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LECTURES

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

IN

DIVINITY.

BY REV FINIS EWING,

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER.

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PREFACE.

On opening a book, we naturally feel a desire to know something of its origin. To satisfy this curiosity, we say to the reader, that these Lectures were commenced by the Author, when a Theological School was taught in his neighborhood. And the general plan was pursued after the school had been discontinued.

An edition of these Lectures was printed, in 1827, for the Cumberland Presbyterian Synod. The work was well received. The publication of another edition has been repeatedly called for. It is now issued as a publication of the Cumberland Presbyterian Board. The copy right has been donated to the Board.

Perhaps the Author's style might have been better suited to the taste of some readers; it is, however, well adapted to those for whose benefit he mainly wrote. It will be readily discovered, that the Author was more solicitous to elucidate his subject by common sense argument and God's word, than by a selection of pretty words. It was his highest hope, and most ardent wish, to advance God's honor and the salvation of souls. Truth was his polar star.

Some thoughts, in most of these Lectures, were presented by the Author on his own responsibility. He earnestly desired "*every* reader to examine the *whole* in its connection, without any previous determination to retain his long established sentiments. Truth—simple, undisguised truth, ought to be the object of every reader, whether it go with, or cross, a previously trodden path."

This work having generally met the approbation of an impartial public, the Author prepared a second edition, enlarged and corrected. But after its preparation, God, in his mysterious

providence, removed him from the labors of earth. This edition of the Lectures has not been published. It appears, that, from the person into whose hands the manuscript was placed, nothing can be obtained, except the few articles published in the Cumberland Presbyterian Magazine.

Not found in the first, but incorporated in the present edition, are—the Lectures on God; The Christian Sabbath; and Supporting the Gospel.

On the recommendation of the Examining Committee, the second edition has been published by the Board. The work is offered to the public, believing it will be acceptable to the denomination of which the Author was a member, and beneficial to the cause of truth and spiritual religion in general.

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LECTURES

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS IN DIVINITY.

LECTURE I.

OF GOD.

THERE is a God. All men, in all ages, have given their assent to the truth of this proposition; and this fact renders it unreasonable to suppose it to be false. Cicero says, "There is no animal but man that has any knowledge of God; and of men there is no nation so untractable and fierce, although it may be ignorant what a God it should have, yet is not ignorant that one should be had." And Plutarch says, "If you look over the earth, you may find cities without walls, letters, king houses, wealth and money, devoid of theatres and schools; but a city without temples and gods, and where is no use of prayers and oaths, and oracles, nor sacrifices to obtain good or avert evil, no man

ever saw." These are the sayings of men, who lived when the knowledge of the true God was in a great measure lost by the nations of the earth. From Adam, until after the flood, men possessed the knowledge of the one living and true God; but when they substituted idolatry for his worship, and the service of devils for his service, they lost the knowledge of God; and their understandings being blinded by ignorance, and their hearts corrupted by licentiousness, they became so degraded, that, instead of the living God, they worshipped the sun, the moon, and stars; yea, beasts, and birds, and creeping things: but even this idolatry proves, that the sense of God is so deeply rooted in the minds of men, that nothing can remove it.

The works of creation prove the being of God. Every thing in the universe, which the mind of man can contemplate, the eye behold, or the hand can touch, proclaims this important truth — when we behold the wide extended canopy of heaven, studded with beautiful globes of light, especially when we see the sun, whose rays enlighten the inhabitants of the earth, and under whose benign influence so many things are brought forth upon it; — when we consider its magnitude and astonishing virtues imparting light, life, and joy to so many myriads of creatures, we must acknowledge that nothing but an Omnipotent and infinitely wise Being could give it existence, and guide it in its wonderful and undeviating

course for so many ages. When we view the globe we inhabit, suspended like a ball in the air, replenished with every thing necessary to the comfort of its numerous inhabitants, surely the mind of man must be constrained to acknowledge that there is a God. Indeed the most insignificant insect that crawls on the earth, or the smallest herb that grows in the field, proves that it is formed by an infinitely wise and powerful Being. And when we consider our own composition, the fabric of our bodies, and the faculties of our souls, the wonderful manner in which the members of the body are connected together, and this union preserved, often for seventy, or eighty years, notwithstanding the many accidents and diseases to which our frames are exposed, every day and every hour, we must be constrained to say, with the Psalmist, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made — marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." And who, upon considering the noble powers and admirable faculties of the soul, can for a moment deny that it was created and is upheld by God. View its understanding, by which it can learn every art and science; can rapidly travel through all the continents, kingdoms, and cities on the globe; can examine the forms and beauties of animals; can discover the medicinal qualities of herbs; and can trace the astonishing combinations of causes, calculated to secure the comfort, and happiness of

the intelligent creature man. See its will, which can choose, or refuse whatever is presented to it, with the most absolute sovereignty. See its affections—love, hatred, hope, fear, joy, some placed in the soul to secure its safety, and others to promote happiness. Examine the conscience, with its self-reflecting powers, which performs its office as it should do, accuses its possessor when he does wrong, and excuses him when he does right, thereby imparting either peace of mind, or fearful dread of punishment at the great day; then reflect, this wonderful being cannot die. Give it in possession all things below the sun, yet its longings for happiness cannot be satisfied, and then say, is there not a great and glorious Being who gave it existence, and in whose presence and enjoyment alone it can be truly blessed.

Again: if there is no God, why has not this globe of the earth long since become a ruined waste? The most magnificent palace, if not kept in repair, will soon crumble into ruins. Even the strong pyramids of Egypt, being left to themselves, have fallen into decay. Why, then, have not the pillars of the earth, long since, been shaken? Why is it, that this mighty globe is not a heap of ruins? Why has it not started from its orbit, and become a lawless wanderer in unmeasurable space? We answer, because the mighty agent, who first created it, still preserves it. It is by his care, that it is not now old and decayed. It is by his

care, that it is still replenished with beasts and birds and creeping things. It is by his care, that all its inhabitants receive their food in due season, and that, ungrateful creature man is supplied with an abundance of every thing necessary for his comfort and convenience; and yet vain man will attempt to deny the very existence of that kind and gracious being, by whom he was created, and from whom all his blessings come. Or if he give a cold assent to the truth of his existence, yet he will dare to live in the violation of his law, and enjoy the blessings of his providence, without ever feeling one grateful emotion of soul towards his kind Creator, and gracious Benefactor.

Every creature possesses a nature, so does God the Creator of all. Peter speaks of believers being made partakers *of the Divine nature;* that is, they, in the work of regeneration, were created anew after God's image, in righteousness and true holiness. We also read of the *form* of God, by which we do not understand any external appearance or visible shape, but his glory, his excellency, and perfections. In this sense Christ is one with God. He is not only his image or likeness, but he is one in essence, so that he who sees the one sees the other. When Moses prayed to see the glory of God, the reply was, "Thou canst not see my face." By the term we understand, that it was impossible for Moses, or any human being in the present state, to view the essence or nature of

God. In heaven, indeed, the saints shall see Him as he is, but even there it will be impossible for them fully to comprehend the infinite nature of God. The different persons of the Godhead possess the same nature, or essence, which is one and indivisible. The Father does not communicate his nature to the Son and Holy Spirit, but the three persons exist together in the same essence, and have thus existed from eternity.

It is impossible for us to form adequate ideas of God; yet it is our duty and privilege to enquire after him; for the more correct our conceptions of him, the more glorifying to him will our worship be; and those who know most of God, are most apt to be like him.

It is very absurd to think of God as a corporeal being; yet men are prone to commit this mistake; and some, even in the present day, have no higher conception of God, than that of a grave old man. Some have run into this foolish error from the fact, that the members of the human body are sometimes attributed to God. Thus we read of his face, his ears, his mouth, his arms, his hands, &c.; but it should be remarked, that these are figurative expressions, and denote his attributes. Thus, his eyes signify his omniscience; his ears, his readiness to hear the prayers of his people; and his arms denote his power. Some have taken up the idea, that God is a corporeal being, because man was made in his image, and after his likeness;

but it should be remembered, that it was the soul of man, not his body, which was thus created.

God is a spirit. Such are the grovelling views of men, that many are prone to attach the idea of corporeality even to spirits. Thus, some think that they are subtilized bodies, or composed of air or vapor, and thereby invisible.

A spirit is immaterial: that is, it has neither body nor parts. It is incorruptible; that is, no part of it can be destroyed. It is immortal—it cannot die. They are invisible; no man ever saw a spirit; for it cannot be discerned by the natural eye. God is an infinite spirit. He is incorruptible, immortal, and invisible. He dwells in light which no man can approach; and as none can tell what is the form and appearance of the soul of man, much less can any form just conceptions of the form, the appearance, the essence of God. When man approaches this awful subject, however great his powers may be, he must be dumb. Yet it is his privilege to wonder and adore.

All creatures are mutable. God alone is immutable. They are all subject to change. He alone remaineth the same for ever and ever. The heavens are subject to change. Sometimes they are clear and serene; at other times the electric cloud, the flashing lightning, and the roaring thunder, fill the minds of spectators with awe and consternation. This earth is subject to change.

Sometimes it is covered with frost and snow, and by and by it is decked with all the beauties of spring. It has been covered with water, and the time is coming when it shall melt with fervent heat. The sun is subject to change. Sometimes it appears in unclouded glory and meridian splendor, and presently it is under clouds or in an eclipse. All the inhabitants of heaven are subject to change. Some of the angels kept not their first estate; they have fallen from high thrones in heaven, to the dark prison of hell, where they are reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day. All the inhabitants of the earth are subject to change. Even man, at his best estate, was altogether vanity; for although he was created innocent, yet he was mutable; although he was holy, yet he fell, and became sinful and miserable, and he is now subject to innumerable changes. To-day he appears full of life and vigor; to-morrow he is a palid and lifeless corpse. Now he is the most lovely of creatures; but, alas! presently he is a mass of corruption. One week he is actively engaged in the pursuits of this life; the next he is an inhabitant of eternity. But God, being a simple, unmixed, infinite, immutable, eternal, and uncreated spirit, cannot change; for in him there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning. He is now what he was many millions of ages before the creation of the world; and he is now what he

will be in the most remote periods of eternity. His laws and his purposes are like himself, immutable. As regards the first, they must be obeyed; as regards the last, they must be accomplished; and he has directed that those who trample upon his laws shall be punished; but those who tremble at his reproof, shall live with him for ever.

God is infinite: that is, he is immense, and cannot be comprehended, neither space nor time can comprehend him; therefore, he is omnipotent and eternal. From eternity he existed as he now does; and to eternity he will continue to exist. All other beings had a beginning, and although angels, both good and bad, and the souls of men, will have no end, yet it is God who supports them in being; he can, in a moment, annihilate them all. He is the first and the last. All creatures depend on him, but he alone is independent of all other beings. His attributes are infinite. His understanding comprehends all things. He sees and knows, individually, every creature in his vast dominions; from the most exalted angel that adores before his throne, to the most insignificant insect that crawls upon the earth, or floats upon the surface of the ocean. He knows not only all the creatures he has made, and will make, but also, all he could make. There is no end to his understanding. His power is infinite. He has created innumerable globes like this we inhabit. He could have created myriads more. His power never has

been, and never will be, exerted to the uttermost. His purity, holiness, and justice, are infinite. He is infinitely perfect; therefore, he cannot be comprehended by any other being; for all others are finite, but he comprehends them all. Finite creatures may know something of him in this world, by his works of creation, providence, and redemption. In heaven they know something of him, where they see him face to face, but never can comprehend him. Sooner may all the planetary systems he has created be put within the shell of a grain of mustard seed, than that he should be comprehended by man or angel. And this infinitely great and glorious Being is the eternal portion of the true believer, and the everlasting enemy of the finally impenitent sinner.

As God cannot be bounded by space or time, he must be every where for ever. He has created the heavens and the earth, and they and all their inhabitants are upheld by him; and he must be near them, and all around them, to sustain them. He is good unto all. The angels and glorified saints in heaven, are rendered completely happy by his presence; and the saints upon earth receive from his liberal hand all the blessings they enjoy. He rules among the nations of the earth; he sees all the inhabitants of the world, and is intimately acquainted, not only with their actions, but with their motives; and, by his power and providence,

overrules all the actions of men, for the promotion of his purposes, and the manifestation of his glory: therefore, he is everywhere present. Thus, the divine nature of Jesus Christ was in the highest heaven, even while he was arraigned before Pilate's bar; and, as an evidence of his omnipresence, he has promised his disciples that he will be with them at all times, and in all circumstances, even to the end of the world.

There are different ways in which he manifests his presence. In heaven, he displays his glory to angels and glorified saints: on earth, he displays his presence to his creatures by giving them being, and upholding them in it: among the followers of Christ, he displays his presence by converting their souls, sanctifying them, and qualifying them for heaven: and, in hell, he displays his inflexible justice, in the punishment of its miserable inhabitants. With propriety, then, the Psalmist said, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence;" that is, whither shall I flee from thine *essence.* Could he ascend into heaven, he would there behold the Deity, in all the glory of the Godhead. Could he take up his bed in hell, he would there behold the Governor of the Universe, continually punishing the violators of his law: or, could he fly to the most remote parts of creation, even there he would behold his goodness, and be upheld by him. So immense is Jehovah, that heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool; while he is seated on

the one he treads on the other. In a word, he fills the heavens and the earth with his presence. Is it asked, where did he dwell before the creation, we answer, in himself—in his own immensity. In view of the omnipresence of God, how should his intelligent creatures act, seeing that in no situation can they be concealed from his view; but at all times, and in all circumstances, he is present with them, and his eye intently fixed upon them. Certainly this should be the language of their hearts at all times, "Thou God seest me;" and they should always conduct themselves as if they beheld his essence, as they will in the person of his Son, when, at the last day, they shall stand before his judgment seat.

God being infinite, must be eternal. Eternity has neither beginning nor end. It is not like time, which began, when creatures began to exist, and admits of a succession of parts. But eternity has neither former nor latter; for it does not admit of succession or motion. In this sense, no being but God is eternal, and he is from everlasting. If he is not, then there was a period when he did not exist, consequently, when there was no God; and if this be true, there may be a period when he may again cease to be; for that which once was, may again be. But at no period did he pass from non-existence into being; for he is immutable and perfect, and that which is perfect must be eternal. Man is not perfect; therefore, it is said of him,

that he is but of yesterday. And, if God is not eternal, then he, too, must be but of yesterday. If so, he is imperfect; therefore, he cannot be God. But he is the first cause of all things, therefore, he is the creator of time among other things. If he is the creator of time, he existed before it, and, consequently, he is eternal.

God is a Spirit, which is pure and unmixed; therefore, not capable of dissolution, as bodies are, which, being composed of different parts, may be dissolved. But, spirit being uncompounded, is incorruptible; therefore, angels and the souls of men are immortal; they cannot cease to exist, except by the power of God, the Great Spirit, who created them all; and he being a simple infinite being, has neither beginning nor ending. He alone is independent; he has no superior; therefore, no being can put an end to his existence. Men are as grass; they change and perish; yea, the heavens and the earth shall be removed, but he is always the same, and to his years there is no end. He is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; and his throne will appear in unspeakable splendor and glory, when all other thrones are cast down, and the most powerful kingdoms are overthrown, and all the thrones and sceptres, and jewels of all the kings and potentates on the earth shall be burnt and melted into ashes; yea, when these elements shall melt with fervent heat and nature shall expire: for his throne is an everlasting

throne; and to his dominion there shall be no end. In a word, he has neither beginning of days, nor end of life, for he is Eternity itself, and its inhabitant.

God is omnipotent. This is evident from his works. Had he never exhibited his omnipotence in the works of creation and providence, still he would have been omnipotent. He is an uncreated and eternal spirit. All spirits are powerful. This is obvious from our own souls, which cannot only will, and reason, and love, and hate, but can also act upon our bodies, and do with them what they please. Angels are still more powerful than the spirits of men, and nothing less than omnipotence can be ascribed to the eternal uncreated spirit, who gave being to all others. His nature being immense, his power must be infinite. His essence is unbounded, for he occupies all space, and all duration, and his power can have no bound. This is evident, from the fact, that all creatures depend upon him, while he is independent of all. He can do what he will, throughout the universe, and none can stay his hand. His power is beyond all conception, for he can do more than we can think. If he were not omnipotent, he would be imperfect. If he knew what was good, and yet could not do it, of what avail would his goodness be? If he could will, but could not perform whatsoever he pleaseth, he would be imperfect; therefore, no longer God. But omnipotence

belongs to God, and to no other, for he who is omnipotent, is above all. Even the human nature of Jesus Christ was not omnipotent, though closely united with the Divine Nature. It was subject to the same infirmities that men are, except such as are sinful. When he was in Gethsemane, his human nature was strengthened, which would not have been necessary, had it been omnipotent. On Calvary, it suffered and died; therefore, although his divine nature was omnipotent, his human nature was subject to infirmities; for in all things he was made like unto his brethren. But his divine nature can do all things, consistent with his purity, and the glory of his perfections. He is not governed by the laws of nature, but he controls them, and is above them, and can act contrary to them. Witness the time when he brought the three Hebrew worthies out of the furnace, seven times heated, unconsumed, unhurt, unsinged. But there are certain things which God cannot do. He can do nothing which is inconsistent with the purity of his nature, and the glory of his perfections: therefore, he cannot create another infinite being, and thus raise a creature to the dignity of the Godhead; for this would detract from his glory, and give to another what is due to himself alone. He cannot leave any of his promises or threatenings unfulfilled, for this would argue imperfection in his character, and would render him contemptible in the estimation even of the

creatures he has made. Even to attempt any thing of this nature would be a proof of weakness. But he can do all things, which are consistent with his own glory; therefore, he can do many things he has not done, and will not do. Thus he has made many thousands of planets, and fixed stars; he could have made myriads more.

We have sufficient proof of his omnipotence in his creating this world and its inhabitants, which he made out of nothing. The skilful mechanic can mould his materials into various forms, but he must be supplied with tools, and with matter, upon which to work: he cannot make them himself. But God can work without tools and without materials. Out of nothing, by the word of his power, matter was created, and that matter moulded into thousands of forms and creatures. The most skilful mechanic advances slowly with his work, it takes him a long time to produce even one article; but not so with God; for he said, "Let there be light," and immediately it sprang up. The skilful artificer, in producing his various articles, experiences pain and weariness; but not so with God, for this world, and all that are on it, were produced without the smallest toil.

The omnipotence of the Deity is manifested in his works of preservation, for by him the universe is upheld in existence; he upholds all things *by the word of his power*. It was manifested in the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ. It was

clearly proved in his incarnation, for none but the Omnipotent can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing. It was manifested in his miraculous works, when he gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. It was manifested in the power communicated to him to fulfil the law, and satisfy the demands of justice, which work would have baffled the united power of all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven. It was manifested in upholding him when the storm of God's wrath, due to our sins, fell upon his innocent head. And it was manifested when he raised him from the dead, which act declared the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the guilty.

The omnipotence of God is manifested in the conversion of sinners, who are created anew in Christ Jesus. And it is manifested in the believer's final perseverance, and arrival in heaven; for if their salvation depended upon their faithfulness, they would all, without exception, fall away; but here is their security; they "are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

The most grand displays of the omnipotence of God, will be made at the resurrection, when the bodies of all men shall be re-animated—when this globe shall tremble to its centre, and these elements shall melt with fervent heat, and when all men shall be compelled to stand before the judgment

seat of Christ, and from him receive their final doom.

God is omniscient. All rational creatures possess knowledge. Angels possess much; so did man before the fall; and, although he has thereby lost much, yet some he still retains. But, in a state of nature, he is destitute of the most important knowledge — acquaintance with the character and perfections of God.

As intelligent creatures possess knowledge, so their Creator must possess it in perfection. This is obvious from the works of creation, and preservation of his creatures, which display the perfection of wisdom and knowledge. The possession of knowledge secures happiness, and that happiness is in proportion to the amount of knowledge possessed. Thus, men possess knowledge, and this renders them capable of enjoying happiness, which never can be experienced by the brute creation. Pious men possess a knowledge of God, of which the wicked are destitute, and it is this that makes them happier and better than they; and when their knowledge is perfected, their happiness will be complete. God is perfectly happy, therefore, he possesses perfect knowledge, or omniscience. Thus, he knows not only the actions of all his rational creatures, but all their thoughts.

It is deemed a mark of wisdom, among men, to know themselves; but the most knowing are

fearfully deficient in this important knowledge. But God possesses the most perfect knowledge of himself. He alone understands the sublime and awful doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead. And mortal worms, who would attempt to comprehend it, do but prove their presumption and folly. He has a perfect knowledge of all his creatures, from the most exalted archangel that adores before his throne, to the meanest worm that crawls upon the earth. He knows every glorified being that now dwells in his presence, and all who will yet worship before him. He knows every devil and miserable spirit now confined in the dark prison of hell, and all who will yet be inhabitants of those horrid regions. He knows all the men on earth, and all their secret thoughts, whether good or bad. He knows every oath, every blasphemous expression, uttered by wicked men; and, for these things, he will yet bring them into judgment. He knows all the actions of the followers of his Son, and the motives from whence they spring. In a word, he knows all that has been, or shall yet be. With him there is no past, present, and to come; all is an eternal now; for with him a thousand years are as a day, and one day as a thousand years. He is from everlasting to everlasting; therefore, he must know all that has been, now is, and shall be. We cannot tell the manner in which he knows all things, but this we know—he is not instructed by

another, nor does he obtain his knowledge by reasoning and inferring as men do, but he knows all things at once. In his immense and eternal mind are the original ideas of all his acts and all his creatures.

In Scripture, God is called the Holy One; without holiness he could not be perfect, for unholiness is an imperfection, and the reason that men are imperfect, is, that they are sinful. But God is perfect, for he is just and true, without iniquity; his nature is without spot; he is purity itself; his holiness is termed the beauty of the Lord, and, in holiness, the beauty and excellency of angels and glorified saints consists. Wisdom without holiness would be cunning, and power without it would be tyranny; but God is glorious in holiness; his holiness sheds a lustre on all his other perfections, and prevents them from being improperly exercised. As holiness is the nature of God, it is infinite, and it can neither be increased nor diminished. It is immutable, for in him there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning. The holiness of the most exalted creatures is changeable, as is obvious from the apostacy both of angels and men, but God is from everlasting to everlasting, the same holy being. He is the foundation of holiness, and from him it is communicated to all others who partake of it; but theirs is infinitely inferior to his, therefore, the holy angels, while they celebrate the holiness of

God, cover their faces, conscious of their infinite inferiority.

The holiness of God is manifested in the works of creation, for he made them all very good; therefore, all his creatures were originally holy, like himself. Man was made in the likeness of God, that is, he was pure, holy, and upright. It may be objected to the holiness of God, that he suffers sin to exist in the world: but it should be remarked that, although he permits it, yet he is not the author of it, nor does he approve of it, nor does he tempt to it; but he hates and punishes it. He has given the most grand display of his holiness, in the punishment of his Son, for our sins; indeed, this act of God gives a much more clear discovery of the holiness of God, than if all the human race had suffered for sin in hell for ever. His holiness is manifested in the very design of the scheme of redemption, and in all the means used to bring sinners to Christ and heaven, for his object in all these is to make men holy.

The love of God. God loves himself before all others; hence his own glory is his ultimate end in all his works: and, his happiness consists in contemplating his nature and perfections, and nothing beyond this can add to his enjoyment.

God loves all his works. When he first created them, he pronounced them very good; and his

tender mercies are still over them. Particularly God loves his rational creatures; and those of them who are holy, are admitted into his immediate presence, where they behold his glory, and are perfectly happy. The love of God to man is manifested in the most astonishing and glorious light, in the gift of his Son, who fulfilled the law they violated, by his holy life, and satisfied the demands of justice, in their behalf, by his suffering and death.

The love of the Son of God to men, is manifested in his forsaking the glory of heaven, assuming their nature, and, in that nature, undergoing the most humiliating mortifications, and unparalleled sufferings, to open a way through which they might be saved from sinking into a state of the most abject wretchedness, and eternal contempt, and be exalted to a state of glory and honor for ever.

The love of the Holy Spirit to men, is manifested in his convincing them of sin, &c., in leading them to Christ, in opening their blind eyes, and showing them his suitableness and excellency as a Saviour; in enabling them to rely upon his righteousness as the only ground of their acceptance with God, and in that act transforming them into the image of God. This love is manifested in working in them all the gracious dispositions necessary in the sons of God—in blessing them with that peace which passeth

knowledge—in shedding the love of God abroad in their hearts—in assisting them in every duty—and, in never leaving nor forsaking them; for he is their guide and comforter through all the ills and temptations of life.

God loves the human race; hence, he gave his Son a ransom for all; but there is nothing in them which is lovely; and, consequently, calculated to attract his love. No, they are a race of sinners, and they possess no beauty until the work of regeneration renders them all glorious within. This love is everlasting; hence the love betwixt him and believers shall never be broken; for, "what shall separate us from the love of God." The soul and body shall be separated, but the union betwixt God and the believing soul, can never be broken. He may take from the believer his wealth, his friends, yea, life itself, but this love never shall be removed, it shall be fixed upon them for ever.

LECTURE II.

OF GOD, OR JEHOVAH.

Our catechism gives a very excellent and comprehensive description of this awful and glorious Being. For mortals to attempt an explication of the divine nature, would be absurd in the extreme. Yet, from the book of nature, and, especially from the book of revelation, we know that there is a God; and we may know, from the same source, enough of his attributes and of his will concerning us, to make us happy in time and eternity. For "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

There have been various ideas entertained concerning a proper distinction of the divine attributes; but, perhaps, incommunicable, communicable, and moral, will be as just as any other. Incommunicable perfections are such as entirely distinguish the Great God, from all, and every other being in the universe. These we will call his eternity, immensity, omnipresence, independence, sovereignty, and immutability. His moral

and communicable attributes we will call his wisdom, power, love, goodness, mercy, justice, truth, and holiness.

We have already observed, that incommunicable attributes distinguish the Great Jehovah from all other beings. His eternity, for example, cannot be communicated to any being. None but God exists by an absolute necessity of his own nature; and, consequently, from eternity to eternity. None can number his days. He is at no period a moment older or younger. "One day is with him as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day." God may create, and has created beings, who will exist *to* eternity, but not *from* eternity.* Therefore, every suggestion about *eternally begotten*, forces upon the mind the idea of inferiority.

The immensity of God is also an amazing thought. Astronomers have exerted the strongest powers of their souls in calculating world on world, and system on system of worlds, until their most lively imaginations, aided by mathematical

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* We read, in the Scripture, of the Sonship of Christ, and of his Divine Father. But we are not hence taught a literal derivation of his eternal Divinity from God, as a son from a father—as really as was Isaac from Abraham; nor of his inferiority to the Father. No doubt there is a peculiarity in Christ's relation to God, as a Son. He is called God's *own* Son; his *only* Son; his *only begotten*. But such phrases contain not the least evidence that the proper Divinity of Christ was derived from God. Other passages of Scripture utterly forbid such an idea. This we understand to be the author's view.—*Examining Committee.*

numbers, have failed them; and then, lo! God is there! Nay, he is infinite leagues beyond there! and lo! he is *here!* The idea of his omnipresence is inseparable from his immensity. God is in heaven, in hell; in, and filling all space.

Independence is a perfection of the Divine nature, and peculiar to God alone. The greatest of all created beings, that we can imagine, must always be dependent on the Creator for being, as well as the enjoyment of being; therefore, real independence *cannot* be communicated. Sovereignty, absolute sovereignty, is inseparable from incommunicable independence.

It is Jehovah's right to rule the world and the beings he has made, and do with them as seemeth good in his sight. His sovereign, though just rule, is universal and uncontrollable. The Sultans and the Czars are mighty sovereigns; yet they are dependent on a thousand contingencies for their thrones; and, as mere creatures, must always be dependent on the independent Sovereign of the universe.

Immutability is peculiar to God. We know that the highest order of intelligent beings has changed from good to bad—from happiness to woe. The history of man, from his creation to the present moment, affirms him to be a changeable being. Reasoning by analogy, we have good grounds to believe, that *good* angels are changing, or *growing* in capacity and happiness continually

But, "God is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Wisdom and power are communicable attributes, but are distinguished from what *we* call moral perfections; because, immoral and unholy beings may possess great degrees of them. Satan, for example, possesses great wisdom, and, perhaps, more natural power than all the men in the world; yet he is a devil. Wherefore a devil? Because he has no love, goodness, mercy, justice, truth, nor holiness. We know that God is holy in all the displays of his wisdom and power; but these perfections of the divine nature, without holiness, would be awful to the intelligent universe. Omniscience, though an incommunicable perfection of God, is inseparable from his wisdom; by which all calculations of time and events are as one eternal *now* with him. He sees and knows every thing done in heaven, earth, and hell. The tallest angel, and the smallest insect, are equally manifest to him, as well as every thought of the human heart.

Love is an adorable attribute. John, in the contemplation of this divine perfection, seems to have had his whole soul absorbed, and emphatically exclaims, "God *is* love." From this infinite perfection sprang the whole devise of fallen man's redemption. We are not, however, to think of God's love as we would of the passion of love in the soul of man. It

is a p 'nciple or quality of the divine nature, essential to the being of God.

Goodness is an attribute which is also essential to the divine nature. In Matthew, it is said, "There is none good but God:" he is altogether good, immutably good, and constantly doing good to his dependent creatures. Displays of his goodness are seen in all the works of his hands: whether of the animate, inanimate, or rational creation. All the goodness possessed, felt, and acted out by every intelligent being, is an emanation from HIM who is the great eternal source of all goodness.

Mercy* is an attribute of God, not dependent upon any cause, out of himself, for its existence; for this would suppose a cause prior to the *great first cause.* Consequently, it is essential to the divine nature, as are all others of his adorable perfections.

Mercy is defined to be God's "readiness to relieve the miserable and pardon the guilty." It

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* The question has been controverted, whether mercy is a modified form of goodness, or is to be considered an attribute in the abstract. Some insist that mercy, in the abstract, is not a form of goodness, more than truth or right, in the abstract, is a form of goodness. Considered as a moral attribute—or, in other words, the disposition to pity the miserable and bestow good upon the ill-deserving, in our opinion, is a form of goodness; but still may be called an attribute, as really so as justice and truth. It is goodness in God which prompts him to do justly, as well as to exercise mercy. Goodness enters into and comprises God's whole moral character. It is as truly manifested in meeting the strict demands of justice, as in exercising compassion, or in doing good.—*Examining Committee.*

is infinite, and extends to animal, as well as intelligent beings: it has found ample room for triumph and display through the blood of the cross. It is called God's "darling attribute;" and, as it regards fallen man, is a prominent feature in the divine character. It is the *only* plea of a truly convinced and convicted sinner: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Justice is that infinite perfection of God, by which the right and honor of the divine throne are maintained. It is defined to be "the ardent inclination of his will to prescribe equal laws, as the Supreme Governor; and to dispense equal rewards and punishments, as the Supreme Judge." It is distinguished, first, into distribution of rewards, the rule of which is predicated on grace and promise: and, secondly, vindictive justice in punishing the guilty. The justice of God was most awfully and gloriously displayed in the punishment of his dear and only Son, when he became our substitute, by bearing "our sins in his own body upon the tree, and was made sin for us, who knew no sin."

Truth is an attribute of God, essential to his nature, and the origin of all truth amongst angels and men. It is an infallible warrant for and exact correspondence between the *intention and declaration* of him, who is "THE TRUTH." "He is a God of truth;" and, from the infinite and perfect nature of this attribute, "it is impossible for

him to lie." Therefore, *all* his threatenings, and *all* his promises, must be infallibly accomplished.

Holiness, that infinite, unbounded perfection of God, is essential to his being, and "without it he could not be God." "It is the glory, lustre, and harmony of all his other perfections." He is originally holy. The purity of his nature is infinite; and is marked on all the original work of his hands. When we conceive of a being possessed of infinite love, goodness, mercy, justice, and truth, we are irresistibly led to conceive of that being, as possessing essential holiness.

God is a spirit. Of necessity, that immense, omnipresent, undivided, eternal Being is a spirit—is incorporeal. Were he corporeal, he could not be where other matter, or bodies, are. He is, consequently, without body, parts, or shape. It is a species of idolatry to form any image in the mind of the invisible *Trinity*. This one eternal Being, of whom we have been speaking, is TRIUNE. However the boasted reason of vain but limited man may object to this doctrine, the infallible Scriptures clearly teach us to conceive of God, as one in three, and three in one. Gen. i. 26; ii. 7; xi. 7; Isa. xlviii. 16; Mat. xxviii. 19; John xiv. 23; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Acts v. 3, 4; 1 John v. 7; and many other passages of similar import. This union of the divine persons in the Godhead is an

acknowledged mystery; therefore, no discreet, sensible divine has attempted an explication of a subject inexplicable of itself: that is, as it regards the particular *mode* of the divine existence. Neither is it at all necessary; for it lies on the enemies of the doctrine to show that it contains a real absurdity; and that *they* can explain, or comprehend other acknowledged perfections of the Deity; such as his eternity, immensity, omniscience, omnipresence, &c. Nay more, it lies upon them to show that even the *mode* of their own existence has been comprehended by themselves, or by any naturalist who has written upon the subject of the union betwixt soul and body. But who will be so bold as to assert, that such a mode of existence is not essential to the being of God? It may be, for aught we know, one of the highest sources of that infinite happiness and blessedness which the great God enjoys. We know that the greatest intellectual pleasure is enjoyed by social, intelligent beings through the medium of *society;* and the more the mind is enlightened and freed from moral stains, the higher is that enjoyment. Why may not the indissoluble union of the adorable persons of the Trinity in *one* God be a high source of infinite enjoyment? I am strongly inclined to the opinion, which some have avowed before me, that the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit would not have been known to us, nor to angels, had it not been

for the fall of man.* These names seem to be consequences of the different offices, assumed in the great plan and work of redemption. I see nothing in this hypothesis contrary to reason or revelation. Were it adopted, it would take from the enemies of the *cross*, at least, a plausible objection to the doctrine of the Trinity, and proper divinity of Jesus Christ, respecting a son's being inferior and subsequent to a father, &c. And, indeed, the strongest advocates for the doctrine of the Trinity and divinity of all the persons in the Godhead, have acknowledged their incapacity

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* The author is not to be understood as teaching a Trinity of mere names or offices: but the indissoluble union and proper divinity of three persons in one God. He simply states that he inclines to the opinion, that the tri-personality would not have been known to us, by the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, had it not been for the fall of man. Otherwise, that the ground of these distinctive appellations of the persons existing in the fulness of Godhead, does not lie in their eternal divinity, but arise in their relation in the gospel scheme of redemption. The author's doctrine is, that the *one only* God exists in Trinity, and this Trinity in Unity are but *one*. But the second person, or subsistence in this Triune God, assumed the nature of man, and became the only name under heaven given among men by which they can be saved. The whole economy of grace is represented as resting in the hands of the undivided three, in mutual concert.

We find a plurality in God in the beginning of Genesis. We find the same in the last chapter of the Revelation. And we find it all the way through the sacred volume. It is a mystery, but can never be shown to be an absurdity, that there should be in some sense three in one undivided Godhead, of equal Divinity. It is not pretended that there are in God three, in the same sense in which three is one; nor one in the same sense in which three are three. But there are in some important sense three; yet in another important sense, the three are one. —*Examining Committee.*

to connect the words with consistent ideas of *eternally begotten*, which seem to imply a real *contradiction*.

Thus we have given you a succinct account, drawn from the Holy Scriptures, of some of the attributes or perfections of that adorable Being, in whose presence the angels veil their faces and the elders cast down their crowns. In contemplating the character of that glorious Being, even with our very limited capacities, we are constrained, with the Psalmist, to exclaim, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

There is cause, however, of deep regret, to see so many of the sectarian world endeavoring to support their various tenets by arguments *supposed to be drawn* from the nature and attributes of God, in such a way as to tarnish the divine honor; by leaving in view, if I may so speak, but half of Jehovah! One will dwell on his *sovereign will*, with more apparent delight than on all others of his perfections; and repeat it oftener in controversy, than every other attribute of the Deity. He will solve all hard questions by making God's independence or sovereignty, almost or altogether, the entire rule of his conduct, in producing good and evil in the universe—in causing *sin* to come into the world, that he might, consequently, take a sovereign pleasure in damning the sinner! In this way he leaves almost out of

view the infinite *moral* perfections of the divine nature—his love, goodness, mercy, justice, truth, &c. Such men seem to have forgotten, that moral rule *must* be eternally the governing principle of an essentially holy being; and that sovereignty is never displayed, nor never can be displayed, only in perfect consistency with that infinite benevolence, goodness, mercy, &c., so gloriously manifested in the redemption of fallen man. It is lamentable that such divines do not recollect, that there is enough of enmity in the human heart, without exciting more by presenting the infinitely blessed God to mankind in such a view as has a direct tendency to drive them to despair, to the asylum of fate, or to downright infidelity; and by throwing a shade over those adorable perfections of the divine nature, which have constituted a guilty world "prisoners of hope."

On the other hand, some, in perfect consistency with human nature, so prone to extremes, and in order to avoid the above error, have run into the opposite extreme, by manifesting an almost entire indisposition to recognize God's sovereignty at all! Or, if they do, they strip him of the rights essential to the independent sovereign of the universe, by asserting that he has done, and *is* doing, *all* he *can* for man's salvation; quoting, in proof, a solitary passage of Scripture, *doubtful* in in its application, "What more could I have done

in my vineyard?" &c., in the face of the whole tenor of God's word, daily experience, and observation. They thereby rob God of the honor of our *present* salvation! For if God, indeed, be doing all he *can* do at *this* and at *all* times, *nothing* remains but for the creature to *do;* and when he is converted, at least *half* the glory is his own! I do not know how such divines can consistently join with Habakkuk, in crying, "O Lord, revive thy work." I do not know what meaning they annex to their own prayers, when they cry to God to "pour out his spirit." I do not know what keeps them from *despair*, after they have used their utmost efforts in planting and watering, and see no increase. Surely sometimes they have forgotten to be consistent, and have prayed to the LORD to give the *increase.* I cannot tell what notion such men entertain of a *revival of God's work* in the world; for, surely, when there is a revival, on their plan, it must be a revival of *man's* work, inasmuch as God can do no more at *one* time than at another! I hope, my young friends, it is not necessary to pursue this subject or absurdity, any farther. You have, no doubt, already smelled the poison of rank Pelagianism in it; and you surely see how diametrically opposite it is to our Confession of Faith, and the infallible word of God. Those opposite extremes, however, on which I have touched in this lecture, ought ever to be a warning to

you, when you begin to veer off from one extreme, not to be entangled in its opposite. The *safety* of the *middle* ground will occur in the present case, as in almost every controverted point in divinity.

LECTURE III.

ON CREATION.

PROPER Creation is that omnipotent FIAT which produced all things out of nothing. This is an amazing thought. It drowns our intellects; it is incomprehensible by finite minds, yet it is infinitely more defensible than the irrational notion of the external existence of matter. We are constrained to admit a first cause to be intelligent. Matter is not intelligent; it cannot, therefore, be eternal. As to *how* all things were created out of nothing, we have already admitted, is incomprehensible. This question can only be solved by saying, omnipotent energy is adequate to it; as the actual existence of matter and spirit clearly evince. The formation of animals and things out of matter is also called creation, but in a less proper sense. It would seem, however, that the same power is necessary in this latter species of creation, as in the former; for what power, short of omnipotence, could make flesh, fins, feathers, and living animals out of *water!* Yet, it is said,

God did so! The balance of the animal, as well as the vegetable kingdom, declares his "eternal Godhead and power."

The stupendous work of God in our planetary system irresistibly forces the mind to acknowledge the infinite wisdom and power of the great Creator. But what is our system, compared with the countless millions of systems that occupy space? It is now pretty generally admitted, that all the fixed stars are suns, or centres of other systems. How many of these are visible to the naked eye? How many more can be seen through the telescope? And, reasoning by analogy, how many more can be imagined almost *ad infinitum?* Yet creation proper and less proper must have a limit.

Again: when the philosopher lays aside his telescope and takes up his microscope, what wonders does he behold? He sees clearly that even in a cavity of a grain of sand, almost invisible to the naked eye, is a house wherein dwells an animal, perhaps many animals, all having lungs, blood vessels, and other functions of animal life! This instrument has made no less wonderful discoveries in the vegetable kingdom, which the naked eye has never penetrated.

But there is another species of proper creation, that more immediately concerns us, than the one of which we have been speaking; that is, the creation of spirits. It is said, by the best philoso-

phers, that spirit, in its own nature, is entirely distinct from matter. Observation and experience, in a great measure, verify this opinion. There are, however, some atheistical fellow beings, generally known by the name of *materialists*, who imagine that even the human soul is only a refined piece of matter! They thereby destroy the most essential properties of the soul, and, consequently, its immortality. That profane and unphilosophical thought is quite dishonoring to the great Creator, inasmuch as it makes it necessary for him to resort to a second cause, (matter,) out of which to form the best part of his creation, and that part *only* which can bear any semblance or image of himself.

When angels, that higher order of intelligent spirits, were created, we have no data on which to predicate an opinion, but we know that they were created, or at least many of them, before man; and it appears quite probable that the matter, of which our solar system was made, was spoken into existence immediately before man's creation. If God had power to create material substances out of nothing, why not create intelligent spirits, or immaterial substances out of nothing, and in that creation and formation give those spirits a nature entirely distinct from all and every species of matter? This seems to be the most rational idea, most worthy of God, and most to comport with the Scriptural account

of the creation of the human soul. It is said, God made the animal part of man out of matter, the earth, but he *breathed* into him the breath of life, and he became a *living soul.* Not that he took a piece of matter, and refined it more, and made a soul for man, or an image for himself. No, but he breathed into him, &c. We observed above, that observation and experience verified the truth, that spirit and matter are entirely distinct; especially when we retain in our minds the main constituent of a soul, that is, its power of thinking. Now, we are conscious that thought is not impeded in its progress by matter. Our thoughts can penetrate the hardest substances, and extend even to the centre of our planet; and the only reason why we cannot tell what kind of matter is there, is because of the present union between soul and body. By this union the organs of sight, touch, &c., seem necessary to our proper understanding of many things while in the present state of existence.

When we contemplate the almighty energy of God in causing millions of intelligent spirits to exist, we are led to admire his goodness, as well as to acknowledge the truth, that God made all things and beings for his own glory. All creation, in some sense or other, negatively praises the Creator, but only intelligent beings praise him positively or directly; those praise him in silent notes, these in living or active

strains. A holy intelligence must necessarily be continually employed in ascriptions of honor, might, majesty, goodness, &c., to the infinitely blessed, triune God. I would remark, that such exercises must *originally* have been *man's* employ as well as angels'. I would further remark, that the idea of God making a being or thing otherwise than perfect, or good in its kind, is absolutely inconsistent with any just notion of the perfections of Deity. Therefore man, in his origin, must, of necessity, have borne the image of his Creator; that is, he must have been holy.

As it regards that part of God's creation, commonly called animal spirits, or those *somethings*, that actuate or give life and action to mere animal bodies, there has been much perplexity, both among philosophers and divines. While some allow animals only a spirit formed out of matter, which they call *instinct*, and which they suppose to perish with the animal, others see such amazing sagacity and apparent *design* in some of them, that they are led to the conclusion, that animals certainly must have thinking powers or souls, but that those souls, or thinking powers, are so entirely under the influence of matter, or the animal body, that they are not accountable. But after ascribing to them something that comes under the idea of immortality, and yet denying their accountability, they are

led to conclude, that those spirits are continually changing their habitation; that is, when the body or animal dies, they migrate to, or actuate another. There are, certainly, difficulties in this subject. If the animal spirit come under the idea of *proper* creation, I would be ready to assign it immortality. If it come under the idea of *less proper* creation, (that is, something formed out of matter,) I would have no difficulty in limiting its duration to the time of its giving life or action to the body for which it was formed. To this latter opinion I feel strongly inclined. And while I acknowledge difficulties in the apparent *thought*, *design*, &c., of some animals, I feel more difficulty in ascribing to them *immortality;* and especially, an immortality without accountability. By adopting the hypothesis of the immortality of animal spirits, we are led, in my opinion, into an inextricable difficulty respecting the creation of that infinite variety of souls adapted to the almost infinite variety of animals, with which our world abounds. The smallest insect or mite in a cheese, has as great a claim to this soul as the elephant. And it appears to me utterly unworthy the nature of an immortal spirit, to imagine that a spirit like itself begat it. But on the principle of allowing the animal spirit to be a secondary or *less proper* creation, we may, with some propriety, conceive, not only how they are neither accountable nor immortal, but how each animal spirit, according

to its kind, may be propagated, and give action to its particular and distinct body, without making it necessary for the great Creator to be continually exerting his creating power, in producing spirits for the great variety of animals, or causing them to migrate from one body to another; while, perhaps, millions of them are without bodies, for a time at least, to occupy at all. The manner of propagation to which I allude, is, according to its kind, like that of animal bodies; for, however *refined* and *subtle* the matter may be, which is thus called the spirit, if *matter* at all, it may be propagated by the same laws which propagate more solid matter, or animal bodies; for matter is *still* matter, let it be in whatever condition it may. But this part of the subject, will, perhaps, come more properly under the head of a subsequent lecture. I would further observe, however, that this idea of matter being formed into what is *called* spirit, seems to accord with the declaration of the Apostle, when, speaking of the resurrection, he says, we shall have *spiritual bodies:* and it also explains his meaning, where he ascribes an animal spirit in man, *distinct* from his *soul.* This distinction has been almost overlooked by theological and philosophical writers; yet it is matter of *revelation;* it is part of *God's word,* as clearly expressed as human language *can* express it. Nor does it, in my humble opinion, contradict any just notions of philosophy—any

just distinctions of matter and spirit, properly so called.

Solomon says, the spirit of the beast goeth downward, that is, to the earth, dying and even putrefying like the body; but the spirit (soul) of man, goeth *upwards*; or, as expressed in Ecclesiastes, goes to God who gave it. We know that the soul of man is often called, in Scripture, his spirit; but it is his immortal spirit, that *thinking*, *reasoning*, *judging*, *determining* something, which is distinct from every species of matter. The Apostle, where he assigns us spirits *and* souls, not *or* souls, must design to say, that we have spirits in common with other animals. And when he speaks of the flesh, in contradistinction to the spirit, (soul,) he amalgamates our animal spirit with our animal body; and says, the flesh, that is, body and animal spirit, lusteth against the spirit, (soul,) and the spirit (soul) against the flesh: hence, he prays to God to sanctify the whole soul, body, *and* spirit.

The question, as to the particular functions assigned the animal spirit in man, may be best solved, perhaps, by referring the enquirer to other mere animals.

In conclusion, I will remark, that men, and good men, too, are hurried into great and *opposite extremes*, by an over anxiety to *comprehend every thing* within their limited capacities,

and by not keeping their eye *constantly* on *revelation.*

Let it be your care, my young friends, to profit by the misfortunes of some of those who have gone before you; and be fervent in your supplications to the Father of lights, for "wisdom that cometh from above."

LECTURE IV.

ON LAW.

It is difficult to conceive of any species of being, without annexing the idea of law. Matter has its laws, animals their laws, and men and angels laws suited to their capacities. And, what is more remarkable, if any of those several laws be violated by accident or design, confusion, misery, or distress, is the sure consequence. This proves, to a demonstration, that there can be no law, which is properly so called, without either a natural or annexed penalty. Thus, when a leaf is torn from its parent stem, the laws of its nature are violated, and its destruction is the consequence. If the laws which regulate animal life be violated, death ensues: so if those immutable laws, which bind intelligent beings in obedience to their great Creator, be transgressed, the penalty of eternal death is incurred.

The Creator has given laws, by which our solar system is maintained in that beautiful harmony and good order in which we see it every

day. These laws we would call absolute, or laws that cannot be violated without the will of the law-giver There can be no impropriety in governing unintelligent beings by such laws, since no perfection of the Deity is therein chargeable.

There are some mysterious laws, about whose operations philosophers are not very well agreed. I mean those laws by which the vegetable world is maintained in being. One generation comes and passes away, and another succeeds it. But a discussion of this subject would not aid our present research.

Animals have their laws, too, which are more commonly called instinct, by which they are sustained in being, and their several kinds are propagated. But these inquiries more properly belong to the philosophical than the theological writer. We will, therefore, proceed to examine the laws by which intelligent beings, particularly men, are, or ought to be, governed.

The sacred Scriptures give us an account of various laws, which are commonly called judicial, ceremonial, positive, and moral.

Judicial law was peculiar to the Jewish nation during the time of their theocracy, or while Jehovah condescended to be their supreme magistrate; and of course obligatory on no other people, except in things relating to moral equity.

The ceremonial law is that which prescribed the rites of worship under the Old Testament dispensation, and was typical of Christ, and that dispensation which HE was to bring in.

Positive laws are those precepts which have their reason in the *will* of the law-giver, and may be abrogated when their necessity ceases. Among these laws are enumerated the prohibition to Adam of the tree in the garden, and also the positive institutions in the New Testament of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Some, also, rank among the positive precepts, the command to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But this command is so intimately connected with *moral* obligation, and the reason and necessity of it are so clearly seen by *all* enlightened Christians, that I am reluctant to number it entirely among positive precepts. At any rate, we know, if it were abrogated, that man could not be saved, consistently with the purity of the divine government.

Some add to the catalogue above, the *law of nature;* but we shall endeavor to show, in the course of this lecture, that the law of nature is only another name for the *moral* law, of which we design principally to treat.

A moral precept is defined to be a law, which is good, right, and fit in its own nature; consequently, was always right, and must eternally continue to be right. That this is a just definition

of the whole moral law, as summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, and defined by our Lord himself, cannot, I think, be denied. The sum of the whole moral law, and of every moral obligation under which intelligent beings are placed, is "to love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Were this infallible interpretation and compend of the law more frequently adverted to, it would, perhaps, prevent many pernicious mistakes about the nature, obligation, and immutability of the moral code. If it be asked, when this law had its commencement, I answer, at *no period!* for, in its principles, it must be eternal. The definition above explains and confirms this idea. Moreover, the Apostle calls the law *holy*, *just*, and *good;* consequently, it must, of necessity, have had its origin in the holiness, justice, and goodness of God; therefore, must be eternal in its principles. It is no solid objection to this theory, that there were no created intelligences to be governed by this law. This does not alter the principle of eternal right; and none will deny, I imagine, that it is eternally right for angel or man, when he begins to exist, to love his Creator with all his heart. I think, therefore, it is not, strictly speaking, proper to say that God created angels or men, and then enacted laws by which they were to be governed; but that God *revealed* unto them what previously existed as the pure rule of their

conduct. You have already seen that I include angels as being bound by this law as well as men; yes, more certainly. True it is, that we sometimes hear of various laws of men's naming, such as the Angelic, Adamic, &c.; but such distinctions, so far as they regard purely moral precepts, are not to be found in the Scriptures, nor in the reason and nature of things. We know that angels and glorified spirits, cannot, *literally*, be bound by all the precepts of the *second* table of the law; yet they are spiritually bound, and can, and do perfectly fulfil it, according to our Lord's definition, "the second is like unto it; love thy neighbor, love thy fellow angel as thyself." By what law are Gabriel, and his fellows bound, if it be not the moral law? What law did Satan violate, if it were not the moral law? It is generally imagined, that the cause of his fall was a refusal to worship Jesus Christ, when he was known to angels in the character of mediator. What did this refusal imply? A *want* of supreme love to God, and an acknowledgment of the divinity of Jesus Christ. What was this but a double violation of the *moral law?* Had this once bright morning star never violated the moral law, he had never become a devil. But, are some ready to ask, is it reasonable for angels, that higher order of intelligence, to be governed by the same law that governs men? Yes, most surely, I answer, by the same moral law.

By keeping your eye on Christ's exposition of the law, you will see its glory and lustre, and how exactly it is adapted to *every* created intelligent being. "Love the Lord thy God," &c. Whom? Angel, Archangel, Seraph, Cherub, and Adam. The injunction is just and easy, and each one in his sphere can *perfectly* obey it. Had Adam, in a state of innocence, been required to love God with Gabriel's heart, or powers, the law would have been rigorous, and he could not possibly have obeyed it. Were Gabriel to love only with the powers of Adam, he would be a violator. But this Godlike law requires Adam to love with *all* his *own* heart; Gabriel with all *his* heart; and even that imaginary being, called the Arian's Christ, with ALL *his* heart! But has this law a penalty? Most certainly. If it were without penalty, it would be utterly unfit to govern intelligent beings. It would be less efficient than the laws by which mere animals are governed. Without a penalty it would be no law; the angels, who violated it, had never been thrust down to hell; Adam had never been expelled from Paradise, or the Sodomites been suffering the "vengeance of eternal fire." But of what nature is this penalty? I answer, precisely like the law itself—just, immutable, and eternal. The very idea of the law's immutability proves the penalty to be eternal; for, if the unchangeable law continue its demands,

as it must necessarily do, on the angel in glory and the angel in hell; on man in paradise, out of paradise, and in hell, the penalty must, consequently, be annexed to enforce those demands. Therefore, the vain idea of the penalty of the law ceasing its demands on the sinner, after he suffers awhile in hell, is preposterous in the extreme. The language of the law is, "Cursed is every one that *continueth not* in *all* things written in the book of the law," &c. Therefore, a want of supreme love to God, by the damned in hell, subjects them continually to the curse; and, instead of expiating their crimes by *suffering*, they are every moment increasing the debt to divine justice, and will be to all eternity. It will be admitted, by every one, that the penalty of any law, and especially of the divine law, must be equal in dignity and demands to its precepts. Moral precepts are eternal in their principles, and immutable in their nature, and so must the penalty be: that is, eternal in its duration, and immutable in its application. While God maintains order and government in the universe, he must have laws; if laws, a penalty for their violation. God will, eternally, maintain order and government in the universe; therefore, intelligent violators of his holy laws will be eternally punished. The moment you admit the law to be unchangeable, (and who can doubt it,) that moment you virtually admit the penalty to be eternal.

The beauty, harmony, propriety, and holiness of the moral law, are admitted by all intelligent Christians. Indeed, the enlightened statesman, of every age, has acknowledged it, according to his understanding of it, to be the best rule by which states and other communities can be governed. The regenerated are ready, with David, to admit its sweetness; and, with Paul, after the inner man, to delight in its holiness, justice, and goodness. That the law is holy and pure, is undeniable. That it is admirably calculated in its nature to produce, were it perfectly obeyed, perfect happiness amongst all God's intelligent beings, is incontrovertible. Were mankind now all conformed to its spirit and letter, there would be a perfect paradise on earth. In short, it is the golden chain that has bound, does, and will for ever bind, the moral universe, and maintain the purity of God's government. Therefore, the confused idea, that Christ, in some sense, came to do it away, is exceedingly dark and dangerous. What! do away the eternal principles of *right?* Break the chain that binds holy beings to God and one another—produce a dark chasm in the divine government? God forbid! No: Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil; to magnify, to satisfy, to give evidence to all worlds, that the law could not be violated with impunity.

If this view of the law be just, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion, that it never ceases

to be the rule by which all intelligences are bound; good angels and bad angels; Adam in paradise, and out of paradise; man in his wicked, penitent, and regenerated situation. No matter where, or in what condition soever the intelligent being is, the law binds him to obedience. Indeed, I can conceive of no voluntary action by any intelligent being, in heaven, earth, or hell, but what is either in conformity to, or violation of the divine law, either directly, or indirectly. Hence, I say, the law of nature is only another name for the moral law. The law of nature is defined to be "the will of God relating to human actions, grounded in the moral difference of things," &c. Now, what is this but the moral law, the precepts of which are written, in less or more legible characters, on every man's heart, and impressed, by the divine Spirit, in a less or greater degree, on every man's conscience. The Apostle, speaking of the heathen who have not the written law, says, "They are a law to themselves, their thoughts accusing or excusing," &c. By what rule do their thoughts accuse or excuse? Surely, by the immutable rule of eternal right; that is, by the moral law; just with proportionable force to the clearness of the moral principle impressed upon their mind.

I would remark, in conclusion, that it is very important for all, but especially for the student in divinity, who would be a safe and successful

preacher, and who would be well grounded in the fundamental truths of the gospel, to study well *the law.* On a proper knowledge of the law depend all our just notions of the gospel, the nature of Christ, the nature and design of the atonement, the nature and use of his righteousness, &c., &c. The law is incorporated into the New Testament, as the rule of the Christian's life; and is of infinite value to him, not only as a rule of life, but as a mirror, in which he may discover all his imperfections. It has a tendency not only to humble him, but to bring him to Christ the "Lord his righteousness." The law is, also, not only the rule by which sinners are to be convinced and convicted, but the very means by which they are brought utterly to despair of help in themselves; and are thereby brought to submit to the righteousness of God.

Perhaps nine-tenths of the pernicious, and all the damning errors in the Christian world, have arisen from unjust notions of the moral law. Were it not for this, there would be no Antinomians, no Legalists, no Socinians, no Arians no Pelagians, &c. O Lord, teach us thy law!

LECTURE V.

ON THE FALL OF MAN.

That mankind are not in that state of moral rectitude, in which they were originally, when they came from the hand of their God, can scarcely be denied, I think, by the infidel himself. That they were morally pure in their first formation, accords with every just idea we can form of the great Creator. This being admitted, the principles of eternal justice exclude every idea of such beings suffering. Mankind *do* suffer, in soul and body: therefore, they are fallen creatures.

But the Scriptures are clear on this subject. Moses gives us a succinct account of man's original, and of his apostacy, which is confirmed by the Prophets, Apostles, &c. Man was made upright, in the *image* of his God; not in shape, form, power, &c., but principally in knowledge and holiness. God is Lord of the universe; man was subordinate lord of the lower creation. God is a spirit, necessarily existing from eternity

to eternity; man's soul is a spiritual being, and, from its nature, and the appointment of God, will exist to eternity. God is infinite in wisdom; man, for a mere creature, possesses amazing powers of mind. God is infinitely and essentially holy; man was *perfect* in holiness, but, alas! he has fallen! he has fallen! The image of his Creator is lost; the image of the tempter is contracted. But how did the lamentable occurrence take place? By *disobedience.* God, as a sovereign, saw proper to give Adam a test of his obedience, by prohibiting him to eat of a certain tree of the garden of paradise. This we have called, in the preceding lecture, a positive law, or precept; and, though positive, Adam was under *moral* obligation to obey it. But it is obvious that this positive precept was not the only law which our first parents violated. Although we have no explicit account of Adam's having the *written* law, yet, from the very relation in which he stood to his Creator, we may clearly infer, that he was bound to love and obey him. If the law is written on the hearts of the heathen, we may, with equal propriety, infer, that it was written on Adam's heart. But, if we advert to the definition Christ has given of the moral law, we are bound to admit that Adam was under it; and, if under it, it must have been in some way known to him; and, if known, he was justly subjected to its awful penalty. I think it may be easily proved, that

Adam violated the spirit of *both* tables of the moral law, before he actually violated the positive law. There is such an intimate, nay, inseparable connection between the two tables of the law, that it is difficult for me to conceive, how a man can violate the one, without, in effect, violating the other. Christ says, "He that breaketh the least of the commandments, is guilty of the *whole*." The same disposition that would lead to a violation of one table, would tend to a transgression of the other. He that would do injustice to his neighbor, would "rob God of his glory." And he who would dishonor God, would do his neighbor wrong, if opportunity offered. Adam was bound to love God with all his heart: he ceased to do so before he consented, or could possibly consent to take the forbidden fruit. He relaxed in his love, and this was a direct breach of the first table of the law. The tempter told him he should not die, but be as God, distinguishing between good and evil. Adam *coveted* more knowledge than his Maker had given him, and, therein, was guilty of a literal breach of the second table, "Thou shalt not covet." Thus we see, that Adam did, mentally and really, transgress both tables of the moral law, before, or while he was preparing to violate the positive precept; and this appears to me to be his principal crime. Indeed, as I have suggested, in a former lecture, I cannot conceive of crime, only

on the breach of moral rule. Man cannot violate a positive command voluntarily, until he is first prepared to do so by a direct or indirect violation of a moral obligation. The love we owe to God binds us to obey all his positive precepts; but if we transgress his positive precepts, it is evidence to us, to the world, that we do not love God, or have ceased to do so with all our hearts. But if any still doubt whether our first parents were under, and violated the moral law, I would refer them again to Christ's exposition of the law, and to Paul and John. Christ says, "The law is to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart," &c. John says, "He that *feareth*, is not made perfect in love." After Adam sinned, he *feared*, therefore, he lost his *perfect* love to God by sinning. How? By *ceasing* to love God with all his heart. But Paul settles the matter, when he says, "Where there is no law there is no transgression." Adam manifestly violated the law, which was proved by his fearing, or being slavishly afraid. Adam could not have violated the law, unless he had been under it; but Adam did violate the law, therefore, he was under the law.

But was not Adam compelled to fall by some secret determination of God? or if he were not, why did not Jehovah prevent his fall, &c.? In answer to these queries, I would remark, that there have been many bold, not to say, profane speculations on those subjects. Who art thou,

that would arraign the Almighty for not having done thus and thus, or for having made man just as he did make him. That *he* made Adam perfect, according to his kind, there can be no doubt; and that free agency was a principal constituent of that perfection and happiness, can be, I think, as little doubted. As it regards the *secret* previous determination of God with respect to man's sin, I would remark, that I know of no just method by which we may *guess* at the secret things of God, but by his *revealed* will. God commanded Adam not to sin, and informed him that, if he did, he should die; thereby presenting a powerful *motive* to his mind to deter him. But if, after making Adam free in his volition, and thus revealing his will to him, he *secretly* determined that Adam *should* violate his holy law, why curse him for doing so? Why inquire, what hast thou done? Why subject him and his posterity to eternal punishment? But the thought is profane. It makes the blessed and essentially holy God the *author of sin!* which blasphemous thought I pray God eternally to exclude from our minds. I would just remark, while on this part of the subject, that to indulge in speculations about God, his determinations, &c., beyond what is revealed in, or clearly inferred from his written word, will always lead to the greatest perplexity, absurdity, and often downright blasphemy. My own mind, after endeavoring "to be wise above what is

written," has been glad to fly back to the sweet and sure asylum of revealed truth. Blessed be God for his *revealed will.* By this compass we must abide, or we will lose our way, and never arrive at the desired haven of truth and of eternal repose.

But what did our first parents and their posterity lose by transgression? I answer, *every* thing that was calculated to make them really happy! They lost communion with God, the highest source of real pleasure, without which all other enjoyment is a species of hell! Paul gives an affecting account of the condition of man in his lapsed state. "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all* under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not *one.* There is none that *understandeth,* there is none that seeketh after God. They are ALL gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them

who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

If any one will attentively view the above drawn and humiliating portrait of fallen man, he will have no difficulty in exclaiming, with the prophet, "The *whole head* is sick; the *whole heart* is faint;" that is, the whole soul of man is entirely depraved, corrupt, and alienated from God, a child of wrath, an heir of hell, "going astray from the womb," conceived in sin, an enemy to God, &c., having "a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" the understanding darkened—the affections earthly, and the whole man sensual and devilish. In short, we can hardly open a page of the sacred Scriptures, but what gives us a heart-appalling view of human nature in its fallen condition.

After contemplating these, and many other parts of the Scriptures, on the subject of the fall, it is difficult to conceive how it ever entered into the minds of any to imagine that the *principal* loss man sustained in the fall, was perverseness in his *will*. True it is, the will of man is depraved, prone to evil, ready to choose any thing or every thing but God, and the one thing needful. But it is equally true, that all other powers or faculties are equally depraved. My bible makes no distinction. The understanding and judgment are

dark, the affections are earthly, the memory is swift to retain or recal *evil*, but slow to retain or recal good. In short, the *whole* soul is depraved, is unlike God; is sunk in spiritual death, and fast tending to eternal death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin;" &c. Yes, by reason of our union with our federal head and representative, we sinned in him and fell with him, and *death* is the consequence. Death spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

That spiritual death was the *immediate* consequence of Adam's transgression, is obvious from the circumstance of his trying to *hide* himself from that God, in whom and with whom he had so shortly before enjoyed the most exquisite delight. Behold him now dead to God, dead to all the sweet enjoyment of God which he had so recently felt.

But the *seeds* of *temporal* death were sown in his animal frame, that instant he sinned. "As in Adam all die," that is, a natural death, "even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" that is, by a general resurrection of the body. Indeed, it would be difficult for us to conceive how man became mortal on any other principle, than that of his sinning against God. For, without sin, inherently, actually, or by imputation, we cannot, on the principles of divine justice and goodness, conceive of pain; and without pain, of

some kind, it is difficult to conceive of natural death.

But man subjected himself to *eternal* death. We have seen that man violated the *moral* law. We have seen, in a former lecture, that the penalty of *that* law must be like its precepts, conseqently, eternal; therefore, man is bound over as a transgressor to eternal death, or punishment —to eternal privation—eternal banishment from God and his heaven-giving presence. "Now we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law," &c. And what doth the law say? "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to *do* them." But, alas! man *cannot* now *do* them. He has become weak, morally weak; he *will not do* them, for he is averse to God; he has become carnally minded; and "the carnal mind is *enmity* with God, not subject to his law, neither, indeed, *can be*." What then? Must God's truth be violated? God forbid. Must his law be abrogated? Speaking with reverence, this is impossible. What! must that which is *holy*, *just*, and *good*, cease its demands because man has become a rebel? Must Deity change?—must the eternal principles by which he governs intelligent, all intelligent beings, cease their operation, because man has willfully, and without any constraint, violated the best of all laws? No: rather let

Adam and all his posterity sink in one common ruin. Let them sink under the just penalty of an holy law while eternity endures. But were mankind left in this deplorable condition? No! glory to God in the highest! The *seed* of the woman—the SEED of the woman was promised. But this will be matter of a subsequent lecture.

LECTURE VI

ON THE PROMISED SEED, OR JESUS CHRIST.

In our preceding lecture, we have seen the deplorable condition of man in his lapsed, fallen state; in this, we would treat of that glorious personage, who undertook to restore and bring him back to God. When we retrospect our thoughts on the law, and man's violation of that law, we are naturally and irresistibly led to the contemplation of just such a Saviour, as the Scriptures represent Christ Jesus to be. For, when we leave out of view either of his natures, we are constrained to believe him unsuitable and insufficient for the great work of redemption.

But the Scriptures unquestionably lead us to conceive of Christ Jesus as God man, possessing two distinct natures united in one person—not mixed, or confused. "His humanity is not changed into his deity, nor his deity into his humanity." How this union of his two natures exist, we cannot tell; it is above our comprehension, as

many things, less important, are above the comprehension of finite minds, of limited capacities such as ours.

That Christ is very God, possessed of proper divinity, &c., appears abundantly evident from numerous passages in God's word, a few of which only we will now mention. In the creation it is said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image," &c. "Let *us* go down and confound their language," &c. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and smite the man that is my *fellow*, saith the Lord." Who is this co-equal of Jehovah? "He is the mighty God, the *everlasting* Father," (or Father of eternity,) "the Prince of peace." He is the "most mighty;" for it is said, Psalm xlv. 3, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O *most* mighty," &c. When we compare this Psalm with the first chapter in Hebrews, it is evident the Lord Christ is meant. Then this settles the point at once; for who can be greater than the most mighty? Again: Isaiah xliv. 6, "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his *Redeemer* the Lord of Hosts: I am the first, and I am the last, and beside *me* there is no God." You will notice, it is the Lord, the *Redeemer*, who is speaking. The Father is not called the Redeemer; therefore, it must be the Son, or Jesus Christ. And it is said, "Beside *me* there is no God" Will any say, that the Son is not truly or properly God, after looking

at this passage? Again: Isa. xliv. 24, "Thus saith the Lord, thy *Redeemer*, and he that *formed* thee from the womb: I am the Lord that maketh *all* things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*; that spreadeth abroad the earth, *by myself*." How can any one say, that the *Redeemer* is not the Creator of *all* things, and, consequently the Almighty God, after reading this verse? He is not called the instrument, as some would say, for he did these things *alone*, without aid; "by myself;" not by *another*, as an instrument. I would ask those, who deny the proper divinity of Jesus Christ, to read these verses again. In the New Testament it is said, "There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the *Word*, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are ONE." That "*he* thought it not robbery to be equal with God." "I and my Father are ONE." "I give unto them *eternal* life." (Who but God can give eternal life?) "The WORD was God." "God was manifest in the flesh." "God with us." "Christ is over all, God blessed for ever." In 1 Cor. xv. 22—28, we have this remarkable passage, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he (Christ) shall have put down all rule, and all

authority, and power. For he (Christ) must reign, till he (Christ) hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he (Christ) hath put all things under his feet. But when he (Christ) saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he (Christ) is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, (Christ) then shall the *Son also himself* (that is, the man Jesus,) be subject unto him, (Christ,) that hath put all things under him, that God (the Trinity) may be all in all." I have not seen any attempt, by Arians, or Unitarians, to explain the above passage of God's word. I myself put it to one of their ablest teachers, but he dared not attempt an explanation of it. It is too explicit; it is impossible for Arian subtlety, itself, to wrest it. This passage, also, explains or confirms what we have before suggested, about the two natures of Christ, that is, that they are not mixed, &c. That after the great work of final redemption shall have been completed, and the enemies of the cross for ever locked and barred down in eternal night: in short, when there will no longer be a necessity for a *Mediator*, even the humanity, or glorified soul and body of our Lord Jesus Christ, (which was never deified,) will be subject to the *Logos*, that God, the adorable Trinity, may be all in all.

The circumstance of the Jews charging our Lord with blasphemy, because he made himself God, is no inconsiderable proof of his proper divinity. The Jews were tenacious of their Scriptures, and of the unity of God; therefore, they charge Christ. But he appeals to them for the purity of his life, and repels their charge. Arians, Unitarians, &c., virtually bring a similar charge against the blessed Jesus. For, surely, he doth blaspheme, if he, being man, or any other *created* being, says it is not robbery to be *equal* with God. But, inasmuch as "*all* the fulness of the God-head *bodily* dwelleth in him," he must be equal with God. And so did the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles consider him. For they all apply the same *names* and attributes, the *same* perfections and works, that they do to the eternal Jehovah. Who can create, but God? Yet Jesus Christ creates. Who can know the *thoughts* of the heart, but God? Yet Jesus Christ knoweth them. Who can forgive sin, but God? Yet Jesus Christ has power to forgive sin. Who can give *eternal* life, but God? Yet Jesus Christ giveth eternal life. It is idolatry to worship any but "the Lord thy God," for *him* ONLY shalt thou serve. Yet angels, nay, *all* the angels of God worship him; Prophets worshipped him; Evangelists, Apostles, and all true Christians, down to the present day, worship him, as Thomas in life, and Stephen in death. The many pas-

sages of Scripture which speak of the Saviour's *inferiority* do not contradict, but rather establish the proper divinity of the God-man; for if words convey ideas, or have any meaning at all, there are numerous passages which clearly convey the idea of Christ's *full equality* with the Father. In the Apostles' benedictions he is always made equal, as well as in baptism. Sometimes he is named *first*, "Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus," &c. I will introduce one more passage, from 1 Thes. iii. 11, which proves the perfect equality of the Son, but where the *first* person of the adorable Trinity is *first* introduced. "Now God himself, *and* our Father, *and* our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you." Where it is said, "None knoweth when the day of judgment will come but the Father, and that even the Son himself knoweth it not," the allusion is obviously to the humanity of Christ, abstractly considered; for we know that omniscience is ascribed to the word, or Christ, and he and his Father are *one*; but omniscience does not belong to the mere humanity of Christ. To the same amount are a variety of other passages of God's word, where the inferiority of the Saviour is mentioned. If the student in divinity would always keep his eye on the humanity, or mediatorial character of the Saviour, he would have no difficulty in his mind, where such passages of Scripture occur. When other passages, clearly

expressing proper divinity, occur, keep your eye on *the* GOD; then you will conceive of the God-man, who only could possibly bring in an everlasting righteousness for guilty man.

Indeed, it is impossible to expound many plain passages of God's word, only by applying some to the real and proper divinity of Christ, and some to his humanity; but, by doing so, all is easy, and we are not subjected to the awful threatening, where God prohibits additions, or a taking from his holy book.

"But this WORD was made flesh;" that is, "he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abram." "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a BODY thou hast prepared me." "He was made of a WOMAN, made under the law."

The Saviour had a soul as well as body; and it is said to have been "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Hence, it appears, that the Redeemer of fallen man, was and is very God, and very man—proper divinity, and proper or real humanity, mysteriously, but really joined or united; and, in those two natures, yet without sin, he entered on the great work of glorifying God, and saving fallen man from the curse of that immutable law, that binds over its transgressors to eternal punishment.

LECTURE VII.

ON WHAT CHRIST JESUS HAS DONE FOR MAN.

The doctrine of the atonement has been stumbled at and rejected by certain descriptions of mankind, ever since the commencement of the Christian era. Although the ceremonies of the Jews, particularly their sacrifices, pointed to this very circumstance, yet they stumbled at Christ and him crucified. Arians, Unitarians, &c., have not, perhaps, been so uniform in any thing else as in rejecting the atonement. Modern infidels, too, come in for their share of glory in rejecting what has ever been the true Christian's boast. But this host of ancient and modern enemies is rather a proof, than otherwise, of the truth of this foundation of all true believers in Christ.

If I have just views of the nature of the atonement, or of what the Saviour has done for man, it is the God-man, Christ Jesus, living and dying *for* Adam's guilty family. "In the fulness

of time, God sent his Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." How? By obedience and suffering—by fulfilling every jot and tittle of the holy law of God, which man had violated—by obeying it perfectly and perpetually, in spirit and in letter, in thought, word, and action; and when he came to the end of the commandment, he entered on a scene of sufferings past description by tongue or pen. All his holy life and example, all of that "infinite fund of righteousness" which his active obedience brought in, would have answered no valuable purpose, "without the shedding of BLOOD," for, without this, there could be no remission of sin. Divine justice could not be appeased; the law could not cease its demands; its penalty must be satisfied, or the sinner's blood must be the price. But, O wondrous love! the Saviour did die; Jesus did suffer; he bled, he groaned, he gave up the ghost. But were these ordinary sufferings? No, verily. The consternation of the philosopher, the confession of the pagan captain, and the phenomena of nature, all proclaim these were no ordinary sufferings. But when we advert to the nature of the law, and its penalty, we will easily see that the Son of God suffered more for guilty man than is possible to describe. The law had eternal demands against the sinner, against all Adam's race. Christ had undertaken to satisfy

the demands. This could only be done by making full satisfaction—full satisfaction could only be made by sufferings equal * to what all the fallen race of man was bound to suffer eternally. First, then, if you please, enumerate the whole race of man, from Adam to the sound of the Archangel's trumpet; then enumerate the sins—those that are more aggravated as well as less aggravated—suppose each one, and every one to be doomed, by justice, to suffer eternally, according to their several aggravations, and then multiply the whole together, if you can, and you have the sum of sufferings that our dear Lord endured, "who

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* We understand the writer to mean, that law and justice could not have been more fully honored and maintained, by the sufferings of the whole race of Adam everlastingly, than they are by the sufferings of Christ. So that God is just, while he is the justifier of him that believeth in Christ. So, that by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinner can meet all the law's demands against him. Though Christ's sufferings were not the same in kind and duration, as would have been the sufferings of all Adam's race everlastingly, yet, to say the least, they are *equal* thereto, in satisfying justice, law, and the order of the Divine Government.

The writer's doctrine is not a mere extension to the whole race, of that asserted by distinctive Calvinism in regard to the *theoretic elect*, that Christ, as surety, in the covenant of redemption, took their whole debt upon him, freed them from guilt, obeyed the law, and so fulfilled the alone condition of their salvation, and engaged to bring each one, for whom he died, to glory. But his doctrine is that set forth in Scripture: "That Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God:" "That he was made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" "That he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world;" as in 1 Pet. iii. 18; 2 Cor. v. 21; and 1 John ii. 2. Thus the way of salvation is open to all; but none are saved without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Examining Committee.*

bore our sins in his own body on the tree." It is no marvel, under such circumstances, that, even while anticipating such sufferings, he cried out, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and, how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" It is no wonder, that his precious blood left its natural channels, while in the garden, and burst through the pores of his sacred body. It is not surprising, that he (as the learned say the original implies) bellowed as an ox on Calvary. It is not strange, that the bright luminary of day should refuse to shine on such a scene; that the veil of the temple should rend from top to bottom; the rocks rend, and all nature be in consternation. But, O, my heart, it is a wonder, it is a wonder of wonders, that thou art not constantly melted down into generous sorrow, every time thou dost contemplate the scene.

But, O, my Lord, man, blinded man, man prone to every extreme, except holiness, would derogate from thine honor, from the strength of thy love, in encountering such sufferings; by saying, that, perhaps, thou didst not suffer more than many mere men have done in the world! Yes, Lord, and those, too, who profess to be thy friends! saying, "Because of the dignity of thy person, that little suffering would do to expiate the crimes of a guilty world." Why not, O my Lord, extend the idea a little farther, and say, for the same reason, after thou didst proclaim

thyself the sinner's friend, thy heavenly father would pardon sin without *any* suffering? without calling *at all* on the sword of justice to "*awake*, and smite the man that is my *fellow*," &c. O Lord, my atoning high priest, I, the meanest of all thy servants, would, if thou wouldst help, vindicate thy honor against such reproach.

Have those derogators from the nature and extent of the sufferings of the Son of God, duly considered the nature of justice, particularly divine justice? Have they considered the distinction between the nature of justice and mercy? It is the province of mercy to forgive a part, or the whole of any demand, when consistent; but justice, abstract justice, knows of no such thing. The justice of God's law knows no acquittal without full satisfaction; it acquits when satisfied, not in part, but in whole. What was the demand of the law for its violation? Eternal punishment! Against whom? Against all its violators—all Adam's family. How are those just demands to be satisfied? I answer, by sufferings, equal, at least, to the demand. What saith the law to its violators? "Cursed is every one," &c. How long doth the law curse? Let the poor Sodomites answer, who suffer the vengeance of *eternal* fire! Then, if Christ suffered at all, if he said truly it was "finished," he did suffer what was tantamount to the sufferings of all Adam's family

in hell eternally. "He was made a curse for us." How? By bearing our sins, by suffering in our place or stead. But did he suffer only a *part* of what we should have suffered? No, surely; but, until he could cry out, "It is finished"—the bitter dregs are all wrung out—"I have trodden the wine-press alone"—I entered in once for all, and "for ever perfected them that are sanctified."

But the great difficulty in the minds of some, about such extensive suffering, is the impossibility of proper divinity suffering at all, and the inadequacy of humanity to suffer so much. We should not, however, reject matters of fact clearly revealed, or clearly inferred, because we cannot comprehend the how it was accomplished. But Christ himself gives us a strong intimation of the *how*, when he saith, "Ye fools, and blind, whether is greater, the gift, or the ALTAR that SANCTIFIETH the gift?" We have seen, before, that Christ Jesus possessed proper divinity and real humanity, mysteriously, though really joined or united in one person. Now, by reason, or virtue of this real union, every act of obedience was infinitely meritorious; and, consequently, his sufferings were infinitely satisfactory. "Whether is greater, the gift, or the altar?" It was the practice of the Jews to erect an altar on which they offered sacrifice. This altar *bore up* the sacrifice, whether a lamb or bullock. It was built sufficiently strong to support the sacrifice, however ponderous the

offering might be; and while the offering or gift was consuming, the altar sustained no injury. So it was with the Son of God. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a BODY hast thou prepared ME!" This body and soul were offered on the altar of divinity. The load of sins, of guilt, was ponderous, indeed, that pressed this offering—it was amazing—it was incomprehensible by finite minds; yet, the *altar!* the ALTAR! the ALTAR sustained it! The fire of divine justice was kindled, it fell on the offering, or sacrifice, and burned fiercer and fiercer, until the cry of "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," was extorted. But the Son stood as the substitute for the law-cursed family; justice, inflexible justice, must have her demands, crying, "Pay me that thou owest,"* until the very heart of eternal hell was kindled in his righteous breast. But, presently, the fire begins to burn less fierce; presently, it is totally extinguished! It burnt down, through the offering, until it came to the altar, then, lo! it goes out; heaven is propitious, mercy smiles, justice demands no more. God's law is magnified—all worlds are convinced; it (the law)

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* The writer is giving a pathetic delineation of Christ's sufferings. If he meant to teach that hell was kindled in his breast, we cannot adopt the idea. We take it in the sense, that his sufferings were beyond the power of language to express. Not that conscious guilt, feelings of remorse, and despair were experienced in the bosom of the Son of God. —*Examining Committee.*

cannot be violated with impunity. Justice, mercy, truth, goodness, and love, can all now gloriously harmonize in the sinner's pardon; because a righteousness, an everlasting righteousness, is brought in by the Son of God. The law is honored, and sinners may be saved. "God can be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

In proof of the doctrine of the atonement, I would remark, that the sacrifices under the old dispensation had obviously an allusion to the sufferings of Christ for man. See Heb. x. 1—14, particularly the following: "But this man, (Jesus,) after he had offered one sacrifice FOR SINS, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." See also, Dan. ix. 24, 26; Isaiah, chap. 55th throughout; but particularly the following parts of that chapter: "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for OUR transgressions, he was bruised for OUR iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes WE are healed. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was cut off out of the living; for the transgression of my people, was he stricken: yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering FOR SIN, &c.; for he shall BEAR their INIQUITIES." "For I deliver unto you,

first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died FOR OUR SINS, according to the Scriptures:" 1 Cor. xv. 3. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:" Gal. iii. 13. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God," &c.: Heb. ix. 14. "And not only so, but we, also, joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." See also, Rom. iii. 25, 26; Eph. i. 7, 14.

As to the extent of the atonement, or provision of the gospel, there have been various ideas; and, in this, as well as on many other subjects in divinity, there are great extremes. The rigid Calvinist maintains, that Christ died only for the elect; consequently, all for whom he did die, must and will come to him, sooner or latter. The Hopkinsian veers off entirely on the other side, from the first idea, but retains, with more inconsistency, the second; that is, he admits, *indirectly*, that Christ died for all, or, rather, that he had no definite object as it respects man; but died to honor God and the law, and, therefore, the atonement, in its extent, would embrace all mankind, but that God secretly determined never to make application of it, or never to give the necessary aid to a part of mankind to enable them to participate in the benefit of the atonement. The Universalist drives matters

into another extreme, alleging, that Christ died for all; therefore, all must, ultimately, come to heaven, though it should be from hell itself! And thus the sacred word of plain truth is wrested and twisted this, that, and the other way, to suit the different and various hypotheses that men have chosen to adopt. But, it appears to me, that all the above plans are founded in error, are dishonoring to God, and not supported by his word nor reason. It may not, perhaps, come so properly under the head of this lecture, to controvert those errors, but I will say to the hell-redemptioner, that, though the provision is full, without an application, without faith, without holiness, the fallen creature must be turned into hell, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," but where the impenitent "suffer the vengeance of ETERNAL fire," for rejecting the provisions of the gospel.

I would say to the Hopkinsian, your plan exhibits the blessed God in the most awful light; he *provides*, he *calls*, but he determines to withhold the wanted *aid*, and then damns the sinner for not having it! Moreover, your plan of the object of Christ's mission contradicts the plain word of God. We know God is glorified, that his law is magnified by Christ's advent into the world; but we also know, that the avowed object in his coming, was to *save* SINNERS. "God so loved the world," (not himself,) that he gave his

Son," &c., and "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." Yes, as well as numerous other passages, which go to disprove your dark, undefined notion about Christ's mission.

I would say, with deference, to the rigid Calvinist that your plan seems to contradict many plain passages of Scripture, which go to prove the extent of the great atonement made for sin, some only of which I will here mention.

First, it is said, in John iii. 16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I am aware, that some explain the above text as meaning the elect world; but, such explanation is unsound. Let us paraphrase the passage, agreeably to that explanation, and see how it will do. "God so loved the *elect*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever of the elect, that believe, should not perish, &c., consequently, that part of the elect world that do not believe must perish!" The absurdity of this will at once appear. It is admitted, that when any argument, or explanation, goes to prove too much, it proves nothing at all. There is, however, another passage, in 1 John ii. 2, that appears still more expressive: "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Again: "The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto *all men*," &c. "By the grace

of God he hath tasted death for *every man*." There is another passage in the Prophets, to the same import, "Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope," &c. Now, it appears, that all the world are prisoners of *hope*. Wherefore? Because Christ died for, and, thereby, constituted them prisoners of hope. Without such satisfaction, or atonement, they would be prisoners of *despair*. The angels' declaration at the birth of our Lord confirms the same idea. They brought glad tidings of good news, which should be to all people. The very commission that our Lord gave his disciples, implies the same thing. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature," &c. But what follows? "He that believeth," &c., "shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." What! damn a soul for not believing a non-truth! Would it not be a non-truth for a sinner to believe in Christ, if he had not died for him? Every call of the gospel, every invitation to repentance, the extent of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and the oath of God, all confirm the same sentiment.

I think it useless to multiply proofs and arguments on this subject, as we think some, at least, of those which we have offered, entirely satisfactory to all those who are *willing* to know the truth. But, in conclusion, we will add, that every Christian, and, especially, every

Christian minister, should cleave to the atonement as the broad foundation of all their well-grounded hopes, and the only medium through which they may expect, ultimately, to conquer the world!

May God keep us near, and always glorying in the Cross!

LECTURE VIII.

THE HOLY GHOST, AND WHAT HE IS DOING FOR MAN.

Although John's disciples, while uninstructed and baptized with the Christian baptism, had not so much as even heard that there was a Holy Ghost, yet the Scriptures abundantly teach, there is such a being—a real and distinct person in the adorable Trinity, possessing real and proper divinity, without whose operations on the hearts of the children of men, purchased redemption would be of no avail; but who does operate, and that as extensively as Christ has died, or made the atonement.

Personal powers of understanding and will are ascribed to him; also, personal acts, such as teaching, speaking, witnessing, &c. "For the Spirit searcheth *all* things, yea, the deep things of God—even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. See also, 1 Cor. xii. 11. "For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost:" Mark xiii. 11.

See also, Acts xx. 22; Rom. viii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. vi. 19, &c. The Holy Spirit is joined with the other two divine persons, as the proper object of worship, which appears from the Apostles' benediction, the ordinance of baptism, and the following passages of Scripture: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are *one*." "Now God himself, (that is, the Holy Ghost,) and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.: 1 Thes. iii. 11. That the Holy Spirit is a divine person, co-equal with the Father and Son, is as susceptible of proof as the divinity of either of the other persons; which appears from the passages of Scripture we have already quoted, as also the following, which ascribe to him names proper only to be ascribed to the Most High God, such as Jehovah, God, Lord, &c.; as also attributes proper to be ascribed only to the eternal Jehovah, such as omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and eternity. "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day, if you will hear his voice," &c. "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years," &c. "So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into MY rest:" Heb. iii. 7, 9, 11. See also, Ex xvii. 7; Heb x. 15, 16; Acts v. 3, 4; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 19. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him?" Isa. xl. 13. See also, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

For omnipresence and omnipotence, see Rom. viii. 26, 27; Luke i. 35, &c. For eternity, read, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the *eternal* Spirit, offered himself without spot to God," &c. Heb. ix. 14.

If we have succeeded in proving the divinity and personality of Jesus Christ, we think it unnecessary to multiply proofs about the Holy Spirit. For I believe there are none who admit the divinity and personality of the Saviour, who deny the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Now were it not for the operation of this Holy Spirit, in vain had Christ lived and died for rebel man. For such is his (man's) blindness, his hardness, and dreadful insensibility, were not God's Spirit to operate on him, he would continue to grope in the dark, continue fast asleep, until death would hurry him to the tribunal of the Eternal. For he is, indeed, "blinded by the God of this world;" he cannot perceive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. The God of this world has so blinded his mind, that the glorious light of the gospel cannot (while in this situation,) shine into his heart; "he is dead in trespasses and in sins."

The same light by which the holy Scriptures were written, is necessary to a proper understanding of them. A man must have natural light to write to his friend; his friend must have the same

or similar light, to read what is written: so must God, by his Spirit, shine into our hearts, or we will never understand his divine word.

But this is the office of the Comforter, or Holy Spirit: "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." He quickens those who are dead in trespasses and in sins. He illumines the understanding, and when the "commandment came" with power, a Paul, a Jailor, and three thousand, on another occasion, inquired what they should do. The Holy Spirit, in the work of regeneration, also presents the "one Lord," the only proper object of faith in the act of justification. Were it not for such operation, Christ would continue, even to the convinced sinner, as "a root out of dry ground." It is by the same enlightening, warning influences, that the progressive work of sanctification is carried on in the hearts and lives of the regenerate. It is by his influence that men are moved to preach the gospel, and led "into all (necessary) truth." It is by his touches that any sinner of Adam's family is ever moved to seek the salvation of his soul—that any revival of God's work takes place and is carried on. In short, the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of man's awakening, regeneration, and sanctification.

There has been much speculation, and diversity of thought, about the nature and extent of the operation of the Holy Spirit; and a phraseology

often introduced to support different hypotheses, which is unscriptural and calculated to mislead the unwary; such as special and common calls of the Spirit, &c. But the plain word of God tells us, that the office of the Spirit is to reprove, or convince the *world* of sin, &c. What world? I answer, that world which God so loved, &c.; that world, that *whole* world, that Christ died for; that world, whose constituent parts are *every man.*

I see, or think I see, such an intimate, nay, inseparable connection between the atonement and operation of the Holy Spirit, that, if I have proved satisfactorily the extent of the former, the latter will follow of course. For, if God has really given his dear Son to die for all mankind, he, "who would have all men to be saved," has given, or sent his Holy Spirit into the world, crying in every man's heart, "Turn ye, turn ye, for *why* will ye die?"

LECTURE IX.

ON FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

Although these two articles are distinct in themselves, having different objects, yet I consider them inseparable; and sometimes used in the Scriptures as synonymous. Peter, in the Acts, says, to the converted Jews, "Repent, and be baptized," &c. Now, this implies the commission which our Lord gave to his apostles, when he said. "Go ye into all the world," &c. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Again: Peter, in one of his epistles, says, "God is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" that is, that they should experience a saving interest in the Lord Jesus. The repentance here spoken of, cannot mean that repentance alone which a man may have without saving faith; if it did, the reason given by the Apostle for God's long suffering must lose all its

force. Again: Jesus says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The most comprehensive definition I have heard, or can give, of repentance, is, a sorrow for and a turning from sin. This definition will, perhaps, embrace every kind or species of repentance, which is the effect of a divine operation on the human mind.

The shortest, and clearest definition that I can give, of every kind of faith spoken of in the Scriptures, is an assent and consent of the mind to certain propositions, according to the evidence with which such proposition or propositions are presented to the understanding. If these thoughts be correct, we may easily see the connection between faith and repentance, and that faith is *always* first. But the agency of the Holy Spirit is necessary to either or both; for, without light there can be no evidence; without evidence there can be no faith; without faith there can be no repentance. The devils, through some medium, see, feel, believe, and tremble; and, no doubt, are the subjects of some kind of despairing repentance, for having voluntarily left their first estate. Wicked, abandoned men, are often illuminated to see something of the danger of their course in life, and its probable end; they believe on the evidence presented; they repent, but presently they put out the light, by "quenching the Spirit" that produced it, become unbelieving, and, consequently

cease to be sorry for their sins. I would call this some of the first or lighter workings of *legal* repentance, which is produced by faith in the law. I know of no better term by which to call any kind of repentance, previous to *saving* faith, than that of legal. That is, the man is sorry for his crimes, he is disposed to forsake them, because he believes they do subject him to misery in this life, and in that which is to come. Not for any hatred he feels to sin, or the practices he has been guilty of, because of their own hatefulness and deformity; but because misery, death, and hell will be the sure consequence. I would illustrate this idea by the case of a felon. He has violated some penal law of the land, is apprehended, brought before the proper tribunal, tried on evidence, and condemned to suffer the penalty. With all the proceedings before him, he has full evidence to believe that he will suffer the shame and pain consequent on his crime; he is now sorry for his offence; if he could recal a few weeks or months, he would not commit it; he trembles for the consequences; he *repents:* Wherefore? Not because he inwardly hates the crime; not because his heart, from principle, is opposed to such shameful and unreasonable conduct, but because inflexible justice says he shall die; because self-love, and self-preservation, counterbalance all the benefit or enjoyment he felt in the commission of the crime for which he is

brought to condign punishment. Just so it is with every awakened sinner, from the first stage of such awakening until he believes to the saving of his soul. And this idea is not contradicted by the circumstance of God's goodness, sometimes leading to repentance. This is one method by which the Holy Spirit "reproves," or convinces men of their ingratitude and unreasonable crimes; yet, whatever be the means that God uses, it always ultimates in *fear*, a slavish fear, and legal repentance before regeneration. When Paul was stricken to the ground, he inquired of the Lord what he would have him to do; when the jailor was enlightened to see himself, "What must I do to be saved." The three thousand on the day of pentecost, being pricked in their hearts, "cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" we feel misery, pain, and guilt now; we look for fiercer pains, the just desert of our crimes, "what shall we do?" Indeed, there appears no instance on the divine record of one awakened sinner, who did not fear with a slavish fear; consequently, repented with a legal or slavish repentance.

The idea of men first seeking God from love, or being moved thereto by a principle of love in the heart to God, is extremely preposterous. What! an unconverted sinner moved by love to seek God? That is as much as to say, the converted seek for conversion, the regenerated for regeneration, or the pardoned seek for pardon!

For God's love in the heart, or love in the heart to God, certainly implies all those characters; for, "he that loveth is born of God," &c. If righteous "Noah was moved by fear to build an ark," much more may fear excite an awakened sinner to flee to the ark, Christ. Mr. Hopkins says, "There may be *genuine* repentance without or before faith." What he means by the term "genuine," I cannot tell; if he means to say, that the highest kind of repentance, that the Scriptures contemplate, can be experienced before faith, he flatly contradicts our Lord and his Apostles; if he means that a man, who has not saving faith, may be sincerely sorry for his sins, and disposed to forsake them, though his motive may be for fear of the consequences, I would admit the correctness of his position. But I imagine this is not his meaning, for he allows there is no promise made "to the doings of the unregenerate," &c. If I understand him, he holds, or would inculcate, a kind of jumbled, inconsistent plan, that is not taught in the Scriptures. First, the man is regenerated, then he repents, then he believes; and on this plan, it is hard for me to tell at what period he was justified. I have generally thought, with Paul, that he was justified when he believed. But, the idea of a *regenerated* man, and a *true* penitent, being *unjustified*, shows that Paul, surely, must have been mistaken, when he said, "Being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God," &c.

That repentance, that is, legal repentance, is necessary before saving faith, is certain; that is, it is necessary for the sinner to see and believe that he is a sinner, exposed to death and hell, be sorry for his sins, be willing to forsake them, before he is prepared to believe in the Lord Jesus: for the sick, not the whole, need the physician. It is somewhat remarkable, that the direct command to believe in the Lord Jesus, by the Apostles, was generally, if not always, given to the penitent or awakened sinner. Peter, on the day of pentecost, it is true, told the awakened to repent; but this must either imply a *forsaking* of sin, or *faith*, or both; for he was then addressing awakened sinners, who were *sincerely* inquiring what they should do—sinners, who were then "pricked in their hearts," and sincerely sorry for having crucified the Lord of Glory. But, as all degrees of legal repentance are an effect of faith; so gospel, or evangelical repentance, is an effect of *saving* faith. That instant, and never till then, in which the man believes to the saving of his soul, he begins to sorrow after a godly sort—he begins to repent with a generous, and, in a certain sense, disinterested repentance. He is not sorry now for having sinned, because his sins subject him to eternal punishment, for he is pardoned; but he is sorry for his sins, and is disposed to forsake them, because they have been committed against so much goodness, love, mercy, long-suffering,

purity, &c., and, because he sees them hateful, odious, and abominable in their own nature. In short, his regenerated heart loathes itself on account of sin, and repents as in dust and ashes. And when he feels the strongest confidence, that his sins will not arise in judgment against him, he feels the strongest desires to be freed from all sin, and, most heartily, repents for his sins. This, too, is the business of his whole subsequent life; which is another proof, that genuine and saving repentance must be after the first acts of saving faith. Through a progressive life of sanctification, the man sees, or has evidence; he believes, and repents.

We have already seen, that faith is and assent and consent of the mind, to propositions presented with more or less clear evidence to the understanding. That such an assent, and consent, must be preceded by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, is obvious; for, by nature, the human understanding is darkened and blinded by the God of this world; but the office of the Comforter is, "to reprove or convince of sin." When this conviction takes place, the man *believes*, that is, he believes with an influential faith, that he is a sinner—a great sinner. This is more than a mere speculative faith; for that, perhaps, he had always. But, by the Holy Spirit's immediate operation, he is brought to see, feel, and believe in his heart, that he is in imminent danger. The command-

ment has come with power; he believes, he trembles, he inquires, &c. The Holy Spirit further enlightens him, by whose light he is at length brought to see the hidden wickedness of his *heart;* never, before, did he really believe the truth of that saying, "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and *desperately* wicked." But now he sincerely believes it. Why? Because he has evidence to the truth of the fact. This faith has a powerful effect, but not a *saving* influence; yet it is absolutely necessary. The plan of salvation is a mystery to the sinner; but when "he who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into the *heart*, (in contradistinction to the *head,*) and gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus;" or when the ONE Lord is presented, or revealed, in his fulness, sufficiency, suitableness, and willingness, to the distressed sinner, *he believes*, he assents and consents most heartily, receives the antidote, rejoices in the Saviour, and repents, after a godly manner. And this is his business through subsequent life, to assent and consent, acquiesce and rejoice, in the gospel plan of salvation, and live by faith in the Son of God. But just in proportion to the strength of his faith, so in proportion will he repent, and hate sin, and loathe himself on account of it.

While on the subject of faith, I would remark, that there has been much speculation and

incongruity in the Christian world concerning it. Some alleging, since the canon of revelation is completed, there is nothing wanting but the sinner to *will* to believe, which he supposes entirely in his power; others, that it is not for want of a knowledge of salvation, but *an indisposition*, or enmity against it; others, that the creature can do nothing towards believing, till God, the author of faith, give it to him, virtually making the creature a machine in this, as well as in other respects. And thus is man prone to run in opposite extremes, in matters of the greatest and most vital importance. In consistency with what I have already hinted on the subject, in this lecture, it appears to me, that man's sin lieth, as an unbeliever, or not having faith, principally, in not cherishing the evidence he has, or does at some time receive, and in not *trying* to believe on what evidence he has. God does not require his creatures to believe any proposition, without direct or collateral evidence. And, as it regards *spiritual* evidence, such as is necessary to produce an influential faith, it is obvious, from the whole tenor of God's word, that man, by nature, is destitute of it. "But when HE has come, he WILL reprove the world," &c. He does reprove the world; man too often refuses to turn at the reproof; he too often takes methods to grieve or quench the illuminator, who makes "manifest" his conditon, and, by such means, to obliterate from his mind.

the evidence that he had, and might have, with more clearness. Indeed, our Lord says, that "this is the condemnation, that light has come," &c. Again: man does not *try* to believe on the evidence he is the subject of. Now, every one knows that the agent, man, may, in common things, use means to strengthen, or weaken his faith in any proposition; so may he in spiritual things. I said, *try* to believe: yes, for I take it, this is all that is implied in the command to "repent and believe the gospel," to "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. When the man with the withered hand was commanded to stretch it out, all that was implied was, for him to *try*, to make the *attempt* to stretch it out. When we are commanded to pray, to repent, to preach the gospel, or any other religious duty, acceptably, all that is implied is, to *try* to do those things; for, it is clear to every experienced man, that without Christ he can do nothing; but, through Christ strengthening him, he can do all things; that is, he can do every duty acceptably. Now, here rests the guilt on the subject of faith. Every command to believe implies, or expresses, all necessary aid on the part of the commander. The command itself clearly implies, that it is not impossible for the creature to believe. It moreover implies, that faith is, indeed, the creature's act, but the gift of God as it regards the evidence and power to believe. Hence, faith may properly be

said to be the gift of God, that Christ is the author and finisher of it; yet, it is the creature's act; it is on his making the attempt that all necessary evidence and power is communicated to the soul. Therefore, man is justly condemned for not having faith, faith that will prompt him to seek, to strive, to repent; and faith to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel, or the "one Lord," the proper object of faith. Many sincere seeking souls have stumbled here. The command is, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; they *think* they do try to believe, but, in the mean time they indulge a thousand things calculated to keep them in unbelief. After they are awakened they will often, in their hearts, refuse to obey the command, alleging, that they have not repented enough; they are not convicted enough; they have not *done* enough; they have not suffered enough, &c. Now these are all the *unnecessary* workings of the legal heart—of that heart that would wish to bring some price; whereas, the command direct is, to believe, or trust in the Lord Jesus.

The sinner is often surprised that he does not receive the blessing as well as others, intimating, he has done *all* he can do; when, at the same time, God, perhaps, beholds him in the direct omission of a commanded duty, that is, not using every effort of his heart, to "credit the report that God has given of his Son." The awakened

sinner would not think it strange, if God were not to convert his soul while he wilfully neglects to try to pray, or "ask;" yet is guilty of a greater omission of duty, when he neglects to try to believe. The constant effort of the awakened sinner's heart should be, to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. In hearing, singing, praying, reading, meditating, and every other duty, there should be but one aim, and that is to believe in Christ. God's ministers and people are, no doubt, culpable on the subject of faith. The preacher should credit, should unhesitatingly believe, that Christ will be with him "always," &c. He should constantly trust in that grace which he recommends to others; in short, he should preach in *faith*, that he might see God's work prosper through his instrumentality.

The Church and people of God indulge too much in unbelief. As unbelief, in general, is the damning sin of the world; so, in particular, is it the curse of the Church. When Zion prays, she should believe that she will receive the things she prays for. The Church is often large in *desire* and *expression*, but *limited* in faith, and, according to our faith, so it is done unto us. But, if our faith were larger, more extensive, stronger, we would see, and feel, more glorious displays of God's wonder-working power, and we would repent more for our sins. I imagine, before the longed-for millenium is fully realized, there will

be much more FAITH in the Church; therefore, all who ardently desire that event, should resist unbelief, and strive for an increase of faith. Fasting, much prayer, searching the Scriptures, self-denial, in short, abounding in every known duty, is the medium through which we may expect our faith to be strengthened.

LECTURE X.

ON JUSTIFICATION.

Our Catechism has given, perhaps, as clear and Scriptural a definition of Justification, as can be given in so many words. It says, it is an "act of God's free grace, in which he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

In a theological sense, Justification may be said to be at the root, or to be the root itself, of all true religion; a mistake about it must always be fatal in its consequences. In vain may we attempt evangelical obedience to the precepts of the gospel, if we be not justified, acquitted, or pardoned, in consistency with the requirements of the divine law.

This appears to me impossible, only on the principle of an interest in the pure, law-fulfilling righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we contemplate the nature of God's law, its

purity, spirituality, extent, demands, and, particularly, its immutability, where shall we go, or look, for justification? To reformation, prayer, repentance? These, being all imperfect, will not answer the purpose. And, if we could perfectly obey, how could our *past* sins be cancelled? There is an eternal demand against the sinner for his past crimes, which present and future obedience can never satisfy. Adam, in a state of innocence, kept the law, and was justified. His nature, temper, disposition, thoughts, words, and actions, were perfectly conformed to the holy law; therefore, it did not, and could not, curse him.

But man, in his fallen state, so far from being justified by the law, after his most holy obedience, was cursed by the law: that is, there is so much imperfection in his best performances or duties, when compared with the pure law, that he stands condemned. His nature wants conformity, his motives are selfish, his mind is wandering, his thoughts are sinful, his prayers, tears, repentance, and every thing he does, or can do, are mixed with sin, are imperfect; consequently, can never justify him in the sight of God's holy law. If the law be immutable, which is unquestionable, there is no possible way of justification on any other principle, than a righteousness equal to the law; this we cannot have in, or of ourselves; we must, therefore, look to the pure life, and satisfactory

death of the Lord Jesus; we must be interested in that "everlasting righteousness," which he has brought in, or we can never be justified. Hence, to the regenerate, Christ is emphatically called, "The Lord our righteousness;" not the Lord who has made us, or wrought righteousness in us for justification, but, in an abstract sense, "the Lord our righteousness."

But how are we to become interested in this righteousness? I answer, by faith. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," &c. When the soul believes, "God justifieth." Hence the wounded, the convicted, the *condemned*, are, in Scripture, every where exhorted to believe. What for? Is there any *merit* in believing? No, by no means; but it is the medium through which God has appointed to acquit a condemned sinner. Then faith is not the righteousness *for* which a sinner is justified, but the instrument. When Paul says, "Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness," his meaning (not to contradict himself,) must have been, that it (faith) stood in contradistinction to works, that is, to that legal, imperfect obedience to the law, which can never justify the soul, and to the *object* of faith; for he says, expressly, that "we are justified by his blood." It is Christ's merits, then, not the merit of faith, for which we are justified in the sight of the divine law. Faith, through the gift of God, is the creature's *act*, consequently, it is a mental *work*,

if a work of a creature, it is imperfect; and no imperfect work or act can justify in the sight of a pefect law.

We ought always, carefully to distinguish between the meritorious cause of our salvation, and the instrument by which we are saved. My view of justification is, the law-condemned sinner accepting, or receiving what was prepared before him, without and entirely independent of him, that is, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. This righteousness, and this only, is adequate to a sinner's justification. For the sake, or on account of this righteousness being imputed and accepted, "God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth."

That this is a Scriptural doctrine, appears, unquestionably, from the following passages, and others, that might be referred to: "By Jesus Christ, all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." "By the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous." "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness

which is of God by faith." "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for, by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified." Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. v. 9, 19; 2 Cor. v. 21; Phil. iii. 8; Gal. ii. 16. See also, Jer. xxiii. 6; Dan. ix. 24.

The act of justification must, from its very nature, be instantaneous. We are not partly justified *now*, and partly *again*. It is always a sensible, or *felt* exercise in the soul. The soul may not always know at the time of justification, that it *is* justified, yet it is a sensible operation. It does not pass in a dream, nor is it *gradual;* it is sudden and powerful in its effects.

As to the *time* of justification, the very term implies it was not from eternity. Scriptural justification presupposes condemnation; man could not be *really* condemned, in the sense in which he is *really* justified, before he had an existence.

Eternal justification, applied to man, seems to be a palpable contradiction in terms; and, consequently, an absurdity. It appears from Paul's account of justification, that the creature has an *instrumental* agency in his justification: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and

thou shalt be saved," &c. "Being justified by *faith.*'

The *time*, then, of justification, is when the creature receives, or accepts, or trusts in the Lord his righteousness. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," &c.

The effects of justification are peace with God, access to the throne, evangelical obedience, a freedom from the penalty of the divine law, and, finally, (after the work of sanctification is complete,) eternal salvation.

LECTURE XI.

ON REGENERATION.

Regeneration, though distinct in its nature, is inseparable from Justification. No man can be regenerated without being justified; no man can be justified without being regenerated. Therefore, the war of words, and idle speculations, about which act takes place *first*, is worse than useless; it is "darkening counsels by words without knowledge." For, if one *cannot* be without the other, why stir up questions about it, which gender strife, and tend *not* to holiness, but its opposite? I would just remark, once for all, that *in* the act of justification, the heart is "changed into the same image," which I call regeneration.

That regeneration does not consist in an outward reformation, forms, &c., is obvious, from various passages in Scripture, as well as the nature and design of that change. It is to be feared, that too many have explained away the true

nature of regeneration, by giving, as evidences thereof, what they call practical religion. It is certainly true, there can be no regeneration without practical religion; but, it is also true, that many have abounded in what had the *appearance* of practical religion, from selfish motives, without a changed heart. A man, for instance, may pray in secret, and in his family, he may even be tenacious of his form, he may give alms, he may be scrupulously strict on the Sabbath; he may, in short, appear as beautiful without, or outwardly, as a whited sepulchre, and yet have a heart full of enmity against God.

The history of the Pharisees, and the *form* of godliness, of which Paul speaks, abundantly prove this position. Therefore, to prevent a mistake, or deception, preachers of the word should frequently speak negatively, or show what is *not* regeneration.

The Scriptures are very clear on this subject. Our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not, that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again;" or, as some render it, "born from above." Paul says, "We all beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are *changed* into the same image, (that is, the image of God,) from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." John says, "He that is born of God cannot sin, because his *seed* remaineth in him." From all which, as well as many other passages of similar import,

we may clearly infer, that regeneration implies a radical change of *heart*, as well as of life.

The heart, the temper, and disposition of the soul must be changed; every power of the soul is changed from rebellion, enmity, and wickedness to grace; that is, the power of sin is broken, "for sin shall not have *dominion* over you," the soul shall not be under its tyrannical sway.

The will that was obstinate, now acquiesces in that method of redemption, and bends to the high commands of God. The affections that were earthly, sensual, &c., are now set on things above; the memory, that was swift to remember evil, is now more retentive to remember good. The understanding that was blinded by the God of this world, is now enlightened to understand the glorious mysteries of salvation; the judgment that was prone to form wrong conclusions, in accordance with false premises, is now more apt to form just conclusions about *true* happiness. In short, the whole soul is quickened, and made alive to God. Not that any faculty of the soul is taken away, and new ones added; all the powers of the soul are radically changed, by the energy of divine grace, or by beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.

The evidences and effects of regeneration, are clear and numerous; some of which, only, I will mention. Supreme love to God, and love to man are certain effects, and sure evidences, of a

regenerated heart. Faith, humility, no confidence in the flesh, dependence on the righteousness of Christ *alone;* a glorying in the *cross* of Christ; peace with God and man; a hungering and thirsting after righteousness; a deep sense of the odious nature of sin, a fixed hatred to it, a longing after its opposite, holiness; new views, new desires, new pursuits, and attention to the various duties of religion; in short, a disposition to endeavor to obey all the commandments of God, and avoid every known sin, are both effects and evidences of regeneration, without which, in the general judgment, Christ will say, "I never knew you."

From what we have already seen of its inseparable connection with justification, it must be instantaneous.

In a certain sense, the creature is passive in this act; that is, it is not he, but God that changes the heart; but this change is effected by the creature's *beholding* the glory of God. The creature is also active in the means which God has appointed; through which he has graciously promised to meet with and change the heart. Therefore, it is presumption, for any one to expect this great work to be effected on his heart, without the diligent use of the means.

The great *design* of regeneration, is, to prepare the creature for the enjoyment of God. Herein it differs essentially from justification, but is much akin to sanctification. Without regeneration,

there could be no sanctification; without sanctification, the soul never could enjoy *God* in heaven. If we could conceive of a justified soul without regeneration, we could conceive of a man against whom the law had no demands, and for whom no place in hell could be found, and yet, no place in heaven; consequently, a being neither fit for heaven or hell!

But regeneration gives a relish for the *service* and enjoyment of God in this world, and is the foundation for that progressive life of sanctification, which will, ultimately, prepare the soul for the enjoyment of God in heaven.

LECTURE XII.

ON SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctification sometimes means a setting apart to a particular use, as in the case of Jeremiah, the vessels of the house of God, &c. Some also, imagine, that this was all that was meant by John the Baptist being sanctified from the womb. But I am inclined to the opinion that as John was "more than a prophet," and as he was designed for extraordinary business, that he was really and actually sanctified, or cleansed from sin, in, or from the womb. Sanctification, in the common scriptural sense, is the certain effect of regeneration. and inseparable from it. Regeneration is the tree being made good; sanctification is the necessary fruit of that good tree. It is a dying unto sin, and living unto God.

It appears from several passages of scripture, that it is a gradual and progressive work, It is represented by the figure of the blade, the shoot, and then the full ear of corn. Also, by the babe, the

young man, and the father in Christ; by forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing towards the mark (of perfection) for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; by the leaven hid in a measure of meal, until by a gradual progress the whole was leavened.

The means through which this work is carried on, are all the duties of religion, particularly the sacraments, prayer, fasting, faith, &c.

As to the degree of it, attainable in this life, there are various opinions. Perhaps in this, as in almost every other subject in theology, men have run to opposite extremes. Some look for little till death; others allow that before death: nay, long before a man may arrive to the perfection of the divine law. The former are apt to be too much contented under the influence of strong corruptions; the latter seem to have but very imperfect views of the nature of the divine law. The former are too apt to make some kind of virtue in a knowledge and confession of many weaknesses, much depravity, many doubts, &c.; the latter are too apt to be puffed up with their *supposed* attainments, annexing ideas to sanctification that are not applicable. Now, in consulting the "law and the testimony" on this subject, it appears that neither have very just views of this important matter. For it is absolutely certain on the one hand, that Paul had himself attained high degrees of sanctification, and in the strongest terms

inculcated it on others, that they might the better honor God, be useful, and enjoy strong consolation in their own souls; yet, it is equally true, that after he was a most eminent saint, he accounted himself not as having ALREADY attained; but he would press on, &c. It is also true, that this same eminent apostle, after his conversion, or regeneration, groaned much under a sense of remaining depravity, as described in the 7th of Romans. Some, indeed, have allowed, that he was then personating a convicted sinner; but, on a particular examination, this supposition seems improperly founded; for he says, "I delight in the law of God after the inner man." An unregenerate soul could not do this; for the carnal mind, that is, the unregenerate mind, is enmity to God; consequently, to his holy law. But when Paul was ready to be offered, he exclaimed, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course, hence there is a crown laid up for me," &c.

The idea of a man in the flesh arriving to the perfection or sanctification of the divine law, or as it is expressed, to love God with *all* the heart, &c., and our neighbor as ourselves, seems to be a mistake. To love God with *all* the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, is completely and perfectly fulfilling the divine law, whose holy precepts take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart, which would be violated, if the heart ever relaxed for a moment in its perfect

love to God and man. One sinful thought passing through the soul is a violation; the least diminution of zeal at any moment is a violation; in short, any want of conformity to the divine law, in thought, word, or deed, internally, or externally, is evidence that sanctification is incomplete.

But that there are higher degrees of sanctification attainable, even in early Christian life, than many real Christians have imagined, I have no doubt. The apostle prays God that your whole soul, spirit, and body, may be sanctified; he says, "Pray without ceasing; rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks, *for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you.*"

He also exhorts to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and man. I have been long of opinion that this most happy, useful, and desirable state, was attainable by *every* Christian; if it were not, it would not be so clearly and forcibly inculcated in God's word. Many pious souls exclude themselves from those glorious privileges and blessings, by believing they are not attainable till, or near death; consequently, they are not looking for that "love which casteth out all fear, which hath torment;" they are not expecting *daily* communion with God—daily access to the throne; a daily, or *abiding* witness that they are born of God. They content themselves by feeling those things *occasionally*. The consequence is, they have many doubts, but seldom feel ready

to die, and in their doubts, they often long most ardently for God to give them such a manifestation that they can never doubt any more. While in these doubts, their former experience, or experiences, never appear clear to them; therefore, almost the whole desire is to be put beyond doubt, *in future*, by a *present* manifestation. But God does not choose to prevent future doubts in this way, nor yet to sanctify the soul suddenly, or by one manifestation of himself. When the man is regenerated, he is under double obligation to *act*, his agency is rather increased than diminished; he is enlisted under the banner of Christ; he has received his bounty, and is required to fight, to be active, to deny himself, to take up his cross daily, and follow Immanuel. Therefore, he may not expect, when he asks for those blessings, that he will receive them, that he may consume them on his lusts, or in idleness, sloth, &c., &c. But he who would know of the doctrine must be a *doer* of his will, or commandments—he must "follow on to know the Lord"—he must *add* to his faith, virtue, temperance, brotherly kindness, charity, &c., or he cannot go on to [Christian] perfection; he cannot enjoy that comfortable assurance of his gracious state: he cannot be dying daily to sin, and living unto God. He *must* maintain an active warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, or the work of sanctification will not progress in his soul. His remaining corruptions will rather grow stronger

than weaker. God has ordained that sanctification shall progress in the soul, through the use of the means which he has appointed; and it is when we abound most in the means, from evangelical motives, that we are apt to be most spiritual; when we are most spiritual, we are most believing, we *feel* more constantly the application of the blood of the *cross*, which alone can, "cleanse from *all* sin." Those whom John saw, "had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." In short, the soul that would be conscious (and who can rest without it?) of the progress of sanctification, must submit to do the *whole* will of God. There are many, I am persuaded, under degrees of darkness, that do not do this. They have what they call their set duties, refrainings, &c., but many times they flinch at the *cross;* they are ready to cry, Lord, pardon me for these little things. There is some indulgence unlawful, or some omission or commission, that prevents the soul from feeling *daily* communion with God; perhaps, by habit, darkness, false reasoning, or comparing themselves with some others, there may not be a clear consciousness of those omissions or indulgences being evil; yet God sees them evil; Christ will not be the minister of sin; therefore, the subject doubts, fears, is cold, corruption gains strength, &c., although death is not stopping his pace a single moment. I repeat, there is not, habitually, a giving up in the heart, to do

the *whole* will of God, in every thought, in every action, in every word, in self-denial, in duty, or, as the apostle expresses it, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do *all* to the glory of God." Reader, examine; do you *eat*, do you *drink*, do you *talk*, do you *work*, do you *preach*, do you *exhort*, do you *pray*, do you *read*, do you *meditate*, do you *buy*, do you *sell*, do you put on *apparel*, &c., &c., to the glory, or with an eye single to the glory of God? If you do not, you may not marvel that corruption seems as strong in your hearts as it was some ten or twenty years ago. But, by the man submitting to do the *whole* will of God, at *all* times, he is in the direct road to sanctification, and God will sanctify him through his truth, for his word is truth. This state of mind is not inconsistent with a humiliating knowledge of our imperfections, our constant need of divine aid, and our constant need of the pure righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, there are effects as well as evidences of progressive sanctification The nearer the soul gets to God, the more conscious of the existence of remaining depravity, the more humility, the more ardent is the desire to be made perfectly holy. Every increase of sanctification, is sure to increase the desire for more holiness. This is always the safest way to judge of our religious exercises.

Let us solemnly ask ourselves, are the *effects* good? If they be, the cause must be good.

LECTURE XIII.

ON DEATH.

Natural Death is an awful idea, at times, to almost every living son and daughter of Adam. The idea of an active, restless, busy mortal being confined in the narrow limits of a tomb or grave, often makes the flesh recoil; yet, this awe, this reluctance, may be, and often has been overcome.

It would be hard to conceive of natural death, or a separation of soul and body, if man had not sinned. The perfection of soul and body originally, the perfect innocence, the perfect freedom from all moral stain, forbid the idea of mortality, or natural death, on any view we have, or can have of divine justice.

It seems utterly incompatible with the divine nature, or perfections of God, to punish pure, or perfect innocence; that is, to inflict punishment on a moral being, who is neither guilty in himself, nor by implication. Adam, while he kept his first estate, was neither guilty in himself, nor by

imputation; therefore, in that situation could not be punished: without punishment, there could be no pain; without pain, or what is tantamount, a diminution of strength, it is hard, or impossible, to conceive of natural death.

Therefore, we naturally infer, if Adam had not sinned, neither he nor his posterity would have died. But he sinned, and necessarily became the subject of misery — of pain. Though his natural life was protracted for a time, and the threatening of natural death was not *immediately* executed, yet the *seeds* of that death were sown in his nature, the moment he transgressed; yes, the moment he violated God's law, he became mortal. The material part of the man become subject to pain, &c., and, consequently, to death — the immaterial part did die a spiritual death, which was, if I may so speak, the germ of eternal death. In reality, he was spiritually dead; in *law*, he was eternally dead. He begat children in his likeness, subject to all the pains and miseries to which he was himself exposed. Hence, death, that justly styled *King of terrors*, has been making his ravages through every grade and subdivision of time, down to the present day. He comes when commissioned, as a mighty conqueror, as a triumphant combatant, as if conscious of his superiority, laughing to scorn all the boasted skill of the faculty, and all the force and power of medicine — sweeping generation after generation into the eternal world. From the

womb to the hoary head, he has triumphed over his victims; entering kings' palaces with as much facility as the peasant's cottage; bringing, by one stroke, the monarch and the meanest, or most indigent subject, on a perfect level! Yet, he enters the dwelling of the rich, who have been saying in their hearts, "Soul, take thine ease," &c., and aided by their luxuries, with half an effort, brings their occupants to the narrow limits of a coffin! Ah, more! he will sometimes sever the most intimate, the most endeared friends — the husband and wife, the parent and child, &c., thus speaking, or virtually reiterating that solemn mandate, "Worship thou God, and him *only* shalt thou serve." Yes, this terrific monster will sweep both master and servant, governor and governed, oppressor and oppressed, the just and the unjust, down to dust, that they may all ultimately appear before that Judge who will do right.

We have already, suggested that the terror of death may be and often has been overcome; yes, multiplied thousands, who are *now* singing hallelujahs in paradise, could testify that death, in their last hours, had no sting for them. Thousands now on earth, have witnessed the triumphs of faith in their departing friends and neighbors. "O death! where is thy sting," &c.

The stoic may die like the brute that perisheth; *some* of the infidel tribe, whom "God has given up to believe a lie," &c., may die without terror; the

fanatic may out-brave death, in a fit of phrenzy or misguided zeal; but it is reserved for the Christian, the living child of God, to die triumphing, to die "desiring to be with Christ, which is far better," to die exclaiming,

> "Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are."

But who thus die? All that are *called* Israel? No, verily. It is the man or woman who gives "all diligence to make his or her calling and election *sure*"—the man who gives up, or consents in his soul to do the *whole* will of God in *all* things: the man who watches and prays, who lives conversing with death, day by day; who, in short, lives, having daily communion with God and his Christ—such, and such only, may reasonably expect to meet death without dismay, or with a rational joy.

But does the soul die, or lie dormant till the resurrection? The very question, though many have virtually asked it, seems to imply great ignorance of the nature of souls. That active immaterial part of our species, from its own nature cannot die, or lie dormant for a single moment, unless God were to say so. God, in his word, has no where said so; consequently, the soul must continue active. The soul, unlike the most refined matter, is not subject to suffering, to putrefaction, to death. It cannot be enclosed by walls, bulwarks, prisons, or tombs. It can penetrate to

the centre of any known planet, and fly from thence to the surface or centre of the most distant planet, in a moment; it can descend to the caverns of the damned, or mount to the throne of God, with infinitely more velocity than light.

The soul is a perfect, that is, a complete being, in and of itself, possessing every necessary faculty in order to such perfection, and is not, consequently, dependent on the body, either for existence or action. But the "law and testimony" confirm philosophy and reason on this subject. John "saw the *souls* of those who were *beheaded*, crying, O Lord, how long," &c. When he would have worshipped the apparent angel—"See thou do it not, for I am of thy *brethren* the *prophets*," &c. "The rich man *died* and lifted up his eyes in hell," &c. Lazarus *died*, and his soul (not soul and body) was found in Abraham's bosom. Moses and Elias, long dead and buried, appeared *active* ministering spirits, on the mount with their Saviour. Jesus says to the penitent thief, "*This day* thou shalt be with me in paradise." We are, therefore, bound unshakenly to believe, that when the body dies, the soul, according to its previous preparation, descends to hell, or ascends to heaven, there to await the sound of the Archangel's trump, and the voice of God, to awaken the slumbering dust, again to be united to the soul.

LECTURE XIV.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

Although this doctrine has often been the subject of sport and ridicule, to Sadducees, infidels, and some philosophers, "falsely so called," yet holy and learned Paul, seems to have put great stress upon it, as an essential link in the great chain of redemption, through the Mediator of the new covenant. He declared that all faith, preaching, &c., were vain, if the dead rise not, and, especially, if Christ be not risen.

Christ was the first fruit, and sublime example of this wonderful and glorious work of the dead rising. The evidence of his resurrection is so abundantly proved in various parts of the sacred Scriptures, that it is not, perhaps, necessary, to cite it here. But the objections that philosophy has found to the resurrection of the *same* body, will not apply to the resurrection of Jesus, in as much as his body did not lie in the tomb long enough to putrefy!

Our Lord, Job, and the Apostle, seem to give very clear intimations, that, in some proper sense, the same body will awake, or rise in the morning of the resurrection. Jesus says, "They that are in the grave shall come forth," that is, the *same* body that was put in the grave. Job says, "With these very eyes I shall see him," &c. Paul says, It (that is, the body) is sown in corruption; *it* (the same that was sown,) shall be raised in incorruption; it is sown a natural body, it (that is the same body) is raised a spiritual body," &c. Again, "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. This corruptible shall put on incorruption; this mortal shall put on immortality." You will notice, that the Apostle speaks of *this* mortal, and this corruptible, that is, the *same* body. But some philosophers, with Mr. Locke at their head, who were well disposed to Christianity, imagined that those, and similar passages of Scripture, should not be literally taken as applicable to the same person, further than his soul, which indeed was not confined in the grave, but which will be all of the man in the resurrection, necessary to identify him; that is, your soul or mine will be united to a new, or another body, formed out of any or other matter — alleging, as the ground of their hypothesis, that the particles of the human body, and that with which it is formed, are continually changing; some passing away, and new ones succeeding them; and, particularly, when the

body dies, it putrefies; supports vegetation; beasts eat those vegetables, man eats those beasts, &c., &c.; so that the same body which is buried, may become a part of hundreds of other animal bodies. But, more particularly, they think it impossible for the same body to rise among the cannibals, who are in the habit of eating one another; and thus, what seems to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, is made to bend, and even by good men* too, to our *imperfect* knowledge of philosophy. I have no idea that true, or *perfect* philosophy, contradicts one Christian tenet taught in the holy Scriptures; for nature is said to be the art of God, and God is the author of the Scriptures.

While it is freely admitted, that the particles which compose the main bulk of the human body, are constantly changing, yet this does not hinder the identity of the same man. For example: it was George Washington, an infant, George Washington, in manhood, and George Washington, when he died, familiar to, and perfectly recognized by all his friends; though, no doubt, "perspiration, attrition," &c., changed the atoms that composed his body several times. Besides, every body knows that it takes soul and body to constitute the man. In these, conjointly, he has obeyed or disobeyed, loved or hated, practiced virtue or vice; and, it would seem incontrovertible, that in these he must

* The Unitarians claim Locke; if this be just, it is no wonder that *he* could not discern the things of the Spirit.

be judged, and finally rewarded or punished, as the case may be.

That holy and extraordinary man, Doctor Watts, who had been noticing the dispute between Locke and Stillingfleet, on this subject, with his usual discrimination and forbearance, undertook to reconcile the combatants in so sensible and reasonable a way, countenanced, too, by revelation, that I will here give you his own words verbatim. After admitting that all the atoms that ever composed the human body cannot be raised, or will not, he observes:

1st. "It is very probable that a newborn infant, in its muscles and nerves (and especially in its bowels and bones) has some original, essential, and constituent tubes, fibres, or staminal particles, (if I may so call them) which remain the same, and unchanged, through all the stages and changes of life, in following years, how much soever the external and fleshy parts may be changed. And some philosophers maintain, that the growth of the animal body is nothing but the dilation, stretching, or spreading of these essential staminal parts, these fibres, tubes, or membranes, by the interposition of new additional particles; which additional and accidental particles, are the only things which are in perpetual flux, and always changing. And it may be added also, that perhaps these essential staminal particles are of such a nature as not to join and unite with other animal or human bodies,

and constitute an essential constituent part of them; and therefore, if mankind were *all cannibals*, and eat one another, as well as the flesh of beasts, yet the same staminal, or constituent particles, cannot belong to the bodies of two, or more human persons. It has been said by some philosophers, that the mere membranous parts of an animal body, though eaten by other animals, will not easily, if at all digest; and then they cannot be sanguified, or turned into blood; nor can they become nutritive juices, nor form the constituent and essential parts of other animals. Now, a great many of the original, constituent parts of human bodies, are membranous, for some suppose almost the whole body to be made of tubes and juices, with little interspersed fibres, which are added by nutrition. And how far the bones, that is, the original, mere osseous substances, may be indigestible also, who can tell?"

"Upon the whole, it seems that these essential, constituent, or staminal particles, whatsoever they be, whether osseous, or membranous, or of any other quality, and how few soever they be, always abide the same, even when the body is greatly enlarged by the perpetual new interposition of additional, nutritive particles, which are in continual flux. I say, also, that it seems that these unchanging parts, whether few or many, in union with the same soul, are abundantly sufficient to denominate METHUSELAH THE INFANT, AND METHU-

SELAH THE AGED, the same person; and then, also, these few essential, constituent particles, preserved by divine Providence, and raised in the formation of a new body, and united to the same soul, are sufficient to denominate METHUSELAH DYING, and METHUSELAH RISING, the same person still, both soul and body."

In another page of the same work, he says: "The similitude which the Apostle uses in that discourse, concerning *a grain of wheat*, plainly teaches us, that though there should be but a very few of the same individual particles, raised from the dust, and mixed with a multitude of other new particles, yet those few are sufficient to denominate it the *same body*, so far as the Apostle's argument requires it. For it is evident, that when a grain of wheat is sown into the ground, that far the greater part of the grain quickly dies and rots in the earth; and there are but a very few small particles of the same grain, which compose the *germen*, or bud, of the new plant, and which do really grow up into, and help to form and compose the new stalk, and the ear of corn, together with the addition of a multitude of other new atoms, borrowed from the earth and water." "In the same manner the Apostle leads us to suppose, there may be a few of the same original and essential parts of the body of a man, which are buried in the grave, which are the original, the spring and foundation of the new raised body, though there may be

thousands of other new atoms mixed with them." "Now it is easy to suppose, that the power and providence of God may, according to this supposition, preserve and raise the same body at the resurrection." Watts' Philosophical Essays, pages 190—194.

It would have been enough, perhaps, to have said, God has promised to raise the dead, not to make *new* bodies, but to raise and change the *same* body. I have no doubt, that many of the pious feel an unshaken confidence, that they will *see* and recognize many of their departed friends and relatives, who have died in the triumphs of faith, in that interesting morning, arising with immortal youth and vigor, and joining the happy millions in ascribing *with their tongues*, glory, dominion, &c., to God, and to the Lamb—to God, and to the Lamb.

The bodies of the saints shall be like unto the glorious body of their Master, essentially pure, active, and immortal—no more a clog to the ardent soul, and eternally incapable of being subjected to, or susceptible of pain, disease, or diminution of strength.

The feet that once loved to tread the road to the house of God, shall now tread the streets of the New Jerusalem; the hands that were once lifted to Heaven, without wrath, and doubting, and opened to relieve Christ and his members, shall now be engaged in tuning a lyre, to strike a higher,

and still a higher note throughout eternity. The tongue that loved to pray, talk about Jesus, and lisp the praises of Emanuel, shall now be *uninterruptedly* employed in the song of the hundred and forty-four thousand, with that other innumerable company, to all eternity.

LECTURE XV.

ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

The necessity and propriety of a General Judgment, will appear, from a variety of reasons; the principal of which is, the justice of God, or, "that the Judge of all the earth will do *right*." It will be admitted, that the most aggravated crimes against heaven and earth, against God and man, have often passed unpunished in this world. Rapine, murder, oppression, &c., have a thousand times been committed with impunity, in various parts of the habitable globe. Even in the most civilized parts, where laws, regulations, &c., have been brought to the greatest perfection, the innocent often suffer while the guilty go free. Owing to the imbecility or corruption of some judges, the ignorance or partiality of many jurors, the misguided zeal or avarice of some lawyers — justice, common and obvious justice, has often been flagrantly violated, and prostrated, as it were,

in the streets. Law makers, as well as executors of the law, are often actuated by mercenary motives, or selfish designs, to pass laws, not to relieve the innocent and oppressed, but to benefit themselves and friends, in violation of their sacred trust, and their most solemn oaths, taken to support the constitution of their country, and promote the public weal. Officers of various descriptions, forfeiting their title to honesty, have purloined the public, or the people's money, committed the most palpable perjury, and yet they have escaped punishment. The polluted debauchee, who has, by violence, or deception and art, violated female chastity, involved his unfortunate victim and others, in misery and disgrace, and often brought her to a premature grave, has gone unpunished. The tyrannic master, who riots in luxury, while his half starved, half clothed, and oppressed domestics are dragging out a miserable life, with their furrowed backs calling to heaven for vengeance, exults in his power, and that there are none to call him to an account. The haughty monarch, who claims, by hereditary title, the power over millions of his fellow beings, to tax, to oppress, and half starve them, to keep him and his, in wantonness and every odious crime, blesses himself that there are none to call him to an account. The calumniator, who will stain and murder his neighbor's character, yet in such a way that the laws cannot punish him. The civil magistrate, or officer of any description, who originally was

ordained of God, to be a "terror to *evil* doers, and a praise to them that do *well*," often pervert their authority, and both by precept and example, invert the order that God has appointed, and yet they go unpunished. In short, many rulers and ruled, in nations, kingdoms, empires, states, counties, and families, pervert justice, cause much evil, and yet go unpunished. All these, and a thousand similar things declare, if there is a God, and that God is *just*, there must and will be a general judgment.

The nature of God's moral government requires a general judgment. Unpunished crime, or unrewarded virtue, generally cause distress in any society. The general good of the intelligent universe, would seem to require that the vicious should be excluded and punished, and the virtuous collected together, to dwell in harmony for ever. But the Scriptures are abundant and explicit on the subject of the judgment. See Matt. xxv.; Rom. xiv. 10, 11; Acts xvii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Thes. vii. 16, 17; 2 Thes. i, 7, 10; and Jude xiv. 15.

The *immediate* Judge will be the Lord Jesus Christ, who will appear in his human nature, but not as he appeared the *first* time he visited our globe. He will come a second time, but it will be *without sin* (imputed as at first,) unto salvation, "to take vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not his Gospel," &c.

The awful magnificence of this joyful, dreadful day, is described in various parts of the sacred Scriptures. In 1 Thes. iv. 16, it is said, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." Rev. i. 7, "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so: Amen." Rev. xx. 2, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away! and there was found no place for them." But whom did John see on the throne? He tells us, in Rev. i. 14—16, "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength," The phenomena attending this tremendous day, will be awfully sublime. Peter says, "The heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements shall *melt* with fervent heat!" The elements? what! the air, water, earth, and *fire* itself *melt?* Yes, God has said it. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon turned into blood; the rocks and mountains shall flee away from the

presence of the Judge. But what will follow? Why, the graves, the sea, and death and hell, shall all give up their dead, at the mandate of the omnipotent Judge. The staminal parts of every human body shall come forth and be united to the *same* soul, that once directed, actuated and governed it. The saints shall be honored with the *first* resurrection, but it shall all take place, both saints and sinners, in one day, or within that limit of time; for it is said, in Acts xvii. 31, "God has appointed *a day* in which he will judge the world," &c. Countless millions of happy souls will fly from the paradise of God, to reanimate that dust which slept under the watch care of the Judge. The entire man, soul and body, in which he obeyed and suffered, will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. They will take a position on the right hand of the Judge — the wicked, with devils, must come forth and take a position on the left hand of the Judge; then the books are opened, and another book — the books — some reckon five books that will be opened in the judgment. The book of God's providence — of remembrance — of conscience — of the scriptures — and the book of life. Whether this enumeration be just or not, we know that those who have lived under the Gospel, shall be judged by the Gospel; and those who have not the law, that is, the written law, shall be judged according to that law which they are to themselves; that is, according to their conformity,

or nonconformity to the impress of moral right, which God, by his spirit, made on their hearts, their consciences being witnesses in the case. These two general rules, or books, with the aid of conscience as testimony, in either, or both cases, will include all mankind.

It is not precisely determined, or said, *where* the scene will take place. Some have imagined in the air; but, wherever it be, those to be judged will be so disposed, or take such a position, as will place them in full view of the Judge, where they can *all* see and hear every sentence. O! now what scenes will open! The Judge will turn to those on his right hand, and begin to enumerate "their work and labor of love." Now, perhaps, the most unnoticed and long since forgotten tear and throe of heart, for God's honor, and the good of souls—the most trivial act of benevolence, flowing from evangelical motives, even to the giving a cup of cold water in the name, or *because* he was a disciple, will be noticed or acknowledged by the Judge. The faithful labors of every called and sent minister of the *Cross*, with every true disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, will be openly acknowledged in the face of the intelligent universe. While the blessed Jesus will say, with heaven in his countenance, "Come ye blessed of my Father," &c., "when I was hungry, ye gave me meat; thirsty, ye gave me drink; sick, and in prison, ye visited me," &c. I have often been

struck with the *unanimous* answer of the blessed, and joyful, and redeemed saints; "Lord, when saw we thee, thus and thus, and ministered unto thee?"

The *same* spirit, or disposition, (humility) that characterized, and characterizes *every* child of God, according to this, will accompany them to the bar of God. They are quick-sighted, and eagle-eyed to their infirmities, their imperfections, &c., but slow and dull to remember their good deeds, or labors of love. Lord, when saw we thee, thus, and thus? O how different a spirit from that of the blinded pharisee. But Jesus, who had bottled all their tears, and who was touched with all their infirmities, opens the book of his everlasting remembrance, and shows every good deed—*he* has not forgotten them—*he* has noticed the *motive* from whence they sprang—*he* has not forgotten the smallest thing done, or *desired* to be done, where opportunity would not permit to act, to promote his honor and kingdom in the world—hence he will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these, (pointing to them,) ye have done it unto me."

O Christian, do you mark how Christ identifies himself with his people? Then "do good to all, but *especially* to the household of faith;" do not bite and devour one another, but do *good* to one another. O now, methinks, that those who have received favors, and benefits, from their fellow

saints, will look on them with delight, pointing them to the Judge; especially, will those who have been saved from hell, through the instrumentality of another, point to, and acknowledge that instrumentality, that the Judge may be justified in adding the star in his crown. If he be a preacher of the Gospel, all his spiritual children will openly acknowledge him, and the Judge will approve, and award his crown accordingly. O ye ministers of Jesus, would you have many stars as *planters* and *waterers*, or both? But methinks every, yes, the most remote Christian may have more or less stars in his crown of rejoicing.

The Judge will acquit, justify, and pronounce blessed, every one that is blood-washed, and in such a way that his sentence will be acknowledged *just* by all the intelligent universe. But the judged and approved saints do not immediately wing their way to glory; they *wait* till the scene is over, till the final sentence is passed — and join in the judgment, being now prepared to do so, of both men and devils, as witnesses and approvers of the just sentence that will be pronounced: for "Know ye not," says Paul, "that ye shall judge angels," that is, fallen angels; again, "The saints shall judge the world," &c. The Judge will now turn to those on the left hand, with awful terror in his looks, and say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil, and *his* angels," &c.

But ere this awful sentence is pronounced, the scenes of guilt, of dissipation, folly, blasphemy, drunkenness, lying, perjury, revelling, luxury, pride, defrauding, oppression, debauchery, gambling, obstinacy, disobedience to parents, or other lawful rulers, persecution, Spirit-grieving, conviction-stifling, conscience-bribing, light-rejecting, and unbelief, will be fully opened and made manifest to all. The indulged, polluted thoughts, wicked desires, and enmity of heart against God, his Christ, his Gospel, his people, with the shutting the bowels of compassion against the distressed; the indignity and calumny offered, and poured on God's ministers and people, with every other abomination, will be exhibited in such manner as to justify the eternally just Judge, in the view of all worlds.

O my God, who will be found in *this* multitude, waiting with despairing looks, to hear their final sentence. Will not many, who were called virgins—many who wear the sacred garb of Christianity, but were full of hypocrisy, &c.?—many who have made solemn professions of thy holy religion—many, who even, (said they) "prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils?" Ah! me! what do I see? The blind guide, with his blind flock around him, cursing him openly for never clearly telling them they "MUST BE BORN AGAIN,"—they MUST be HOLY. But O! what do I see? the wretch that not only

preached, but *printed* damnable heresy, even denying the (true) Lord that bought him, and thereby spread his poison far and wide, with the blood of thousands of souls stained upon him. But, O my soul, what dost thou see? parent and child, husband and wife, preacher and people, neighbors, relatives, acquaintances, &c., criminating and recriminating each other! The saints bear testimony to the obstinacy, and wickedness of those whom they have warned, taught, or prayed for. Devils are brought to the tribunal, they are accused of their original rebellion — of their tempting our first parents — of their tempting and harrassing the people of God, &c., which the saints will testify; having been the painful subjects of such temptation. Then the eternal Judge will pronounce the just sentence against devils as well as wicked men; "Depart," &c., which will be irrevocable while eternity endures!

LECTURE XVI.

ON HELL, OR ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

That there will be a place, or state, of future punishment, is clearly evinced by the sacred writings, as well as the reason and nature of things. The same reasons advanced in the preceding lecture, to prove the reasonableness of a general judgment, are applicable to prove future punishment.

What that punishment will be, is represented by the worm (conscience) that dieth not, and the fire (God's wrath) that is not quenched. These are the two principal constituents of hell. And when we dwell on the idea, it is enough to excite the most lively apprehensions for ourselves and our fellow beings. What! a guilty, awakened, accusing conscience, to be eternally gnawing, as the devouring worm? and the wrath, or positive punishment of a just and sin-hating God, to be burning in the soul and body for ever, and ever!

Yes, God has said it, and the good of the intelligent universe demands it. The nature of the torments of the damned, is strongly represented by the case of Dives, who died, and lifted up his eyes in hell; and especially, his piteous cries to Abraham, when he supplicated for Lazarus to touch his tongue with a DROP of cold water, adding, that "I am *tormented* in these flames." Now, whether the case be a *real* one or figurative, it matters not; *torment*, the most inconceivable torment, was the situation. We know that God, as a spirit, can act on spirit as well as matter, and even before the resurrection. HE, Jehovah, can make the impenitent sinner, as completely miserable, as it is possible for him to bear; consequently, the idea of a material hell, or fire and brimstone, &c., is not so essential in the main point; "A *wounded* spirit who can bear?" But I see no good reason to concede to the infidel, the Scriptural account of *material* fire of some description being employed in the punishment, in part, of the wicked; for, it is certain that, in some proper sense, they will have material bodies after the resurrection; but, though material, they will be so constituted, or immortalized, that they will not be subject to consumption, or dissolution, by the refined material element that will prey on them. Hence, we may conceive, in consistency with philosophy, that the wisdom, and the power of HIM who created matter, may give it all the shapes, qualities, and duration, in those forms, that will

answer the purposes of his government, and the infliction of that punishment, which justice and the general good require.

Where this place of torment is to be, has given rise to much speculation, or guessing, I would call it; for God has no where, that I recollect, in his word, given us data on which to found a correct opinion. Suffice it to say, that wherever it be, it will be found, by experience, to answer all the dreadful descriptions given of it, in God's infallible word. That there will be a place of future punishment, Pagans, Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians, have all agreed. That the Scriptures of divine truth, are clear on the subject, cannot be denied.

But some have ventured to question, and others have denied, that these torments of the damned will be *eternal*, alleging that the word everlasting is an equivocal term, and is often applicable to a limited duration; therefore, the wicked will not suffer eternally. While we would admit the premises, we positively deny the conclusion. We can only determine the proper meaning of the word by the context; but the context, sometimes, binds us positively, to annex eternal duration to the term; for the same word is used to express the eternity of the happiness of the saints, as well as the eternity of the misery of the damned. There are many passages of Scripture that confirm this idea. "Where the worm dieth NOT, and the

fire is NOT quenched." The Sodomites suffer the vengeance of *eternal* fire. "As the tree falls, so it will lie," &c. But the very nature of the crime, and the situation the damned must necessarily be in, seem to settle this question; as well as the fact, that the Mediator will lay down his mediatorial office, after, or at the general judgment.

Every sin is a violation of the divine law. Every wicked thought, every unholy disposition, is a violation of the divine law. Every *impatience* in a situation that *justice* has placed us in, is a sin. None will deny, I imagine, but that the tormented in hell, are impatient, are full of despairing and wicked thoughts, and unholy dispositions. Indeed, had they not been unholy, they had not been sentenced to hell. Now these very tempers will *continue* their transgressions of the divine law, whose demands will be *increasing* instead of diminishing, to all eternity! Hence, the fitness of the comparison of hell to a bottomless pit. For, as the unhappy wretch continues in torment, so will his crimes multiply, and the demands of the immutable law of God increase; as these increase the weight of guilt will magnify; and in proportion to *its* ponderous load, so must the subject sink lower, and lower, deeper, and deeper, in the bottomless pit. Yes, and continue to sink with increasing velocity, while the law and the justice of God, continue unchangeable. O Lord God, must man die *eternally*, and yet never die! Yes,

O righteous Lord. O! then, let *all*, by *speedy* repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, escape that awful place, not originally prepared for man, but for the Devil and his angels. Amen: even so, Lord, grant it.

LECTURE XVII.

ON HEAVEN, OR ETERNAL HAPPINESS.

That there is a place of future happiness, none, I imagine, would feel disposed to deny, if it were not for its opposite, a place of future punishment. Reason, however, as well as Scripture, confirm us in the opinion, that God has prepared a place where rewards shall be more equally distributed than in this world. Were it not so, it would be difficult to account for the providence of God, as it regards the present situation of mankind. That ardent desire which possesses the souls of all, to be happy, together with the impossibility of attaining it perfectly in this life, is a strong indication that there is a heaven. But the law and testimony are abundant and explicit on this subject. I need not quote particular passages for those who read their Bibles. It is not, I presume, essential to future happiness, that heaven should be local, or a particular place; because, wherever the sweet,

reconciled presence of God is felt, and known, there is, heaven. Yet God has seen meet to determine, that it shall be a *place*, as well as a state. In John xiv. 2, 3, Jesus says, "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."

That heaven is a place, is determined by the circumstance of several real bodies having gone there already; those of Enoch, Elijah, and the body of our Saviour, are all in heaven. After the resurrection, also, the *bodies* of the saints must be *some where*. But in what par ticular part of infinite space, we cannot determine; because God has not expressly revealed it. Peter tells us, indeed, that we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; perhaps this may be an intimation, that after the material heavens, with this earth will have been purged, or refined, in the general conflagration, that they will be the immediate residence of the redeemed of the Lord. But wherever it be, it will be a state of perfect blessedness. There, "our worst enemy, (sin,) shall vex our eyes and ears no more." There, the soul will be perfectly holy, and the body pure and immortal. There, the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary shall be eternally at

rest. There, the redeemed shall be for ever free from toil and pain, from disease and death, from temptation and sorrow, from sighing and weeping, from crosses and losses, from shame and disappointment. There he shall never feel a hard, ungrateful, cold, wandering, unbelieving heart. There, he will cease, eternally, to weep over an impenitent child, friend, or neighbor. In short, there he shall "see his Jesus as he is, and be LIKE him!" There, he will enjoy the smiles and approbation of the blessed Trinity for ever. There, he will enjoy the immediate vision and fruition of God, and the Lamb for ever. In this world his heart leaped at the *sound* of Jesus' name; his soul was elated when he saw his Saviour, though it were "darkly, through a glass;" but O, then he shall see him face to face. There, he will join society, where there are no false brethren, no sectarian zeal, no "biting and devouring one another," but where there is sweet and uninterrupted harmony for ever more. Then the strife shall be, not who shall be the "greatest," but who shall bow *lowest* at the foot of the throne, and sing the *highest* note of praise to Emanuel. There, parents shall recognize their children, and neighbors their neighbors. There, the once indefatigable minister of the cross, shall recognize his "crown of rejoicing," in the men and women he has been the instrument of saving; but *both* parties shall join in giving *all* the glory to God.

In heaven, new wonders and new glories will be constantly opening on the expanding mind. That soul once so intent for useful knowledge, shall know more now, perhaps, in one hour, than it could know while in this "tabernacle," in a long life.

The soul and the body are now made capable of *bearing* infinitely more than in the flesh; yea, "an exceeding and eternal WEIGHT of glory." Moses, while in the flesh, could not see God and live, that is, his clay tenement could not bear the weight of that view of the divine glory that he desired. But, in heaven, his body as well as soul, with all the redeemed, will be capacious to know, and strong to bear, what the heart of man has not conceived.

There will be no jarring nor discord in heaven. All the countless millions of every nation, kindred, *tongue*, and people, will join in the *same* song, and speak the *same* language. Their *voices* shall be as the *sounding* of many waters, but there will not be *one* to cry out confusion! confusion! The arches of the New Jerusalem will echo, and re-echo, with "hallelujahs" from every tongue. "God and the Lamb," will be the object of the song, and it will never grow old. But, while eternity rolls on, the song will be increasing; an infinite God will be eternally pouring new glories on, and new delights into, the redeemed soul.

But why do we talk, or try to tell about the heavenly world? Who can tell one of ten thousand glories, or one of ten thousand delights? Vast, immense, unmeasurable, and eternal felicity, awaits *all* who will get to heaven.

"Sweet Heaven! sweet Heaven!
Lord, shall *I* ever get to Heaven."

LECTURE XVIII.

ON EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

Some preachers will converse freely, and repeatedly, about *practical* religion ; but you will seldom, if ever, hear them say one word about *experimental* religion. It is all practical, practical, as if a man might be a very good Christian, without any experimental knowledge of religion, at all.

There are others, from whom you hardly ever hear a word about practical religion. It is all experience. Now, sometimes, and not unfrequently too, I have been tempted to question the piety of both. Or, that the former had no experience, and the latter, such an one as was not productive of good fruit.

But there are such things as experimental and practical religion taught in the Bible. Experimental religion, of course, comes first.

I will not attempt to fix, or mention the precise exercises, of which every soul is the subject, that

experiences religion. There is "a diversity of operations, but the same spirit." But it is clear to me that every one, who has come to years of maturity, who is born of God, is the subject of certain exercises of mind, of which he is sensible.

The very idea of experience presupposes, or implies a consciousness of what passes in the mind. For example, no man can feel much pain or joy on any subject without being conscious of it. So in like manner, when the divine Spirit operates on the mind, making manifest the condition of the man, he will feel less or more miserable, according to the clearness of the discovery he has of his lost, ruined condition.

The example of Paul, of the jailor, and the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, is unquestionably proof of this. Human nature is the same in every age, and similar causes will produce similar effects in every country; therefore, whenever a sinner is clearly convinced of his exposure to death and hell — when he sees what a rebel he has been against God and his government — when he *feels* his imminent danger, he will not only *know* it, but will cry for relief. A conviction of outward or external sin, is matter of feeling and much pain; but a conviction of inward sin, or sin of the heart, is cause of still greater pain: but a conviction of utter inability to help ourselves, or justify ourselves, is still the greater

pain of all. A species of despair, is often a consequence of such conviction.

How can such things pass in the mind, without the subject of them being most sensibly affected by them? First, his "sins are set in order before him;" second, he has found out that "the heart of man, (yea *his* heart) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" third, he finds, by actual experiment, or trial, that "without Christ he can do nothing."

Now, a clear conviction of all these things is absolutely necessary, for the "whole need not the physician, but they that are sick,"&c., and I would ask, how can these things take place without the man being sensible of them? It is impossible, in the nature of things. It is absurd to suppose it. A creature in this situation, is disposed to use every means in his reach, or power; false shame abandons him, and he will cry, "Lord, save, or I perish," even if it should be in the great congregation. He feels the justice of his condemnation, but the idea of sinking to eternal hell, is intolerable.

Being as yet unregenerated, his highest motive, of course, is self preservation. But he has *heard* of Jesus, he has heard he saves the chief of sinners; he knows, by painful experience, that every prop on which he has been depending, has failed him; he resolves to venture on the Lord, or "submit to *his* righteousness," by striving to

"believe in his name." So soon as God witnesses such, or this effort of the heart, he is propitious. "He who first commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into the HEART, and gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." The eager soul grasps the antidote, or lays hold by faith on that "one Lord," the only proper object of faith; and now, "justified by (not for) faith, we have *peace* with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." The heart is changed, or regenerated. "For we all, with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the SAME IMAGE from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." The heart is well pleased with the plan, and most cordially acquiesces in it. Sweet peace, heavenly solace, and often unutterable joy are the consequences. The soul discovers now, that to be saved by the imputed righteousness of Christ, is safe to man and honoring to God. That holy law, which just before cried for the sinner's blood, has ceased its demands, or found for its precepts and penalty, ample satisfaction in the life and death of the Son of God, in whom the sinner believes. Its condemnatory sentence, of course, is taken out of the breast of the pardoned rebel. The heart has now new relishes, "loves a new master, acts from new motives, to accomplish new designs; chooses new companions, experiences new sorrows, and new joys." This is what every son and daughter of

fallen Adam must experience, in substance, or never be admitted to the paradise of God.

Is it not, then, passing strange, that some professed teachers of the holy religion of Jesus, will say, and preach, that such things may pass in the human mind in an insensible way? Or, that the man may have religion, and not know when, where, or how he got it? What! a condemned, guilty rebel be pardoned, and not know it? experience "peace with God," and not know it? have his dark mind illuminated to see the wonderful plan of salvation, and not know it? be the subject of "joy unspeakable and full of glory," and not know it? *feel* his heart burn with love to God, and not know it? FEEL the witness of the Spirit, and not know it? What dangerous, strange absurdities! How many thousand souls have been ruined by this *insensible* religion; and that by teachers, too, who profess to take the Bible for their guide! Here the thought naturally occurs again, of the pernicious and damning consequences of a man's undertaking to teach others, who knows not the way himself—undertaking to preach preparation for heaven, when he himself is unprepared, or has no true *experience* of vital religion; for it is a fact, which all will allow, that it is hard for a man to condemn himself. I have noticed, with pain and anxiety, some who would preach conviction tolerably clear, (just as far, perhaps, as they had gone,) and then slide round conversion, or closing in with

Christ, with a marvellous facility, and then go into what they call practical religion.

But those preachers, who hate so much the very name of *time* and place religion, imagine they have found one, or, at most, two passages of Scripture to favor their plan. "Whereas I was blind, now I see." How does he *know* he sees? Did he not know when he *began* to see? If he did not, how would he know at any time that he saw? But there is another — "The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is *every* one that is born of the Spirit." Now, this passage either proves nothing to the point, or it proves too much. "So is *every* one"— then whatever description of the operations of the Spirit on the human mind, is intended, it proves that every one who is born of God, is included. We have only then to prove, that *some* have been sensibly, or knowingly converted, to make that passage prove *all* are so. Then let me ask, if Paul, the Jailor, and *three thousand* others knew when they got religion? If *they* did, according to the passage in question *every* one does.

I will admit, that, owing to the previously wrong conceptions that men generally entertain about the nature of faith and conversion, that some may not know at the time of their justification, that it was religion they had experienced; in some instances, it may be some time before they are

convinced *it* was religion; yet even in *such* cases, the exercise was most sensibly *felt* — the heart was sensibly relieved from a great burden — the soul sensibly glowed with love to God and his people, and this is what I call sensible religion — religion in the *weakest* of the flock

LECTURE XIX.

ON PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Practical godliness is a sure consequence of experimental religion. If the tree be good, the fruit will be good also. There is no cause and effect more intimately connected, than experience of grace and a holy life. But, without the former, the latter is impracticable. A man may appear to be a practical Christian without being regenerated, but he cannot be so in God's account. His legal, or unrenewed heart, may produce legal fruit, but not that *kind* of fruit, which will abound to his account in the day of the Lord Jesus. He may, apparently, abound in every good word and work — he may do the deeds of the regenerated, and yet be no practical Christian. He may pray often and long at a time, he may be baptized, and go to the Lord's table; he may keep the sabbath of the Lord, may give alms, and even his "body to be burned," and yet be no practical Christian.

How many men are there, who, in their general deportment, appear to be pious, that can give no "reason for the hope that is in them?" *Love* is wanting. Evangelical motives are wanting. "God sees not as man sees, but looketh on the heart." This man works, but he works *for* life; that man works, but he works *from* life, or by the principles of eternal life which are in him. He pursues and loves holiness, because he has seen and felt its beauty and excellency. He "delights in the law of God after the inner man." He does not want that holy rule of life to be less rigid, or brought down to his infirmities. He voluntarily chooses it for his way mark, and is constantly desiring, and trying to come up to all its requisitions; not because he expects to purchase life thereby, but because he finds his highest happiness in conformity, or in endeavoring to conform to its precepts. Thereby he glorifies his heavenly Father, which is a secret delight to his soul, and thereby his graces are strengthened to go on his way. He is not, Antinomian like, ready to question his obligation to obey the law. He knows, he feels, that Christ is not the minister of sin, but a saviour from sin. He is practical, mentally and outwardly, negatively and positively. He is engaged in the strength of divine grace, to keep his passions, propensities, &c., under; to resist temptations, evil thoughts, unlawful desires, &c. He feels bound to guard against outward sin. But he often finds this less difficult

than inward sin. He may be said to be negatively holy, because, he conscientiously refrains from what God has forbidden. He may be said to be practically holy, because he is engaged to try to do the will, the whole will of God, concerning him. His comprehensive petition is, "Lord make me to *know* and *do* thy will." He prays in secret, not merely because it is his duty, but because he often feels it a great privilege. He is constant, and conscientious in the discharge of this duty. He prays in his family, if he has one, not merely because he feels it his duty, but a great privilege. Without a providential hinderance, he is also constant, and conscientious, in this practice. He goes to the house of God, not because others go, but because there his soul often "feeds upon the sincere milk of the word," and thereby, he grows and thrives. He gives his aid, in a pecuniary way, and otherwise, to spread the gospel; not because he expects to merit heaven by it, but because it is his *duty*, and because he loves Jesus, and precious immortal souls. He aids the poor, because they are God's creatures, and because his soul is akin to that Christ, who pities them. He feeds and clothes the indigent Christian, because thereby, he feeds and clothes his Saviour, in his members; and he does them good, because they are disciples. He is ardent in his desires, and active in his duties, to promote, in his sphere, the coming of God's kingdom. He feels that he is God's steward over

the things committed to his charge in this world. He is, therefore, conscientious how he disposes of them. Not in luxury, or extravagance, or in "giving to the rich;" but in disposing of his property in that way in which God will be honored, himself, his household, and fellow creatures, be most benefited. The practical Christian carries his religion with him in all his business with mankind. He speaks the truth to his neighbor; he deals justly with him, he will be conscientious to perform his contracts — he will not violate his just contracts, because unjust laws, *afterward* enacted, will permit him so to do. He carries his religion with him to the muster field, to the court house, to the jury room, and every other place where he has business to transact with his fellow men. In short, it is the business of his whole life, to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

LECTURE XX.

ON THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

I FEEL some delicacy in treating, or discussing this subject, for several reasons. Our Synod* has said enough in her "Confession of Faith," to satisfy her own members; or, if they be not satisfied, I have but little hope, by what I can add, of communicating much more light upon the subject. I also feel a delicacy in saying *more*, on a subject that has already engrossed the attention of the Christian public quite too much. I moreover, feel a tenderness and respect for a large, respectable, and pious body of Christians, who differ from us in opinion, on this point. Some of my brethren may not be pleased with this concession; but, be that as it may, I speak sentimentally; and will further add, that I have long viewed that society, as *one* of the principal barriers, in these United

* When the author wrote, our General Assembly had not been constituted.

States, against the growing domination of *another* society, or denomination, whose government, spirit, and practice, ought to be watched with a jealous eye by all liberal Christian denominations. But no liberal people will blame us for supporting our *own* sentiments.

In treating this subject, I would first consider some of the principal texts and arguments *against* final perseverance.

One argument often introduced on that side of the subject, is the many cautions, &c., against falling, It is said, caution implies danger, &c. True: but our very natures are such, that we need caution, as well as encouragement, and even to have our fears excited, in the absence of better principles. That is, when the Christian is not actuated, or "constrained by the love of Christ," to duty, it is necessary that he should do duty from *some* motive.

But what motive of *fear* can excite a Christian who believes in final perseverance? I answer, two. First, he knows, should he backslide, he will lose the *comforts* of religion, and incur God's displeasure. This is a powerful motive to keep him on his way." Again: if he does backslide, and lack the present evidences of religion, he does not know that ever he had it; consequently, he is alarmed, examines himself, and cries to God. But, in all those cautions, that I have ever noticed in the Scriptures, I do not recollect *one* that is followed

with a threatening of damnation, to the real Christian, though he be cautioned.

The argument of such and such individuals having obtained religion and then lost it, never can have much weight with the considerate; for, if any such were reclaimed, it is proof on the side of perseverance, if not reclaimed, *we* say, they never had religion. And who but God, who searcheth the heart, can contradict us? Arguments drawn from observation, or the experience of fallible man, can never settle this controversy. One will tell you that he knows, by his own experience, that the saint may fall. Another, of equal probity, will tell you that *he* knows, by his own experience, that they never will fall. Now, in strictness of language, neither can say so in truth, unless each would wait his final destiny, and speak from heaven, or hell? David's case is often introduced to prove *final* apostacy! But, unless it can be proved that, David went to hell, the case will not answer the purpose. David sinned most abominably, for which God punished him sorely. Some, however, might say, that, perhaps David was never really born of God before that event; but others, with more propriety, would say, that though David was *sometimes* much enlightened, yet he lived in a dark dispensation, when even polygamy was not forbidden, and when the kings of the earth considered their subjects a species of property, and claimed the right of putting to death whom they pleased. Perhaps

David, in his backslidden state, reasoned on these principles, to justify himself in killing Uriah, and marrying his widow. At any rate, none believe David went to hell.

The 33rd chapter of Ezekiel is thought, by some, strongly to support the idea, or possibility, of final apostacy, where it is said, "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." "*Die* thereby," but not go to hell. In all this chapter there is not a word about the righteous being finally lost. Here, I think, I might fairly rest the argument, and demand of my brethren, who support the opposite opinion, to bring *proof* that these men were really lost; for it must be remembered, that many of God's people may so displease him, as to subject themselves to punishment, and *natural* death; God was displeased with many of the Israelites, and their "carcases fell in the wilderness." None will allow, I imagine, that *all* who fell in the wilderness, who had displeased God, went to hell. If they do, let them recollect that Moses, himself, was not permitted to live and enter Canaan, because he had "spoken unadvisedly with his lips." What man will venture to affirm, that this was not *all* the penalty those were ever subjected to in Ezekiel? But it is by no means clear to me, that those righteous men were *more* than merely righteous in the sight of the judicial law; consequently, when they should turn from *that* law, they

should receive *its* penalty. I am the more confirmed in this opinion, by the declaration concerning the *opposite* character, where it speaks of his "restoring the pledge," &c., he shall live, that is, not die by the penalty of the law.

The 15th chapter of John is supposed, by some, to prove clearly, the possibility of final apostacy, under the figure of the vine and the branches. I have perused the passage with attention, and cannot see the pointed proof spoken of. Christ, by the figure of a vine and branches, gave a history of facts, which accord with the experience of every true Christian, (to wit,) except we abide in him, we cannot be fruitful; and that without him we can do nothing. He says, those men who do not "abide in him, are cast forth as a branch, and are withered, and men gather them, and they are cast into the fire, and are burned." Surely it is not *men* that cast men into hell! If it be a true Christian that is meant, the meaning appears to me to be simply this:—If he do not attend closely to his duty, he will not receive that aid from Christ, which will make him fruitful; consequently, he will begin to wither, or decline in his graces, until *men*, yes, and the devil, and the world, will get the advantage over him, harrass him, throw him into the fire of temptation, affliction, &c., until he return to his God.

But some have supposed, with much probability, that, in a certain sense, all men were in Christ, that

is, by virtue of his atonement, all were made "prisoners of hope," all were operated on, and stand in a certain relation to him, which authorizes him to look for, and expect fruit, as he did of the fruitless fig tree; and on their repentance and faith, "God would purge them, that they might bring forth *more* fruit." But if they finally rejected offered mercy, they lose their day of grace; and then, indeed, "they are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

But, as I have suggested before, the *main* idea designed to be taught, is the *impossibility* of any bearing fruit, without *union* with Christ. But still there is not a word of the truly regenerate falling into hell. I would remark here, in the language of Mr. Parish, "Figurative expressions often agree with the object to be illustrated, only in one point. Christ is represented as a 'lion,' as coming like a 'thief.' Is he therefore cruel, or does he take what is not his own?"

But in the 6th chapter of Hebrews, it is thought by some, it is conclusively taught, that the regenerate may finally fall. "For it is impossible for those who once were enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." If this passage prove final apostacy, it proves *too much* for those who hold that

sentiment; for I imagine, that they all think that the apostate may obtain religion again. But whatever character is here described, *if they* fall away, it is impossible to renew them unto repentance. But, on examining this passage critically, I am firmly persuaded, that the character described is that character, for which John says we are not to pray, that is, one who has lost his day of grace, or who has sinned "the sin unto death." But even such, if they were to persevere, examine themselves, &c., God would ultimately give them a *transforming* view of the divine glory, or *seal* them to the day of redemption. I am the more confirmed that it is not the really regenerate, who are described, because, in all the strong description given, there is not one distinguishing mark of the real Christian. There is no *faith*, no peace, or *joy*, no *witness* of the Spirit, no *justification*, and no mention of that distinguishing mark, LOVE, in all the description; therefore, I say, without hesitation, that it is not the "born of God," who are spoken of, but it is the "almost" Christian, or that man who has been enlightened just enough to "sin the sin unto death," if he turn back again to wickedness.

I have now honestly given my views of *some* of those passages of Scripture, that I think seem *most* to favor the sentiments of those brethren who differ from us; and, on a review of them, and other passages of God's word, I do not marvel

that good Christians, and sensible men, especially with a previous bias, should adopt the sentiment of final apostacy. But the way that I have been led to adopt, and become firmly established, in the sentiment of final perseverance, was by the perusal of some passages of Scripture, that do appear to me to be doubtful, or susceptible of ANY other meaning, than what they literally express: then, according to a fixed maxim with me, (making every thing that is doubtful, bend to that which is plain,) I was compelled, as an honest man, to settle down in the sentiment I have long avowed.

In reasoning on the subject of final perseverance, I see every thing to support it. It is said, indeed, that it is *safe* to hold the opposite. I would judge not; for it is obvious, at least, as *many* fall who do hold that sentiment, as those who do not. Again, it appears to me, from the very nature of the union between Christ and his members, that perseverance is insured. Indeed, Jesus himself compares that union, to the union of the persons in the adorable Trinity! But it is conceded by all true Christians, that religion is the *best* thing in the world. Now, what man in his senses, would surrender a great, for a less good? What man would give a guinea for a farthing, or a diadem for "thirty pieces of silver?" Moreover it is said, Christ is our advocate. Who could imagine that *such* an advocate could ever lose a suit? Christ is said to be our high priest, who *ever* lives, to make intercession for *us*

Now, who could reasonably imagine, that his intercessions will not finally prevail. Our standing is either in ourselves, or it is in Christ. If in ourselves, I frankly acknowledge, that we not only *may*, but *will* fall; but if in Christ, I believe he has power, and will keep, that which we have voluntarily committed unto him till the great day. We are kept, then, by the power of God; but it is through faith, or that medium which God has ordained, by which the saints will persevere.

John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (that is, the sin unto death) for his seed REMAINETH in him; and he CANNOT sin, because he is born of God." Now a man *is* born of God, or he is *not;* then when, or at the time he *is* born again, his perseverance is secured. Again, Jeremiah: "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will *not* turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts that they SHALL NOT depart from me." Again, in John: "And I give unto them ETERNAL life, and they shall NEVER perish," &c. I could multiply texts on this subject, but really I think it unnecessary, for, it appears to me, that those I have just quoted must for ever stand incontrovertible; at any rate, until language loses its present meaning, until words convey different ideas from what has always been common. *Eternal*, *cannot*, *shall not*, *never*, are words too unequivocal, too definite to be misunderstood.

In conclusion, I will observe, that it cannot be proved, that *one* man who was *ever* born of God, went to hell; and until this can be done, it appears to me impossible to support that side of the question. I know Saul and Judas are brought in as instances to prove that position, but I think not pertinently. We have no positive proof that Saul did go to hell; but if he did, it proves nothing, unless the truth of the doctrine that a man may lose his day of grace; for, it is clear to me, from his conduct to David, and his applying to the witch of Endor, that he *never* had true religion. As to Judas, it is strange to me, how any one can imagine that he was ever regenerated, when he is called a *deceitful, coveteous* man, in the case of the costly oil, and when Christ himself expressly calls him a devil, and that, too, shortly after he had chosen him; yes, long before the devil more fully entered into him, after he had taken the sop. John vi. 70, "Have not I *chosen* you twelve, and *one* of you is a devil." None, I presume, will deny, but that *one* was Judas.

But if Arminians, and Calvinists, and *intermediates,* cannot feel a good conscience without preaching their several sentiments on this subject, if I were not considered assuming, I would advise that they do it with more modesty and deference for the opinion of their brethren; and especially, that they *confine* themselves to Scriptural phrase-

ology. It will hurt no Christian to hear the Scriptures *quoted*, if they be not *perverted* by an unnecessary comment, on a subject that all allow is not damning in its nature. "Bear and forbear," is a good Christian maxim, though it was taught by a heathen.

LECTURE XXI.

ON PRAYER.

Our Catechism gives a comprehensive, but very just definition of prayer. "The offering up the desires (of the heart) to God, in the name of Christ, &c., for things agreeable to his will." It is the desires of the *heart* which are to be offered up.

It is to be feared, that there are thousands of *somethings* that go under the name of prayers, that are not so in reality, or in God's account. It is not a form of well ordered words which constitute a prayer. It may be called so by man, but God, who "sees not as man sees, and who looketh on the heart," sees through the veil, and will not hear where the heart is not dictating the prayer. But Scriptural, and appropriate language ought to be sought and attended to, especially in family, social, and public prayer. It is also desirable that those who pray for others to hear, should have some connection of thought, and not change their

position too often, and come back to the same thing again in a few minutes.

Repetition of the same thing, or words, when dictated by the *fervency* of the soul, obvious to all, is not generally to a serious audience disgusting. But for a prayer neither to have form nor spirit in it, is irksome to any congregation.

The position of the body is not essential to prayer; but a lazy posture ought always to be avoided. Kneeling and standing seem to be the most suitable and convenient positions.

A practice that too many are guilty of, in social or public prayer, is departing from the nature and design of prayer; that is, to mix their prayers with exhortations. Prayer is too solemn an exercise, and God is too jealous for his own glory, for us to turn away our addresses from HIM to our fellow creatures. When we pray to God, let our minds be *kept* on the only and proper object of worship: but if we feel impressed to exhort our fellow creatures, let us make a *distinct* business of it, and not fill our pretended addresses to God, with exhortation.

Although we may lawfully and properly pray unto either of the divine persons in the adorable Trinity, we must not do it as unto a *distinct* God. There are three divine persons, but *one* God who is the proper object of worship.

There are several *kinds* of prayer obligatory on men, which should be considered a great privilege

by all Christians. Ejaculatory prayer, or a darting the soul to God in secret silence, on any and every emergency, is a privilege that rubies could not purchase from the real child of God. This kind of prayer may be made in every possible situation. At our daily labor, in the house of God, in the court house, muster field, day of battle, &c., &c. In this way, we may almost *literally* "pray without ceasing." We may thus pray when we are going to, or coming from set prayer; when we are preaching, when we hear, when we talk or converse with our friend or enemy, when we lie down, rise up, eat, drink, or in whatsoever situation, or employment we may be in.

Closet, or secret prayer, is expressly commanded by Jesus Christ. This is also a great privilege to every child of God. To retire into a secret place, where none but the eye of God sees, and where the heart may be unburdened, and where the needy, dependent creature, may tell his God things that he would not tell his bosom companion. It will generally be found most suitable to retire far enough from others, so as not to be heard when we pray in secret; for it is most commonly best to speak with an audible voice, to prevent wanderings of mind, and to solemnize our own souls. But I have no doubt, many have been discharging the duty of secret prayer, when they were heard a "great way off!" For it is not the low tone of voice that constitutes secret prayer alone, it is the

intention of the one who prays. Then if a man, abhorring the pharisaic spirit, retires to converse with his God in private, and while in that act, God would give him such clear views of the situation of some friend, or neighbor, or the Church of God, that would excite every power of his soul, and constrain him to wrestle and agonize, so that he could be heard by many, this would be no violation of the main design of secret prayer. Again: if God would, through that medium, deign abundantly to bless his soul, and he were constrained to shout aloud, it would only be an accomplishment of the promise of Christ. I can see nothing of the pharisee in all this.

As to the frequency of this duty, reason and our necessities would dictate the propriety of attending to it at least *every* morning and evening. But I am certain that many, especially preachers of the Gospel, have derived great benefit from attending to secret prayer *three* times a day, which I would hereby most earnestly recommend to every minister of Jesus.

Family prayer is both a duty and a high privilege. It always gives me an unfavorable opinion of the head of a family, who professes religion, to hear him or her question the obligation we are under to erect a family altar, and keep the fire of the morning and evening sacrifice burning Such morning and evening sacrifice seems to have been the practice of God's ancient people, at any

rate. David, though a king, would follow the example; and Daniel, that eminent servant of God, would not be deterred from the *duty* and *privilege*, though a place among the lions, or the loss of his *life* should be the consequence. We are commanded, in the New Testament, to "pray every where," which surely includes our houses, for they are *somewhere*. The plainest dictate of common sense, is, that every man or woman, as the case may be, who has a family, should worship God in that family. If we receive no favors and dread no evils, in time or eternity, in our *family* capacities, then, indeed, we may not pray or give thanks as such. But if, because of our daily obligations, dependence, wants, &c., it becomes absolutely necessary to pray in secret; so, for the same reasons, we should pray in our families. But who ever felt guilt in his conscience *for* praying in his family? But have not very many felt guilt for *not* doing it? What does this speak, as testimony on this subject? It is either a duty, or it is not a duty. If not a duty, God will never reprove for the omission; but God does reprove for the omission, therefore it must be a duty.

I have thought the most convenient *time* to attend to this, is *early* in the morning, and at night before the family becomes sleepy. The shameful, wicked practice of some families, who do pray, in suffering a part of their families, especially their servants, to be absent, or employed in their daily

business, in time of family worship, cannot be too highly reprobated. Let such remember, that they will have to meet *all* their family in the judgment.

Social prayer, when there is opportunity, is a duty, and is a distinguished privilege, and has the express promise of Christ, where only two or three are met for that purpose. God has always owned and blessed prayer meetings, when they have been attended to in a proper manner. And those who have known their value, as means, feel themselves deprived of a great privilege, when they are deprived of social prayer.

There has, however, been much carnal reasoning on this subject. Many who attend, do not receive the benefit they might, by being in dread, lest they should be called on to take part publicly! Wherefore? O they have not *gifts*, &c. But the *secret* cause will often be found to be *pride*. Because they cannot *word* a prayer like other people, they will not pray at all! Then it is to *man* you pray! Such ought to recollect the object and design of social prayer. It is to pray to *God*, and get our strength renewed; as well as to "agree touching the outpouring of God's spirit, in the awakening and conversion of sinners." But if such objectors would pray *more* in secret, perhaps their "gifts" would be much improved. I have often thought, why men of tolerable good sense were not more gifted in prayer, was, because they

did so little of it, and so seldom *felt* to the heart, their *need* of the things they prayed for. When a man *feels*, he must be more or less fluent and eloquent. But, on the other hand, members of praying societies ought not to be lifted, or puffed up by their gifts; this God hates, and it is always attended with bad consequences.

Public prayer is another kind, that all will acknowledge obligatory on public characters, such as preachers, exhorters, &c. A preacher ought never to be lengthy in public prayer, unless extraordinary feelings of soul are the cause of it. In such an event, his audience will not grow weary. But others may lawfully pray in public, besides the preacher, exhorters, &c. I know there has been much said in a way of animadversion, about a practice in our own Church, respecting public prayer. I allude to the practice of preachers, after, or at the close of public worship, calling on all the convicted sinners present, who wish an interest in the prayers of the Church, to make themselves known; and then calling on all God's people to pray for them. You will note, that they are neither told to pray loud, nor in a low tone of voice, but to pray. Now what evil is in all this? Ah! says one, it is confusion. Confusion to whom? to God? No, he can hear a million as easy as one. I trust there are millions who pray to him every day at the same time; and the circumstance of their being separated, does not affect the omnicient

Jehovah. Well, whom then does it confuse? The convinced sinner? the engaged Christian? No, verily. These have enough to do without attending to others. Who then are confused? I will tell you, and let their own consciences bear testimony. It is generally the cold hearted professor, and prayerless sinner. But, perhaps, I may touch upon this subject in another lecture; I will, therefore, in conclusion, observe that, after all, the spirit of prayer, with faith, is every thing in this solemn exercise.

In any of the kinds of prayer we have mentioned, if we lack the spirit, we lack all. We have abundant examples, as well as precepts, on this subject. I have touched this matter in a former lecture, but it is of too much importance not to be brought to view in this. The spirit of prayer, and faith, are most commonly connected. At any rate, there can be no efficacious faith in prayer, without the spirit of prayer. It appears to me they assist each other. Never, I imagine, did man believe with the heart, when he was saying his prayers, or going his formal round. Jacob wrestled when he would prevail with God. The Canaanitish woman turned every repulse into an argument; her happiness was identified with that of her daughter, and she could not give it up without an answer; her spirit and fervency in prayer worked with her faith. James tells us that "the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much."

Elijah was a man of like passions, "and he prayed, and the heavens were shut; and he prayed, and the heavens were opened." He prayed with FERVENCY and FAITH. Elisha prayed, and God interposed to the confusion of Baal's worshippers. But we cannot pray in the spirit with a becoming fervency and zeal, without the aid of the spirit of God. But what Christian may lack this aid, when Christ expressly tells him, "God is more willing to give the spirit to them that ask him, than we are to give our (hungry) children bread."

There are, however, too many, when they feel the spirit of prayer, who indulge in unbelief. "When ye pray, therefore, believe ye receive the things ye ask," &c. But how shall we learn the happy art of praying with confidence, or faith? John tells us, where he says: "When our hearts condemn us *not*, then have we confidence in him; and whatever we ask, we receive, because we KEEP his commandments." The cold, unsteady, half-hearted professor, need never expect, in that situation, to have access to the throne, through the blood of the covenant, nor receive an answer to prayer. Near living, living in union and communion with God, is the situation in which we may humbly expect access to the throne; and when we have access, if we do not indulge unbelief, God will hear and ultimately answer

Indeed the great design of prayer, abstractly considered, is to receive an answer. Then how is it that so many of God's professed children, can pray so often, and be so well contented without receiving the answer? It is an answer we should look for, and expect, for ourselves, our children, our relatives, and the world. We are often straightened, but it is not in God, it is in ourselves. Our Lord, in his excellent form of prayer, taught his disciples to pray: "Let thy kingdom come." Surely he did not teach us thus to pray, to mock us; but that God might hear and answer. I have no doubt, but the conversion of the world will take place in answer to the effectual, fervent, (believing) prayer of the righteous.

Thousands of individuals, who were careless, bold, daring, and, to human appearance, incorrigible, have been *compelled* to cry for mercy in answer to prayer. "When Zion travails (or prays) she shall bring forth." O then, let individuals, let the Church pray much; pray in the spirit; pray in faith; till the world shall be converted to God. No child of God ought to take ease on this subject, while there is an unconverted soul in his family, neighborhood, county, state, nation, or the world.

But if we do not feel the spirit of prayer, may we not omit our set times of secret, family, and

other prayer, till we do feel the spirit? By no means. This is a poor way, indeed, to obtain the spirit of prayer. No, let us conscientiously maintain the form, and beg God for the power and spirit.

LECTURE XXII.

ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

A REVIVAL of religion, is what the Apostle calls "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." That is, a time when God is pouring out his Holy Spirit, and awaking his own people from the slumber of the "foolish virgins," and causing sinners to see their imminent danger, and flee to Christ as their only refuge. It is a time when less or more of the unconverted, according to its magnitude, are brought savingly to close in with the terms of salvation, or are born of God; and a time when God's people, especially in the vicinity of the revival, make good progress to the heavenly world. A time when the godly, though almost despairing parent, has the inexpressible joy of seeing his or her son and daughter brought to the foot of the cross, and there submit to the "righteousness of God." A time when the called, but almost heartless minister of Jesus, has the unutter-

able joy of seeing the fruit of his labors, in the awakening and conversion of sinners.

The means and instruments by which revivals of true religion are realized, are various. God, the eternal, is always the *first* moving cause. Sometimes, by most awful dispensations of his providence, his people are aroused, and sinners are alarmed, and they both begin earnestly to call upon God. But, ordinarily, where there is faithful preaching, it commences with the preacher. He, after frequent unsuccessful attempts, is led by the secret influence of the divine spirit, to enquire the why or wherefore? God leads him, or gives him a view of his own want of spirituality and faith, and also the deadness of the professors of religion. He becomes alarmed, he begs God to reclaim him, and make his *own* heart right in his sight. When he becomes duly awake himself, he can then see, and not till then, so clearly, the dead slumber into which God's people, or the Church collectively, have fallen. He is now, and not till now, prepared to cry, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

The Church, or that part of it, that may be denominated "wise virgins," take the alarm. Means are resorted to, such as fasting, and humiliation before God, more frequent meetings, special times of prayer, &c., &c. A deep sense of eternal things abides in the minds of God's people; they become restless under a view of the constant exposure of poor sinners to hell. They begin to

wrestle with God, in good earnest. They pray like men and women that cannot take a denial. In short, they begin to "be in pain, and labor to bring forth." And "when Zion travails she shall bring forth."

But it may be, instead of its *commencing* with the preacher, there was a Jacob here, and a mother in Israel there, and a daughter of Zion yonder, who had been crying with fervency and *faith*, "Lord, help the preacher! Lord, make him instrumental of saving souls!" &c. And in *answer* to the prayers, the preacher has been led to the course mentioned.

Sometimes, after God has revived his blessed work, it has declined, perhaps because his preachers or people, did not duly attend to the duty of being "workers together with him." Although God is the sovereign agent by whom revivals are begun and carried on, yet he makes it our duty to be active, to avail ourselves of the blessed opportunity he is affording us, to promote his cause, in the salvation of sinners, by every possible means in our power. We are always bound to work, but especially when God is working. There is double guilt attached to slothfulness at such a time as this. Others have suffered a revival to decline, so far as their instrumentality was concerned, from a vain, anti-scriptural idea, that a revival could not, or would not continue longer in the same place, than two or three years! That a sovereign God did

not choose to continue it any longer; and according to their faith, so it was unto them. But in consulting God's word on this subject, and in contemplating the nature of revivals of religion, I can see no grounds for such a hypothesis. I can see no reason, nor Scripture, why, if the Church would do her duty, a revival, when once commenced, may not continue from year to year, in the same place, while there is an unconverted sinner left, and even when all are converted or damned, it may continue with God's people. Has not God promised to answer the prayer of faith? Will he not grant us faith, if we be found "lawfully striving" to do his whole will? Is it not "his will, even our sanctification." Then why should a a revival decline? O my God, perhaps thousands of souls are now hardened, or damned, who virtually became so, by thy preachers and people! We have seen, elsewhere, that the conversion of the world would be in answer to prayer. But how is the world to be converted? Will it not be by revivals of religion? But how will it be by revivals of religion, if they do not *continue* in the *same* place, as well as spread to new or other places.

There are others, who, instrumentally, retard and check glorious revivals of religion, by an "over righteous zeal for stillness, profound silence," or what *they* call order. I would not condemn a revival because much visible agitation and noise do not attend it. No, a sovereign God may even

condescend to meet the unreasonable prejudices of some, and save their children by what are called noiseless revivals of religion. But I doubt not, that many favorable beginnings of revivals have been checked in the minds of individuals and communities, by encouraging, nay, by virtually commanding the subject, or subjects, to quench the Spirit! by not suffering them, or by causing them to believe it is a sin, to give vent to their feelings.

From whence do men derive their authority for doing so? Is it from tradition and unreasonable prejudice against other denominations, or from God's word? Surely not the latter. For both in the Old and New Testament, we have abundant examples of what they call confusion. Abraham laughed when he saw the Lord's day, though afar off. David danced before the ark of God, and called on every thing, both animate and inanimate, to praise the Lord. Isaiah says, "In that day they will cry out and shout, because of the greatness of the Holy One of Israel," &c. Again: "Let the inhabitants of the rock (Christ) sing, let them shout from the top of the mountain." In Nehemiah's time, when the foundation of the new temple was laid, some wept aloud, others rejoiced aloud, so that there could not be a distinction, and the "noise was heard afar off."

The three thousand were pricked in their heart on the day of Pentecost, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Were they heard?

Did Peter tell them to be "silent?" Did he refrain from continuing his pointed discourse, lest the multitude should become "too much agitated?" Paul was stricken to the earth, and the Jailor "sprang in, trembling, and fell at the Apostle's feet." Yet not a word about restraining their feelings. No prophet, no Apostle, is heard to say, in all this great work, that there was "profound silence," &c. It is quite disgusting, as well as painful, with all these facts before our eyes, to read the eulogies passed on revivals in some places, *because* there was no noise attending them. Neither noise nor silence, is the test by which to try the genuineness of revivals. But, it is an incontrovertible fact, that noise, and much noise, too, attended revivals of religion in the days of the Prophets and Apostles. It is no wonder, when the subjects of God's operations are thus restrained by their teachers, &c., that we hear from the pen of *such* teachers, that out of scores who professed religion, in such a revival, "that *very* few dare hope, with any confidence, that they were really converted!" And this is mentioned as a peculiar commendation!!! I would to God, that men, especially teachers, would read their Bible more, or understand it better, when they do read it.

Some teachers, however, who have since become famous for their opposition to revivals, in times of revivals, winked at, or even encouraged the most

unscriptural extravagance. And either for want of a knowledge of what true religion was, or overlooking its main evidences in others, have been the means of bringing a reproach on the *whole* work. Men possess passions, which, though agitated in a revival, should be kept within *scriptural* bounds. The enemy is always ready to sow tares when the wheat is sowing. And because the passions are excited in revivals, they are not, therefore, to be suffered to run without the compass of the Bible. Clear descriptions of true religion, ought to be constant, from the pulpit, and elsewhere; and when any exercise appears which is obviously *unscriptural*, it ought to be promptly discountenanced. Such a course will never offend the Holy Spirit. But let men take heed, and let them be sure they have God's word on their side.

Another ground of the declension of revivals, is, the instrumental promoters of it sometimes become elated, and led away with prospects, and do not maintain their hold of God's immutable promises, imagining that the work will prevail now at any rate.

But what is most offensive to God, and often no doubt a primary cause of the declension of religion, is, the instruments of the revival becoming *proud* of their instrumentality? The work has revived under *their* instrumentality; it progresses under *their* instrumentality. They are ready to *compare* themselves with others, who are not

instrumental in revivals, and afterward, are ready to take at least *a part* of the glory to themselves! The sure consequence is, God becomes displeased, withholds his wonted influence, and thereby "*abases*" such proud, or self-exalted hearts. O Lord, keep all, but especially the active instruments of revivals, *humble*. What gift have you, that you did not *receive?* Has God honored you with being the happy *instruments* of revivals? Is this cause of exultation? or is it not great cause of the deepest humility and self abasement? Who gives light and energy to the word? who directs the arrow to the heart of saint and sinner? who helps to pray, exhort, and preach in the Spirit? It is God. Then let all the glory be given to God, now and for ever.

Let all who pray, "Thy kingdom come," be ardent to promote, and careful to cherish revivals of religion. By them the world must be converted to God; by them the "knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters do the great deep." By them the time must come, when none "shall teach his neighbor, saying, Know ye the Lord; but when all shall know him from the least to the greatest."

Hasten it, O Lord God of Zion. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

LECTURE XXIII.

A CALL TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

This is a delicate subject; delicate, because it is so important, and because there is a diversity of opinion about it. But we, and we "think we have the mind of Christ," believe most assuredly, that every preacher of the gospel, whom God approbates as such, is the subject of a *distinct*, *particular* and *special internal* call to that responsible work. Indeed, I believe, as well as my recollection serves me, that most of the Protestant Creeds, and Confessions of Faith allow it.

The Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist enquire, "Are you moved by the Holy Ghost to take on you this office," &c. I write from memory, but I think this is the substance of the question in all; yet, in these modern times of refinement and learning, "to be wise above what is written," it is boldly contended, that learning, piety, and especially the *subscription call* of an Association, called a Church, is all that is necessary (with ordination)

to constitute a legitimate minister of Jesus! In perfect consistency with these sentiments, there have been, and are many machines put in operation, at great expense, for the purpose of *manufacturing* preachers of the gospel!!! It is no marvel, then, that multitudes of *such* preachers, under the imposing name of Missionaries, have gone to and fro, through the country, and preached, often without the least apparent success. It is no wonder, that, though their sermons be, in the main, sound, they are sapless, uninteresting, and leave their audiences as they found them; exciting the wonder of many, why so learned and exemplary men seem to feel their subject so little — why men, speaking on matters of eternal moment, do it so coldly, indifferently, and unimpressively. These difficulties would, perhaps, be easily solved by the plain declaration, that such men, probably, took on them this office *without* being "CALLED of God, as was Aaron." I judge no man, "but by their fruit ye shall know them."

I would not be misunderstood on the subject of learning, and theological schools, or seminaries. The former is an excellent handmaid in the great work of the gospel ministry; and the latter, if properly conducted, to a certain extent, might be very valuable in the promotion of truth. But I pray God ever to keep them out of the Church, or that branch of it to which I belong, except for the admission of those of whom there is the most

satisfactory evidence, that they HAVE BEEN (not probably will be) SPECIALLY and INTERNALLY called of God, to the work of the ministry. I have no doubt but many godly men, (whose SIN is less than that of their instructors,) under the influence of improper teaching, and opinions, have, from a MIXTURE of motives, been induced to accept the sacred office, and have preached many years, all the essential truths of the gospel, "not feeling the BURDEN of the word of the Lord," without much, if any benefit at all to the Church of God; on the whole, perhaps, a real injury, being only an example and instrument in his ministerial labors, of lukewarmness and dead formality. But are some ready to ask, "How can these things be?" I answer, if they "run before they are sent, they shall not profit the people." I believe an uncalled minister, though he be pious, to say the least of it, is no advantage to the Church; an impious, and, consequently, an uncalled minister, is always a curse to the Church.

But it may be enquired here, if the call of the Church be not satisfactory evidence that the called should preach! I answer, that the recognition of the preacher, by several, or a number of the members of the TRUE Church, recognizing, not the zeal of the sectary, but the voice of the Shepherd, (Jesus,) is good corroborating evidence that the man is called of God, especially if those members be in the spirit and power of godliness at the time.

On the other hand, there are, no doubt, many ignorant enthusiasts, utterly unqualified in their intellectual powers or acquirements, and, perhaps, some of them even destitute of vital religion, who imagine they are called of God to preach the gospel; suggesting they have *dreamed* that they were called, or heard a *voice*, saying, "Go ye into all the world," &c., and you cannot persuade them out of it by all you can say. This incoherent, dark, jumbled, and *guess-work* exposition of God's word, is no evidence to *them*, that they are not specially called of God to preach; and opposition, though ever so modest and tender, only tends to increase their zeal. The want of that modesty, and self-diffidence, so peculiar to the called of God, is obviously wanting in them. Such men, if they be religious, are apt to have a *mixture* of motive also; they in common with other Christians, may feel a desire to do good, and they may be prompted by misguided zeal; and they may have a strong mixture of pride and self-conceit—for it is unquestionable, that ignorance is the prolific mother of self-conceit and pride. Now, if such be encouraged, admitted, and promoted to the ministry, they will ultimately profit the Church as little, or as assuredly profit it none at all, as the uncalled minister, formerly described. But it is time, perhaps, for us to say something about what we deem a special call of God to the work of the gospel ministry, and our *proof* for such a call.

I would remark here, that God has always exercised his *sovereignty* in the selection of individuals to carry on his purposes of mercy towards his Church; whether patriarch, prophets, judges, or rulers of any description. As in the case of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *in preference to Esau*, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and a succession of prophets, till they ceased under the old dispensation. Under the New Testament dispensation his sovereignty is most clearly displayed in the selection of the apostles. Who but *him*, "who sees not as man seeth," would have thought of choosing a few *illiterate* Jews to convert the world? Paul, indeed, is an exception on the subject of learning, but who would have thought of choosing such a bold, successful *persecutor* as Paul.

With these evidences before their eyes, it is passing strange that some men in this day, virtually deny to Jehovah the *right* to select whom he pleases, by a special call to carry on the same kind design—in effect, stripping the Lord of his sovereignty, while at the same time they are ready to resolve every hard question in their systems of divinity, by the sovereignty of God. If the sinner's agency be in effect taken away, and he tied down to the car of fate, it is, according to some, the sovereign will of God, that it should be so; yet the *same* Lord is not permitted to call, especially if the

called have not been at College, whom he will to preach the Gospel! But God has, does, and will call whom he will, to bear the glad tidings of salvation to a dying world. I hold it as incontrovertible, that God calls none to preach who are not "born again," nor all of those that the Church, by their rulers, might take in their head to promote to the work of the ministry. But the man whom God allows to preach, feels, in common with other Christians, a tender concern for the salvation of mankind—he feels more, he often feels *deeply* impressed with the worth of souls, and that impression is more *abiding* than on other Christian minds. Such are the nature and strength of his impressions, often before he knows what is working with him, that he can hardly forbear calling aloud to sinners to repent, &c. The Holy Spirit is often bringing into his mind, the dangerous, ruined situation of his fellow beings, while at the same time, he sees such a fullness in the Saviour for all, that he longs to be telling them about it. Sooner or later, he by some means is led to suspect, that perhaps God is moving him to do something in a public way in his vineyard. For a time he will not indulge the suspicion; but when it becomes stronger, his difficulties and objections begin to rise; perhaps he has but little learning, no prospect of obtaining it, naturally ignorant, &c., &c. Therefore, he concludes, that it is impossible that the Holy One should be moving him to the

important work. For a short time, perhaps, he becomes measurably easy; but some presentation to his mind, through some medium, arouses him again, he becomes uneasy, and knows not what to do. He may now be induced to reason more fairly on the subject, and venture to give a word of personal, or general exhortation. If he do it publicly, though he feel a good conscience, yet the enemy presents to his mind what he has done in the most gloomy manner; he is, perhaps, quite ashamed of it, and resolves never to do so any more. But if he maintain the life and power of religion, his impressions will return, and in such manner that he feels he cannot live easy, or happy, unless he submit to do the will of God. He consents, or partly consents, for a time, but again a thousand objections will arise—such as his entire want of qualifications, the impossibility, as he supposes, of obtaining them; his embarrassed situation with a family, perhaps, &c. So, on the whole, he will conclude again, and perhaps a score of times, that it cannot be, that God allows *him* to work publicly in the vineyard, therefore, he will abandon the idea; but in order to keep a good conscience, he resolves to move in some limited sphere, such as praying in society, or talking personally to his fellow sinners, or exhorting *occasionally* in the neighborhood, &c. But in the discharge of these duties he is brought, perhaps, by some presentation of some passages of Scrip-

ture to his mind with light, and impressed by the energy of the Holy Ghost, to think he should go further than he had determined; perhaps by hearing an appropriate sermon on that subject, by a *called* minister of Jesus, he feels a strong conviction in his mind, that God is really calling him to the all important work of the ministry; and feels that a woe will be on him if he do not obey. He reluctantly and tremblingly consents to do God's will in this matter. He now is seeking proof again and again, whether it be God's will. The Lord in mercy often condescends to give him evidence, just in the way he asked it, yet again he will doubt, again ask evidence, again receive it, again doubt, &c. But the enemy will now perhaps assail him on a new quarter, that is, cause him to suspect his *motives!* this makes the *honest* man start back with horror. He knows the deceitfulness of his heart, and is ready to admit the truth of the suggestions. Although he knows, on an examination, that he would not for a thousand worlds engage in such an embassy without the appointment of the Great Head of the Church. And so he is tossed from time to time, till he is in a certain sense constrained to submit. After all those evidences he often has to be sought out by some deserving and *called* ministers of the Gospel, before he will make himself known.

I will admit, that it is not *always* manifest to the man himself, nor to the judicature to which he

applies, whether his impressions are to preach, or only exhort; for it appears these were different and some times distinct gifts in the Church in the apostolic age. But I would observe, that it is much more satisfactory to all, when this, on the first admission, can be satisfactorily ascertained. Yet I have known instances, when neither the candidate, nor judicature could ascertain what sphere Christ allowed him to move in, only that beyond a doubt he was powerfully impressed to do *something* in a public way; that by attending to the proper trials, he has become satisfied, himself, and has given the clearest evidence to his brethren, that God allowed him to preach and expound his word. It has been made manifest on the other hand, that some had not the gift of sermonizing. I would stop here to remark, that the discipline of our Church, on this subject, is most admirably adapted to the above mentioned purpose. The more experience I have of it, the more I am pleased with its practical benefit.

It is impossible for me, in the limits that I have allowed myself, to tell all the ten thousand workings of the mind, under the influence of a special call of God to preach the Gospel. "There is indeed a diversity of operations, but the same spirit." Suffice it to say, in the language of the Apostle, that "none may lawfully take this office of the ministry upon him, but he that is CALLED OF GOD, as was Aaron." Yes, especially called of God, to

that particular office. Again, after he has evidence that there *is* a dispensation of the Gospel committed unto him, he ought to feel the application of the Apostle's saying, in another place, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel." I am persuaded, there are many who would not submit, if it were not for that woe, or if they could keep a good conscience, and live in the enjoyment of religion in their private capacity. It may be ojected here, and asked, in the language of the Apostle, if they who *desire* the office of a bishop, do not desire a good work? Most assuredly it is a good work, and when those desires are the effects of God's special call to that work, and an *evidence* of that call, together with a longing desire to do good, or vent the feelings of the heart, the fire of the Lord being *shut up* in the bones, such desire is perfectly consistent with the exercises above described.

As further evidence of a special call of God, I would refer you to Jeremiah xxiii. "Yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not PROFIT this people at all, saith the Lord." No: God had not *sent* those prophets; for this reason they should not profit those that heard them; *vice versa*, if God *had* sent them, they would have profited the people, more or less; and so it is to this day, and will be till "all the Lord's people are prophets." Those who undertake this important work, without a special commission from the Great Head of the Church, do as the

sons of Levi, in another case, they "take too much upon them." In proof of which, I would refer you to 2 Cor. v. 20. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead," &c. Ambassadors! What man, in his senses, would undertake an embassy to a foreign court, and especially to an unfriendly power, without the proper authority, or appointment from his government? Or if he were, though he possessed, in many respects, the most rare qualifications, would not that court, or people, with whom he had taken into his head to negotiate, laugh at him, or treat him with the utmost indifference. Wherefore? Because he shows not his *credentials*. Or if he show credentials signed by some one, or many who had not the authority to do so, it would amount to the same thing. Just so it is with a preacher, who can only produce credentials from his Church, or Church Judicature, while he cannot give any evidence, that they are counter-signed by the King and Head of the Church. He undertakes to treat with the inhabitants of a rebellious province; who indeed have deeply revolted from the government of God: but the people listen to him with indifference, and perhaps not *one*, after very many efforts, consents to the terms of reconciliation. Wherefore? Because they do not recognize the authority, with which he *professes* to be clothed—they do not hear and *feel* him speaking "in the demonstration

of the SPIRIT and with POWER;" commending himself to every man's conscience—the word which he speaks comes "in word only," not "in power and much assurance." O ye professed ambassadors of Jesus, *re-examine* your invisible credentials, see if they be from the proper authority!

Christ says to his apostles, "Lo! I am with you even to the end of the world." Now, it is obvious that this precious promise was not intended *alone* for the Apostles—for Jesus well knew *they* would not live to the end of the world. The promise, therefore, must be taken as applicable to all the legitimate, or called preachers of the Gospel, in every succeeding age of the world. Yes, *called* preachers; for if they run when he does not send them, it is presumption to claim the promise. Yes, blessed be God, every real minister of the CROSS, however humble in talents, if he be faithful, may humbly claim, and *feel* the application of that all supporting promise. Again, it is said, God chose some Apostles, some teachers, &c. God CHOSE: yes, some fishermen, some tent makers, &c. And so does the sovereign Head of the Church continue to choose some mechanics, some farmers, some lawyers, some doctors, and some of various occupations, from among the learned, and less learned; and who shall reply against God, on the one hand, or run before they are sent on the other?

I must conclude this lecture, already more lengthy than was anticipated, by devoutly praying to the Lord God, henceforth to hedge up the way, and prevent all those whom he has not called, and open the way by his providence, for all those whom he has, or may call to the holy work of the Gospel ministry. Amen.

LECTURE XXIV.

ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A GOSPEL MINISTER.

In my last lecture I touched *one* qualification, without which, *all* others are utterly useless; that is, religion, *experimental* religion. I, from my very soul, pity the man who attempts to direct others in a way that he himself has never known. I think it was the great and good Whitefield, who once said, God could not permit a greater curse to come on a people than a Christless minister. But Jesus has settled this matter at once, when he said, "If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch;" that is, if the unconverted teach the unconverted, they both will fall into hell. Then let a man, let a preacher examine himself.

But there are literary qualifications highly useful, if not absolutely necessary, in order to usefulness. I know *all* acknowledge that God is able to take the most illiterate and make them useful. So could he use as a sovereign, Baalam's

ass, "to reprove the madness of the prophet;" but this does not argue that study and learning are not necessary. It always gives me pain, when I hear a professed preacher of the Gospel begin to exclaim against learning, as being useless and entirely unnecessary. I want no better evidence of a man's ignorance who does so. Were he a man of good sense and application, while he would deplore its being made "a *sine qua non*," in the admission of preachers in any Church, he would feel and lament his own want of it. Those exclaimers against learning, are generally prompted by the most unworthy motives; because they have not learning, they would wish to undervalue, and bring it into disrepute. But those very men undertaking to teach others, give the clearest evidence of the great importance of learning in the Gospel ministry. For, in their attempts to expound, and connect God's word, they make such wretched work of it, that many of their hearers clearly perceive that they are "darkening counsel, by words without knowledge." That, for want of some necessary learning, and good sense, they are merely *guessing* at many things, and that too with as little probability, as the bulk, or any of their hearers could guess. Men of sense, without reflection, are too apt, not only to turn from *such* teachers, but from the *cause* which they essay to support. This is wrong in those men, utterly wrong; but such pretended teachers will bear part

of the sin. It is to be sincerely lamented, that there are but too many professed preachers, in various denominations, who give evidence of scarcely *one* solitary qualification for the Gospel ministry. I have ever thought learning, and "much learning," too, an excellent auxiliary to a *called* preacher of the Gospel; and I shall always have the example of a Paul to bear me out. But, in this, as well as in other matters, the Christian world has run to opposite extremes. I do not mean by this suggestion, that a man may have too much learning to be a preacher, especially if he has acquired it before he was called of God to the work. But I mean that certain degrees of learning, required by some Churches, are not warranted by God's word. The Scriptures no where tell us, for example, that every minister before he preaches the Gospel, must have a knowledge of so many languages, sciences, &c. I repeat that these qualifications are desirable, but ought never to be made a limit for the Holy Ghost! The Great Head of the Church has given clear evidence of his sovereignty on this subject. He called "some learned, and some less learned." It is no solid objection to this example, to say that ALL the Apostles were inspired, and had Jesus for their immediate instructor. True: but we never hear of his sending Peter, John, &c., to Gamaliel, to acquire as *much* learning as Paul. And after they were inspired, and their immediate teacher

had ascended into glory, the people will perceive that they were unlearned, and ignorant men, (ignorant of such human acquirements as Paul had,) and, on that account, were amazed at the power which attended their word. But every day's experience proves the folly, not to say wickedness, of making, say a knowledge of the dead languages, with other correspondent literature, a criterion by which to judge of the qualifications of a preacher. For example: C. and D. were both religiously educated, and, in mature age, both professed religion and joined the Church. C. had received an excellent collegiate education; D. had only a *common* English education; they both felt it their duty to preach; C. was received, but D. was rejected. They both appeared to be pious. D. lamented his want of learning, he was very studious, and soon became a tolerably good grammarian, and also acquired considerable knowledge of the useful sciences—say, Geography, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, &c. But he was entirely ignorant of the Latin and Greek languages. C. in the mean time, was progressing in his trials, and was presently licensed to preach. After some time he was ordained, and was called by every one a man of sense. By a turn of divine providence, D. was also brought to the ministry, but not in the same Church. He was a man of excellent sense, and dependent on his God; for he had not *much* learning to depend on. His good sense, and

pathetic discourses, soon attracted attention, and, believe me, my brethren, when I assure you, it was not long before he was considered by the wise and discerning, a much *greater* and much more *useful* preacher than C. And so we might multiply examples of a similar kind.

The great Alexander Anderson, of Summer county, Tennessee, did not know, perhaps, a word of Latin or Greek; yet, who was more eloquent? Who was more *powerful* in the Gospel? Who attracted the attention of the wise, and unwise, of the learned, and unlearned more than he? Who was more *useful*, while he was on the walls of Zion? O Anderson! thy name shall stand as a perpetual monument of God's sovereignty in his *choice of* preachers, and as a constant reproof to those who reject all applicants for the ministry, who cannot read Latin and Greek.

But on this subject, I would say, as did Paul, in another case; if *God* call a man to preach, being learned, let him not seek to be unlearned, (that is, undervalue it.) If he be called, being unlearned, let him not seek *more* learning, than will tend to his *greater usefulness.* Usefulness, indeed, ought to be the high object of every preacher of the Gospel, and just so much learning, all things considered, as will best promote *that object*, ought to be sought and obtained at any sacrifice. But for a person who has arrived to mature age, and is called of God to preach, to go, even if it were convenient

to a College, there to spend several years in acquiring parts of learning not absolutely necessary, while souls are perishing and sinking into hell every day, seems to me to be entirely wrong. Perhaps while he is striving to comply with an unauthorized rule, he might have been the means of saving *some* souls from the damnation of hell. How will such account to his master in the general judgment?

But are you waiting with impatience to hear what parts of learning are necessary to further usefulness? In answer to the Cumberland Presbyterian Preacher, I would say, Look into your Discipline. There you will see an enumeration of qualifications that, I think, are predicated on reason and God's word! The more I contemplate those acquirements, the more I am pleased with, and think them indispensable; at least the greater part of them. None will deny the utility of the study and knowledge of Church History, and Theology. As to the English Grammar, common sense teaches the propriety and necessity of it. It is fit that a preacher should understand, at least, the general principles of that language, in which he preaches. He can then speak without offence to the learned, and the unlearned can better understand him. For a knowledge of the grammar will enable the speaker to convey his ideas with more clearness to the weakest understanding. Moreover, the Gospel which he expounds, is written gram-

matically, and often, especially in controverted points, he has to apply to the rules of grammar to give a sound, literal construction of the word.

As to Geography, it is impossible, without a miracle, for any one to understand many of the historical parts of the Scripture without it. Suppose a preacher, who had not studied Geography, were asked where Egypt is, the country in which the children of Israel sojourned so long? Where is the Red Sea, where God wrought miracles? Where is the wilderness, through which Israel were forty years passing? Where is Canaan? Where is Jerusalem, where our Lord atoned for sinners? Where is Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and a thousand other places of which the Scriptures speak, where many important things occurred, mentioned in the word? Such questions will at once convince the reasonable man of the necessity of a knowledge of Geography.

Astronomy. There is Astronomy in the Bible; the study of which, is so sublime, and so calculated in its nature, to give extended views of the wisdom, power, and goodness of our *Christ*, who created, and possesses those multiplied systems of worlds called heavenly bodies, that Dr. Young exclaimed, with great propriety, "The undevout Astronomer is mad!" Whatever science that is soon acquired, which tends to enlarge our views of the blessed Trinity, which gives us clear discoveries of the infinite power, the infinite goodness, and infinite

wisdom of the blessed Jesus, must tend, if properly improved, to our greater USEFULNESS. And such is the science of Astronomy, I think, beyond contradiction.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY. This is a pleasing, and most useful study. The more we know of it, the more we are amazed at the exquisite skill, and unbounded goodness of the great Creator. *God* is proclaimed on every discovery we make. Its effect on the devout mind are similar to that of Astronomy.

But the knowledge of these things I would not enjoin *before* the "called of God" should open his mouth to warn sinners. No, let him exhort, and if he promise usefulness, after he acquires the grammar, license him. If he continue to be useful, or promise more usefulness, after he has obtained the balance, ordain, or lay hands on him.

Yet it would be quite desirable to have some preachers more learned than here described. *We have some*, and hope, if God see it best, that he will *continue* to call some Pauls as well as some Peters. Even so, Amen. Lord let *thy* will be done!

LECTURE XXV.

A SOLEMN ADDRESS TO MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

Although I have humbly hoped, that these lectures might be somewhat profitable to *all* denominations of Christians; yet this lecture is designed *particularly*, for the preachers of that denomination to which I belong; if others get benefit I shall rejoice.

My dear brethren, and sons in the Gospel ministry, near twenty years experience and observation have taught me, that almost every thing depends on the preachers, as instruments, in promoting the Kingdom of Christ in the world. I repeat it—almost every thing, directly, or indirectly. It is acknowledged, indeed, that "when Zion (collectively) travail, she shall bring forth;" but it is equally true, and ought not to be dissembled, or concealed, that the preachers, where there is a Gospel ministry, are ordinarily, if not *always*, the means of stirring up Zion to travail. When,

within your recollection, did a revival of God's work take place, that did not begin with the preachers? Perhaps you cannot point to the time or place, where there was preaching. Yes, when the fire is shut up in the bones of the preacher—when he begins to exclaim, "O that my head were waters," &c., when he begins to feel quite restless—in short, when he feels as if he could not live unless God revive his work, then it is, and generally not till then, that God's people to whom he preaches, begin to awake. They catch his spirit, they enter into his views, and they become co-workers in the sacred cause. And permit me to remark here, that it comes with an ill grace for a preacher, whose own heart is cold, to reprove coldness in his fellow professor; whose own heart is dull, to reprove it in others; whose own heart is worldly, to reprove the same spirit in others; whose own heart is indulging pride, to reprove it in the Church; whose own heart is in a great degree unconcerned for poor sinners, to abuse the Church for not feeling about their situation; and finally, whose own heart is unbelieving, to reprove the Church for their unbelief. And what is worse than all, such reproof, &c., arising from such a source, is sure to have little or no good effect. We cannot, my dear brethren, "scald with cold water!" But when the preacher feels what he inculcates, to the very heart—when he is honest, to live what he preaches, when the feeling of his soul, beams

out in his countenance, his gesture, his speech, &c., those who have ever felt the situation of sinners, will, and must feel. They begin to cry to God, first for themselves, and then for sinners; they wrestle, and will not be comforted without spiritual children; they are now in a situation to hear preaching with hearts lifted to God, crying with almost every breath, "Lord, send thy word with power to the hearts of the people." God hears, and helps his servants to preach "in the demonstration of the spirit and with power," and the blessed work begins; and, by minding the SAME THINGS, and walking by the SAME RULE, the blessed work is carried on.

On the contrary, perhaps, almost every revival of religion that declines, the declension *begins* in the hearts of the preachers. This may be saying too much, but I am persuaded, that it will *generally* hold good, for I hold it as undeniable, that *a religious* people cannot continue long cold and lifeless, who constantly attend on intelligent, spiritual, heart-searching, and faithful preaching. When the preacher begins to backslide in heart, you will soon see a correspondent disposition in the major part of the professors. And, O, then the work begins, of not "provoking to love and good works," but to sloth, worldly-mindedness, &c. There may be some exceptions to this general rule; but, brethren, let us examine ourselves critically, and see where, or when, the work declines, if it did

not, first, or simultaneously decline in *our* hearts? A preacher, preparing to take the *lead* in a declension of God's work, first suffers his mind to be led away by the cares of the world, or some other thing, or things, that are not lawful in their nature, or unlawfully pursued: he then, by degrees begins to decline in personal holiness, and, in proportion to this, his concern for mankind will grow weaker, and weaker; in proportion to that state of mind, his spirit will become more conformed to this world. He can now converse an hour or two with a sinner, and never mention the name of Christ! Religious conversation becomes a great cross to him, and he can, with considerable facility, engage in "jestings which are not convenient;" of course, now his discourses are flat, sapless, lacking energy, and almost every thing calculated to make them useful; having almost quit looking for, or expecting God's people to be made very happy, and sinners awakened and converted, he contents himself, in a measure, if he can study out and communicate a new idea to amuse and please the ear a little. Or, if occasionally, in the act of preaching, by dwelling on eternal things, he gets his mind awakened a little, and preaches with some energy, it is not pursued with entreaties, prayers, exhortations, conversations, &c.; hence the blessed work of saving sinners ceases, God's people grow cold, sinners grow hard, and the enemy triumphs

There is another prominent cause of the declension of the proper spirit of preaching, and consequently of God's work in his vicinity; and that is what is called spiritual (perhaps improperly) pride, especially amongst young preachers, or the heart becoming lifted up by their performances, success, &c. The Apostle advises not to promote a novice (in the margin *young* convert) to the ministry, lest he be puffed up, and fall into the condemnation of the devil—and, O how often have we seen something of this "puffing up?" Young men, to whom God had given talents, and, to all appearances, a deep concern for the welfare of precious souls, and who for a time promised fair, to be extensively useful in the Church, after a while seem to grow proud of their success, and of the applause of the unthinking multitude; and ready to ascribe, at least in part, to themselves, what is abstractly of God. If they be God's called preachers, they are soon made to feel "in whom their great strength lieth;" if they now humble themselves, watch and pray incessantly against the indulgence of such a spirit in future, God will again afford them necessary aid in the administration of his blessed word; if not, they will by degrees decline, and though they may prepare labored discourses, which may amuse and please the outward ear, their preaching will be unprofitable to saint and sinner; no energy, no success will attend their administration. Such, however, when their consciences begin to accuse

them, have a salvo, and that is, the sovereignty of God! that is, God, as a sovereign, will not always accompany his word with power. Thus, virtually rolling the blame of their pride, sloth, carnality, want of spirituality, &c., on the blessed Jehovah! But God looks through such folds of hypocrisy, and abhors such a subterfuge. Let preachers, above all people under heaven, have the Lord's saying deeply and earnestly impressed on their minds—"He that exalteth himself *shall* be abased."

My dear brethren, and sons in the Gospel, do you want to be, and *continue* to be useful, honored of God, and die happy? If you do, O suffer the word of exhortation, or direction. In first attending to personal holiness, in your own hearts and lives; for it is vain for us to expect successfully to preach holiness to others, while we are not *breathing* after it ourselves. It is vain for us to tell the Church to live to-day, with consciences void of offence towards God and man, unless *we* have such consciences: it is vain to preach the high privilege of God's people, in *daily* access to the throne of God, unless *we* have such access. It is vain to enforce the solemn, and important commandment, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," unless *we* act with an eye single to the divine honor. It is vain, at a solemn moment, for us to reprove for levity, inconvenient jesting, &c., when the next hour, or day, perhaps, *we* are quite full of levity, jestings, &c. But you will, perhaps, object

here, and say, "Must we not preach the *truth*, though the lash gives our own bodies stripes?" Yes, but it is to be awfully feared, that there are too many who content themselves with preaching the truth to others, while they themselves, in a measure at least, are the servants of sin! and moreover it is beyond all doubt, unless you live and feel what you preach, it will not have effect. You will not, you cannot enforce it in the same way; God, I think, ordinarily will not bless it, as if it came from an honest heart, or a heart ardently engaged in what the tongue inculcates.

There is something in ourselves which recoils at condemnation, consequently, an *unholy* preacher cannot *enforce* and *press* the necessity of holiness on his hearers, like one who feels what he is preaching. God, as a sovereign, may make truth efficacious in unholy hands, but this is not his ordinary way of dealing. When we preach what condemns ourselves, we have not the same fortitude or confidence to enforce it on others: just like a man when he prays, if he pray with his heart, condemning, he prays with hesitation, with doubt, with unbelief, or want of confidence. Personal holiness, or near living to God, is the foundation of every thing, to a preacher called of God: if he have daily access to the throne, if he have daily communion with God, he has light to discern, and love, and prospects to excite him to approach God with an humble confidence, to direct him in

his whole duty, to "work in him to will and to do." Feeling God's love burning in his own heart; feeding on the sincere milk of the word himself, he can, "feed the lambs, he can feed the sheep." O how dry, unsavoury, and unprofitable is it for a preacher to talk to Christians about the joys of heaven, when he is feeling no such prelibations of those joys in his own soul? Yet, it is the express command of his God, to feed his sheep and lambs. How will he do it, unless he himself get fed by the great Shepherd? But will not the Shepherd feed his under shepherds, if they do their duty? And so as it regards preaching the law, or the torments of the damned; if the preacher be far from God, he does not see eternal things as they are, therefore all the terror he can preach will have but little effect.

But again, in order to usefulness, it is necessary for a preacher to be careful in his choice of subjects to preach from. In this, to be sure, we must exercise our judgment, but we must exercise it with an eye single. For example: if the congregation were all Christians, it would not be prudent to choose a subject entirely applicable to the unconverted; and so *vice versa.*

But while we are exercising our judgment in this matter, we ought to do it with hearts fervently engaged with God, to direct by his Spirit. Our enquiry ought to be, what subject would, most probably, be useful; what subject, the description

of which, will tend most to the divine glory; what subject will be most likely to reclaim the backslider, or convert the sinner? Not what subject shall I be likely to have the most liberty in preaching, or will lead me to make the most popular discourse. Ah! me! how many times have whole sermons been lost for want of proper motives in selecting the subject? Or, if the motives were right in part, they were mixed with a sufficient quantity of selfish, or unworthy motives, to render it partly useless. God sees our hearts at this, as well as at all other times. The subtle enemy of our souls is ready to say to the deceitful heart, "Well, you are going to preach to a polite, learned audience, to-day, choose something that will be entertaining, and treat it with such embellishments, that you may attract notice, and it will, perhaps, be a means of preparing them for more pointed truth bye and bye." This all looks plausible enough, and carnal reason, and the proud heart, are ready enough to give in to it. But had the heart felt passive on the subject of choice, and cried fervently to God to determine the mind, perhaps the mind would have been determined on something like—"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again:" or "Behold now is the accepted time," &c. While the preacher is "preparing" his audience for more "pointed" truths, some of them may "lift up their eyes in hell, being in torment!" I recollect to have read in some work, about a godly, and called

minister of Jesus, in Scotland, who never was at a loss to know what subject to preach from, after he had conversed with his God on the occasion, until he was called upon to preach the coronation sermon of a wicked king. He asked his God, as usual, what subject to preach from. There was a subject powerfully impressed on his mind, that would have led him directly to expose the wickedness and abomination of his sovereign: he resisted it and began to look for another, but would still pray to God for direction. The same subject was powerfully impressed on his mind again, and perhaps, the third, or many times. He indulged carnal reason, or slavish fear, and finally, contrary to his constant practice, rejected that subject, and took one of his own. God was displeased, and ever after, to the day of his death, he was always in difficulties about what subjects to preach from, though he sought a decision "carefully with tears." Let us take warning my brethren; let us not consult the flesh when we are choosing texts; let us not hypocritically ask God for a subject, while we have a will for our own, or are predetermined to take such, or such an one. I repeat it, that we should always feel perfectly passive in our own minds, when we are asking God to direct by his holy Spirit. If we do, and have a single eye, I think, generally, God's preachers may know when they are right. And, in studying, or meditating on our subjects, previously

to preaching, our eye should be as single as in the choice; and the same spirit and aim should run through the whole of the sermon, when we deliver it.

Those who would be useful in the ministry must be careful to maintain "a form of sound words." What an awful responsibility rests on the ministers of Jesus! Every preacher of the Gospel, it is presumable, has less or more influence among mankind; and just in proportion to that influence, so will he be the instrument of ruining souls, should he, by pride, or any other cause, be left, or induced to embrace and preach "damnable heresy." Or, if not directly damning in its nature, yet leading to such consequences; and I doubt not, such pernicious sentiments have often been the effect of an undue desire to be "wise above what is written," or a suffering the mind to be bewildered in metaphysical searches, and researches, until the man, by degrees, departs from the simplicity of the Gospel. Man is proud, he wants to comprehend every thing by his own little mind; and if, per chance, while he is following his philosophy, falsely so called, he runs out of the limits of the Bible, he pauses, but being pleased with his new light, or logic, he sets about trying the elasticity and flexibility of God's immutable word; he imagines it will stretch a little in one place, to cover his hypothesis; in another, yield or bend a little to suit his plan, and if common sense forbids it, he would find fault

with the present translation; and so on, till God's sacred, infallible, revealed truth, is made to bend often to support the greatest absurdities, and the most damning heresy. Oh! brethren take heed; "bind the GOSPEL to your heart." If you be at a loss to expound some part of it, go to another part for your commentary. When we have an inspired commentator, we know we cannot err; and if in those difficulties, we feel passive as to which side truth will turn, and are active and disinterested in our applications to God, he will show us the truth.

There is another caution that we cannot be too often reminded of, that is, "Let every man minister according to the ability that God has given him." A preacher is not condemnable because he has not the talents, or as many as another preacher—he is only guilty for not improving what talents he has. And the caution by no means implies, that a preacher should not "study to show himself a workman that need not be ashamed." It only implies a suppression of the pride and deceitfulness of the heart, that would prompt us to attempt, or appear to minister above our ability. Indeed, such attempts often meet with their own punishment; for, generally, there are some discerning men in every congregation, and especially such congregations where the temptation is strongest to minister above our abilities, who are sure to see through the guise, and feel a just contempt for the

offender. If we must display wisdom, let us get it first, and not impose on the ignorant, with a view to make them think more highly of us than they ought, nor bring ourselves into merited contempt among the wise.

Those who would be useful must speak plainly, that is, they must use language that their audience can understand. Bombast is ridiculous in any orator, but especially in a preacher of the Gospel. I have sometimes with pain noticed public speakers, manifesting a disposition to all their discerning audience, to strain after high flown words, rather than the substance of their subject. Such, indeed, may show that they have looked into a dictionary, but they are apt to show, at the same time, a little mind, indicating itself in misapplications, and in preferring the tinsel to the main ornament—the shadow to the substance. I do not mean, by plain language, mean language. A plain, masculine, correct language, is the kind becoming the discussion of eternal things. If I would recommend a model on this subject, I know of none better than the language used in the New Testament. Sometimes the prudent choice of phrases, to convey the same idea, is attended with happy consequences. On the one hand, it is ridiculous and sinful to avoid the language of Scripture, when it would come naturally in the discourse. It is said, that some preachers have apologized for saying hell, when they were preaching! Such, it is

believed, will not be the instruments of many poor sinners escaping that place "prepared for the devil and his angels." On the other hand, young preachers, especially, are very apt to use themselves to a *harshness* in speaking to the sinner, that often blunts the poignancy of their discourses, and prevents that usefulness that would otherwise be realized. It is not uncommon for too much of our *own spirit* to be mixed with our denunciations of God's vengeance on the wicked. When, for example, we say *sinner*, we may put an emphasis on the word, that will appear to be rather the production of our own spirit, than that of the Spirit of God. I have known some to adopt, at least, occasionally, the word fellow, or *dear* sinner, with a happy effect. While the Bible phrase is retained in all its force, there is a word preceding, which shows our affection and spirit, while we would, in the most pathetic manner, denounce the doom of the impenitent. Convince the sinner that you really *love* him, and you may preach what terror you please, without closing his ear against the truth of God's word.

It is said, that industry and perseverance will overcome every difficulty in human life. If any species of human beings ought to be industrious and persevering, the minister of the everlasting Gospel surely should. No obstacles that could possibly be surmounted, should deter them; no calls of the flesh should cause them to dwell in the

cradle of sloth. What! an ambassador of Christ slothful, indolent, and careless; while rebellious souls are dropping into the burning lake, day by day! "God forbid." Those who feel inclined to such a disposition, should frequently read in Ezekiel, the duty and destiny of the watchman. Will the watchman lie at ease, while the enemy approaches nearer and nearer? Will men, who say they are called of God, as was Aaron, content themselves by preaching once every Lord's day? Will those who profess to have felt "the terrors of the Lord," only persuade men once a week to flee from the wrath to come? But, says one, I must have such and such necessaries, and I must provide for my household; true, but do you preach as often as you can? It may be you do not, and it may be that *some* more souls might be saved if you were to preach oftener. But suppose you and yours were to live on a little worse fare, and some twenty or thirty *more* souls would be saved thereby? would you not rejoice in *death*, and especially in *judgment?* What is ease, what are even *necessaries*, compared with souls? Suppose we and ours, were to live on bread and water all our lives, and *one* more soul would be saved thereby, would it not be a good sacrifice? Would we not rejoice in such a sacrifice in eternity? O, what a picture! A minister of Jesus, to appear on the stage of action, have his name enrolled among the ambassadors of the blessed God, sink into apathy and

vain excuses, live a mere *drone*, and *die* leaving no living monument for God, or his *call* to the ministry behind him!

But, after all, my brethren, the *quality* is of still more importance than the *quantity;* but, let me here remark, that most commonly those who abound most in *quantity*, are most apt to give the best *quality;* indeed, it is hard for me to conceive, how a called preacher *can* be spiritual in his administrations of God's word, who preaches but *once* a week, unless he be prevented by some act of God. And, my brethren, spiritual preaching is the kind at last, that will save souls; in vain may we make the nicest arrangements, in vain may we be famed for orthodoxy, in vain may we tell all about the heavenly world, in vain may we break our lungs in shewing the torments of the damned; if we be not *spiritual.* "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," &c. O God, pity us, when we can be content without that internal light, feeling, and energy, which are always precursors to *usefulness.* Sometimes we feel tolerably well satisfied, if we have what we call good *liberty* and light, with an attentive audience. And what then? Will our supposed light, and liberty, and attention to the people save them? Ah! brethren, what is the object of preaching to sinners? Is it not to beseech them to be reconciled to God? Then, if this high object be not gained, or in a fair train to be obtained, we may be sure something is lacking

in *us*. We seem to have forgotten the main object of preaching, when we content ourselves with any thing short of the salvation of sinners, and the obvious feeding of God's sheep. But O, says the "itching ear," I love to hear a sermon well arranged, well delivered, &c., if there be not so much *heat* in *it;* and again, such a discourse "was cutting, but scattering; but that other man pleased me, he is a man of *sense.*" But, I would ask, which discourse had the most *spirit*, *life*, and *power* in it? Do you say that "scattered" one? then, in God's name, in the name of *souls*, give me the scattering one. I am, perhaps, as well pleased with arrangement and light, and good sense in preaching, as *concomitants*, as the most of men; but would never esteem them *equal* to the spirit and energy of a sermon; without which we may preach our lives out and do no good. We can never get to the hearts of our hearers, without we feel the spirit of preaching. We may hear an hundred sermons with admiration, and even amazement, and not have our hearts made one whit better. Yes, perhaps those hundred sermons were mere *blanks* in God's account. The man who views the *worth* of souls in the glass of eternity, and the immense price they cost; the man who realizes the feelings of good Jeremiah, when he exclaimed, "O my bowels, my bowels, I am pained in my heart," whether he be great or small in the eyes of the world, is the man who will preach with energy;

who will preach "in the demonstration of the spirit, and with power."

I had rather my family would be under a holy, spiritual ministry, though they lacked a thousand literary qualifications; than a dull, frozen preacher, though he was the most learned and eloquent man on earth. I repeat again and again, that the high object of preaching is the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification of God's people; if these be lost, all is lost. Then, in strictness of language, the *great* man, at last, is the *useful* man. Yes, such, though he be almost unnoticed by the polite world, is still the most honorable man, for God honors him, and the souls that he has been the means of saving, or benefitting, will honor and love him; his conscience will acquit him, he will die in *peace*. Then, brethren, let it be our main aim to be useful. "Let us covet the best gifts for usefulness." O, are not those the *best* gifts, or acquirements, that are most useful? Suppose a case. Here is one man that has spent much time, money, and labor in acquirements which have made him quite popular in the world; but he has been the means of saving only *ten* souls. There is another who had the opportunity to acquire, an equal mind, and set out to preach at the same time; but he studied what appeared to be more immediately necessary in order to more usefulness—he was careful to try always, to prepare his sermons, &c., to this end; he regarded the good of souls as of

infinitely more importance than the display of learning, or human eloquence; his soul was bent on the main object, God's honor and the salvation of men; and, in the same length of time, among the same materials with his colleague, he was the means of saving *fifty* souls. Now, in God's account, in the account of reason, which of those two men were the greatest? Brethren, you know I am no enemy to useful learning, but the world may say what they will, it will appear, if not before, in the general judgment, that the great preacher, was the useful preacher—that the *greatest* preacher was the *most useful* preacher—that the most useful preacher was the *most honorable* preacher. Yes, the *most* honorable. God honored him most, and he is most honorable. But, brethren, we cannot be useful unless we preach in the spirit; we cannot preach in the spirit, unless we *live* in the spirit; therefore, personal religion, or *heart* holiness is essential to our usefulness.

What preacher, when he has been brought to the borders of eternity, has not, on a retrospect of his ministerial life, regretted that he had not been more *spiritual* in his administration of God's word. Brethren, this is evidence that we have not done our *whole* duty in life, or in health. We should frequently ask our hearts, before we go to preach, if this were our last sermon how would we preach it. Brethren, we should always study and preach, as in sight of the judgment bar.

This lecture is already longer than I have generally allowed myself, but I cannot dismiss the subject without a word of caution to ordained ministers on the subject of discipline. The proper exercise of discipline always tends to the soundness of the mystical body. When a member of the human body is infected, after every exertion to restore it to soundness proves abortive, and mortification is obviously progressing, it is meet, it is *safe* to cut it off. So as it regards the Church; but take heed that you do *equal* justice to all—the ignoble, as well as the noble. God abhors a flinching from the exercise of the discipline, because the member is some *great* personage. If great in the estimation of the world, so much more the danger of their example.

But most seriously, would I caution my brethren, on the subject of receiving, licensing, and ordaining ministers to preach the Gospel. O brethren, how awfully responsible is your situation in this particular. If, by carelessness, or want of discernment, we introduce an *uncalled* or impious minister into the Church, we at once introduce a pest, and a curse, into the family of God. O how should Presbyteries wrestle, plead with, and earnestly entreat the Great Head of the Church, *always* to direct them in this matter? Great caution ought to be observed in the reception of candidates, greater in licensing, and the *greatest* or utmost

care in ordaining. Never, never, could I be induced to "lay hands" on any man, without *satisfactory* evidence that God had called him to the work.

My dear brethren, I really am afraid, judging from facts, that some of our Presbyteries have already been too precipitate on this subject. You may have pleaded an apparent necessity; but no necessity will justify laying hands on any man about whom a *suspicion* remains, as it regards his call. Have you not ordained some of this class? Have *all* those whom you have ordained, given, and are they now giving evidence, by their zeal, diligence, industry, and *usefulness*, that they are called of God to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ? O Lord, do, in great mercy, always direct thy ministers in this important duty.

Finally, my dear brethren, as one who knows your difficulties, I can sympathize with you; and as one who knows the faithfulness of your Master, I can encourage you. Be humble, be watchful, be diligent in your whole duty, be SPIRITUAL, and God will bless you; he will crown your efforts with success—he will support you in death—he will acknowledge you in judgment, and finally, reward you with a crown, in which there will be a star for every soul you have been the means of saving! Yes, though many of them may have been proselyted to

other churches, the stars shall be put in *your* crown of rejoicing, in the day of Christ Jesus. O Lord, grant grace, and more grace, to all thy called servants in the Gospel, for Jesus Christ's sake. AMEN!

LECTURE XXVI.

ON ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION.

THERE has been so much written and said on this subject, that I have little hope of adding any thing that will stagger, or settle the faith of any, on either side, especially in the limits that I have allowed myself in these lectures. But it may be natural to expect me to say something on every important doctrine that we find in the Bible.

That election and predestination are found in the Bible, none will deny; but the proper application of those Bible doctrines is not so easily determined. That there are difficulties in them, I presume, no sensible, candid man will deny. The *dogmatism* I have seen and heard on both sides of this question, has tended rather to disgust than to edify me. The hard sayings, and obvious want of charity and liberality, displayed by many of those who have engaged in this controversy, have done a world of mischief among mankind. I have thought, that if opponents were to look

impartially, at both sides of the subject, they would become more modest, more forbearing. I have no hesitation in saying, that many great, useful, and very pious men, have supported and advocated *opposite* sides of this question. From which circumstance, I am led to believe, that it is perplexing, or mysterious in itself, and that there is nothing damning in the nature of the sentiments, either of a moderate Calvinist, or Arminian. But, perhaps, both are too prone to go into extremes.

In Paul's first chapter to the Ephesians, there is much said about predestination, and also in some other epistles. In the Old and New Testament, there is frequent mention of the elect, and of election. Some have imagined, that these passages of Scripture clearly hold out the idea, that God, from all eternity, fore-ordained, or predestinated a definite number, and even names, who should be saved; and, in conformity to this, Christ undertook for them, and for them *only*. Others, with less consistency, admit a wider range, or more extent to Christ's purchase, or rather to his death; but maintain the same idea of election: that is, both maintain that there is an absolute, definite, unalterable, and *unconditional* election. This term, unconditional, is often used, by which to try the orthodoxy of professors of religion! Yet, it is an equivocal term in theology, and will admit of various applications.

Unconditional Elections. If by unconditional, be meant, that the fallen sinner cannot pay the price of his pardon—cannot *merit* it by any thing he has done, or *can* do, by prayers, tears, reformations, self-denial, alms-giving, repentance, or even faith itself, I can most heartily subscribe to the tenet. But if, by unconditional, be meant, that God has required no condition of *duty*, I positively deny it. The *essential* duties of repentance and faith, on the plan of the Gospel, cannot be dispensed with, and they come in the form of *conditions*, too. "EXCEPT ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth, and is baptized, SHALL be saved, but he that believeth NOT, SHALL be damned." If language, if words have any determinate meaning, these are conditions on which our salvation depends. Here then is a *revealed* decree. Men may talk, or say, what they please about *secret* decrees, purposes, predestination, election, &c., but we have just seen the decree of the Bible, the predestination, the foreordination, and election of the Bible. We know that all and every decree of God, election, predestination, &c., are perfectly consistent with the *revealed* decree, which we have just mentioned. After all the thousand volumes that have been written, and the ten thousand sermons that have been preached, on the subject, every one must settle on the simple declaration of God, making repentance and faith the conditions of *duty* and *privilege* on man's

part, with which he shall be saved—without which he shall be damned. Were men to keep their eye on this revealed ordination of God, it would, perhaps, assist them in explaining other passages that appear to support the idea of absolute predestination and unconditional election. I have long thought it safest, to make those passages of the Scriptures, which are *doubtful* in their meaning, to conform to those that are *clear* or explicit. The reason of such a method will at once appear to every judicious man. I will remark, then, that the decree of which we have been speaking, cannot be misunderstood, and all orthodox Christians, of every denomination, will agree in its application; that is, all will allow, that without faith and repentance, none can be saved.* All will admit, that there is no contrary, secret decree, to this revealed one. Then why put a construction on a few doubtful passages, that not only go to contradict this in effect, but the general tenor of God's word? I would remark here, that I doubt not but many have been led into the notion of individual, and absolute election and reprobation, from various passages of Scripture which are only intended to declare God's absolute sovereignty, possessing the right to work where, when, how, and on whom he will, in a less or more extraordinary degree. Also from those passages which go to prove the exercise

* I do not here include infants.

of his sovereignty in the *choice* of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, &c. But in all these, where is it *definitely* stated that God chose some to eternal salvation, except on the condition of faith and repentance?

As I believe the 1st chapter of Paul to the Ephesians seems to favor the idea of absolute, or unconditional election, I shall quote several passages from it. In the fourth verse it is said, "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," &c. Now, what is in this verse to contradict our *revealed* decree? He chose us *in him;* how? by faith in his name. But it was "*before* the foundation of the world;" true, but still not contrary to the written decree. God, who possesses infinite knowledge, in his adorable goodness, determined from before the world was, that every son of Adam, who repented and believed the Gospel, should be saved. And who can object to this? 5th verse, "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Yes, it was the good pleasure of God to determine, that Adam's apostate family, or such part of them, as would repent and believe, should experience the adoption of children, for you will remark that it is *by* Jesus Christ. In the next five verses the Apostle is speaking of the medium, (Christ and his blood,) through which those blessings are communicated,

the blessed consequences, &c. But in the 11th verse it is said, "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Here the sovereignty of God is brought clearly into view again. but in what sense? In a sense that perfectly corresponds with his *revealed* decree. It was God's purpose, agreeably to the counsel of his *own* will; he consulted none in this wonderful plan; he willed and purposed to do what? To save *every* sinner that would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the 13th verse this idea is confirmed, where it is said, "In whom also, AFTER that ye BELIEVED, ye were SEALED with that Holy Spirit of promise." Now, mark it, my brethren, after all the supposed absolute election and predestination, found in this chapter, it comes out precisely according to that *revealed* decree which we first established, that is, repentance and faith. For it appears, that with all God's gracious and precious determinations of mercy, which are cause of eternal gratitude and wonder, that there could be no *sealing* till *after* they believed.

Of similar import is that passage in the 8th of Romans, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son," &c. "Foreknow." What did he foreknow? He knew that he would reveal a decree in after times, or "in the fulness of time," the import of which should be, "he that believeth

should be saved, and he that believeth not should be damned." But those whom he foreknew would believe, he "predestinated to be conformed to the *image* of his Son;" for "without HOLINESS no man can see the Lord." "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, justified, sanctified, and glorified." CALLED, that is, continued his gracious operations on their minds; for it is clear, from Scripture, that God calls every man; but those who continue to *reject* his calls, he ultimately leaves to a hard heart, &c. But those whom he saw would yield, or were yielding to divine influence, he continued to call until he justified them. But how does God justify men? Paul tells us in the 5th of Romans, "Being justified by FAITH, we have peace with God," &c. We believe, without any comment, that those who are justified will be sanctified and glorified. I will remark, before I quit this chapter, that the foreknowledge of God is spoken in conformity to our weak capacities. I imagine that, strictly speaking, it will be conceded, that God knew no better at one time than at another, what would transpire among men. Infinite wisdom sees every thing, from eternity to eternity, consequently, with God it is always one eternal *now*. And eternally, of course, his revealed decree of faith and repentance, is as present with him.

The 9th chapter of Romans, which is so often introduced as the main bulwark of unconditional

election, &c., may be explained precisely in the same way that we have the 8th, and that of Ephesians, which will clearly appear from the conclusion of the chapter, verses 31, and 33: "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? *Because* they sought it not by FAITH, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; as it is written, "Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence, and WHOSOEVER believeth on him, shall not be ashamed." Now, we are told, expressly, in the above passage, the reason why a part of the Jews were cut off, "*because* they sought it (righteousness) not by faith," because they did not submit to the revealed decree of God. But *whosoever* believeth on him, Jew or Gentile, shall not be ashamed.

There is but one more passage that I shall attend to in this part of this subject, which is in Acts xiii. where it is said: "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed."

This, taken as it stands, seems to favor the rigid predestinarian plan more than any passage in the Bible. But being a solitary passage, unsupported, as was thought, by the general tenor of God's word, some of the learned have been led critically to examine the original; the result of which is, they declare, without fear of contradiction, that, in our translation, the proper order of the text is

inverted, and that it would be more natural to read it thus: "As many as believed, prepared, or set in order, were ordained unto eternal life." I am inclined to think this translation the true one, because it exactly accords with the "revealed" decree, "He that believeth," &c. It appears to me, then, that those passages of God's word, that are generally considered most to favor the idea of eternal, absolute election, and predestination, do not clearly support that sentiment. It only remains, then, to enquire, whether God *compels* any man to submit to his revealed decree of repentance and faith.

I would here, again, distinctly remark, that God, as a sovereign, has reserved to himself the right to work in an ordinary, or an extraordinary way, in his operations on mankind, just as seemeth unto him good; that is, though he has promised to operate on *all*, in a gracious sufficient manner—sufficient to leave them inexcusable, yet he has no where, in his word, bound himself not to go out of his ordinary operations, and sometimes bring down the most haughty and hardened; as in the case of Paul, the Jailor, &c., which cases, I think, differ in their nature from the cases of the three thousand on the day of pentecost. *These* were attending to the word of God, preached by the apostles—God awakened them. *Those* were breathing out threatenings against God's preachers, and people—a *sovereign* God awakened them. But it is clear

that even in such extraordinary cases, many of which have occurred, and I hope will occur, that the will is forced, or man's agency is not consulted? If the will be really forced, it must cease to be a will. If man's agency be in no way consulted, he must cease to be an accountable creature. But it is clear to me, in the most extraordinary cases of conversion, man is still free, and acts freely, or voluntarily. On the cross, the thief voluntarily asked his Lord to remember him. Paul voluntarily asked the Lord to remember him. Paul voluntarily enquired what the Lord would have him to do. The Jailor voluntarily "sprang in," and enquired what he should do to be saved. It is no solid objection to this thought, to say these men were powerfully convicted; they were indeed, but it was by the powerful motives that a sovereign God so clearly presented to their understandings, that they obtained the consent of their wills, to be saved on the terms of the revealed decree. Whatever sovereignty God may exercise, in the display of his grace, in awakening and convincing the sinner, it is still in perfect conformity to his written decree, and consequently, in conformity to what is supposed, or implied, through all the Bible, that is, man's agency, the freedom of his will, and his accountability. The very command to repent and believe, implies agency, and practicability on the part of the creature, and implies guilt if he do not. It is clear enough, from God's word, and from

observation, that God often forces sinners to feel their condition contrary to their wills, or desires. But I do not recollect any passage of Scripture, that says, or implies, that he forces any to repent and believe, unless they may be said to be compelled by the force of evidence presented to their minds. But this would only come under the character of what some call moral suasion, and still would exclude the idea of God's working on the mind of his creatures, by physical power, or mechanical force.

It has been shown, in a former lecture, that God has not so fully, and completely finished all the work in his vineyard, that no more remains for him to do; but that he is still carrying on this work, by blessing those means which are used for the glory of his name, and the salvation of souls. May he not have in reserve, exertions of his power and grace, to exhibit, on extraordinary occasions, in answer to the prayer of faith? "The fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much." May he not have struck down a Saul to the ground, in answer to the fervent supplications of some trembling Christians, who cried unto him day and night, when they saw a commissioned oppressor, clothed with authority from the chief priests. &c. May not God have caused the earth to quake, the prison doors to fly open, and the Jailor to cry out, in answer to the prayers of Paul and Silas?

After all, I am not so positive that there may not be some, whose powerful awakenings are not dependent on contingencies, in the same sense that the awakenings of mankind generally are, for the certainty of the accomplishment of those *unconditional* promises, made to the Mediator, where it is said, "He SHALL see the travail of his soul—the heathen SHALL be given him," &c. Yet those unconditional promises will be accomplished, without violating the revealed decree, or man's agency, and do not, and will not go to the exclusion or injury of the rest of mankind. Perhaps some of my brethren will think that I have here conceded too much, and others my think me inconsistent. I will farther explain myself.

God may, in the exercise of his sovereignty, enlighten some men more, and continue his gracious operations longer, in some instances, than in others; he may, as we have just remarked, by light, suddenly strike a Saul to the ground, and so clearly convince a Jailor, that he will at once consent to be saved on the terms of the Gospel, and in this extraordinary way, he may continue from age to age, to bring the most obstinate and daring to yield; and thereby, absolutely secure to his Son, a seed, the travail of his soul, &c. None, I imagine, will deny, that God has power to convert the world in a moment, or all mankind, who have not lost their day of grace; but this is not his ordinary way of working; neither is it his ordinary way to bring

the rebel to bow, who is using all the means in his power to oppose the Gospel, the means of grace, &c., yet, in the exercise of his sovereign goodness, he often does bring such to bow, to secure, perhaps, the promise made to his Son, and in answer to what I would call extraordinary prayer, and "GREAT FAITH." If this be called particular election, I am ready to subscribe to the doctrine; but not, as I said before, to the exclusion of the rest of mankind. The sovereign display of God's grace, in this way, do not tend to the injury of others, any more than his sovereign choice of some to preach the Gospel, tends to the prevention of others, from being useful in their sphere, or the salvation of their souls.

Some have had difficulties in reconciling this sentiment with that declaration of Peter, in Acts, where he says: "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." The true meaning of which passage is explained in the next verse, "But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." That is, every true worshipper of the living God, whether Jew or Gentile, is approved of him. But I would further remark, that our sentiments on the sovereign displays of divine grace, do not contradict the idea of God's being no respecter of persons. He does not, I imagine, bestow grace on any of the fallen family because of their goodness. but for Christ's sake. I suppose it will be conceded,

that Paul and the Jailor were as corrupt as any; but though God is not a respecter of persons, yet he respects his own promise, whether made to the Mediator or to the Church. Therefore, the Church, or individual Christians, whenever they are the subjects of Zion's pangs, and are exercising "great faith," may confidently look for God to work, if it should be in an extraordinary way. That God has reserved to himself the right, and exercise of his sovereignty, as it regards mankind, is explicitly declared in various parts of the Scriptures, only two of which places we will mention. One is in the case of the one, two, and five talents. The other is in the case of the laborers. What Christian ever thought of replying against God, for giving to one man more talents than another? Or for assuring the poor sinner, who is in the eleventh hour of his age, or day of grace, that if he repent and believe, he shall enjoy the same heaven that is promised to veteran soldiers?

But instead of this doctrine of God's sovereignty in working in an extraordinary way, being filled with that gloom and despair, which is always attached to the idea of fatality, it is full of encouragement and comfort to the faithful people of God. Where the ordinary means fail in a neighborhood, where half, or more of the people are unconverted, including many of the children of God's dear people, what would be the con-

sequence, if it were not for the sovereign displays of his grace, or his sovereign, unmerited interposition, on such an occasion? The most heart breaking despair, must be the consequence to God's reflecting people. In vain, may it be said, let the preachers and Christians awake and call upon God. For, according to the unreasonable, and unscriptural ideas of some, this would answer no purpose at all; for "God is doing constantly, all he can consistently do for sinners!" Then it is, indeed, in vain to pray, or believe, for the sinner will remain the same. But laying aside this monstrous idea, how are the people of God, collectively, to be awakened, after they have fallen by their own doings, into the slumber of the foolish virgins? Will you tell me, by reflection? &c. Who is to excite this reflection? Will you say, Some one who has kept covenant? Where is he? No, it is God—it is the sovereign, unmerited interposition of triumphant mercy, extended to one or more, to arouse those who are instrumental in awakening others. Hence the powerful incentives to preachers and people, to persevere and "faint not;" hence the encouragement to be "instant in season, and out of season;" though appearances may be ever so gloomy; for, if ordinary means fail, a sovereign God can make extraordinary means efficacious.

There are millions converted, or born of God, in what I call the ordinary way, that is, they attend with desire, on the means of God's appointment,

and God blesses them accordingly. There are many others, some of which cases have been mentioned, who, while they were going against the means, and doing all in their power to overthrow the means, have been arrested, and so clearly convinced of their exposure to hell, that they have suddenly, and most sincerely, cried to God for mercy. These are incontrovertible facts, predicated on God's plain word, and on daily observation. But I repeat what I have often said, such cases do not prove the reprobation of one of Adam's family, which I design to show in the next lecture.

In conclusion, I would ask, why so much strife and animosity about this doctrine? The most rigid Calvinist, and the most rigid Arminian, are both compelled, if consistent with themselves, to MEET on the same ground of God's revealed decree, to wit: "REPENT YE, OR YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH—BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED."

LECTURE XXVII.

ON REPROBATION.

Some, in accordance with their views of eterna. and unconditional election, maintain that God, from all eternity, foreordained some men (not characters) &c., to everlasting pain. Others maintain, that God, from eternity, determined to withhold the necessary grace, by which a part of mankind might be saved. Others, while they acknowledge there are reprobates, believe that God does not, nor did not, by any foreordination, make them so, but they themselves became so by their own doings. This latter position is what I design to maintain in this lecture. And I will take that revealed decree of God, in the form of an oath, for my support. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but would that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, for why will ye die," &c. I think it was the great Chalmers who said, "*One* experiment in philosophy was worth a *thousand* theories." So I would say, in this

matter, that one *clear* text is better than a thousand wrested, twisted, and perverted texts, to establish any fact.

I will admit, that all Adam's race, by nature, are *legal* reprobates, that is, they are all dead in the eye of the divine law, and doomed, as transgressors of its holy precepts, to eternal pain. And it appears clear to me, that this is the *kind* of reprobation of which Paul speaks, when he says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith," &c.; "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." That is, know ye not, except ye be in the faith, the law still curses and dooms you to eternal misery? The first glance will convince the impartial that the Apostle could not mean eternal reprobates, nor even those who had reprobated themselves, for then every unbeliever must be such.

But, in the 9th chapter of Romans, there are several passages introduced, to prove absolute or eternal reprobation. One is, "Even for this purpose I have raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Raised him up to what? I answer, to the throne of Egypt. For the Scriptures say, all (such) power is of God. But for what purpose? To show his power, and make his name, as the only true God, known among the nations. But, it is said in the next verse, "Whom

he will, he hardeneth." How? by compelling them, or tempting them to sin? God forbid. "God tempts no man." God will not, cannot be the author of sin. But how did he harden Pharaoh? By justly withholding the restraints of his grace, by *leaving him to himself.* Now, what of eternal reprobation is in all this? God, as a sovereign, had as good a right to select Pharaoh to be King of Egypt, as Paul to bear his message to the Gentiles. And if he left the king to himself, and thereby hardened him, it was for his *wickedness;* and who can reply against God, for doing so?

But again: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor?" Yes, most assuredly; especially if part of "the clay mar in his hand," as Jeremiah saw it do. Now let us examine the figure. No potter acts without design; when he prepares his clay, his object is to make all good, or saleable vessels; if part of the clay "mar" in his hands, and will not, by reasonable labor, make the *kind* of vessel he contemplated, he will either throw it away, or make *another* kind of vessel. But in the next verse the whole matter is explained, in perfect consistency with God's revealed decree, or oath. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, ENDURED WITH MUCH LONG SUFFERING the vessels of wrath FITTED (by whom) for destruction."

But it is written, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" God, as a sovereign, saw that Jacob would be the most suitable person, though the younger brother, to be the head and patriarch of his people, or that nation which he designed to select from among the nations, in which he designed to preserve his worship free from idolatry; and he had just as good a right to do so, as to choose Jesse's youngest son to be king over Israel. And I imagine, it never entered into the mind of any one, because God chose David, he therefore reprobated the rest of Jesse's sons to eternal pain. But "it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," that is, he loved Esau less than Jacob. For the justness of this exposition, I will only refer you to our Lord's declaration, where he says, Except ye hate father and mother, &c., ye cannot be my disciples. Now, we are expressly commanded to love and honor, father, mother, wife, &c.; the meaning then must be, except ye love them less than me. But I see not a word in all this, that even intimates that God previously determined that Esau should be damned. We are warned, indeed, by the Apostle, not to be as profane Esau, who SOLD his birth-right, not his soul, I would hope. But, if his soul be included, it was he that sold it. But it is said in Jude of certain persons who were "fore-

ordained to this condemnation," &c., that is, all such persons. God, when he fixed the plan of the Gospel, when he determined on his decree of "faith and repentance," also decreed that perverters of his sacred truth, and the finally impenitent, should be damned. But in the Gospels, or Evangelists, it is said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but unto them in parables, that seeing, they might not see, and hearing, they might not understand. It is said, by some, and I think with great probability too, that the meaning of this passage is, that our Lord taught the angry Jews in parables, and thereby prevented them from seeing, or understanding his design of bringing them to a knowledge of the truth, until by such means and degrees, they were better able to bear it. But if this thought be rejected, I will say, with God's oath on my side, that it was such as have sinned the "sin unto death." I think it unnecessary to pursue this subject negatively, any further. I have mentioned several passages of Scripture, that I think are *most* relied on by the advocates of absolute reprobation.

I will now mention a few that, according to my view, give the true notion of reprobation. It is said, in Proverbs, "When I called, ye refused; when I stretched out my hand, no man regarded; ye would none of my reproofs; THEREFORE, I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear

cometh," &c. This is reprobation, but by whom? The guilty, rebellious creature, himself. Again, in Luke, it is said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, &c., how often WOULD I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth her brood under her wings; but ye *would not*. Behold now your house is left unto you desolate," &c. Here is also reprobation and the true cause of it exactly comporting with the oath of God. Again, Christ says, "O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this THY DAY, the things that belong to thy peace, but *now* they are *hid* from thine eyes," not originally, not always hid, but *now*. Here is reprobation again. But Paul, speaking of a certain character, says "If they fall away, it is *impossible* to renew them to repentance." This is the character, I presume, that John speaks of, where he says, "There is a sin unto death," that we are not even to pray for. Here then is reprobation clearly implied, in both of those passages. But how? "IF they fall away." The other is a SIN; committed by whom? The creature, surely, for *which* he is justly left, justly "given up to believe a lie, that he might be damned." Why? "Because he had pleasure in unrighteousness."

That there is such a doctrine taught in the Bible, that a man may lose his day of grace, I think can scarcely be denied. If acknowledged, it at once settles the question: for a man cannot lose a day of grace unless he has one, that is, he cannot

lose what he never had. That the passages we have quoted *prove* that men have, and may lose their day of grace, is, I think, unquestionable.

But the idea of previous, or eternal reprobation, seems to me, to be utterly inconsistent with the whole tenor of the Gospel. When Christ gave commission to his Apostles, it embraced ALL the world. Paul says, by the grace of God HE tasted death for every man. John says, "God so loved the world (not a part) that he gave his Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Again, John says, "He is the propitiation for *our sins*, and not for ours *only*, but also for the sins of the *whole* world." Such passages not only show that the provision is ample for all, but was *designed* to embrace all. Again, "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin," &c., that is, the Blessed Spirit will reprove, or convince, as extensively as the purchase. See the harmony; God the Father, loved and provided; God the Son, loved and executed; God the Spirit, loves and applies, or approves.

But our consciousness of agency, and accountability, with the general judgment, all unite in declaring, that there is provision for all; and that there is sufficient grace promised to all who will improve that grace for the salvation of their souls. I am aware that, in order to support *fatality* (for such I must call it, after all the noise that has been made,) with more plausibility, there is, by some,

much said about natural and moral power, or ability, that is, man has natural power to keep all the commands of God, but has not moral power, or a *disposition* to do so. Then it is triumphantly, asked (as if the victory were already gained) if it be any excuse for the sinner, because he is indisposed to obey the Gospel? But such *self*-announced victors, ought to remember that, instead of vindicating the divine honor, their plan, in its application, throws a shade over the divine glory, and perverts the plain meaning of all God's promises made to the unconverted; all his threatenings, the design of Christ's purchase, the design of the extensive operations of the Spirit, and even the oath of Jehovah himself! For, when God devised the plan, when Christ executed it, when the Holy Spirit operates, when God swore that he *would* that the sinner would turn and live, he was perfectly acquainted with man's moral inability to comply with the requisition of the Gospel without his aid: therefore, he addresses them everywhere, with an eye (if I may so speak) to their moral inability. He knew their indisposition to good, he knew the enmity of their hearts, he knew they could, or if you please, *would* never come without *his aid;* yet, he invites, warns, promises aid expressly in some places, and *always* implies it. Why do men talk so much about moral inability, with these facts before their eyes? Who denies moral inability, that holds the essentials of religion?

The command of God to sinners, is, "Turn at my reproof." To whom is the command given? To morally weak, depraved sinners. The command is, "Let the wicked forsake his way," that is, the ways for which he has *already* been reproved. To whom is *this* command addressed? To Adam's fallen family, with all their indisposition, and heart-enmity, full in view of the commander. "Seek the Lord while he may be found." Whom? Morally polluted sinners. "Quench not the Spirit." Whom? Fallen sinners. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Whom? The sinner whose heart *hates* God and his law. It was not for man in his primitive state of moral strength and purity, that the gospel was provided, but for those who are destitute, if you please, of moral power, to think one good thought. Yet God commands *such* to repent and believe the Gospel, with a perfect knowledge that it is utterly *impossible* for them to obey without his aid. But he promises all necessary aid, therefore, they are justly condemned, under, or by the Gospel, if they do not. If it were not so, how are we to understand that saying of Christ, "THIS is the condemnation, that light has come, and men loved darkness," &c. How could we understand that of Paul, "If ANY man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be *anathema maranatha*." How could we understand that of the wise man, "When I called, ye refused, &c, therefore, (*for this reason*)

I will laugh at your calamity," &c. Men may talk as much as they please about moral weakness, or what nobody denies, and make a soul-ruining application of it; but, nevertheless, the truth, the oath of God, "shall stand," against a thousand such visionary applications. I have, again and again, admitted and avowed, man's fall, man's total depravity, and his utter inability to change his heart, or prepare himself thereunto, without supernatural aid. But how did man become so? Was it not by virtue of that relation in which he stood to Adam? Had he any control over Adam's transgression? Will a just God damn him, for that which he had no control over? God, in his boundless mercy, has made provision for him, and has, at least in a limited sense, restored his agency to him by the death of Jesus, and now calls on him to exercise that agency, promising all necessary aid to restore him to peace and happiness again.

I will not pretend to fix the precise limits of man's agency in regeneration and sanctification, but this I will say, that man, yea, *all* men, may, with the grace *already* given, and which will *be* given, secure an interest in that blessed Jesus, who has made atonement for *every* one of them. And if they be not saved it will be their own fault, and *every* mouth shall be stopped on the broad principles of the Gospel provision. Yes, they will be condemned in the general judgment, not because of their *natural* indisposition of heart towards

God alone, but because they did not exercise their agency according to the grace *given*, and *offered*, and *promised*. And yet, I am firmly of opinion, that salvation is of the Lord, and that every one will, from his *heart*, ascribe *all* the glory to God *alone*, who has, or ever will feel this salvation. Why *all* the glory? Because God devised the plan—Christ executed it—and the Holy Spirit is the constant, and essentially necessary agent in the application of it. Every convinced sinner feels that God might justly damn him, for having so often grieved the Holy Spirit—for having so often rejected the offers of mercy, and for having so often done violence to his own conscience, and also for his transgressions of God's law. He wonders that God has again, or now convinced him of his deplorable condition. He is convinced to the heart, that he is justly condemnable for not having, long since, turned at the reproof of God. And ere he embraces Jesus, he is convinced of his entire fitness for hell, and his utter inability to save himself; consequently, when he is saved, the first dictate of his heart is, "Glory to God."

In conclusion I will remark, that whether I have succeeded or not, I have only *aimed* to fix the guilt, or fault, where it ought to be, that is, on the sinner, and clear Jehovah of insincerity, or the imputation that some of his professed friends, at least virtually ascribe unto him, of not meaning what he says! While I have been attending to

this, I have also aimed at maintaining really, positively, and plainly, the sovereignty of God, but in a way consistent with all others of his adorable attributes, especially his moral attributes. For let it again be distinctly understood, that, though God is an absolute sovereign, he never will, and, speaking with reverence, I would say, never can exercise that sovereignty contrary to his word or truth, his justice, mercy, goodness, and love. Therefore, let every expounder of God's word, when he is about to solve a hard question, by rolling it in the abyss of God's sovereign will, pause and inquire, if what he is about to do will agree with the revealed moral attributes of Jehovah. This course would be a safe one, and, it appears to me, it would be more honoring to God.

LECTURE XXVIII.

ON WATER BAPTISM.

THERE are so few who deny the obligation of Christian baptism, and the Scriptures are so clear, and abundant, on that subject, that I will not stop to prove its obligation or perpetuity. I shall therefore proceed to consider,

1. The proper subjects of baptism.
2. The probable mode.

It cannot be reasonably expected that I can say much, if any thing, that has not been previously said on a subject that has so long been controverted in the Christian world. But what I may say, I wish to be tried by "the law and the testimony," and by common sense.

The proper subject of baptism is, first, the true believer, who has not previously received that ordinance, and "straightway his household," or children. I am confirmed in the opinion of the right of infant baptism, from the following reasons: 1st. "That God *did* constitute, in his Church, the

membership of infants, and admitted them to it by a religious ordinance. 2nd. That this right of infants was never taken away." If these assertions can be proved, the controversy, as to the *subjects* of baptism, ought for ever to cease; for every one knows, that a law once enacted is still a law, till repealed by the proper authority. God has once enacted a law, in the form of a covenant, by which his people were bound to dedicate their children to him, and thereby they became members of his visible Church, which is recognized in the New Testament. See Gen. xvii. throughout, and Gal. iii. 14—17. It is in vain to say, that this covenant, in its main design, was but temporary, and had for its object, principally, the right to possess the land of Canaan; for it is expressly said, that it was to be an everlasting covenant. Gen. xvii. 7. It is vain also to say, this ordinance of circumcision was a carnal, legal rite, &c., for the Apostle, in Rom. iv., expressly says it, circumcision, was "a seal of the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the FAITH," &c. Now, if the right of infants to be taken into the pale of the visible Church, was once commanded by God himself, and that right is no where taken away, who will take it upon them to gainsay it? Where, or when, was this right disannulled by Christ, or his apostles? That the sign was changed, is admitted, and the reason of that change is easily seen. It pointed to a Messiah, who was to bleed: it was considered a yoke, &c.

Therefore, *after* the Saviour did bleed, it was no longer a significant ordinance. But the sign, and the subject, ought to be carefully distinguished. If infants, then, were once to be received into the pale of the Church, they are yet to be received because, their right is no where abrogated, or forbidden in the New Testament. "If received into the Church, it must be with or without baptism: but none ought to be received without baptism; therefore, infants must be baptized." I again demand of our opponents, or rather the opponents of God's express command, to show us the *repealing* clause of the infant law. Where is it? It is in vain to say, that the abrogation of circumcision *implies* it; for, on the same principle, or by the same analogy, it would imply the exclusion of the adult children of God from his Church. Every reasonable man will allow, that the true Church of God was the very same in every essential particular, under the old as under the new dispensation. There was surely no chasm, or interval, between the old and new dispensation, when there were *no* Church members at all! But why will men talk about implied repeals, or *infer*, that such and such laws are repealed, when they think it suits their convenience, and will not admit them in other places? But where there is a *plain*, unequivocal command, that cannot be misunderstood, I want a plain unequivocal repeal, that is equally clear to the mind. Until this is shown me,

I must still say, Who art thou that "makest void the commandments of God by your traditions." The truth of the matter seems to be plainly this; that God had a visible Church, in which there were true and false members, when Christ made his appearance in the world; that all the true members of his Church received Christ, and submitted to his ordinances; and that every spiritual blessing, and useful privilege were continued to his people and granted to all who would be added unto them. The right to take their infant offspring into the pale of the Church with them was a distinguished privilege, and God did not prohibit it. Hence, the declaration of St. Peter, "The promise is unto you, and unto your CHILDREN," &c. This right, of infant membership, was not once questioned by any Apostle. It was a right well known, well understood by preachers and people; and when the Jews were converted to the Christian faith, no one ever dreamed of telling them their children were excluded: but, on the contrary, Peter seems to have reminded them, that, though the dispensation was changed, they need not fear their children should be left behind, for "the promise is unto you and your children." What promise? I answer, the promise that God made to Abraham and his seed, when he entered into covenant with him, and gave him and his seed a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith. If this be not the allusion, what did the Apostle mean by

the promise to their children? We see, then, how entirely unnecessary it was for any thing to be said expressly about infant baptism in the New Testament. Their membership was not impaired nor touched, and all knew there was no other way to receive them into the Church than by baptism. With these facts before their eyes, why do men talk so much about the necessity of a *positive* command for infant baptism? Show me a *positive* repeal of infant membership, before you ask me to show a positive command for infant baptism. But since I have touched the subject of positive commands, I will ask for *such* command for females communing at the Lord's table; for keeping the first day of the week for the Sabbath; for meeting to hear the Gospel preached; for dipping a man under the water with his *back* downward; or for excommunicating one of God's people, because he felt it his duty to "do this in remembrance of me," with God's children of other names? I grant, that the three former duties only may be easily *inferred*, but not more clearly than that of infant baptism. Until men quit believing, and acting, by inference, in matters of great importance, they, for shame, ought to cease to demand of their brethren a positive command for a practice that is naturally inferred, as things they take for granted every day. And, above all, they should blush to be constantly begging the question, by requiring positive proof for the shadow, before they show a repeal of the

substance. This is like a man in argument, who, when hard pressed with a plain question, asks an irrelevant one by way of answer! I would, if necessary, without a blush, ask our opponents a thousand times to show us, that the *old* law of infant membership is repealed, before we feel bound to show them a *new* law for their reception.

I think it is generally admitted, that the Lord's Supper came in the place of the Passover; but the shedding of the blood of the paschal lamb was no longer significant after the Lamb of God was slain. So, in like manner, did baptism come in the room of circumcision.

But, in addition to Peter's declaration which we have quoted, there are other strong intimations in the New Testament, of infant membership, and, consequently, of their right to baptism. Our Lord said, Matthew xix. 14, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Now it is generally believed, that the kingdom of heaven, in this passage, means the Church; if so, the matter is settled. But if it means the kingdom of glory, I would ask, if God admits infants into heaven, why may not men admit them into the pale of the Church? But it is said, Christ did not baptize those infants that were brought to him, but took them in his arms and blessed them. I would remark, in reply, that Christ did not baptize any, either adult or infant; but he recognized infant membership. But

how are we now to follow the example of putting our infants into the arms of Christ? He is gone to glory, his body is there. How will we follow that desirable example, but by putting our children into the arms of his mystical body, the Church? Blessed be God, in this way we still may bring our children into the arms of their Saviour.

In 1 Cor. vii. 14, we have this remarkable passage, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." Paul is showing, in the context, that the marriage contract is not necessarily dissolved, because one of the parties has become a believer, and recommends them to live together, though one be a pagan, unless the unbelieving party voluntarily depart; in such a case the other is not bound. But, he reasons on the propriety of their dwelling together, showing the great advantages that might result, even the salvation of the unbeliever. But, as a further inducement, he takes occasion to refer to the favored condition of the pledges of their affection, *the children;* "else were they unclean, but now are they holy." Holy, in what sense? Not absolutely so, for they, with all other children, were "conceived in sin," &c., but holy in a relative sense; holy, as pertaining to the Church of God; that is, having a right according to the covenant of God with Abraham, to Church membership; inasmuch

as "the blessing of Abraham had (now) come on the Gentiles." Inasmuch as that pagan father, or mother had become a believer, and was thereby constituted the legitimate, spiritual descendant of Abraham, his or her children were entitled to the same privileges of God's house, that Abraham's believing children were entitled to. If this be not the true meaning of this passage, of which I have no doubt, I would ask, What does it mean? The awkward, barefaced attempt to make the Apostle mean, "else were your children illegitimate, but now are they legitimate," is too ridiculous to admit of a serious reply. A man must be hard pressed, indeed, who would virtually say, that all the children of unbelieving parents are bastards! But, I will ask those infant excluders, if they can show in the Bible, *one* place where the *term holy* is applied to any being, or thing, on earth, but what, in some sense, pertains to the Church of God. I demand this showing. If it cannot be done, the children in question must also pertain to the Church of God; and as there is no other door of admission, under the gospel, they must be baptized WITH water. As there were several whole households baptized, we have a right to *infer*, that some of them had children in a state of minority. If Stephanus had none, which is by no means proved, it is quite probable the jailor had, especially from the circumstance of his being jailor; for an old man would not well suit that office, and it is said,

"he sprang in," implying vigor and action. The Baptists imagine, from a passage in the narrative, that the jailor's family were converted, where it is said, "He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." I will remark, that if the sacred historian intended to show by this, all that were baptized in the jailor's family were believers, it will certainly come with double weight against the Baptists, in the case of Lydia's family, spoken of in the *same* chapter, Acts xvi. Where is the least intimation of any of Lydia's household believing or rejoicing? Let us see, verses 14, 15. "And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that SHE attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when *she* was baptized, and her household, *she* besought us, saying, If ye have judged ME to be faithful to the Lord, come into MY house, and abide there. And SHE constrained us." Notice throughout this passage, it is *she*, *me*, *my house*, &c. Not one word, not the smallest intimation of any part of the household, but what was in a perfect state of minority. Nothing at all is said about them, only that they were baptized, *after* God opened HER heart, and she had received that ordinance. Now, the jailor's family were, or they were not converted; if they were not, it settles the question; but, if they were converted, and that appears from the history, it is conclusive evidence

that Lydia's family were *not* converted, and, consequently, the question must be equally settled on that ground. Take it, then, which way you will, *one*, at least, of the cases amounts to incontrovertible evidence that children, without faith, were baptized. As I consider this an unanswerable case on every principle of analogy and common sense, I will further illustrate it. There is a mission among the Cherokee Indians; one of the missionaries writes to the Board, of the baptism of a heathen family, in which he, as the Baptists say, gives an account of the conversion of the *whole* family, as in the case of the Jailor; and, in the *same* short letter, he gives an account of the baptism of *another* family, only *one* of which, the head, is mentioned as being converted, as in the case of Lydia: who would ever once imagine, that the *second* family were *all* converted?

Suppose a jury of twelve men, with no bias on their minds in favor of either side of this controversy, were *sworn* to try this case on the testimony before them, that is, the testimony of the historian, who gives an account of Lydia's conversion, and the baptism of her household; what kind of a verdict would they return? Would they return, on their oath, that they believe *all* Lydia's household were converted? It would be impossible.

The Baptists believe, that the jailor's family were converted, on what they call evidence

in the narrative; but no such evidence appears in the case of Lydia's family, which they all admit.

The argument, then, as before suggested, must settle on this point. If the jailor's family were *not* converted, it proves every thing we want; if they were converted, it *absolutely* proves, keeping an eye on the infallibility of the inspired penman, that Lydia's family were *not* converted. But they were baptized; therefore, unconverted children of believers must be baptized.

The objections to this practice, inferred from the commission of the Apostles to baptize believers, never can have any force on the minds of the unprejudiced. First, because, as I design hereafter to show, all the world, at that time, were unbaptized with Christian baptism; and, secondly, because, if infants were excluded by that commission from baptism, they were equally excluded from heaven! If they cannot be baptized, because they cannot have faith, neither can they be admitted to heaven, because they have not faith, for "he that believeth not, shall be damned." See, then, what a dilemma men run into, by perverting the plain meaning of God's word, in order to support an untenable hypothesis.

The question, often asked, which is more curious than pious, "What good does it do the *child* to *baptize* him?" might be answered by, "Who art thou, that repliest against God?"

But the same question is equally applicable to the reception of infants under the former dispensation, who received the sign and seal of circumcision, and was actually asked by some of the fault-finders of God's institutions, in Paul's time; who gave them a very emphatical answer, "Much every way." And so I would answer, with respect to infant membership, "but chiefly," because God has enjoined it; and because every Christian is virtually bound, as far as he has opportunity, to care for, watch over, and *pray* in a particular manner, for every baptized child. Is this no advantage? Are the prayers of the righteous of no avail? Is their special and tender concern for the baptized of no profit? Let the great majorities of conversions among that class of people, in all great revivals, answer these interesting queries.

There is another circumstance which ought to satisfy every candid inquirer after truth; that is, the circumstance of the hardened, opposing Jews, never once mentioning this supposed innovation on their ancient privilege. If Christ and his Apostles had excluded infants from the Church, is it not absolutely certain, that the Jews, and especially the judaizing Christians, would have made a noise about it? Yet there is no complaint, no, not one word.

As to the history of infant baptism, there can be no point better established, from the apostolic

age down to the present day! There were individuals, who doubted about the *time*, &c.; but it does not appear, from the most authentic history, that it ever was a matter of controversy for several centuries immediately following the apostles. I will give only a few incontrovertible evidences, for which I am principally indebted to Jedediah Chapman, V. D. M., commencing in the third century and upwards, to the apostolic age; for, after that time, hardly any one doubts its (infant baptism) being the universal practice of the Church. We are chiefly solicitous to establish it in the *first* ages of Christianity.

About 150 years after the apostles, *Cyprian* called a council of sixty-six bishops, to determine a question that had arisen among some of the brethren, whether infant baptism should be delayed to the eighth day, as in the case of circumcision; not whether it should be performed at all. The unanimous decision was, that it was not necessary to delay it; and there were letters written accordingly to the Churches. Now, I will ask every candid inquirer, if it were possible, so soon after the apostles, and in the country where they preached, and in an age when it is so generally allowed Christianity retained so much of its original purity, that sixty-six ministers of Jesus could be found unanimously approving a practice that did not come from the apostles? It is absurd to suppose it.

Origen, who was born less than 100 years after the apostles, speaks often of infant baptism, in his Homilies on Original Sin, as an *established* practice in the Church, and expressly says, that the Church had an order from the apostles to give baptism to infants. I would remark, here, that *Origen* was not contending for the right of infant baptism merely, for it was not disputed as coming from the apostles; he only designed, thereby, to illustrate his other doctrines.

Tertullian, who lived at the same time with *Origen*, mentions infant baptism as no novelty in his day, but pleads for delay, rather than introduce sponsors, or what have since been called god-fathers, &c.

Ireneus, who wrote about fifty years after the apostles, and was well acquainted with *Polycarp* one of John's disciples, and also saw, and *conversed* with those who had seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, mentioned infant baptism as no matter of dispute in his day.

Justin Martyr, who is supposed to have been born about thirty years after the death of Christ, speaks of baptism being to us in the room of circumcision.

We think it needless to multiply proofs from history on this subject, until, at any rate, those we have introduced can be overthrown, not by garbled, but by well authenticated history, which we are sure can never be done. For history, that is so

well supported by the Old and New Testament, must stand like the rock of Gibraltar, in despite of all the furious storms that may assail it.

We are now to speak something of the mode of baptism, about which, if it were not for the vast importance attached to it by our Baptist brethren, we would feel but little solicitude; because we believe that Christ did not prescribe any particular mode, when he instituted this ordinance; therefore, we practice various modes, when the "answer of a good conscience," requires it by the subject. Still, we are firmly established, that our preferred mode, sprinkling or pouring, does most fitly represent what is intended by water baptism. I would reply here, to a cant, that we often hear, about the invalidity of immersion, when performed by a Presbyterian, Methodist, &c., because, it is said, "They have no faith in it." This is like some other *modest* things we hear. But we have said a thousand times, that we believe it is a lawful baptism; but unnecessary; but it is the faith of the one to be baptized, I would imagine, that was principally concerned.

There can be nothing determined about the mode from the word *baptize* as in our translation, or from *baptizo* in the original. Even *bapto*, which is said to be the strongest word in the Greek language, to express plunging, is used in Daniel iv. 33, to signify to *wet*, or *sprinkle*. But *bapto* is not the word used by our Saviour, in the commission to

baptize, it is *baptizo*, "which the most approved Lexicographers say, signifies any kind of washing, or cleansing with water, that is, the application of water in various ways. Those who doubt it, are requested to consult Hesychius, Budeus, Scapula, Stephanus, and Dr. Leigh's Critica Sacra, who are all acknowledged to be great masters of the Greek language."* "It is also certain, that this word is used by inspiration to signify divers washings, without *any* reference to the mode, as in Mark vii. 4, "And from the market, except they wash, (*baptismous* in the original,) they eat not." The same word is also applied to many kinds of the ceremonial washings; as in Heb. ix. 10, "Only in meats and drinks and divers washings," in the original *baptismous*, plural of *baptizo*. Again: Luke xi. 38, "And when the pharisee saw it, he marvelled, that he had not first washed, (*baptized* in the original,) before dinner." Who does not know, that this *did not* mean plunging the body all over in water.

After such testimony from the most approved masters of the Greek language, and from the New Testament itself, is it not passing strange, that we hear many pretending to establish immersion from the original, who do not know one principle of their mother tongue! I said before, and perhaps, it would not be too much, if I were to say, it has been proved a thousand times, that nothing can be determined about the *mode* of baptism, from the

* Chapman on Baptism page 52.

word *baptize*. If any particular mode can be determined, it must be by *inference*, drawn from the practice of the Apostles, and the allusions of that ordinance.

I will now candidly consider some of the strongest supposed proofs of our Baptist brethren for immersion. Acts viii. 38, 39; "And they went down BOTH into the water, BOTH Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water," &c. This passage is much relied on to prove immersion; but I will ask, where, or how does it prove it? We have here a history of a fact, that is, of a baptism; but *how* is not even intimated. That they went into the water, and came up out of the water, proves nothing; this was no part of the ordinance. If it prove that the Eunuch went *under* the water, I assert, it also proves that Philip went *under* the water! (For we are not to take the present practice of the Baptists for proof.) Philip baptized him; but *how*, no man under heaven can tell. It is all guess work. The Baptists *infer* he was immersed. I, with perhaps fifty to one on my side, infer he did not go under the water. I conscientiously believe he did not, but was baptized *at*, or *in*, the margin of the water, by sprinkling or pouring, as I, myself, have recently baptized.

The intelligent Baptists know, that the preposition, rendered *into* in this place, very often, in various parts of the original Scriptures, means *to*

only. But I want nothing but our present translation to support me in affirming, that the case of the Eunuch is no proof for immersion. It is all *guess*—but I want proof.

There is another passage, in Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in baptism," which is supposed to prove immersion. I would just remark, if men will indulge their imaginations (feeling a strong predilection for a favorite tenet,) in figurative expressions, they can extend their figures, so as to prove almost any thing. There was a preacher, lately, near this place, who, in his sermon, not only allowed that Solomon's temple was figurative of the Church, but that the rafting of the timbers for the building over an arm of the sea, was proof of baptism by immersion! Just as irrelevant is the application of the subject before us to water baptism, which the connection clearly shows. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the FAITH of the operation of God, who hath raised him (Christ) from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." It is astonishing, how any intelligent man can believe this has an allusion to water baptism. Read it again: whatever burial is intended here, it is expressly said, they are *raised* by the faith of the operation of God. Now let any man try the experiment, that is, let him be plunged, or buried, under the

water, and see if his faith will raise him out of the water! I am certain if faith without works in this case would not be dead, it would produce *death.*

But the Apostle says, they were *dead* in their sins, and he (Christ) hath quickened them. Does this quickening from spiritual death take place in water baptism? Or does it not always, according to the Baptists, go before? But in this act of this burying, whatever it be, Christ "forgives all trespasses." Does the act of water baptism ensure the forgiveness of sins? I think the candid will at once see, by this analysis of the subject, the absurdity of applying it to water baptism. The true meaning of the passage seems to be simply this: the Apostle is speaking of Christ's sufferings, death, and burial, by the term, or figure, of baptism, (which term Christ himself used, when he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and, Oh! how am I straitened till it be accomplished,") and that spiritual baptism of the believer, by which he dies, and is buried to sin, with Christ, and is raised to hope, comfort, and heavenly mindedness, by the faith which is of God's operation, and in which act all his sins are forgiven him. For it is only by "being baptized *into* Christ," that he can have that quickening; and it is by faith in a risen Saviour, who was once, indeed, crucified and buried, that he can die unto sin. This explanation is confirmed by a correspondent passage in

Rom. vi. 4. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into DEATH," &c. Now, if we make this passage mean any thing, except a spiritual baptism on the part of man, we see at once where it would lead—"into death." To be consistent, and pursue the figure, if it be water baptism, we must actually be buried under the water, until we *die!* There is no alternative, but to die; for there is not the shadow of a doubt, that the Apostle is speaking of Christ's death. I am ready to conclude, if this were the test, and I affirm it should be, if it means water baptism, that we should not see many more immersions.

But I would ask what analogy is there between dipping a man under water and instantly raising him up again, and Christ lying three days in a hollow rock, or tomb cut out of a rock, the door of which was in the side? If you take the figure of the burial, maintain it, and keep the subject as long under the water, as our blessed Lord was in the tomb. I mention this, to show the absurdity of supposing the Apostle was speaking of water baptism.

We have now carefully examined the case of the Eunuch, and both burials with Christ in baptism, and what will they amount to? Not one word, nor even an intimation about immersion in either! Where will we go next? To John, and Jordan, says my Baptist brother. Agreed, for I have long since thought that truth never suffered by investigation.

It is said, John baptized where there was much water; I answer, this was necessary, when we consider that John had one of the greatest *camp meetings* that we ever heard of! For it is expressly said, "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and *all* the region round about Jordan, came out to John, and were baptized of him." Now much water was really necessary for such a multitude to drink, &c., as well as for the use of their beasts. But we do not read of any dipping in this "much water."

It is said, John baptized *in* Jordan. I will also say, in reply, that he baptized *beyond* Jordan, John i. 28, where, it is said, "Christ afterwards dwelt, or abode," John x. 40; from which I would *infer*, at least, that it could not be a river, or creek that John baptized in *there*. But he baptized *in* Jordan. What does this prove? Immersion? By no means. I will *prove* it to you. Paul says, the Israelites "were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud, and *in* the sea." And yet it is expressly said, they at the very time of this baptism, went "over DRY SHOD!" Here, then, is a baptizing *in* a larger water than Jordan, without immersion. At any rate, if the balance of the body were immersed, their feet were kept dry. I think, according to the modern practice of immersion, it would be difficult to perform it and keep the feet dry.

But it is said, that Christ and others went down into the water, (Jordan) and came up out of the

water, and here immersion is *inferred.* But if such inferers, "will turn to the history (in Joshua) of Israel's transit over Jordan, they will find it repeatedly asserted, that they went down into Jordan, (the same river in which Christ was baptized,) and came up *out of* Jordan, and wet the soles of their feet ONLY." Now, what of dipping, or immersion, is found in all this train of supposed incontrovertible proofs? I answer, just not *one* intimation of it! If you still insist that John, at any rate, dipped the people, I will introduce his own testimony in opposition to you—when he says, again and again, "I indeed baptize you WITH water." Not that he baptized the water *with* the subject, but the subject *with* the water. As I would say, I shave with my razor, I write with my pen, &c. John says, "I indeed baptize you *with* water, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost and *with* fire." Now, suppose we were to read this passage as our Baptist brethren would have us: "I plunge you all over in water, and he will plunge you all over in the Holy Ghost, and in fire." How absurd! But read as John intended, and it would read naturally, and correspond precisely with Peter's views, that is, "I, John, pour water on you, but he that cometh after me, will pour the Spirit on you." Peter, in Acts x. 15, 16., quotes this very passage, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell ON them, as ON us at the beginning Then remem-

bered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized *with* water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." How? By falling on them, as was prefigured by the water falling on them in John's baptism.

But it is still asked, Was not Christ immersed, and was it not done as an example for us to follow? I answer, I believe he was not immersed; and if he was, it was not intended as an example for us. With respect to his immersion, there is nothing proved from the narrative; and what induces me to believe he was not, is, the custom of setting apart the priests, when they were inaugurated, by washing their hands and feet.

Now there cannot be one reasonable doubt, but this was all the design of Christ's baptism. John refused to baptize him at first: he said, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to *fulfil* all righteousness;" that is, to obey a law yet in force, about induction to the priesthood; for you will mark, that Christ taught and yielded obedience to the ceremonial law, until he was crucified. He was circumcised; those he had healed, he told to go and show themselves to the priests, as commanded in the law of Moses; and he ate the passover, &c. Hence, after he was set apart to the priesthood by the washing of water, being now of the proper age, thirty years, according to the law, he *ascended the banks* of Jordan, and as he was now ready to enter on his public ministry, and as God was wont

to give all necessary proof of his divinity and mission, "there was a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." The Holy Ghost lit UPON him in the shape of a dove.

That Christ's baptism was not designed as an example for us to follow, is absolutely certain, from the circumstance of his not being baptized till he was thirty years old; and from the circumstance of John's baptism not being the Christian baptism. Do not marvel, for I *will prove it.* But to return to the example of Christ. Why did he not receive baptism among the *first* that were baptized by John? Why did he delay it till he was thirty years of age? Why did he say, "Thus it becomes us to *fulfil*," &c., not enact, but fulfil? Let men give a just solution to these questions, which I know is impossible on their plan, or for ever cease to misguide the unwary, by the moanful tone of following their Lord into the water. As well might they teach to follow their Lord in the rite of circumcision, eating the passover, or any other abrogated ceremony. For it is unquestionable, that John's baptism was not the Christian baptism, and of course is done away. I promised to prove this.

First: God the Father, not Christ, instituted John's baptism. *Second:* He did not baptize in the name of the Trinity *Third:* The people whom he baptized continued members of the Jewish Church. *Fourth:* His baptism was *limited*

to the Jews. *Lastly;* We have an express repeal of his baptism recorded in Acts xix. 2—5, "He said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him, which should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were *baptized* in the NAME of the Lord Jesus." There is an ignoble attempt to evade the force of this *repealing* clause of John's baptism, by endeavoring to make the text read quite differently from what it does; and introducing Paul's declaration to the *Corinthians*, that he did not baptize at *Ephesus!* where he said, "I thank God, that I baptized none of you, except Gaius," &c. But you will mark, it was none of *you*, Corinthians, who were a separate Church from the Ephesians, where John's disciples were re-baptized. This shows what ridiculous shifts men are often driven into, who are *previously* determined to hold an untenable sentiment.

I asked for a plain repeal of the law of God, admitting infants into the pale of the Church; it has not been, nor can it be shown. The Baptist brethren may ask for a plain repeal of John's baptism. I have shown it.

We will now ask, What does water baptism represent? We have already shown, that John and Peter clearly understood it as representing the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit. And I have never heard it denied, even by the Baptists, that it also represents, or is figurative of, the all-cleansing influences of the blood of Jesus. We read every where of the Holy Spirit being poured out, and falling on the people. And "there is no object whatever, in all the New Testament, so frequently and so explicitly signified by baptism, as these divine influences. See Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8, 10; Luke iii. 16—22; John i. 33; Acts i. 5; ii. 38, 39; viii. 12, 17; xi. 15, 16. With respect to the blood of Jesus, it is frequently called the blood of *sprinkling*. See Isa. lii. 15; Heb. xix. 13, 14; xii. 24. All of which answer to the prediction of Ezekiel, where he is speaking of the full and complete return of all Israel to their own land, with the general spread of the gospel; more than intimating, perhaps, their mode of baptism. Ezekiel xxxvi. 25. "Then will I *sprinkle* clean *water* upon you, and ye shall be clean," &c.

We will inquire now, if it be at all probable, that the three thousand, Paul, and the Jailor, were immersed? When Peter began to preach, it was about nine o'clock, it is said, and many *other* things he said unto them. A great revival of God's work followed; there was great agitation among the people, which must have taken considerable time

to subside We will allow *three* hours for this—*one* hour, which is too little, to receive their confession of faith in Jesus—one hour more for them to prepare changes of garments, (for you will mind, that when they met, they did not know they would be baptized,) this would bring two o'clock in the afternoon. But now it must take some more time to hunt, and go to a suitable place of water, if, indeed, such a place could be found; which must bring near three o'clock. Now, eleven apostles only have to immerse, all over in water, three thousand people, in about, or less than *three* hours! Impossible! No man can seriously believe it. Every day's experience proves it impracticable. One of my good neighbors, a Deacon, was so pressed with this argument, that, forgetting what his Bible said, denied that they were baptized on that day! It is vain to imagine, that the seventy disciples assisted in this baptism; for their commission had ceased with John's baptism, and we never hear of its being renewed; and we have proved that John's baptism was done away, or discontinued.

But was Paul immersed? Not the least probability of it. Read Acts ix. 18, 19: "And he received sight forthwith, and arose, (that is, sat up, or stood up,) and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened." Not a word is said about going out of the house, or any where else, to hunt suitable water to be dipped in:

no, it appears, clearly, from the simple narrative, that it would have been impracticable. Saul had fasted three days and nights, his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow, and he was too weak to receive baptism in that way, much less to go with Annanias any distance to hunt water. But after he had received baptism, sitting or standing by the bed-side, he received meat, and was strengthened; but you will notice, he was not strengthened till after his baptism. A man's mind must be of a curious structure, indeed, who can believe any thing else, than that Paul was baptized by the bed-side, or in the house immediately after he arose.

Now for the Jailor. But let me premise, that it is well known, the custom in the East was, and still is, to have their jails with different apartments, one of which the jailor lives in, and all under one roof; but it is called the jail. Read Acts xvi. 29, 30, and 33: "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, (that is, out of the inner prison,) and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" "And he took them the same hour of the night, (midnight,) and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into *his* house, (that is, another apartment of the jail,) he sat meat before them," &c. Do not sneer at my parentheses, till you hear me out; I will prove their correctness;

and I will do it by Paul's sincerity. It appears, from the history, that next morning, the magistrates were willing that Paul and Silas should depart, without any further proceedings or ceremony. We will see Paul's reply. "But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into PRISON; and now do they thrust us out (of prison) privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out;" that is, out of prison. After this declaration of the Apostle being brought into view, I hope no Christian, at any rate, will still contend that Paul had been out of the prison a moment, till the "magistrates came and besought them," &c. If we make Paul act the hypocrite in this case, I am sure we are not bound to believe any of his writings. "Nay, verily, let them come and fetch us out." Now, if Paul had been previously out, I say this would have been bare hypocrisy, and, virtually, LYING! It must be remarked, that the Jailor was not commanded by the magistrates to put them in the inner prison, but only to keep them safe. It was of his own accord he put them there for safe keeping, and no doubt to wreak his vengeance on God's servants; it was, therefore, no violation of his duty or order, to bring them out of the inner prison into his own house, another apartment of the prison, where, it appears, they still remained, when the magistrates sent them word next morning. For it does not appear that the Jailor put them

back into the inner prison, after he brought them into his own apartment of it. And this circumstance proves, beyond a doubt, that Paul *still* considered himself in prison, though in the jailor's house, and positively refused to go out till the magistrates came.

If, then, Paul did not dissemble and lie, it is absolutely certain, he was not out of the jail till next morning. But we are informed, that the Jailor and his family were baptized the same hour of the night, that is, the hour of midnight. We have proved it was in the jail; if in the jail, it is absolutely certain it was not by immersion; for who does not know, that a wicked Roman officer had no *previous* preparation to receive *Christian* baptism?

Here, then, are *three thousand and two* cases, in the New Testament, in which it must appear to the unprejudiced mind, next to, or absolutely impossible, in the nature of things, for them to have received baptism by immersion. But we have not found *one* case, where it is even very probable that immersion was performed. If any would still say, because Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water, we ought to follow their example; I would reply, that we are just as much bound to go into the jail, or by the bed-side, and baptize.

By way of argument, I would suggest, that it is impossible to conceive, with any propriety, that the infinitely wise and blessed Jesus would institute

an ordinance, one of the only two under the gospel, that could not be administered at any time, when the proper subjects were presented. This seems clearly to have been the practice of the apostles; whenever a man believed, he was baptized on the spot, and straightway his family. As soon as Philip came to the first water, after the Eunuch believed, he baptized him. So, in like manner, were Paul, the Jailor, and the three thousand baptized forthwith. No waiting, no change of garments ever spoken of, no going to hunt creeks, rivers, ponds, lakes, or pools—no such thing. This is the super-invention of man. But, on the Baptist's plan, there are many times, places, and circumstances, in which it could not be performed.

Many believe on a death bed, days or weeks before death, yet they cannot be baptized by immersion, and, therefore, die without baptism. There was exactly such a case happened in my neighborhood, in Kentucky, with a Baptist preacher's son! In extreme northern climates, in the midst of winter, and in many other places, at different seasons, where men can hardly get water to drink, all prove that the blessed Saviour never enjoined this ordinance to be administered by immersion. The Lord's Supper may be administered under any circumstances of health, &c., and so might baptism by sprinkling or pouring. Then, when neither Scripture nor reason supports

immersion, why will men be so tenacious of it, as even to tear asunder Christ's mystical body, his Church? I do conscientiously believe, that, taking God's word and reason for their guide, the Pædo-Baptists would have greater cause to exclude the Baptists for omitting their duty in baptism, from their communion, than the Baptists have to exclude them on the same principle. Yet I believe all, (I know I can speak for the body to which I belong,) would willingly meet our Baptist brethren on equal ground, and cultivate the most sincere friendship. But this, though we have often tendered it, we cannot have, and retain our *own* opinions and practices. The Great Head of the Church is now sitting in judgment on this matter.

But some are so uncharitable as to believe, that the Baptists are not so solicitous about their mode of baptism, as they affect to be. They draw their conclusions from this circumstance: let a Presbyterian, or a Methodist, of the most indisputable piety, ask them for baptism, but be honest enough to tell them, that, after immersion, he wishes to continue in his former society, they will not baptize him! This, indeed, looks not like the practice of the apostles, and more like a desire for members than to perform the rite of that ordinance, even on what they acknowledge proper subjects of baptism. But others might be ready to excuse this apparent inconsistency in our brethren, when they remem-

ber that if the applicant were to return after immersion to his old Church, he might not be well taken care of; that the principles of *truth*, even telling the truth might not be duly pressed upon him, inasmuch as no one is suffered to give evidence against a Baptist, but a Baptist! "What! (says my uncharitable neighbor,) can no man tell the truth but a Baptist?" It really appears so, from the regulation of the Church; but it is a twin brother to refusing communion to all God's people who are not immersed; for, it is certain, if none but immersed people are fit to commune, that there is some coloring for excluding all other Christians from giving testimony. Yet, I think, the respectable part of the *non*-professors might be admitted, for I doubt not but thousands of them are men of the strictest probity. Some may say, I have left my subject; but I repeat it, this very thing of virtually saying, no man in the world can tell the truth but a Baptist, grows out of that odious, unscriptural distinction between themselves and all the rest of the Christian world. It is a plan of seclusion, separation, *stand by*, &c., that has a constant tendency to alienate God's Church, instead of bringing it closer together.

I will now condense some of my arguments, and conclude.

First, then, I have shown a law by which the infants of believing parents were admitted into the pale of the Church, and that law, or promise,

recognized in various parts of the New Testament. Second: That *that* law of infant membership has never been abrogated, and is, consequently, obligatory on every believing parent; and, that the spiritual descendants of Abraham are bound to give their infants into the arms of Christ's mystical body. Third: That the apostles clearly understood it so, by baptizing whole households without faith, probably many, but certainly, the household of Lydia; (and one clear example is enough.) Fourth: That on the most impartial examination, there is not one proof for immersion in the whole Bible—that our Lord was not baptized for an example for us to follow—that John's baptism was not the Christian baptism; and, consequently, all the world were unbaptized with Christian baptism, when the apostles received their commission to go, and teach, and baptize: therefore, it was fit for adults to profess faith before they were baptized; but "straightway," their households *did* receive that ordinance; and, in the various baptizing of the apostles, we have such strong presumption as amounts to nearly, or quite positive proof, that they did not immerse; especially, when we connect the various representations of the outpourings of the Divine Spirit, which are prefigured by water baptism, as well as the blood of Jesus, which is the blood of sprinkling.

With this train of Scriptural evidence, and what I consider fair arguments, will our Baptist

brethren still say, unless all Pædo-baptists are immersed, they will not admit them to the Lord's table! Permit me, my Baptist brethren, for a moment, to address you seriously.

Though I have indulged in a little humor and irony, in these pages, I have tried to avoid substituting dogmatism and invective for argument. Why will you not let all the rest of the Christian world, as well as yourselves, be content with all the purposes of baptism intended by the apostle Peter, "the answer of a good conscience?" Why should *you* judge *other* men's consciences! To use an ordinary phrase, why can you not "live and let live;" and let every man answer to his own Master about his baptism; and meet all the godly at their Master's table? I would speak as in sight of the judgment-bar, and declare unto you, that I have the clearest conviction, that your close communion, &c., is doing much injury to the souls of men. Infidelity finds strong support in the unnecessary division of God's people. We think we have more Scripture, for the subjects and mode of baptism, than you have against the former, and in favor of your mode. Yet, I will once more venture to tender to all godly Baptists, the reciprocal and sincere friendship of all other denominations of Christians. We only ask it on equal terms. Will you, or will you not accept it? I tender it in the name of our blessed Lord of SOULS—will you accept it?

LECTURE XXIX.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"THIS is called the Lord's Supper, because it was instituted in the evening, and at the close of the passover supper; and because we therein feed on Christ, the bread of life." It is the outward and sacramental sign of inward spiritual grace, wherein we have communion with Christ and his people.

It is called the Eucharist, or thanksgiving ordinance, and a feast, in which the believing communicant may have his soul feasted on the richest dainties. The main design of its institution was to keep up a grateful remembrance, in the minds of God's people, of the death and sufferings of their Saviour. It is to be continued to the end of the world, and is a standing witness that Christ will come "the second time without sin unto salvation."

The symbols, that is, the bread and wine used in this ordinance, are significant of the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus,

but are only signs. These elements are not changed, but sanctified by prayer. The communicants ought, by faith, to look through the sign to the thing signified; and, while they eat the bread and drink the wine, their souls should be "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Saviour;" that is, their souls should be feasting on a crucified Jesus.

Communicants ought always to be scrupulously cautious to take so little of the elements as would in no wise be any gratification to the animal appetite. No doubt this was one abuse of the ordinance, of which the Apostle complains to the Corinthian Church.

The position of the body ought to be that of sitting; this, at any rate, seems to have been the position of our Lord and his disciples. As to the frequency of administering and receiving this ordinance, there are various opinions. But it appears clear, from the example of the primitive Church, that it ought to be as often as is at all convenient; and no opportunity to obey so special a command, and to enjoy so high a privilege, ought, by any means, to offer, without all the lovers of Jesus embracing it. Those, and those only, who can worthily and profitably partake of this holy ordinance, are true believers. This appears clear, from the Apostle declaring none may, except such as have "faith to discern the Lord's body;" that is, have faith to feed

upon the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus. It ought not, therefore, to be administered to any, except such as make a credible profession of faith. This is clear, from the first institution of the ordinance. It is true, Judas was not a true believer, and our Lord knew it; but he was a professor. It is not the province of man to judge the heart. Credible professors, therefore, ought not to be refused or prohibited; nor should any be admitted who are not professors of religion.

But all will agree, that the true disciple is a proper communicant, and derives his right to a participation of this holy ordinance, by virtue of his union with Christ, the institutor; and is under solemn obligation to obey this his explicit command, "Do this in remembrance of me." Then, is it not strange, is it not unaccountable, that there are some, or at least, one considerable denomination of Christians, that have taken it in their head, generally, to exclude all other Christians from this ordinance! Yes, "EXCLUDE" them! For if they be not fit to participate with them, or at the Lord's table under their superintendence, they are not fit to partake any where. Then what does this, in strict analogy, amount to? Why, that there are no Christians in the world, except such as belong to a particular society, that can lawfully commune at the Lord's table; consequently, none can obey that known, ac-

knowledged, and perpetually binding command, and, consequently, are not of those that love Jesus; (for, "if ye love me, keep my commandments,") and, consequently, can never be admitted into heaven! For, without love and obedience, it is impossible to get to heaven. Now, after all the twisting, shifting, &c., that men may use, it must, and for ever will, settle down precisely in this place; that is, if we draw natural, just, and logical conclusions from the given premises. Every body knows, that if a man be not fit for the Lord's table, he is not fit for heaven. And every body ought to know, that the Lord's table is not many but one. It is the same table, and the Lord's one table, let it be spread where it may. It is one ordinance, designed for one character of people; and to promote the same object, and help all those who are one in Christ, on their way to that one heaven of desired rest, where they will join in one song while eternity endures.

It is in vain for our brethren to tell us, they hold us as Christians, but as Christians out of order. Now, if we be out of order, or in an error, that error is essential, or it is not. If it be essential, the conclusions above are just—we cannot get to heaven. But, if our error be not essential, or so essential as to exclude us from heaven, why would we be excluded from the Lord's table? Is this ordinance more pure than heaven?

There is something more serious in this prohibition than men imagine. It is, virtually, compelling those whom God recognizes as "the apple of his eye," to disobey his commandment! What would the world think, in this day of more general toleration, if an individual, or community, possessing the power, would take it into their heads to say, such and such Christian communities shall not pray, nor sing, nor preach, nor hear, the gospel? Would there not be one general burst of indignation throughout Christendom? Yet there is a denomination among us, who think themselves entitled to more than an equal share of public attention who do, in effect, say to all other Christian communities, you shall not obey the Lord's dying commandment, which is equally obligatory as prayer, praise, &c., on all God's people.

Here is one of God's dear people, whose whole life proves the sincerity of his profession; he attends on a communion season, where his brethren of another order are about to administer the holy supper; he is in good standing in his own Church; he has the answer of a good conscience in his baptism; the Lord's table is spread, his heart leaps at the sight; the commandment, "Do this," rushes into his mind; he loves to obey his Lord; he can agree as touching their ordinance with his brethren in its main design; he declares a sincere desire to obey Jesus; he feels

conscious he has the wedding garment; he wants to add his testimony to others about the second coming of Christ; he wants his soul refreshed; he wants, in short, to hold communion with his Lord and brethren; he makes application; the Church know him, they acknowledge him to be a real disciple, but (Oh! shall I tell it in Gath? shall I publish it in the streets of Askelon? must the uncircumcised, or infidel triumph? truth demands it)—he is refused a place at his Master's table!

Is this that heaven-born "charity, that hopeth, believeth, endureth all things?" Is this manifesting our discipleship by such love to one another, that all men may know we are Christ's disciples? Is this loving "indeed, and in truth?" Or is it not, most emphatically, "loving in word and tongue only?"

In vain did they say to this godly man, "You are not baptized." He replied, "I feel all the purposes of water baptism, of which Peter spoke when he said, "Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience;" I feel a good conscience; you must not judge my conscience, "to his own master every man must stand or fall." I trust I have been baptized INTO Christ;" not, indeed, by water, but with that ONE baptism, the Holy Ghost, without which none of us could have a right to this holy table. I now, as I have an opportunity, want to obey

my Lord's dying commandment, will you permit me!" "No, we cannot, unless you will receive baptism in our way!" "In your way? By this I would renounce a baptism that I hold sacred, and which has been held as valid, from the apostles to the present day, by nineteen twentieths of the visible Church. And, moreover, by such an act, I would exclude myself from the fellowship of all the rest of the Christian world. I have no alternative but to do this and violate my own conscience; therefore, my conscience is clear—the guilt of my present disobedience will not rest on me, but on those who have compelled me to do so."

But there *was* a member of this secluded Church, of forty years standing. He attended several Methodist and Presbyterian meetings; his former prejudices began to give way; his soul recognized the voice of the true Shepherd, in those under shepherds; the Lord's table was spread, God's people were invited; he felt his own way clear, but he hesitated—his Church forbid his eating with other Christians; his mind rushed to the New Testament, but he found no prohibition there; he hesitated again—his conscience, God's word, reason, his own feelings, every thing said, Go and "do this in remembrance of me." He was in a strait. At length the Divine Spirit brought to his mind, "Judge ye, whether it is better to obey God or man." He

could no longer hesitate, he approached, and the Lord blessed him. He repeated it again and again, until his brethren called him to an account! When drawn up before the Church, he told them he loved them, he had been a member of their community *forty* years—what he had done he did conscientiously; he hoped they would still recognize him as one of their brethren. No, they could not, without repentance! He told them he could acknowledge no guilt or sorrow, for he felt none. Well, then, he must be *tried*. If he must be tried for the alleged offence, he begged to be tried by the Bible, by the New Testament. It was refused! He insisted again, to be tried by that infallible guide. It was refused! He still insisted to be tried by that *supreme* law of the Christian Church, and was again absolutely refused! And an old manuscript of "traditions, which make void the commandments of God," was introduced, to try the holy old man by, and *he was turned out!* This I *know* to be substantially a fact.

How will that Church meet these men in the general judgment? Does God approve such a state of things? Churches may grow in number by *various* means, till they become as large as the unwieldly Church of Rome; but God does not, cannot approve this severing, this tearing limb from limb the mystical body of the Lord Jesus.

Truth and right must, ultimately, prevail, but many, in the mean time, may be hardened, may be confirmed in infidelity; but the sin, their blood, will not lie at the door of those Churches, which make every thing bend "to the law and to the testimony." It will not lie at the door of those who will not suffer *policy*, nor any other consideration to induce them to cause any to sin, or disobey the Lord's known commandment.

But why should this state of things exist? Is it water, or faith in the Son of God, that gives a right to communicate? Are not all the regenerate, of all denominations, dear to Jesus? Do they not all enjoy HIS smiles? Is he not the *best* judge of what is a valid baptism? Will HE wink at sin? Does HE not hold communion with his people? Will they not get to heaven? Then who art thou that sayest, "Stand by?" Who art thou, that deniest God's dear children a place, a seat at *their* Master's table? Art thou more wise, more holy than God? You say other Christians are out of order. God, Jehovah, says by his smiles, his approbation, that they are not. You say you cannot hold communion with them, because they are not baptized. God *does* hold communion with them, and thereby recognizes their baptism.

I ask again, who is the best judge in this matter, Christ or you? Art thou more holy,

more just, more sin-hating? Or despisest thou an omission of a real duty, more than the thrice holy God? Oh! my soul! what infatuation, what *unnecessary* wounds in the mystical body, what a perversion of the order of God's house! But why this deplorable state of things? "Are we not ALL baptized by ONE Spirit into *one* body?" When will it be known who has the most "wood, hay, stubble," to be bound up? Will it not be in the general judgment? Then why undertake to determine it here? Cannot different Christian communities rally round the common standard of their Lord, as they did around the American Eagle during the late war? Can they not imitate these confederated States, each of which has its own separate regulations, but all are subject to the constitution of the whole? Cannot different denominations of Christians continue their several separate regulations and opinions, in matters of minor importance, and still be subject to the great constitution (the Bible) of the whole visible Church? May they not retain their names, ceremonies, &c., and all meet at their Master's table? Would not this be liberal, charitable, obedient, and attended with the most happy consequences? Would not that hard Spirit, too prevalent now, become softened, and love succeed envy, jealousy, evil surmisings, &c.? Would not the infidel have less ground to stand on? Would not *some* more souls be

converted by it? If *one* more were converted, would it not be worth *infinitely* more than all the sacrifice any Church would have to make? Do we recollect the estimate Christ has put on *one* soul?

The objection, that if we commune with one, we must with all, is futile. Every orthodox prudent denomination, when inviting to the Lord's table, includes faith, as well as practice; that is, they require the communicant to hold the *essentials* of religion. Who will pretend to say, this or that mode of water baptism is essential to salvation?

I could write a volume on this subject, but I must come to a conclusion, by recommending my brethren, who keep off all the rest of the Christian world, to try their principles *once* more by the New Testament; if that will not do, let them go to good old John Bunyan, one of their own order, whose penetrating and holy soul saw and submitted to Christ's order, on this subject, and strenuously advocated the *right* and propriety of all Christians communing together. He has, no doubt, long since gone to heaven; but, though dead, he lives, speaks, and reproves his brethren, for their grieving thousands of God's dear children, and virtually strengthening the hands and hearts of infidels.

LECTURE XXX.

ON THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

In offering a few thoughts on this important subject, I will first speak of the institution of the Sabbath; and here we are not at a loss as it regards the time, or the BEING who instituted it.

In the second chapter of God's Bible, it is said, "On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God had created and made." Here is an explicit declaration, that God himself appointed and sanctified the Sabbath; and, that in commemoration of his having finished the great work of creation. It is also naturally and clearly inferred, that, from the time the Sabbath was instituted, and the thing commemorated, it was intended for all men, and obligatory on all. Whenever and wherever the Holy Sabbath is spoken of, after its first institution, it is not on a *new* enactment, but points the mind

to the obligation of the first enactment: consequently, the very erroneous thought, that the Sabbath was given to the Jews, as a part of their civil polity, and that it was no longer obligatory after their rights and ceremonies had passed away, is both dangerous and unscriptural.

It is true, the Sabbath was revived and renewed on Mount Sinai; and it is also true, that it was there and then written, by the "finger of God," on the tables of stone, and put down in the middle of the moral code, which was perpetually binding on all men. God, as Sovereign, selected the nation of the Jews, in which he designed to preserve his law and his worship free from the idolatry with which the inhabitants of the earth were already infected and overwhelmed. But that circumstance could not release the rest of mankind from the obligation of a purely moral precept. Hence, to our minds, the conclusion is irresistible, that God's holy Sabbath is obligatory on all men. But,

Secondly, Is the Sabbath perpetual? Or, has it always bound, and will it continue to bind all men to observe it?

In order to give a just solution to this important question, it is necessary to inquire, if there be any thing pertaining to the Sabbath which is strictly and purely moral in its nature? If the Sabbath be *only* political, ceremonial, or even a positive institution, with all the duties annexed, then I would be ready to admit it may pass away, or that it has

passed away. Who is ready to affirm, that there is nothing moral, and, consequently, immutable, in the Holy Sabbath? The mere day, that is, the particular day of the week, I am ready to admit is positive. But, the seventh part of time, and, above all, the duties required of man in that time, I contend, is moral. What are those duties? I will reply, in a few words, that they are refraining from things lawful on other days, and spending the time in holy acts of devotion and benevolence. What does this imply? It implies supreme love to God; and, because we love him, we keep his commandments, and worship him. But I see nowhere the repealing clause. Christ has not repealed the law of the Sabbath. His apostles have not; therefore, if the law were enacted and never repealed, it must still be binding.

Thirdly. We draw one of our strongest arguments for the change of the Sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week, from the same source, whence we prove its perpetuity; that is, not only from the mere day being positive, but from the duties required on that day being moral. As God chose to say the seventh day shall be sanctified, or set apart, as a day of holy rest, in commemoration of the great event of finishing the work of creation; so he could, as a sovereign, have said, the first day of the week shall be observed, as a day of holy rest, in commemoration of a *greater* event, even the finishing of the work of

redemption. I think that all Christians will admit, that the work of redemption is greater than that of creation. And let it be remembered, too, that the same high and glorious Being, to wit, the Lord Jesus, performed BOTH works. See John i. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 8, 10. And who will question his right to change the mere day from one to another? I repeat, that the duties of the Sabbath are moral, and are also perpetually binding. Yes, in substance, they will be binding, when earthly Sabbaths are known no more; for *they* will be found in that eternal Sabbath, or "rest, which remaineth for the people of God." All believe, *then*, there will be no seventh or first day of the week. All believe, *then*, the redeemed will be employed in praise and obedience, (a part of the duties of the Sabbath,) for ever and for ever. But, as I hinted before, the mere day is *positive* in its very nature, therefore, it may be altered, or repealed, at the pleasure of the lawgiver. I would ask, with reverence, can God ever absolve his creature man from the duties of love and obedience, either in time, or in eternity? If not, then is the Sabbath perpetually binding, under every dispensation; but the day may be changed when the lawgiver sees meet. In addition to these reasons, which satisfy my own mind, it appears very evident, from the example and constant practice of the primitive Church, that the inspired Apostles *did*, with the approbation of the Great Head of the Church, change the day. It

is, moreover, believed, by many, that some of the prophets more than intimated the change long before the advent of Christ into the world. Be this as it may, it is beyond all contradiction, that the Apostles and primitive Christians observed the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, which was, sometimes, by way of distinction, and pre-eminence, called the Lord's day. On this day they met to break bread, and administer and receive the Holy Supper. On this day, especially, did they meet to preach the Word. On this day, they laid by what they could spare for the indigent brethren, and to promote the cause of God. On this day, in a particular manner, they experienced the divine blessing, and the glorious displays of divine power. Witness the day of Pentecost, &c.

A question naturally arises here, to-wit: Would God have given such signal tokens of divine approbation to a palpable violation of his holy day? That is, if the primitive Christians were not acting under his sanction, and by his authority, in changing the Sabbath day, would he, could he have blessed them in that act of violation? Yet there may be some, who, because they have not seen a direct and explicit appointment of the first day of the week, are conscientious about keeping the seventh day still. But, generally, those who are ready to question the change of the mere day, are secretly opposed to the *restraints* of the Sabbath, and would wish, if possible, to do away both, and

every Sabbath day! But, suppose such were to succeed in disproving the change, what would it avail them? The law of the Sabbath is still binding. Do they conscientiously observe *any* day as the Sabbath of the Lord their God? But among those for whom I principally write, I trust there are no doubts, either as it regards the obligations of the Sabbath, its perpetuity, or its change. Therefore, we will proceed to inquire how the holy time should be kept. (For, I am persuaded, that even in our own branch of the Church, there is, in many places, and among many individuals, a most withering and blighting inattention to the Lord's holy day.) In order to give a proper answer to this inquiry, we must advert to the statute itself. Here it is: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." Here, then, is our way-path, the light and lamp to our feet and path, if we would conscientiously observe the Lord's holy day. By analizing the statute, we may see how God requires his holy time to be kept. If God has required us to keep the Sabbath, he has, doubtless, given us such directions in regard to the manner of keeping it, that a sincere desire to know and do our duty, will make

the path entirely plain before us. The proper place to look for these directions, is in the statute itself; and here they are very explicitly given. What duties, then, does it enjoin? "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." This is the first section. Now, to *remember the Sabbath day,* is to anticipate its approach—to think of it often, especially, towards the close of the week, and so to order our secular affairs, that they may not entrench on the beginning of holy time. How many, alas! *forget* the Sabbath, and permit themselves to lie overtaken by it, on the road, in the field, &c. How many *remember it,* not to keep it holy, but to profane it; "by doing their own work, thinking their own thoughts, and finding their own pleasure."

When we inquire how the Sabbath is to be kept or sanctified, every thing depends on the import of the word *holy.* In turning over the sacred pages, it will be found, that a great many things are denominated holy, on account of their being consecrated to the service of God, or set apart *exclusively* for religious purposes. Thus, to give a few examples: The oil with which the tabernacle and its furniture were anointed in the wilderness, was holy oil; Exod. xxx. 25. The crown, worn by the High Priest when he officiated, was a holy crown; Exod. xxix. 9; One-tenth part of the annual produce of Canaan was *holy;* Lev. xxvii. 30. The ark was a holy depository;

2 Chron. xxxv. 3. The temple at Jerusalem was a *holy* building, and so were the vessels belonging to it holy; 1 Chron. xxii. 18, and xxxix. 3. Now, it is obvious, that the holiness of the things above-mentioned, consisted in their being *sanctified*, or set apart from common uses, and employed exclusively in the service of God. Thus, we elsewhere read, "I will sanctify the temple, and the altar. All firstlings of males thou shalt sanctify. I have chosen and sanctified this house in the temple. All vessels have we prepared and sanctified." The tabernacle, the vessels, the temple, &c., were *holy*, because they were dedicated exclusively to the honor and worship of Jehovah.

"Now it is evidently in the same sense, and for the same reason, the Sabbath is called *holy*. It is because God himself sanctified it, or set it apart for a day of holy rest, and religious worship. * * * If we would keep the Sabbath holy, then, we must set it apart as a day of holy rest—must spend it in the public and private exercises of God's worship; not contenting ourselves with the *forms* of religion; not wasting *any* part of the sacred day in sloth; but employing the whole of it in those duties which, through a divine blessing, prepare the soul for heaven. * * * * * *

"It follows, as a necessary consequence, from the preceding observations, that no part of the Sabbath may be devoted to common secular employments

or recreations. For, if the *whole* day must be spent in religious duties, what portion of it is, or can be, left for the indulgence of *worldly thoughts*, or for any of the ordinary labors and relaxations of human life? This single inference, which it appears to us, can neither be evaded nor fairly resisted, overthrows at once most of the pretences by which thousands strive to justify themselves in habitual encroachments upon those sacred hours which God emphatically calls his own. * * * The prohibitions of the Sabbatical law, are thus, stated, in a concise and admirable compend, familiar to many of our readers: 'The fourth commandment forbids the omission, or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about worldly employments or recreations.'"

The statute says, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." Men are here required to do, not the greatest part, but all their work, in *six* days. There is no provision to accommodate the idle, the busy, or the feeble. Every one must admit, that the form of expression amounts to a positive prohibition; for who that must do *all* his work in six days, can be allowed to labor on the seventh? But God saw fit to make the prohibition doubly strong, by adding, "In it thou shalt not do any work." No. "Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid-

servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." Then, "if we have been sick, or providentially called away from business, we must never attempt to redeem the time, by breaking God's law, but trust in his mercy for the supply of our wants." Neither must we permit our children, or servants, or strangers within our gates to do, though they be not professors of religion, what we ourselves feel forbid to do. If we do, we should remember God's dealing with Eli and his sons, because his sons "made themselves vile, and he *restrained* them not."

Again: this statute enjoins mercy to the dumb beasts. These God made, and gave them to man for his use, but not abuse.

But, are some ready to inquire, did not Jesus teach some relaxation of the law of the Sabbath? Let us see. "Going into a synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day, he found there a woman, who had been grievously afflicted with disease for the space of eighteen years, and healed her. Wherefore the ruler of the synagogue thus indignantly rebuked the people: "There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Our Lord, knowing that the rebuke was intended for him, answered: "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath day, loose his ox, or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering; and ought

not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo! these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? And all his adversaries were ashamed."

On another occasion, we read, that "Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn, and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat." Some of the Pharisees happening to be present, charged them with breaking the Sabbath; but our Lord fully justifies his disciples on the ground of present necessity, by replying, "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." The same day our Lord found in the Synagogue, a man whose hand was withered. The Jews, in their usual captious style, asked him, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And he said unto them, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" How much more, then, is a man better than a sheep? "Therefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." This is the Lord's commentary on the Sabbath day. What is the amount? Why, that works of mercy to man or beast, is lawful on the Sabbath day.

Now, my brethren, when we compare the conduct of even multitudes of professors of religion, with the law itself, and with Christ's commentary,

what a most appalling picture does it present? How many ten thousand times does the deceitful heart, and the subtile devil, turn the works of necessity and mercy into mere convenience? Will our perverting the law, and closing our eyes to its true meaning, acquit us in the sight of the eternal Judge? Will the thousand excuses, founded, not in real necessity or mercy, but in our covetousness, sloth, appetites, and wickedness, be found sufficient to justify us in the sight of HIM who searcheth the heart? How will that man who travels on the Lord's day, either for profit or pleasure, account to God? How will that man, who visits on the Lord's day, except to see the sick, or for other religious purposes, justify himself in the sight of the law? How will that man, who *permits* his servants to work, or trade, or roam about on the Sabbath, meet those servants in the judgment? How will that man, who *permits* his children to play, hunt, stroll abroad, neglect the house of God, neglect their books, &c., meet those children, and the Judge or Lawgiver, who has said, "Nor thy son, thy daughter servant," &c.? How will that mistress meet her "maid servant," who is kept at home on the Lord's day to cook, and prepare a better dinner than common, for some expected guest, who may come home with her from the Lord's house to *dine?* How will that master meet his "man servant," in the day of reckoning, who kept him employed on the Lord's morning,

blacking boots, brushing clothes, &c., to help him to appear very nice at the Lord's house? How will that lady, young or old, meet the Judge, who spends a great part of the Sabbath morning, before she goes to meeting, not in adorning herself with a meek, and quiet, and prayerful spirit, but her body, to appear acceptable and lovely in the sight of men? How will that other professor of religion meet his or her Judge, in the trying day, who will not just go a visiting on the holy Sabbath, but will go on Saturday, and then, being from home, will persuade themselves, "it is no harm" to return on the Sabbath? Especially, if they must be at home early on Monday to go to work. But, how will those professors of religion meet the Judge and Lawgiver, who can indulge in worldly conversation on the Lord's day, even going to, at, and on their return from the Lord's house? Is one ready to say, "This is carrying matters too far?" Let us see. "To the law, and the testimony, if we speak not according to this, it is because there is no light in us." In Isa. lviii. 13, God thus speaks to his professed people: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and shalt honor him, not doing thine OWN ways, nor finding thine OWN pleasure, nor speaking thine OWN words," &c. If every case which I have enumerated above, as violations of the Sab-

bath, is not clearly embraced in this passage of God's Word, then I frankly acknowledge I do not know the common meaning of my mother tongue. Our *own* ways, our *own* words, and our *own* pleasures, are especially forbidden. The ways, pleasures, and words, which would be lawful for us in the "six days," are not lawful on, but a direct violation of, the Lord's day. I need not tell the attentive reader of the Bible, that, in many places, it is clearly shown, that Sabbath-breaking was a prominent cause of drawing down the judgment of God on his ancient people. Nor need I, perhaps, tell such, that God has always approbated and blessed that people, who have scrupulously observed and kept his holy day. From the same evangelical prophet, same chapter, and fifteenth verse, "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

If professed Christians will not punctually observe the Lord's day, how can it be expected that the men of the world will do so? If *Christians* let go the holy Sabbath (what a contradiction?) what will become of our world? Does not the looseness of many professors of religion, with regard to the Lord's day, embolden the wicked openly to violate it, and secretly believe it is a matter of little consequence to the world?

If the Christian Sabbath were abolished altogether, how long would it be before pagan darkness would overspread our whole land? I deliberately believe, that if the Sabbath were entirely abolished, that Christianity, without a miraculous dispensation of heaven, would, in two centuries, be entirely extinct.

What nation can prosper without a Sabbath? What state, or community, or Church, or family, ever has prospered long, in the proper sense of that word, without a Sabbath? Did you ever know a Church, or individual, to enjoy God, and be useful, who did not strictly regard the Sabbath? I feel grateful to God, that our nation, as such, recognizes the holy Sabbath. The most, if not all the States, have statutes which make it penal to labor on the Sabbath. Their civil transactions are done in the "*six days*." Except in criminal cases, process is not served on the Sabbath. Contracts are not binding on that day, nor are moneys collectable by law, on the Christian Sabbath. Their Legislative bodies do not sit, nor their courts, juries, &c., on the Sabbath. And our Federal Government, for the most part, are governed by similar regulations. There was, indeed, a refusal on the part of our national legislature to repeal a law that seems, and does sanction, the violation of the Sabbath. I mean the post office law. It is true that, if all our citizens were as they should be, that is, if they

were all engaged, scrupulously obeying the paramount law of God, which enjoins the observance and sanctification of the Sabbath, the law of Congress, on that subject, would be nugatory. For it does not compel men to undertake contracts, or carry, or open the mail. Yet the law sanctions the violation of the Sabbath. And I conscientiously believe, that it ought to be repealed in time of *peace*, at any rate. It *may* be right, it may be even a necessary act of *mercy*, to permit the mail to be carried in a time of *war*. But I have never seen an argument, neither from the committee which reported on that subject, nor elsewhere, that has the weight of a feather on my mind, to prove it right to carry and open the mail on the Sabbath, in time of profound peace. And if all who bear the Christian name were to unite and petition on this subject, their voice would not be disregarded. But, I repeat, if the holy Sabbath were kept by all our citizens, as God requires it should be, even out of Congress, the Legislature would be compelled to repeal the post office law, for they could get none to execute it. Would to God this were the enviable condition of this nation.

But have Christians, and, especially, Christian ministers, done, or are they doing, all they can, by precept and example, to impress the minds of the community with the obligation and benefit of the Sabbath? May not much of the guilt of the

increased *disregard* of the Sabbath be resting on the Church? Does not Heaven and earth expect the visible Church to keep this holy ark, of our religious and political safety, from the pollution of modern infidels? That is, are not all who name the name of Jesus, doubly bound to commend the observation of the Sabbath to every man's conscience? Do ministers of the gospel advert to it as often in their pulpits, and as earnestly as they should do? Do they always give *practical* evidence of their sincerity on this subject? I doubt not, my brethren, but the loose manner in which the Sabbath is kept, together with its open violation, may be one prominent reason why clouds, thick clouds, hang over many parts of our Zion.

I hinted before, that the Scriptures gave many accounts of God's displeasure, on account of Sabbath-breaking. And I will add, that the attentive observer, and reader of ecclesiastical history, may see, that in various ages of the Christian world, down to the present time, God, by his providence, from time to time, has given signs of his marked displeasure against the violation of this holy law, both as it regards individuals and nations. How many have confessed, under the sentence of death, that their crime was traceable to Sabbath-breaking? How many thousands of individuals have been suddenly cut off in the very act of Sabbath-breaking?

How often has God vindicated the honor of his holy day, by punishing nations, armies, and fleets which have disregarded his Sabbaths? One of the first acts of avowed atheism, in revolutionary France, was to abolish the Sabbath; and the Lord came out against them with "fire, and with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire." Well appointed fleets and armies have often been discomfited in their offensive operations on the Sabbath. "Three remarkable instances occur to us, at this moment, in the history of the late war. The first was an attack which the British made, and their total defeat on Lake Erie. The second was the battle on Lake Champlain and at Plattsburg. The third was the last assault upon the American lines before New Orleans. All these sanguinary battles were fought, unless we are greatly mistaken, on the Lord's day; in each the assailant met with a signal overthrow. Let politicians and historians ascribe all this to valor, or chance, or whatever else they please, we shall still regard such events as no equivocal testimony of the anger of God against the despisers of the Sabbath." Let the Sabbath-breaker fear, for God is always noticing his conduct. Let the lovers of Jesus, and all his holy institutions, be constrained not only to regard his holy day, but to do all they can to induce others to do so. Surely, every true disciple, who is living in

the enjoyment of God, rejoices that God, in his infinite love, mercy, and goodness, has appointed *one* day in seven, to be set apart, peculiarly, to make preparation for that rest which remains for his people, where there shall be a perpetual Sabbath.

In conclusion, I would earnestly recommend the Christian public, and especially Cumberland Presbyterian ministers, to obtain, and read, and study, a little work titled "HUMPHREY ON THE SABBATH." I consider it the *best* work for the length of it, I have ever seen on the subject, particularly in explaining those passages in the New Testament, which some have pretended go to prove that the Sabbath is abolished.

LECTURE XXXI.

ON SUPPORTING THE GOSPEL.

I HAVE long been impressed, that the Church generally, but especially that branch to which I belong, has been criminally negligent on the subject of supporting the gospel with the substance God has given them. There are some, I trust many, honorable exceptions; but in the judgment, I am fearful, that even such cases will be found but too few. There has been a false delicacy among preachers, which has made them afraid to touch this subject, lest they be chargeable with selfishness, covetousness, &c. And for the guilt contracted by that omission of duty, it is no wonder that many of them are often in a strait, to know what is present duty; and also in straitened circumstances, in a pecuniary point of view. If it be not a part of God's council, then, indeed, they should not touch the subject. But, if it be, then our human reasoning to the contrary on the subject, is criminal in the sight of God. True, it but ill becomes some preachers to enforce the

duty of supporting the gospel, on the laity. I mean such as do it with an eye to their own benefit; and, at the same time, address a people, who know that their hearts are not in the work of saving souls; but who give practical evidence that they care more for the money than the soul. Nothing of the kind is so disgusting as to hear a lazy, carnal, worldly-minded, inefficient preacher, always prating about stipends, and grumbling because the people will not keep him up in comparative idleness. Such men ought never to open their mouths about support. But the minister, who gives evidence that his whole soul is in the work of building up God's kingdom in the world, is bound to declare the whole counsel of God, that of supporting the Gospel, as well as other Bible doctrines. As an individual, I am free from the temptation of false delicacy, for it is known by very many that, for various reasons, I have, long since, determined I would not "be chargeable to any of you." Therefore I can speak the more freely on this subject.

If I know my heart in this matter, my only reason for writing on, or bringing this subject to view, at this time, is to endeavor to promote God's cause in the salvation of my fellow men. I have been, and am now, deeply impressed with the belief, that had our people done their reasonable duty, in this respect, many more souls would have been saved from eternal ruin than have been.

I think it altogether probable, that there are many souls now in hell that would not have been there, had the Church done her duty in this one particular. "I am not mad, but speak the words of truth and soberness."

I take it for granted, that every called minister of Jesus Christ would give himself *wholly* to the work of the ministry, if he and his could be supported. Yes, wholly to the work, if a single man, and principally if a married man. Now, my brethren, look around you, and consider if all the ministers of the Gospel, in the bounds of your acquaintance, whom you believe to be called of God to minister in holy things, had been all, or a principal part of their time, both on Sabbath and other days, at home and abroad, laboring for the good of souls, what would have been the probable results? If he be a settled pastor, and his mind had been freed from *necessary* worldly cares, anxieties, and perplexities, by the liberality of his people, how much more *useful* would he have been? If, as a settled pastor, he could have been so situated that he could have spent his time in prayer, reading, studying the Scriptures, &c., how much more spiritual and impressive, and useful would his conversation, his evening lectures, his visits, and all his sermons have been? and how much more spiritual health, and vigor, and comfort, would his people have enjoyed? How many more precious souls, in the bounds of his

congregation, would have been snatched as brands from the eternal burning! But, had he been inclined to become an itinerant minister, (as many of them, both married and single, would, if they could,) how many more precious souls would have been saved from the damnation of hell, through their instrumentality? The good the Church might have done in this way, and the evil she has done by omitting her duty, can only be known in the general judgment. I have been acquainted with but few, if any ministers of our body, who have bodily strength, that would not willingly leave their families, and forego all the pleasures or happiness of domestic life, and travel, and preach, and administer, all their time, could they be but provided with the means of but a bare support for themselves and families. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion, that it is not for want of preachers, that our own country, in many places, is so badly supplied with the word and ordinances; but that it is for want of liberality in the people, particularly the members of the Church. The great Lord of the harvest, who has taught his people to pray for more labourers, will send a sufficient supply, if the people will make a proper disposition of them. But, Oh! how exceedingly inconsistent is it, for Christians to pray to the Lord to send more labourers, while they, through covetousness, refuse to employ those whom the Lord has already sent!

I doubt not, but the Lord has sent or laid a necessity on many to preach the Gospel, in answer to the prayers of the people, and perhaps that very people have tied the hands of those very preachers by their parsimony! The consequence has been the most perplexing embarrassment in the mind of the preacher. He feels bound up in his spirit to warn sinners; and he would do it every day if he could, but the Church refuses to loosen his hands. It would, then, appear at least an act of mercy to your fellow creature, in this particular, if you would quit praying the Lord to send more labourers into his vineyard, at least till you make up your minds to loose their hands when God calls them.

It seems cruel to pray God to set a sense of his "woe" on men, to thrust them into the work of the ministry, and then for us to refuse to hold up their hands. O, says one, I do pray for the preachers. But do you, my brother, remember, that your prayers will not feed and clothe them? Do you pray for them, because it is a cheaper way of assisting them than ministering to their wants? If this be the case, God is observing the whole matter. If we hide our motives from ourselves, we cannot hide them from God. I love to hear that man, rich or poor, who has given, and who is ready to give, "according as God has prospered him," of his earthly substance to support the missionary, either at home or abroad, praying the

Lord of the harvest to send more laborers. Such prayers go up before the throne of God perfumed by the merits of that blood which was shed for sinners.

But, says one, I have been giving for such objects all I could spare. Spare for what? Your real wants? Or all that you could spare without abridging any of your comforts, elegancies, gratifications, &c.? These are questions, my brother, you must answer to God and your conscience. For myself, I doubt not but that, if all the money which is spent in pandering to "the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eye, and to the pride of life," apart from real necessities, or even comforts, were laid up by the Church, it would constitute a fund, which, if well appropriated, would be a means of saving thousands from eternal horror.

Owing to our custom, to our selfishness, to maxims, &c, I am persuaded the Church is more blind, perhaps, on this subject, than any other duty she owes to God and man. For how many do we hear say, I am willing to do any thing in this way, but I am not able. Now, if this be really true, and your own inability is not the result of your own faults, then are you perfectly clear; then may you approach God, as it regards this thing, with a perfect good conscience. But are not many pleading inability in this case, who are not sincere? Or who are so far from God, that they do not see the matter as it really is? I am

persuaded that there are many who have, in the dispensation of God's providence, become embarrassed in making, as the phrase is, "the two ends meet." But, perhaps, the reason is, because they have "withholden more than was meet," when God, in his providence, has been calling for a part of his own money. It is no wonder that *such* professors are often sorely pressed to get along in the world. Their stock die; their crops are scanty; adverse providences seem to hedge up their way; they can't get along.

I have told some, and would now tell all who may happen to read these sheets, that the best way, the surest way to prosper, even in this world, is to be ready to give, according to our means, every time God, in his providence, calls for a part of the substance with which he has entrusted us. This thought is both Scriptural and reasonable. Who fills our barns with plenty, or causes our stock, or trade, or business to flourish? Who sends, or restrains the hurricane, drouth, mildew, or blasting? Who preserves, or takes away the life of our animals? Who gives us, and our families health, or takes it away, and often taxes us with enormous doctor's bills? The answer is easy, except to infidels. But what says God's book, as touching these matters? "He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly." Again: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

Again: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Long observation has confirmed my opinion, that I do not misinterpret the Scriptures in this matter. I have uniformly observed, that those living, warm-hearted Christians, who, whether rich or poor, always contributed something to the support of the Gospel, especially those who were most liberal, got through the world quite smoothly, always finding food and raiment; and time to go to meeting on week days, as well as Sabbaths. It is no fiction, my brethren, it is true; and God has so ordained it, that he who does sinfully withhold, *decreaseth;* and that he that scattereth with an eye to God's honor, and to do good to his fellow men, "*increaseth.*" This is true, as it regards *this* world. But how the account will stand in the next, with those who would rather let souls be damned than part with that with which God has entrusted them, and has called for, I leave to the Eternal.

Some complain, and not without cause, that the burden is very unequal; that is, comparatively a few have to do the chief of what is done, while a great majority are doing comparatively little. This I have always observed myself, and regretted. But the unwillingness of the majority must not prevent the willing few from doing their duty. Mark me, my brethren, those who are not bearing an equal burden, according to their means, are most assuredly scattering not to gather again in

temporal or spiritual things. When all enjoy equal benefit, equal privileges, and are equally bound by God's word, it is most reasonable, that they should contribute equally according to their several circumstances. But here another difficulty arises, for none are *compelled* by the laws of their country —and I thank God for it—nor by those of the Church, to give any thing; and each one is ready to say, his neighbor could do more if he would, but I cannot, &c. I would just remark, here, by the bye, that the great difficulty, after all, is the want of a *willing* mind. On the score of equalizing, those who are willing to do their duty, to do what God requires, can come at it very correctly. Not long since, in a neighboring congregation, a beloved brother, who was wealthy, and who had always been liberal, proposed for each member to take his tax list, or receipts, and make it the criterion by which each one should be governed, and that each one contribute, at least, that much for the purpose of supporting home missionaries. The proposition was acceded to; and I think it an excellent regulation, especially, if the brethren feel (and I presume they do,) as much bound to pay that, as their taxes. Why should they not feel as much bound? One is a debt they owe to their country; and the other a debt they owe to God.

Permit me to inquire, in this place, what would be the results, if even this sum, though small,

were considered a debt which we owe to God, and conscientiously discharged for the purpose of keeping called ministers in the field of constant labor? What, brethren, think you, would be the result? None but God can certainly tell. But no intelligent Christian doubts, but very many more souls would be born of God. Yes, thousands more, perhaps, every year, would be added to the little flock, such as should be saved. But, suppose only one hundred more would be plucked as brands from the eternal burning, could not these outweigh all the gold and silver in the world? When we attempt to calculate the value of souls by gold and silver, we are confounded. It cannot be done. There are a tender-hearted few, who wish to do duty in this thing, as well as in all others; but they are often at a loss to know the precise amount that they ought to give. They are afraid of their own hearts, and of offending God. To such I would just remark, that the safest and most comfortable way to keep your wills so subdued by prayer, through the aid of divine grace, as always to feel what you are ready to do, what God would have you to do, regardless of consequences. Then when a call is presented to your minds, and you are doubtful, ask God to direct you; and, if he sees that you sincerely desire to know his will in this matter, that you may do it. I am persuaded he will not let you err, so as to offend him, or bring guilt on your souls.

I would hope that there are none who "name the name of Jesus," in this day of light, that do deny the obligations of all Christians to support the Gospel; that is, to support all the "called of God, as was Aaron," who are actively and perseveringly engaged in the appropriate work of the ministry. If there be any such, I will call their attention to a few plain passages of God's word, as touching this point.

Matt. x. 7. "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the 9th and 10th verses, we have the promise of their support. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; *for the workman is worthy of his meat.*" In 1 Cor. ix. 11, 13, 14, we have these very unequivocal words, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things." "Do you not know, that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple; and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar?" "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." We could quote many more, but these seem so explicit, and incapable of misconstruction, that we think it unnecessary. This, with much more, is the authority on which I predicate my argument. And it does seem to me, that a Christian, who

will still persist in disobeying the injunction, after looking at, and contemplating what "the Word" says on this subject, is unworthy of the name, and is not, in heart, bound by any other commandment of God. See to it, my professing brethren, there is a day coming, nay, as regards many of us, it is near at hand, when we can neither bribe our consciences, nor turn away from the light.

But I wish to be distinctly understood. It is not every preacher for whom I plead. Not for him that has his farm, and merchandise, and shops, by which he is supporting himself and family, and seems contented in that situation; and who, on Sabbath morning, occasionally picks up his Bible, goes to Church, and gives you a sapless harangue. By no means. But, I repeat, it is the called of God, who is doing, or who would do, all in his power to save souls from eternal death, if his hands were loosed, if he could leave his family without their suffering for the necessaries of life. These are the men that God, and conscience, and reason, and the Bible, and our duty, and the state of the world, and the love of Christ, all unite in declaring, that we should give of our carnal things, and that in sufficient quantities, too, to keep them and their families comfortable, and enable them to go from place to place, proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of the vengeance of our God." Oh, who will close their bowels

of compassion, while so many precious souls are starving! Who will keep back a part of the price, Ananias-like, when God's honor, God's kingdom, and God's SOULS are so loudly calling for it? Who will keep it back, for the sake of gratifying pride or appetite, children or wife, or any thing else, when souls *would* be born unto God, if it were given up freely? Is there a congregation in our religious connexion, how small soever, but could, if they were determined to do so, keep, at least, one *called* minister constantly engaged in preaching the Gospel? Are there not many congregations, if they would unite, and *decree* in their hearts to do so, that could keep two or three able ministers constantly employed in planting and watering Churches for the living God? Oh, brethren, my heart is full, I know not how to express myself on this subject. I see, in some degree, what good could be done, and quickly done, if the professors of religion would do what God requires of them. Many, who ought to give ten or twenty dollars, are easing their conscience, by giving one or two; others who ought to give fifty, or a hundred, by giving ten or twenty.

While I have been pleading for support to those ministers who are longing to go and be extensively useful, I would not be understood as *neglecting* the indigent brethren, who often require our aid in food and raiment. Neither

would I lose sight of the benevolent institutions of the day. I, myself, have recently subscribed fifteen dollars towards employing an agent to ride ten months through the land, to promote the cause of temperance; and I feel thankful to God for the privilege. Our money is all the Lord's, and when we use it according to his directions, it is a blessing to us and to our fellow-creatures.

Preachers who are able, without the aid of the Church, to spend their time in doing all the good they can, are, in duty, bound to do it, notwithstanding the Church may not give them any thing. I do not say it would not be an act of justice for the Church to remunerate them for their time and their expenses in serving the Church. But, I do say, if the Church refuse to do so, it is not a sufficient excuse for them not to labor. If God, in his providence, has placed them in such a situation, that they can spend much time in the work of the ministry, and their family not suffer, they are bound to do it, if the Church give them not a cent. Indeed, I think such men ought not to receive any thing; or, if they do, they ought to give it to some indigent preacher, to enable him to work for the Lord. Again, those preachers who have set down contentedly with a determination to make their own living, and spend but little or no time in study or serving the Church, except occasionally, on the

Sabbath, are under as great obligations to support the Gospel, according to their circumstances, as any lay member in their neighborhood. He is, by no means exempt because he is a preacher, or called one. It is to be feared that there are many preachers, who have it in their power to contribute to the support of the Gospel, but do not because they are preachers; and, perhaps, at the same time, they do not spend as much time in serving the Church as many lay members that are not in as good circumstances as themselves. I know one preacher, at least, who spends a great part of his time in serving the Church in various ways; in addition to which, he gives, for benevolent purposes, and for the promotion of the gospel kingdom, in the course of the year, as much as half, if not as much as almost the whole of the congregation in which he lives. And that congregation is worth, in a pecuniary point of view, more than five times as much, yes, perhaps ten times as much as that preacher. Yet, I have often heard him say, that he did not do enough.

And now, in conclusion, I will say to the heaven-born and heaven-called ministers of Jesus Christ, that we are bound to do all we can to preach the Gospel, whether the people do their duty or not; and I am persuaded, that too many of us live by sight, and have too little faith as it respects this matter. I know the people have been criminally

remiss in supporting the Gospel. But I do believe, if the true minister of Jesus would launch out, determined to go as long as he can, be spiritually humble, dependent, "commending himself to every man's conscience," preach the whole truth, tell the people he wishes to continue in the work, but that he cannot, without their aid or liberality, that God would open their hearts, and induce them to support him.

May God give preachers and people light which will produce *action* on the subject!

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