You know that every year many are unexpectedly and unprepared called into the presence of God. And you know that the chamber of sickness, when the body is full of pain and the thoughts cannot be fixed on any object, is not the fit place for the performance of that work, which requires the exercise of all the powers of the soul. What business is so important and so difficult as that we have to transact with the Great Jehovah, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men! A mistake here is ruinous. How many, who indulge a hope of salvation, have refused to receive the whole truth, and have embraced a defective system! Search the scriptures, I pray you, carefully and impartially. Depend not on human theories, but on the word and Spirit of God, and give yourselves no rest till you can say, Old things are passed away, behold, all things have become new.—Amen.















