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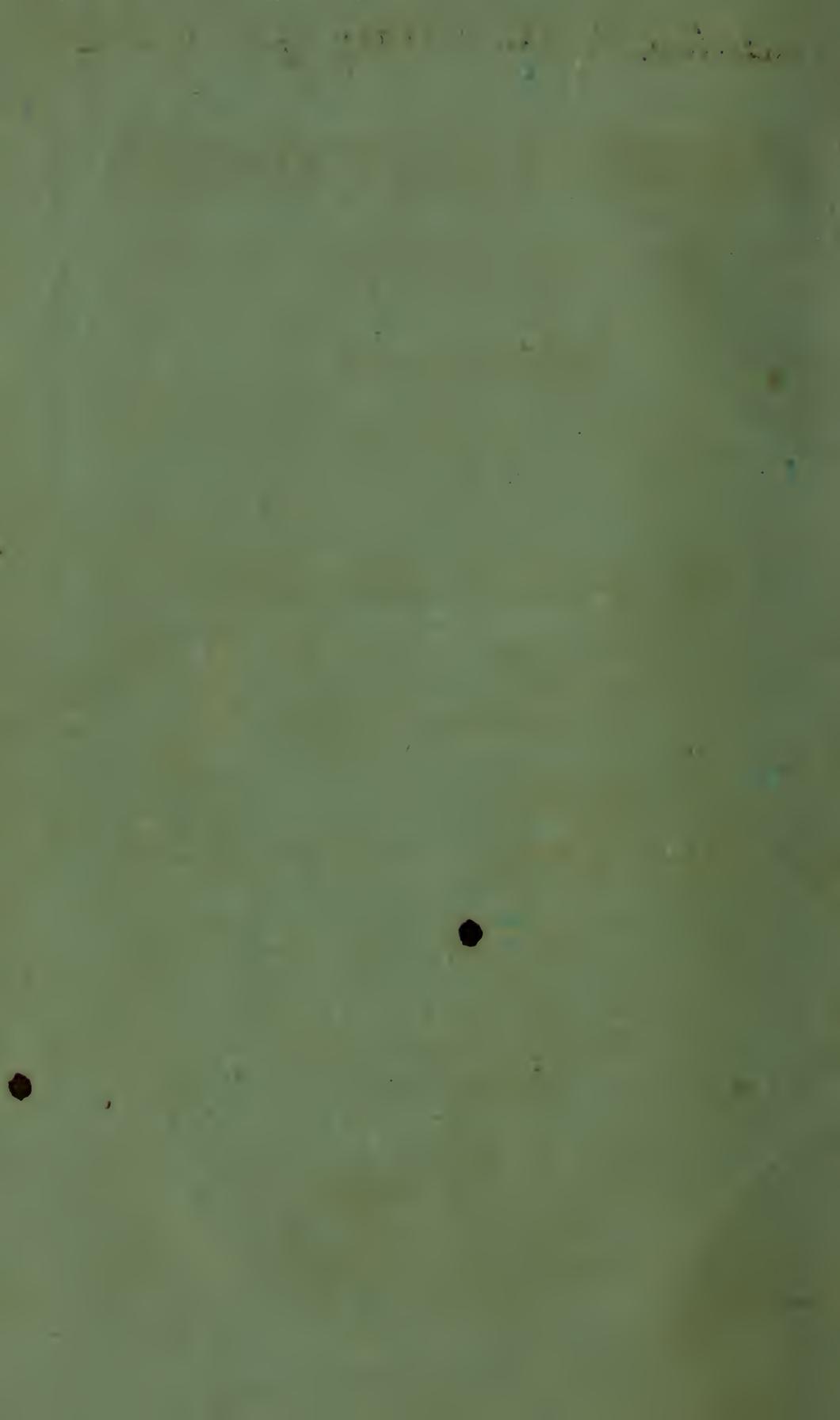
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Godliness: a Great Mystery.



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GODLINESS, A GREAT MYSTERY.

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

The method God has devised and adopted for the redemption of sinful men, is mysterious, and cannot be understood without a knowledge of a plurality of persons in the Godhead.

The scriptures, given by inspiration of God, and the catechism approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, teach us that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

The revelations God has made of himself, of his purposes and works, demand a belief of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. The Father, as the Creator and governor of the world, was the first person made known ; then the Son, the Redeemer ; finally, the Holy Ghost, by whose power men are regenerated and saved.

When God created our first parents, he wrote his law upon their hearts. This law was exactly fitted to their nature and constitution. Perfect obedience would have made them as happy as it was possible for them to be. The works of creation and providence, afforded them proof that there is one God, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness. They could know, while innocent, but one person in the Godhead, their Creator and rightful sovereign. Any in-

timation of a Savior, in case they sinned, would have had the same influence on their minds, as the assurance of the serpent, that, if they partook of the forbidden fruit, they would *not* surely die. It may be added God never makes any unnecessary display of his perfections, or purposes; so perfect is the government of God, that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without him, and the very hairs of our head are all numbered. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work. The works of creation and providence proclaim the unity of God; they give us no knowledge of a plurality of persons in the Godhead.

It is by no means strange, that those who deny the inspiration of the scriptures should be Unitarians; they persuade themselves that they love God, who bestows his blessings on them; but do they, more than some of the lower orders of animals, which love those who feed them, and manifest different feelings, when their masters withhold their usual food from them?

Now the law of God, which is written on the hearts of all mankind, is a manifestation of his character, and an expression of his will. God could not be honored, as a righteous sovereign, should he not punish impenitent transgressors. With respect to every good law, the only alternative is—obey, and be protected; or disobey, and suffer the penalty. The law transgressed demands satisfaction, as the transgressor cannot give satisfaction himself, if he rejects the satisfaction God has provided, he must perish. Here then we see the *mercy* of God, manifested in the gift of his Son, to suffer the penalty of the law we have transgressed. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life—John iii. 16.

Though our first parents were made in the image of God, and were perfectly holy and happy; their knowledge of the

whole character of God was limited by the circumstances of their condition. God had made such a revelation of himself, and of his government, as was suited to their character and condition. He had made no revelation of his mercy, the brightest and most endearing excellency of his character. To forgive one who has injured us, is a proof of deeper piety than to relieve one in distress, who has never offended us.

The apostacy of our first parents, gave God an opportunity to make a more glorious revelation of his character to the universe, than he had made by the creation of the world.

But much as God loved our first parents, and much as he desired to forgive them, he could not do it safely; except in a way which would give honor, satisfaction and force to the just demands of his law. What greater proof can God give of his determination to execute his laws, than he has given by permitting his dearly beloved and only begotten Son to suffer the penalty of his holy law in the room of all he determines to save? This is the only method by which any can be forgiven, and obtain a good hope of future and everlasting happiness.

The promise made to our progenitors, after they had eaten the forbidden fruit, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, gave them the first intimation that there was more than one person in the God-head; and that the seed of the woman, the second person, would overcome the serpent. No doubt, if our first parents, or either of them, became truly pious, the Holy Spirit, though not yet revealed, gave them a sufficient knowledge of the way of salvation. They had a clear view of their disobedience, and felt that they were justly condemned. We know not that they became penitent and obtained forgiveness. Without heartfelt penitence we know they could not be saved.

“Think not,” said Christ, in his sermon on the Mount,

“that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

Though our first parents did not in a literal sense die the very day they ate the forbidden fruit, they became dead in trespasses and sins. The light which shone so brightly in them while innocent, was suddenly extinguished, and they were involved in darkness.

None but God could devise, and had a right to adopt, a method honorable to himself, by which the transgressor could be justified and saved. And this was very gradually made known to the world.

The history of our race for 1656 years is the history of a very corrupt people. Murder was committed in the family of our first parents. Cain murdered Abel. The passions of corrupt men weré the laws which governed them. It does not appear that there were schools or churches, with educated pastors to check and counteract the power of depraved and wicked men. Very few of the multitudes who lived before the deluge, had any knowledge of the true God. What communications were made by special revelations we know not. Enoch appears to have been a good man. Though he lived 368 years, his life was of short duration compared with the lives of some others. He walked with God, and probably suffered persecution from which God delivered him, when he took him to heaven. It is probable that the history of the antediluvians was not much unlike the present history of pagan tribes and nations. The law written on the hearts of all mankind, was their only guide. This was hidden and counteracted by corrupt desires and passions.

In consequence of the longevity of the inhabitants of the old world, it has been calculated by a learned divine, that there were more people in the world before the deluge than there have been since.

Such was the wickedness of the posterity of Adam, after a trial of 1656 years, that God destroyed them with the exception of eight souls, by a universal deluge. The universality of the deluge renders it probable that the world was extensively inhabited. It does not appear that the deluge, terrible as this judgment was, produced any radical change in the character of the human race. Abraham was not born till more than 300 or 352 years after the deluge. When he was 99 years of age, God established his covenant with him, and directed him to circumcise all the males of his family. Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born, who was circumcised at eight days old. He was the son of Sarah as well as of Abraham, and he was dearly beloved. But when about 30 years of age, God subjected his father to a severe trial. God commanded him to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice, *a burnt offering*, in the land of Moriah. Isaac was very dear to his parents, and to offer him as a burnt offering was more than the patriarch could do without strength from God. Such was the help he received from God, to whom he was indebted for his own life, and for that of his son, (God had a perfect right to take them when he pleased, and in the manner most agreeable to him,) that Abraham was ready to do just what was required of him. He was so filled with the Holy Ghost as to have no will of his own opposed to the will of God.

Isaac was a remarkable type of Christ—the Son of God—who was actually sacrificed on Calvary. God spared Isaac and his father, but did not spare his only begotten, dearly beloved Son, and did not spare himself, but freely gave his son to be crucified that we may be saved.

The bloody sacrifices offered from time to time by the posterity of Abraham, till the birth and crucifixion of Christ, pointed to him in whom they all terminated. It was a much greater trial for God the Father to give up his Son to be sacrificed to save his enemies from deserved punish-

ment, than for Abraham to give up Isaac; as the Son of God is greater and more beloved because more deserving of love than was Isaac.

As his own glory is, and must be, the ultimate object God ever has in view, so he performs his appropriate part, and infinitely the most important part in its accomplishment. When it was manifest that none could be saved unless the claims of divine justice were satisfied, and the truth of God was made to appear, God was pleased to give his dearly beloved and only begotten Son to assume human nature, that he might perfectly obey the law man has transgressed, and that he might suffer the penalty in the room of all who cordially trust in him. When all this was done, an atonement was made as sufficient for all the world, as for one individual.

Here, let it be observed, the law which Christ obeyed, and the penalty of which he suffered, is the law written on the hearts of all mankind—*on the hearts of the most ignorant and degraded heathen*, as well as on the hearts of all who dwell in christian lands. In this particular, Christ has prepared the way for their salvation; and it is the solemn duty of the christian church to make known to the heathen the only way by which they may be saved.

The man, however learned in other respects, must be very ignorant of the principles of law and of good government, who does not see that the debtor must satisfy his creditor or suffer the penalty the law demands. But, if the debtor have a surety, the payment of the surety must satisfy the creditor. Now, what innocent person, what prince, what son of a great king would consent to suffer an ignominious and painful death to save rebellious subjects from deserved punishment? This the Son of God has done to satisfy the just demands of the divine law upon all transgressors. I see not on what ground the infidel and unitarian can hope for justification; on their principles no government can be sus-

tained, much less be respected. When they die, as they have no foundation on which to rest, they must fall into that pit from which there is no deliverance.

The seed of the woman, which God promised our first parents should bruise the serpent's head, in process of time proved to be the Son of God, the second person in the trinity. "But when the fulness of time was come," said the Apostle to the Galatians, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons."—Gal. iv.4-5. His life was the embodiment of the divine law. The law had no demands on him for the least offence. He suffered the penalty, not for himself, but for all given to him in the covenant of redemption. "All," he said, "that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."—John vi. 37.

He has the promise of his Father, that "his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him."—Ps. 72, 8, 11.

When the Son of God was baptized by John, the heavens were opened, and the spirit, like a dove, descended upon him; and there came a voice from heaven, saying: "Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."—Mark 1st, 10, 11. "He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power."—Acts x. 38.

The Holy Ghost dwelt in him, and enabled him to perform his mighty deeds. The Holy Ghost dwelt in him till the work of the second person on earth was finished, and till the Holy Spirit, as a *distinct person*, was about to be revealed. No one could come to Christ to be pardoned and justified without being born of the Holy Spirit. How could any one discover any loveliness in Christ crucified, without a new nature created by the Holy Spirit? Regeneration is not the work of the second, but of the third person in the

God-head. As the Holy Spirit descended and dwelt in Christ, and gave success to his ministry, so the Holy Spirit descends on, and dwells in, all called of God to the sacred ministry, and gives success to their labors. It is the Holy Spirit that gives solemnity and power to the preached word. The operations of the Holy Spirit are directed to the conscience and the heart of the sinner. Powerless are the best written discourses if not addressed to the conscience and heart of those that hear them.

It seems to be the belief of some, that the unconverted may come to Christ to be pardoned and justified, just as the blind, the dumb, the deaf and the leprous came to Christ, *just as they were*. This is not a scriptural view of the subject. "No man," said Christ, "can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him."—John vi. 44.

Again: "No man can come to me, except it were given to him of my Father."—John vi. 65. How can any man come to Christ to be forgiven and justified, unless convinced that he is justly condemned, and unable to satisfy the just demands of the divine law? Christ can receive no one unless truly penitent, and prepared to trust in him for salvation. He can receive no one whose heart is still enmity against God. In too many instances, when sinners are urged with great earnestness to come to Christ, their guilt and deep depravity are overlooked. Their *danger* is described and *not their guilt*. The injury they have done to *themselves*, and *not the injury they have done to God and his government*, is exhibited to their view. The impression is made on their minds that they have full power to secure their own salvation when they please. *Their own happiness* is the great object they are urged to secure. Their guilt is shown to consist in not doing what they have power to do. So, when converted, their religion originates in *self love* and terminates in their *own happiness*. Here we see why such preaching is unsuccessful.

As the appropriate work of the second person in the Godhead was by his obedience and death, to satisfy the just demands of the divine law, and to prove the truth of God who had said, "the soul that sinneth it shall die;" so the appropriate work of the Holy Spirit is to awaken, convict, and convert the sinner, and thus to prepare him to become reconciled to the character and government of God.

All who have been saved from the earliest period of the church of God, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. His work is distinct from that of the second person, though their works appear to be united in the conversion of sinners. All who have been justified, have been justified by the imputed righteousness of the second person, and regenerated by the third person.

At the baptism of Christ, "the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon him, and he was filled with the Holy Ghost when he returned from Jordan."—Luke iv. 1. The apostles were filled at times with the Holy Ghost, which enabled them to speak with great power and with great success. The men called by the spirit of God to preach the Gospel, sometimes give proof that they are filled with the Holy Ghost, especially when God revives his work. Such was the union of the second and third persons during the ministry of Christ, that we might attribute to either miraculous powers.

"When John heard of the wonderful works of Jesus, he sent to inquire if he was the Christ? Jesus answered and said unto them—Go and show John again those things ye do hear and see.—The blind receive their sight, 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; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."—Math. xi. 3, 6.

The miracles here recorded were proofs of the supernatural or divine power of Christ, and of his wonderful philanthropy. The defects which Christ cured or removed,

were *physical*, and were not any proofs of *forgiveness*—and the cures were not conversions. The mission of Christ made it necessary for him to give undoubted proofs of his divine power and his heavenly sympathy with the suffering.

Now, because the blind, the deaf, and the dumb; the lame and the leprous were brought to Christ, *just as they were*, to be made whole, *some* maintain that sinners the most depraved may come to Christ just as they are. This error renders the ministry of many, it is feared, unsuccessful, and if apparently successful, deceptive. There is a wide difference between pity for the suffering, who have not caused their suffering by any improper conduct, and the forgiveness of those, who have without any cause hated and injured us. May thieves, liars, fornicators, profane swearers, and murderers, just as they are, without repentance, or a radical change, take refuge in Christ? None can come to Christ till they are reconciled to his holy character, and can have fellowship with him.

Pity is exercised toward the *suffering*—*mercy* to the *guilty*.

NOTE. The Rev. Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh, Scotland, notices the distinction between pity and mercy, which, by too many young preachers is overlooked. His illustrations are very striking and satisfactory.

“To do justice to God and to the Saviour,” he observes, “we must be careful not to confound *pity* with *mercy*. We pity simple suffering, but let pity and love be extended to *guilty* suffering, and you have now the element of mercy. Mercy is the forgiveness of an injury, mercy is the pardon of a sinner.

“In fine, the objects of pity are sufferers who have been unfortunate, the objects of mercy are sufferers who have been guilty.” Sermon VIII. ✕

It was necessary for Christ to give proof of his humanity—his love of mankind, and his pity for the unfortunate. Natural and physical defects were not sins, and did not require the exercise of mercy, but only of pity.

It is a proof of inexcusable ignorance of the work of the Holy Spirit, in the conviction and conversion of sinners, to make no distinction between those born blind, deaf and dumb, and those spiritually blind, deaf and dumb; whose defects are not *physical* but moral, the effects of deep depravity. The excuse is, sinners are urged to come to Christ without dependence on their own works. True, their own works before conversion are sinful, and they cannot come to Christ without repentance, the exercise of a new heart. Renouncing dependence on

“No man can come to me,” said our Lord, “except the Father which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”—John vi. 44. He thus concluded a discourse in a synagogue: “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”—John vi. 65. Now, if we appeal to any intelligent christian, the following will be his testimony: When first awakened by the Spirit of God, I felt that I was justly condemned by his holy law written on my heart, my own conscience; the light within me, condemned me, and urged me to come to Christ, but when looking at the cross I was filled with terror, and I could see nothing lovely in my Saviour. Though worthy of supreme love, I could not love him. I could do nothing to save myself, and fell helpless at the feet of him who will have mercy on whom he will. My unconditional surrender was followed by a most wonderful change in my views and feelings. Christ appeared to be altogether lovely; and I could but love him, and with all my heart embrace him. This great change prepared me to come to him, and without which I never could come to him and embrace him. Every true christian knows that he could not come to Christ and embrace him till there was such a change in his nature as to enable him to discover a great apparent change in his views of Christ. He knows, too, that the change could not be in his divine Redeemer,

our works does not satisfy the claims of justice. It must be an offence to Christ to come to him penitent, for justification.

There appears to be an unwillingness in some preachers to address the consciences and hearts of their hearers. It is difficult to account for this, if they have themselves experienced a work of the Holy Spirit in their conversion. Here we see what prevents the conversion of sinners. Faithfully addressing the conscience of sinners, by which they are convinced and made to feel that they are justly condemned by the holy law of God, which he is determined to execute, alarms, displeases and distresses them. But how can sinners repent unless they are convinced that they are guilty? How can they come to Christ unless they feel the need of his atoning blood?

but in himself. Nothing distresses the awakened and convicted sinner so much as a view of the crucifixion of Christ, in which is seen proof of the truth and inflexible justice of God.

As the appropriate work of the second person in the Godhead was to satisfy the just demands of the law man had transgressed, and to prove the truth of God in the redemption of all given to his son, so when he suffered death upon the cross, was buried, rose again, and ascended up to heaven, *his* work on the earth was finished. And he will never again appear, till he comes in great glory to judge the world. The Holy Spirit that had dwelt in him, left him when he died, and was then revealed as a distinct person.

The work of the third person is distinct from that of the second person, and should be so viewed to prevent confusion in our minds, when meditating on the plan and work of redemption. All, who have been pardoned and justified, have been justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and have been regenerated by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.

When Christ, while on earth, said to anyone, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee," *he* could say it with great propriety, because he was able and willing to become the surety for that person. But it was the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit to give power and effect to the word spoken by the second person. Here we see how the appropriate works of the two persons are united in the same act: the second person, as such, did not regenerate anyone, and the third person did not satisfy the demands of the divine law.

When our first parents were created, as already observed, they knew but one person in the Godhead. They could not know more than one. The works of creation declared the glory of the power, wisdom and goodness of him that created them.

Before the apostacy of our first parents, there was no need of one who saves from sin ; but when they sinned, the law, which they had transgressed, condemned them, and God would have been just had he caused them immediately to suffer its penalty. Because he had purposes of mercy toward the human race, and as regards the brightest manifestation of his own character, he spared the lives of our first parents, and gave them an intimation of his forgiving love.

Here it must be admitted, that God always has an ultimate regard to his own glory. The brightest manifestation of the character of God is his forgiving love, and the man who has most of this spirit is most like God. The language of men is—pay me that thou owest, do me justice—give me the praise and honor I deserve. The person injured, or believed not to have received the honor supposed to be due, becomes an enemy. Forgiveness, which is the exercise of mercy, is written in letters, which may be read by every one, on the plan God has adopted for the redemption of lost men.

The crucifixion of Christ completed the work, by which he made an atonement, as sufficient for the whole human race as for any individual. By his obedience and death he satisfied the just demands of that law, which is written upon the hearts of all mankind, the most degraded heathen as well as the most enlightened in christian nations. The missionary, when about to visit the most corrupt and idolatrous pagans, is cheered and encouraged by a knowledge of the fact, that Christ has gone before and prepared the way for him. Success, it is believed, does attend the labors of devoted missionaries in every part of the world.

The resurrection of Christ was a great and glorious event, in which the whole Godhead was concerned, and by which God approved all that he had taught and done. For forty days he was seen at different times, and by more than five hundred brethren at once.

The crucifixion of Christ terminated the Jewish dispensation, and the separation of the posterity of Abraham from the rest of the human race. The way was prepared for the universal spread of the gospel. This Christ had accomplished by his obedience and death, and he was the proper person to introduce the change.

“All power,” he said, “is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore,” he said to the eleven faithful disciples, “and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”—Matt. xxviii. 18–20.

When Christ had commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, “while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”—Acts i. 9. He will not be again seen till he comes in great glory to judge the world.

Ten days after the resurrection of Christ, the second person in the Godhead, and fifty days after the last Jewish passover, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, as a distinct person, was revealed by his mighty works. “And they,” the apostles, “were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”—Acts. ii. 4.

Though the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at the time of his baptism, and dwelt in him, yet he was not known, as a distinct person, till Jesus was glorified.—John vii. 39.

The Feast of Pentecost was kept the fiftieth day after the passover, in remembrance of the law given by Moses at Mt. Sinai, fifty days, or seven weeks after the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. The extraordinary events which preceded this festival, drew together great numbers from the different places where they resided.

It is worthy of special notice, that the attention of the

multitudes *was directed to the law they had transgressed*, before they were pricked in their hearts and converted. The law was applied to their consciences, and they felt condemned by it. Their guilt in the crucifixion of their long-promised Messiah was then charged against them.

“When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” When the crucifixion of Christ was presented to their view, they felt that they were doubly condemned, and justly deserved to suffer the wrath of God.

The wonderful success which attended the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, should lead every faithful minister to ascertain *what means were so signally blessed*. The attention of Peter’s hearers was first directed *to the law*, written upon the hearts of all mankind, and then to the crucifixion of Christ, by whom alone they could be saved. “And I, brethren,” said the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, “when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”—1 Cor. ii. 1-2.

The hatred of Christ, was hatred of the law which he obeyed.

When the attention of the sinner is directed to Christ, it should be directed to his obedience and crucifixion, by which he suffered the penalty of the law, by which we are justly condemned. In his death we see the inflexible justice of God, and proof of his truth, who said, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” It is to be lamented that *some popular preachers* do not distinguish between the pity of Christ manifested towards the blind, the deaf and the dumb, physical defects, and his forgiving love, exercised toward those condemned by the divine law, and *truly penitent*. Of

course, their beautiful discourses are powerless, and their converts indulge only false hopes. *The dispensation of the Holy Spirit*, the third person in the Godhead, is the most perfect. In urging men to come to Christ, it is not proper to represent him as he appeared, when giving proof of his humanity, but as giving proof of his love of that law by which the sinner is condemned, and the penalty of which he suffered on the cross, in the room of all who trust in him.

In many beautiful discourses the wonderful pity of Christ is extolled, but not his mercy in the forgiveness of the penitent. It was one part of his mission to give proof that he was a perfect man, that he might be the Saviour of lost men; and another part of his mission to prove that he was a divine person, that his atonement might be sufficient for all mankind. But, had he not suffered the penalty of the law, in the room of all who trust in him, none could have been saved. As a man or philanthropist, Christ never saved any. We are indebted to the suffering of the cross for all the hope we have of pardon and justification.

This is the view of every one, who has experienced a work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. He never can forget the distress he felt when his conscience condemned him, and he felt that he was on the very brink of endless misery. He saw that he could not help himself, that his heart was hard, and could not love him who is altogether lovely. He can never forget the change, when the most terrific object he ever beheld, appeared subsequently the most lovely. Great was the change, and none but God could effect it. Here it may be observed, the work of conviction and the work of conversion are always attended with great solemnity. They are works of the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit always operates on the conscience. Convictions of the conscience are different from convictions of the understanding.

Now, as conviction of guilt must precede conversion, it may be asked, how can any be convinced that they are

transgressors of God's law, unless they know it by the greatness of their obligation to obey it? Again, as that conviction, which precedes regeneration, is by a knowledge of the law written on the heart, and which the conscience approves, how can it be known and perform its appropriate work, unless the conscience is enlightened? But how few preachers of the present day faithfully address the consciences of their hearers! Such addresses always awaken a feeling of opposition to those who deliver them. Preachers are unwilling to offend their hearers who liberally support them. Now, we know, that the man who has robbed his neighbor, hates him when his guilt is proved, and the law by which he must be condemned, and all too, who condemn his conduct. Just so it is, when faithful and solemn appeals are made to the consciences of those who are transgressors of God's law. Hence, we find, the most popular discourses are those which are addressed to the understanding and feelings of those who hear them. But we cannot believe, that God has written a law upon the hearts of all mankind, which he does not mean to execute. He has said, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." This truth requires the execution of his law, either on the transgressor or his substitute. "I had not known sin," said the apostle, "but by the law. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."—Rom. vii. 7-9.

Now the first object, which fixes the attention of a sinner awakened by the Holy Spirit, is the crucifixion of Christ, who suffered the penalty of the law, *not for himself*, but for transgressors of the same law. Here the sinner learns the greatness of his guilt, and the determination of God to punish with everlasting destruction all who, by penitence and faith, do not become united to Christ. Their struggles for relief are powerless. The convicted sinner cannot repent or pray, or perform any duty of himself, so as to afford him peace, and to give him a good hope of salvation. Where

must he go, but to the Spirit of God, looking to him who will have mercy on whom he will? The sinner must go stript of all dependence on his works, or his power to work—must fall helpless before him that searcheth the heart, and appears in no visible form. Many, it is believed, render their labors worse than useless, and deceptive and ruinous, by endeavoring to give the sinner such a view of the amiable and compassionate character of Christ, that the sinner, *unconverted*, may be pleased with it, and with such views and feelings may embrace Christ. The work now to be done is not with the second person, as if he were still visible and on the earth, healing the sick, and giving sight to the blind, but with the invisible Spirit, who searches the heart, awakens the conscience, convinces of sin, and who alone can regenerate the sinner.

What signifies going back to a former visible dispensation which has passed away, and is for ever ended, when a more perfect and more spiritual dispensation has commenced, and which is far more favorable to the conversion of sinners than the former? Facts abundantly confirm the declaration. The greatest proof of Christ's love was on the cross. Why not present that view to the sinner?

It is impossible faithfully to preach the gospel without wounding the feelings of the unconverted—perhaps without offending them. When they contemplate the works of creation and providence—the proofs of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God—and the blessings bestowed on them, they persuade themselves that God loves them, and that they love him. How, then, can they believe that their hearts are enmity against God, and that his law condemns them? They appear to be grateful for blessings received, but these blessings do not influence them to love the *holy character* of God, and his *holy law*. Their love of God is selfish. They love him, not his holy character and government, but only for the favors bestowed on them. Those

only, who are called by the Spirit of God, and who are sustained by him, faithfully discharge their duty. When they see any in deep distress on account of their sins against a holy God, they would, if they dared, cry peace; but they know that this would probably prevent one about to enter into the kingdom of God, from obtaining salvation, when about to be obtained. None, who do not love God and the souls of men more than their worldly interest, will faithfully preach the truth; and none are loved more than such, by those converted by their instrumentality. Inexpressible is the joy of one, who discovers the glory of the forgiving love of God in his salvation. It is feared that very many of the reported conversions of the present day, and the additions to the church are unsound.

Discourses, addressed to the understanding, which exhibit proof of logical power and intellectual culture, and which refute the reasoning of popular errorists, may receive the praise of the well educated. Their pleasure may arise from the discomfiture of those who differ from them, rather than from a defense of what they believe to be the truth. So, too, discourses, written with taste, enlivened by beautiful illustrations, and quotations from celebrated authors, may charm the multitude. But such discourses do not reach and awaken the consciences of the hearers, and are powerless.

Preaching the law by many is disliked and condemned, because it is not, as they think and say, preaching Christ. But preaching the law is the most successful manner of preaching Christ. Was not his life the interpretation of the law, and the fulfilment of its requirements? The law never shone with such overpowering splendor as in his crucifixion. It is impossible faithfully to preach Christ without preaching the law. In too much of the preaching of the present day, the happiness of the sinner and not the glory of God, is made the chief end. Faithfully preaching the law and appealing to the consciences of the hearers, is usually, if not

always, attended with the teaching and saving power of the Holy Spirit.

Not preaching the law is not preaching Christ, whose life was the interpretation and fulfilment of its precepts, and whose crucifixion by wicked hands was a manifestation of the enmity of the unrenewed heart against God, and against his Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. The crucifixion of Christ, by which the just claims of the law were satisfied for all given to him, is the most affecting proof of his love of the souls of men.

But so presenting Christ to the unrenewed, as he appeared during his ministry, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind and feeding the hungry, and concealing his holy character and hatred of sin, may lead them to think that they love him and are willing to come to him, when in reality they have the same spirit in them which moved the Jews to crucify him. Many at the present time who come to Christ, come to him, not to be saved from sin, but from deserved punishment. Their hopes are deceptive.

Had the wonderful cures effected by Christ been effected by worldly men, their fame would have extended to the utmost bounds of the earth. Kings and noblemen, if parents of children born blind or deaf or dumb, would, at any expense, send them to such a wonderful physician to be cured. But these miracles of Christ proved him one of the most distinguished friends of mankind, and were suited to dispose them to listen to his instructions. The greatest proof he could give of his love of the human race and his desire of their salvation, was his willingness to suffer the penalty of the law they had transgressed, that they might be pardoned and justified.

Now the question may be asked, why did the Jews crucify Jesus? He was their long-expected Messiah, came at the time predicted and expected. His life was holy, and the exact embodiment of the divine law. The Jews crucified

him because they hated him, and their hatred of him was hatred of the law, and their hatred of the law was hatred of the holy character of God, of which the law was a manifestation. The feelings of every unconverted person, when awakened, and till converted, are like the feelings which moved the Jews to crucify the Son of God. Transgressors always hate the laws which condemn them, and by which they are justly punished. This every one awakened and convicted by the Spirit of God understands. This every true christian will acknowledge to be according to his experience, when awakened and before converted.

There is a strange inconsistency in the preaching of some. They cannot deny that the unrenewed are dead in trespasses and sins, but they urge them by all the force of argument they can command to do what the dead cannot do! They cannot take the first right step. They admit that the natural heart is enmity against God, and yet they make the impression on the minds of their hearers that they have full power to do what is required of them. The consequence is, that the unrenewed believe that their salvation is in their own power, and that they can secure it when they have a convenient time.

You may then ask, what must the sinner do? I answer, he must know what his situation is, and what he ought to do. He is not literally dead, but is dead to what is holy. His deadness to what is good is his hatred of it. He hates God because he has refused to obey his law, which requires him to love him with all his heart. He has robbed God in many ways, and we know that the robber hates him he has robbed.

He must be made to feel the necessity of a new creation, or a new nature, to prepare him to love the Son as well as the Father—indeed, the tri-une God. In his natural state he is fitted to worship but one person: the new nature, created by the Holy Spirit, prepares him to worship understandingly, the three persons in the Godhead.

Some of our most popular preachers are careful, in the exhibition of the character and life of Christ, to introduce nothing which can be offensive to worldly men. His spotless moral purity no one would venture to disapprove.

His wonderful liberality to the poor, feeding five hundredth men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes—his wonderful cures of the blind, &c.

Men of the world admire and extol the man, who, in a time of great scarcity, supplies the destitute with food.—the founder of a hospital for the sick—or a safe place for the insane, the blind, the deaf and dumb.

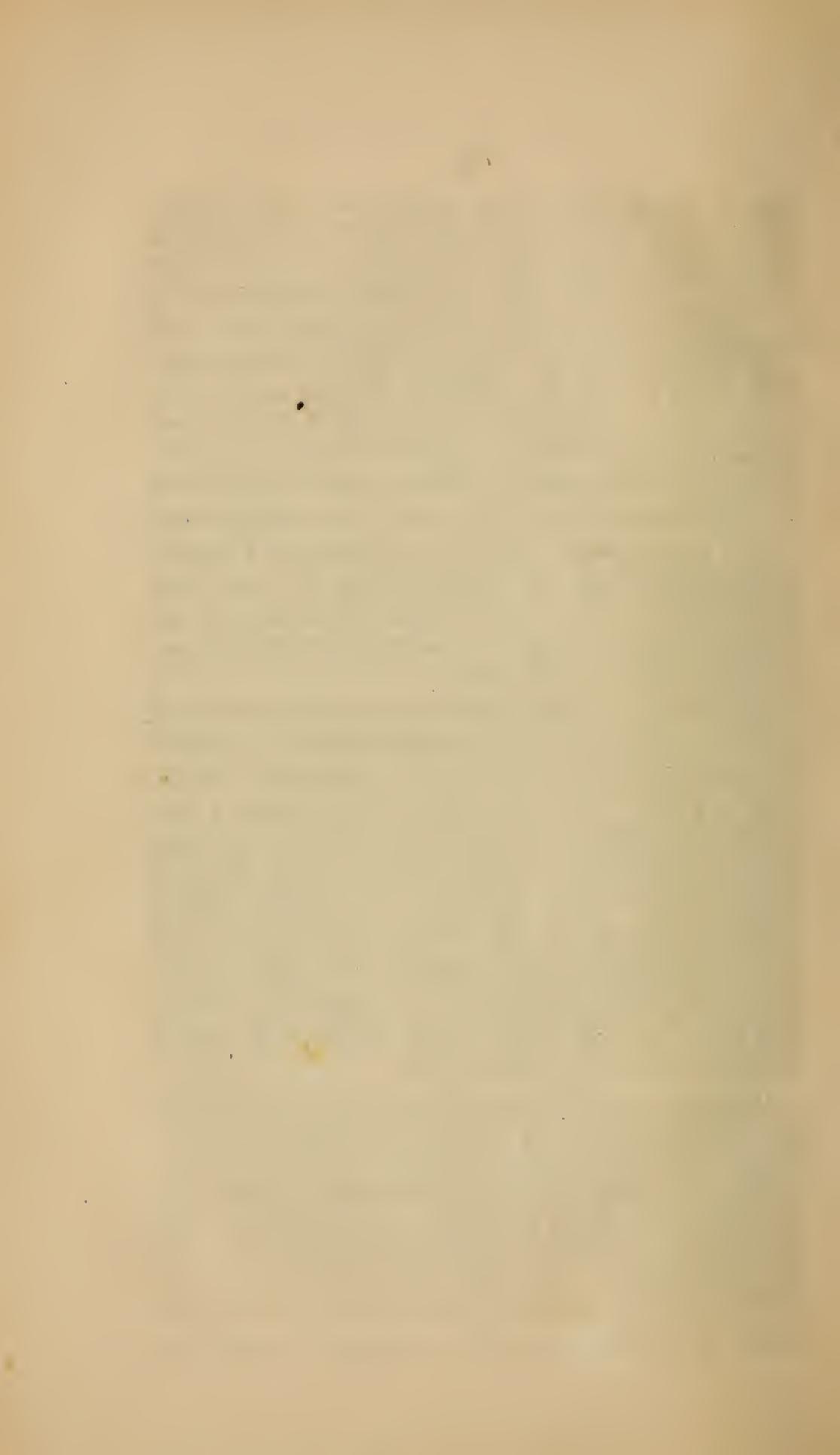
The wonderful miracles Christ wrought only gave lustre to those qualities the worldly admire. Now the unrenewed may be pleased with such a person, and may extol the preacher whose discourse is well written and well delivered. They persuade themselves, that as they are pleased with the discourse, so they are pleased with the character of Christ, and the impression is made on their mind, that they may come to him any time and secure their salvation. Such preachers are admired; their hearers are satisfied with themselves because their consciences are not disturbed, and they persuade themselves that they can come to him just as they are. They will pay liberally to him who will encourage them to indulge in hopes of salvation, without being born of the Spirit. They do not so address the conscience of the sinner as to convince him of his guilt, and of the necessity of a new nature to fit him to worship the three persons in the Trinity.

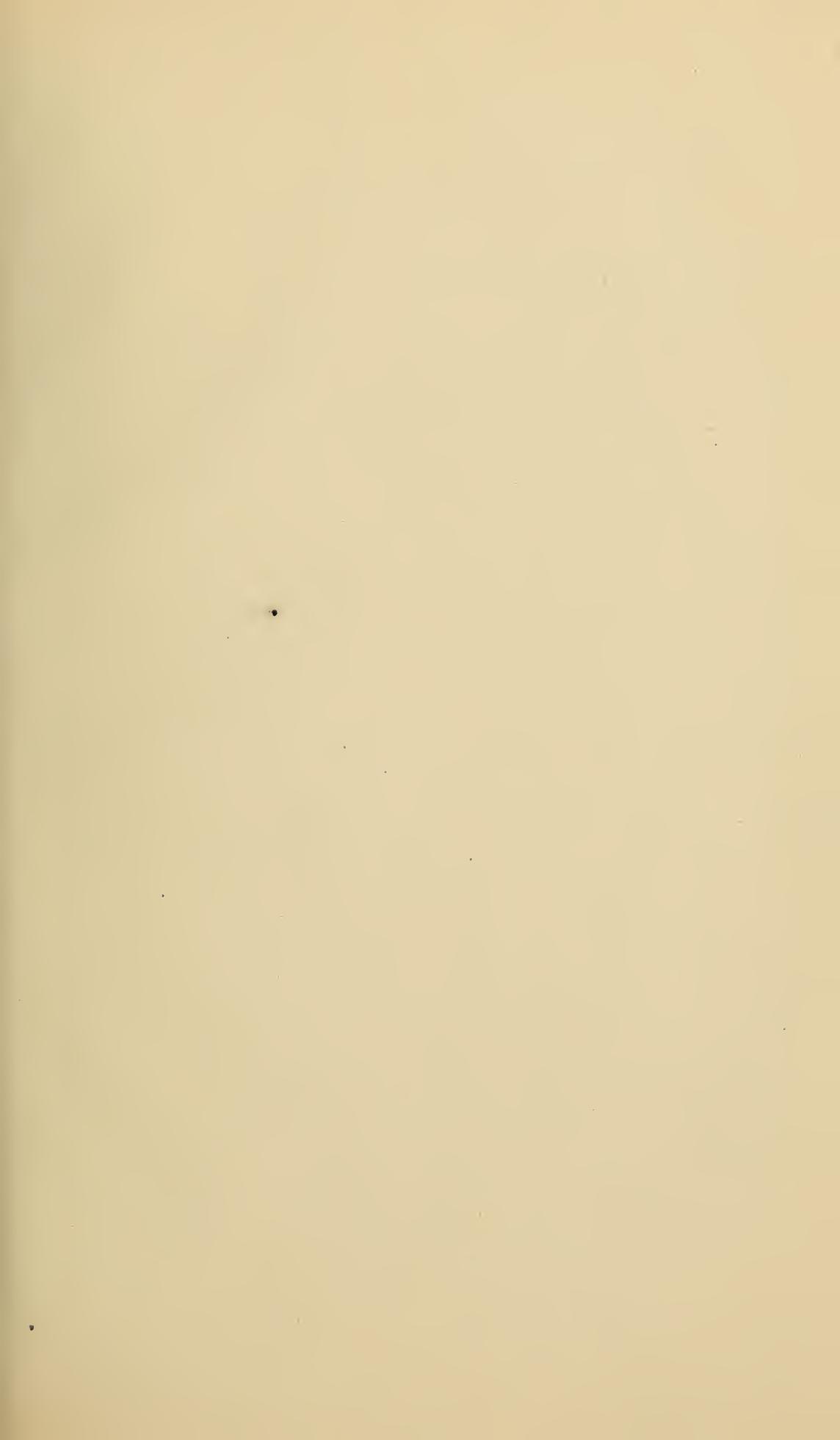
It is to be lamented, that so few revivals and conversions are reported at the meetings of our Presbyteries, and that some very popular preachers appear to regard a very liberal support and the praise of men, more than the salvation of souls. They will not, with solemnity, address the consciences of sinners, and show them their guilt—its greatness—the excellence of the divine law—God's hatred of sin, and his determination to punish it. They only speak of the injury

done to themselves by their transgressions, and not the injury done to God and his government, which could not be repaired except by the death of his dearly beloved and only begotten son. They speak very gently and cautiously of the danger to which the sinner has exposed himself, and urge him to take care of himself and secure his own happiness. It is painful and distressing to hear some of our young preachers, just from our seminaries, deliver well written sermons, which contain some corrections of the translations of the scriptures from the Greek and Hebrew, and some refutations of errors which have existed in the church, but very little suited to the necessities of a common congregation. Why not describe the work of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the essential difference between a good hope of salvation, and one that is deceptive and ruinous?

In conclusion, in many of the sermons of the present day, the work of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of sinners is not brought distinctly to view, and so described as to be known. Conviction by the Spirit of God is a deep, solemn, and painful work, and conversion by the same power produces a great change of views and feelings, and manner of life. It is an important duty of every preacher to make known the evidences of conviction and conversion by the Holy Spirit, and the evidences of the progress of the work in the heart of the convert. We have reason to fear that not a few, who occupy places in the visible church, were never born of the Holy Spirit.

It appears to be of great importance, that young men, in their preparation for the ministry, should devote more of their time to experimental subjects, that those who hear them may be satisfied that they are what they profess to be. This would add greatly to their influence and success. The most important branches of ministerial duty should be made most prominent.







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