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The Salvation of Sinners through the riches of Divine Grace.

TWO HOMILIES,

PRONOUNCED AT

ONEIDA CASTLE,

IN THE AUDIENCE OF THE ONEIDA INDIANS AT THEIR

Eighth Triennial Anniversary,

SINCE THE CONVERSION OF SIX HUNDRED PAGANS OF THAT TRIBE
TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH:

On the 8th of August, 1841.

BY ELÉAZER WILLIAMS, V. D. M.

*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.—Psalm cx. 3.
Shall a nation be born at once?—Isaiah lxvi. 8.*

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Such is the interesting fact of the conversion of the ONEIDA INDIANS, to the Christian faith, under the Ministry of the Rev. Mr. WILLIAMS, that the Editor has been induced to insert in the Appendix, several extracts in relation to it, from different publications; among the rest, Bishop Hobart's address to the Convention.

HOMILY 1.

THE SALVATION OF SINNERS THROUGH THE RICHES OF DIVINE GRACE.

Nothing less than the love and respect I have for the Onieda Nation, and a disposition to do what is within my power to aid in commemorating an event in which I was deeply interested, would have induced me to hazard a feeble voice in addressing you—a voice long unused to speak in public, and which perhaps may fail me on this occasion. But I am addressing a friendly and candid audience.

“Let the words of our mouth, and the meditations of our heart be now and ever acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength, and our Redeemer.”

EPHESIANS, Chap. ii. ver. 4—7.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.”

MY BRETHREN—What an accumulation of grand, of sublime ideas is here presented to our view. With the Psalmist must every pious Christian unite and testify, that the meditation of God is sweet unto him. It is on this subject, difficult to decide which most to admire, whether the grace of God, the benefactor, or the felicity of those who are made to participate in his blessings. The paragraph which now lies before us, requires that we give our present attention to that most delightful of all revealed doctrines, THE RICHES OF DIVINE GRACE. In the verses immediately preceding our text, the Apostle here strikingly exhibited the affecting state of the idolatrous and unregenerate world. He here in animated strains, displays the grace of God, and the glory and happiness of His chosen and sanctified people. This grace, in the passage which we now have under consideration is magnified by St. Paul in bringing up to view,

*Its Origin,
Its Operations, and
Its Results.*

I. To illustrate and display this grace, the Apostle states *its origin or source*. God is rich in mercy, and abundant in love, and these if we may credit the testimony of God himself, are most favorite attributes of Godhead. "And the Lord passed by," says Moses, "and proclaimed I am the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." And in the display of these darling perfections he declares he has peculiar delight. "Who," says the Prophet, "is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighted in mercy." Of these attributes, and these exercises, there exists in the heart of God an inexhaustible fountain. Thus the Apostle witnesses, "the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." They have in all ages since the apostacy flown down upon this guilty world, even upon the most vile and unworthy creatures: and assurance is given us, that they will continue to flow undiminished to all eternity. While God remains the same He cannot cease to possess and exhibit these adorable and darling perfections, for says St. John, "God is Love."

Here, then, my brethren, we discover the source, the uncreated and unchangeable source of all the mercy which has been manifested towards fallen, self-ruined and justly condemned man. Adam in the character and state of a rebel, certainly could present nothing which should merit the favorable attention of his abused Maker; he had voluntarily, and in opposition to all possible motives plunged himself, and all that he represented into a state of hopeless and unfathomable guilt and woe. But in this awful, and in the estimation of all created intelligences, pitiable situation, the bowels of his good, but abused Maker yearned over him. "Adam," says he, "where art thou?" The divine solicitude expressed in their affectionate (perhaps we may say in this plaintive) enquiry is very striking. His Creator wounded and grieved by his transgression and apostacy, still entertained designs of mercy towards him and was disposed to show him compassion.

We perhaps may justly conceive of God's feelings towards Adam and his ruined race, as expressed by the Prophet when he says, "how shall I give thee up Ephraim, how shall I deliver thee Israel, how shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee Zeboim, mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together, I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God, and not man."

On this ground it was that the Saviour of the world appeared, if we may credit his own declarations. "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."

In this view we can readily account for all the calls, invitations and offers of mercy and salvation which have been made to a perishing world, and on no other ground can it possibly be accounted for,

that a single individual of the countless millions of human sinners, now encircling the throne of Heaven, was ever redeemed from the ruins of sin. Wherefore, in order to form just conceptions of the greatness of that grace, and the abundance of that love which has been manifested towards us, we must contemplate it,

II. *In its operations.*

And my Brethren, in thousands of ways, has this self-created and infinite grace been displayed towards us. But let our attention at this time be limited to its operations as they are enumerated and set forth in the passage chosen for our text. And says the Apostle, "God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us even when we were dead in sins." What the Apostle means when he asserts that we were dead in sins, is instantly made evident, by what he states in the verses preceding the text. He there represents that we were walking according to the course of this world, that we were the voluntary and chosen vassals of Satan, that we were indulging every species of filthiness, both of the flesh and of the spirit, and that finally we were giving the most demonstrative proof, that by nature as well as practice, we were children of wrath, and that in addition to all this we were utterly destitute of all power to help and save ourselves. That when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. In this unhallowed, this unhappy, this forlorn situation, did God look upon us in tender compassion. Strikingly does Jehovah illustrate this idea, when by the mouth of Ezekiel, he says, "when I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live, yea I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live;" and as the Apostle declares, we were thus quickened, when dead in sins, by the same spirit, by which he raised Christ Jesus from the dead. By this transaction which could be effected only by Omnipotence, we were united together with Christ, and rendered conformable to him as one head.

In view of these things, my Brethren, shall we, can we forbear to exclaim with St. John, "behold what manner of love, the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. And not only has He quickened us when we were dead in sin;" but further, He has also raised us up and enthroned us together with Christ in Heaven.

The holy Apostle had previously stated, and in a lively manner expatiated upon what God wrought for Christ; what, he enquires, is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe? He replies, "it is according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." In our text he draws a parallel between all true Christians and their Savior, and represents, that what was done for Christ is to be considered as done for every member of his mystical body. In this view Christians are to

be considered as figuratively risen with Christ, and as already enthroned with Him in Heaven. There are their hearts, there is their conversation and there is their rest. "For our conversation" says the Apostle, "is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

In what a striking manner does He in all this exemplify and establish the testimony of the Prophet, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among Princes, and to make them inherit the throne of Glory."

Verily, my Brethren, here are most richly and wonderfully displayed, the exceeding riches of Divine Grace. And this stupendous display of grace will appear altogether worthy of God, if we contemplate it as proposed;

III. *In its end, or final result.*

"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." Not only is God the author or origin: He is also the end, or final result of all things. It would be utterly unworthy of a Being of infinite benevolence, to do any thing which should not result in His own glory; it is impossible therefore that the infinite Jehovah, should not have this always in His view, and in all his operations, aim at its accomplishment. That the manifestation of himself and display of his own glory was the express purpose for which He revealed His grace, our Apostle assures us in the preceding chapter, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all Spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children of Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will; to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.' And my Brethren, this end or purpose is in some good measure already attained. The exhibition which God has made of His sovereign and unbounded mercy, both toward the Jewish and Gentile world, will form a subject of adoring wonder, throughout all ages to the end of time. Every individual who is made a subject of this distinguished love and kindness of God our Savior, must of necessity admire the act and celebrate the author with adoring praise—the exceeding riches of this grace is unsearchable, and is infinitely enhanced by the circumstance of its flowing to us through Christ Jesus.

To eternity will the price which He has paid for these blessings, endure them to the happy and highly honored possessors. As yet the great designs of redeeming mercy are by no means fully answered, but my Brethren, the day approaches when God will stand forth in view of the congregated creation, before assembled worlds clothed in all the riches of His grace, forming an essential part of the splendid robes of his glory. Rich and glorious indeed will this grace

appear in the day of final and eternal Judgment. Then the awful depths of guilt and sin into which we were plunged with the whole human family, will be laid open and exposed to the view of Angels and men. Then also will the spring and source of this abounding love; of these riches of grace be clearly discovered. There then will all these wonderful operations and glorious fruits be exhibited and beheld in one view. How will every eye then admire, and every tongue then adore. Surely nothing short of the acquisition of such infinite good, could call into operation, and make such a display of infinite grace.

Let every individual, therefore, be excited to the most ardent and unfainting exertion to experience these operations and be made the subject of this saving mercy, and let the debtor to grace, every sincere Christian, show forth his sense of obligation, for the kindness of God his Savior towards him, by a life devoted to His praise, and particularly by exertions to spread the sweet savor of His name among men, especially among those who have never heard of the name of Jesus. My Christian Brethren, by far the greater portion of the inhabited earth is enveloped in thick clouds of superstition and error—not knowing even the first principles of the Gospel of Christ. In the days of the Apostles, in most, if not all those extensive and populous regions, where they went preaching Christianity, the human race seemed scarcely to have received any distinct ideas on the subject of religion. Those of them who had any sense of their dependence and accountability vainly imagined that there were many gods, and those very much such beings as themselves—and those of them who had any apprehension of their depravity and guilt, were totally at a loss with respect to any method of recovery to purity and happiness. Idolatry and ignorance—bigotry and delusion, every where prevailed, and men groped after truth and enjoyment in a dark and comfortless path. Such was, my Brethren, the deplorable moral and religious state of your ancestors when the apostolic men went forth to declare unto them the Gospel of the grace of God, and acquaint them with the things that belonged to their peace. They were ignorant of divine truth and strangers to pure religion, and this is the case in every age and in every country, not excepting even those which are called Christians. Our own day and country bear witness to this fact. The rising generation, children and youth in vast numbers remain ignorant of the God who made them, and have no just apprehension of the nature and extent of his law. They have heard probably of a Savior, but of his true character and the nature of his salvation they have no knowledge. Foolishness is bound up in their hearts and they need to be taught the great principles of revealed religion. Yes, and even to those who have arrived to mature age, and would resent the accusation of ignorance.

Since infinite wisdom has ordained that by the foolishness of preaching all them that believe should be saved, how deeply interesting is the employment and how solemnly affecting the responsibility of the constituted ambassadors of Christ. Since the Gospel, through the influence of the Holy Ghost, is made the power of God

to the instruction and awakening, conversion and comfort of perishing sinners, how infinitely important is a steady and conscientious attendance upon its ministration, to those who live within reach of the joyful sound.

Those whom Christ calls, and commands, and commissions, to go forth in his name warning their fellow sinners of their guilt and condemnation, urging them to flee from impending wrath and to believe the Gospel, are often forced to the adoption of the Prophet's complaint: "I have labored in vain and spent my strength for naught; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." But at other seasons they find to their abundant joy, that their "doctrines drop as the rain and distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herbs, and as the showers upon the grass, and the fields are made white unto the harvest." They find the plain and pungent preaching of the Gospel comes with power upon their hearers; that sinners, yea, pagan Infidels are converted, and Saints built up in faith and holiness, in knowledge and comfort unto salvation. Sometimes they plant and water, preach and pray, reprove and exhort with all diligence and fervour, with all long suffering and doctrine, but seemingly to no purpose—little or no apparent increase, few new converts, and old Christians like the foolish virgins all asleep. Whilst at other times the word preached, seems to profit, it takes hold of men's hearts, sinners are alarmed and aroused, are filled with deep solicitude about their souls and eternity. With Peter's hearers they are pricked to the heart and exclaim, "Men and Brethren what shall we do?" And as the trembling Jailor, cried to Paul and Silas, they enquire with deep anxiety, "what must we do to be saved?" Such seasons as these most of us have witnessed, and all who love the truth, and long for the salvation of poor and perishing souls, will say, that they are truly times of refreshing; then the door is open for the greater usefulness of the preacher. He proceeds in his work with comfort and joy, animated by the prospect of having immortal souls for the seals of his fidelity, and the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

To these things, my Brethren, we are not utter strangers. We have seen such times, we have experienced such feelings. There has been visible among you in years past, a hearing ear—a solemn and interested attention to subjects of eternal moment—yes, since your first conversion in 1817, to the Christian faith, with what engagedness and tender affection some of you have on Sundays and other days of the week listened to the words of eternal life. And may I hope that some of the seed then sown, and since watered, is springing up to everlasting life. In all such instances, those days will be remembered with praise and thanksgiving to God to all eternity. In such a period and in such a place, the faithful Christian Minister will with feeling, adopt the language of the Holy Apostle and declare, "a great door and effectual is opened unto me."

The relation which I have sustained among you, my Brethren, cannot fail to give a lively interest in your welfare, and excite a tender sensibility in the transactions of this day;—commemorating

the glorious event, when six hundred of the Onaida Nation, who had been pagans from time immemorial, embraced the Christian faith under the ministry of him who now addresses you. What hour was that to which your nation had arrived? When their aged and venerable Chiefs, counsellors, matrons, and warriors with uplifted hands, and with countenances indicating their minds to be deeply affected, they unitedly, with a loud voice renounced the principles of paganism, and made their profession in the Christian faith. In the former, said they, "we no longer own the name of Pagans; we have abandoned our idols and our sacrifices, and have fixed our hope on our blessed Redeemer. In evidence of this assertion, we here tender to your Excellency,* solemnly and unequivocally, our abjuration of Paganism and its rites; and take the Christian's God to be our God, and our only hope of salvation." In the latter, "we believe in God the Father, the creator and preserver of all things. We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God—the Savior of the world. We believe in God the sanctifier and comforter of all the Children of men. We believe in a general resurrection, and a future judgment, in which all mankind shall be judged according to their works. We believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and that in them are contained all things necessary to man's salvation."

This was the most interesting and solemn hour you have ever known. An hour, from which your whole future life is to draw its chief importance and prospects! An hour, big with consequences which will extend through all eternity. Such was the religious profession of your belief then made—made to the Triune God, in the sight of His holy Angels and Saints upon earth. How far your life and conversation have since been conformable to it—we leave to your conscience to answer the solemn enquiry.

Permit me to say again, my Brethren, that while with emotions of the liveliest sensibility, I would recall to mind and congratulate you on the accomplishment of your wishes, when you, then pagans and the first Christian party, were committed to my pastoral charge. With heart-felt gratitude I rejoice that the attachment which was then formed, has been preserved with most of you, without abatement: and ye are witnesses to the sincerity and ardour with which I have endeavored to promote your temporal welfare and spiritual edification. Still shall I cherish in accordance to your wishes, an affectionate regard towards you, and be disposed to do you every office of friendly attention or ministerial service, which may be useful to you, whenever my health will permit, and the providence of God open an effectual door for that purpose.

Ah! my Brethren, if the Prince of darkness and his emissaries had not entered into the Onaida Mission, as he did into the garden of Eden, you might have still enjoyed the labors of him, who was made an humble instrument in the hands of God, to convince and lead you to acknowledge Jesus as your God and redeemer. But Satan and wicked men were alarmed at the great reformation that was going

*Daniel T. Tompkins.

on among you. They would destroy and put an end to the glorious work, and this they eventually effected by various means. The great adversary is ever fruitful in his devices to injure the cause of Christ. Sometimes by his instigation men may assume the appearance and character of Christians, when they are "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity." Being deceived themselves, they would deceive others, under pretence of building up the Kingdom of the Redeemer among men, they will carry a sanctimonious carriage and with a zeal which becomes the true followers of Christ. Not only these, but they would become the heralds of the Prince of Peace. And it is hoped not for the sake of "the fishes and the loaves," that they would thus take this ministry upon them, but for the love of Christ and the souls of men. We are not to judge our fellow men any further, than we are permitted by Him who is ordained to be our final Judge. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

When men of this description, my Brethren, are introduced into the ministry of the Gospel, what may we expect of them, but to rend the body of Christ, and to scatter the Sheep, which proved to be the most unhappy consequence that followed on our separation. It is with a bleeding heart that I take a retrospective view to the time when the Church of Christ among you was rent in twain. The authors and agents of that evil work, have taken an awful responsibility upon themselves. Their first object was the removal of your Missionary from Oneida—and to effect this, the spirit of discord was carefully fermented in the nation; Yes, my Brethren, those who were in the work of darkness employed most insidious means, by which you became gradually divided on the subject of religion, and were easily led captive by those who would say to others, "stand by, I am holier than thou." Extreme is the guilt of those who scatter poisonous errors, or sow discord among the Brethren, and cause divisions and offences in the Churches—who seduce the people from their Pastor, and weaken the salutary instructions; these are open enemies to Christ—these are counterworking his benevolent plan—these are bringing on themselves swift destruction.

The same opposition against his continuance in the Nation as a Missionary, he again experienced at Green Bay in 1832. After a severe toil for a series of years, to bring the Vineyard which he was cultivating to a state of perfection, and having spent a little fortune in his humble attempts to promote the spiritual and temporal interest of the Oneidas, and to sustain the honor of the Episcopal Church, among the whites in that part of the country, he was once more necessitated to retire from the Nation. This was in consequence of certain representations made by the elective, (against which was strongly protested by the Hereditary Chiefs) to the Bishop of New York, who undoubtedly from the best motives, was moved to withdraw his former sanction of his officiating to the Nation as a missionary*. This was done too by the Bishop, without any investigation

*The Oneidas living as they do under the government of their Chiefs, who would not only control the Civil but also the Ecclesiastical concerns of the Tribe, instead of leaving the latter, at least, in some measure to the communicants, has

into the "pretended causes of the difficulties then existing between the Missionary and some of the chiefs." And, whether this course of proceeding in such cases, was in conformity to the canons of the Church, he humbly leaves now as he did formerly to the Bishop for his decision.

To disunite the Missionary from his charge, similar means as formerly were resorted to. Alas! another scene of discord and confusion was spreading among you—old friendship was broken up—deadly hostilities took their place—and you soon became a subject of triumph for your enemies, and of deep distress and anxiety to your friends. This great and lamentable change, was most unhappily not for the best interest of religion, nor for your spiritual improvement—and those who have thus thrust the torch of discord between the parties to divide them, must on calm reflection, on their death bed, mourn over it with tears of blood.

But we turn from such painful reflections as these, to the consideration of the vast importance of the ministerial work. No undertaking or employment, my Brethren, is so momentous as the pastoral care. No profession or order of men have so weighty a charge and so awful a responsibility as those who watch for souls, as they that must give account. Their concern for their own salvation, their solicitude for that of others, and their fear lest any should perish through their negligence or unfaithfulness, must be acknowledged by all thinking persons to be solemn and alarming considerations. He who engages in it with right views, must be disposed, as well as consider himself obliged to do his utmost to prevent the misery and ruin of his fellow beings, those especially of whom he has a particular charge; and to direct and quicken, and assist them in the pursuit of everlasting happiness! And let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins; shall introduce a new member to the train of the redeemed, and increase the joys of congratulating angels. And methinks what honor it will be to me to be distinguished by Christ, the great head of the Church, at the last day, according to the measure of my former diligence and faithfulness: and what a glorious testimony it will be before the throne of God, to have many of those who were committed to my pastoral care on earth, come forth and say, "O thou King of Saints, this was the hand, which strengthened "by thy might snatched us as firebrands out of the burning! This "was the tongue, that by the direction and influence of the Spirit of

ever been considered to be one of the greatest hindrances of the peace of the church, and the progress of pure religion among them. The affairs of the church have often been made by the Chiefs an engine for political purposes to serve their own ends. The choice and deposition of missionaries among them being latterly thus placed; and of whom, and that frequently, nearly all were men of no semblance of piety, but open profligates and mere nominal believers in the Christian faith. The evils produced by this system are awfully great. If the possession of it were in proportion to piety and wisdom, the church in the tribe would be well governed, but as too often it is in the contrary proportion, the church is totally surrendered to the will of mere worldlings, and the flock of Christ is given up to ravening wolves.

“life, spake to our hearts, warned us to flee from the wrath to come, and imparted to us that knowledge by which we became wise to salvation! This was the Minister by whose seasonable admonitions and salutary reproofs we were awakened; by whose tears we were melted, by whose kindness we were comforted; and by whose prayers and counsel and example we have been conducted to this glory!”—O who can express, who conceive, the ravishing joy which will hence result to the heart of the faithful minister!

As in the former days, my Brethren, so I would now exhort and charge every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.

Let all this numerous assembly feel the importance of that gospel which hath brought life and immortality to light. I shall never again, probably, speak to you on the behalf of religion. To all then who hear my voice, let me preach a suffering, dying, risen, and exalted Savior. Choose his religion now, and you shall be happy in life, happy in death, and happy in eternity. I beseech, I implore you, my Brethren, in the bonds of friendship, and in the bonds of the Lord; by the tender mercies of the God of peace; by the dying love of a crucified Redeemer; by the precious promises, and of the awful threatenings of the Gospel, by all your hopes of Heaven, and fears of misery; by the worth of your immortal souls, and by all that is dear to men; I conjure you to accept of the offers of mercy, and fly from the wrath to come. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. “All the treasures of heaven are now open to you, the blood of Christ is now speaking for the remission of sins; the church on earth stretches out its arms to receive you; the spirits of just men made perfect are eager to enroll you amongst the number of the blessed; the Angels and Arch-Angels are waiting to break out into new hallelujahs of joy on your return; the whole Trinity is now employed in your behalf; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost at this instant call upon you, weary and heavy laden, to come unto them, that ye may have rest unto your souls!”

Now to the God of our salvation, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 2.

THE DESIGN OF CHRIST'S MISSION INTO THE WORLD.

JOHN, Chap. iii. ver. 17.

“God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

MY BRETHREN—For a long period before Jesus Christ of Nazareth was born, there was a general expectation among the Nations, of the appearance of some extraordinary character, a character who should accomplish very extraordinary and extensive changes in the Earth. This prevailing notion probably originated among the Jews. For the Jews, depending on the prophecies which they found recorded in the Sacred Books, were looking for the appearance of Messiah, and this Messiah, they erroneously supposed would interpose on behalf of their nation, and in accordance with their ambitious and aspiring feelings, would bring all other kingdoms and people into subjection to them. Often did the Savior attempt to rectify this mistake, he labored abundantly to convince the inhabitants of Judea, that he was sent to be the Savior of the whole world; even in the discourse with Nicodemus, one of their principal men, which discourse is recited in the chapter containing our text, he introduces this important subject, and introduces it too in such a manner, as we should suppose would inform his mind without awakening and alarming his prejudices.

Having explained to this Jewish Rabbi the nature and necessity of regeneration, and by a natural and well known figure explained to him the way of salvation, he proceeds and distinctly states and declares, that the whole world, Gentiles no less than Jews, was destined in the eternal councils of God to participate in the blessings of his advent, yes, that the Most High in sending him into the world, had as much respect to the salvation of the poor benighted Heathens, the Pagans of Africa and Hindostan, as to his chosen people, the citizens of Palestine. “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

But in view of the passage before us, we are led to observe,

I. That all things considered, it was much more probable, that God should send His Son into the world to condemn than to save it.

II. That notwithstanding the improbability, He actually sent him to save it.

I. We are led to observe that all things considered it was much more probable that God should send His Son into the world to condemn, than to save it.

That God should ever, and on any errand whatever, send His Son into the world, is such a wonderful, such an astonishing event as must forever fill the whole creation with amazement. But had we been assured that Christ was actually destined to visit the world, what could we have imagined to be so certain the purpose of his advent, as the just punishment of man's rebellion and folly. Here let us consider.

1. What situation the world was in at the time that Christ was sent into it. Had God, when He looked down from heaven, to learn the feelings of His apostate creatures, observed that most of them were lamenting their ungrateful apostacy; were sensible of the ruin into which they had foolishly plunged themselves; were ardently wishing that some way could be devised for their recovery and were actually though unsuccessfully struggling to deliver themselves from the dominion of sin, and from its just wages eternal death; it would perhaps not have been wholly irrational to hope that our abused and offended Maker, might feel some compassion towards us, and in the exercise of infinite wisdom and mercy open a way for our recovery and salvation by the gift of His only begotten Son. But when we consider that so far from this, the whole mass of mankind were up in arms against the rightful Sovereign, the glorious Majesty of Heaven; when we reflect that not one of the whole human race (except a few whose hearts He had Himself subdued) ever desired any reconciliation. Yes, were all utterly averse to the idea, and chose to have nothing done about it. We say, when it was their prevailing and supreme desire and wish to live in sin with impunity, and wanted no better heaven than the pleasure of living always in the full indulgence of their fleshly lusts; for what could any one of us possibly imagine that God should send His Son into the world, unless it was to execute upon us his fiery indignation and wrath, which we so richly deserved.

2. When we consider for what purposes God had before this sent special messengers from Heaven to the Earth. On very memorable occasions, the Most High, before the coming of Christ, had sent Angels, commissioned to fulfil His will. In some instances they were ministering Spirits sent forth to serve the interests of the heirs of salvation. But though to these highly favored ones, they were the messengers of mercy, yet when commissioned and sent to the open and avowed enemies of God, they in general came as messengers of wrath, empowered to execute the most exemplary vengeance of their insulted King. Who can in thought behold Sodom and the cities of the plain, who can contemplate all the first born of Egypt, from Pharaoh who sat on the throne, to the slave on the dunghill, yes, who can survey one hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers slain in one night in the Assyrian Camp, and not shudder at the thought of a

messenger sent from Heaven. What then, upon hearing that God was about to send His own Son into the world, to execute His will upon all, could any of us suppose, but that his errand was vengeance. What could any one imagine, but that since it was not a particular city, or one single nation, that God was about to punish the whole world, that therefore His tremendous judgments would be proportioned to the dignity and greatness of the divine executioner. Surely as to the idea of his being sent to save such a world as this, it would not as much as enter the mind of a single created intelligence either human or angelic. But of all things unlikely and improbable this must seem the more so when we consider:

3. That God most perfectly knew just in what manner the world would receive and treat His Son when sent to them. Did we not know that the volumes of futurity in every page lie open and naked to His view, or that God exactly foreknows every event from the beginning to the end, we might as the Evangelist suggests, suppose the Most High to have reasoned thus. "I have sent many servants and prophets to that wicked wretched world, and instead of welcoming and receiving them kindly, and attending to their instructions and advice, they have treated them contemptuously, they have despised and even persecuted them unto death; but should I send them my Son, my only Son, surely they would welcome and reverence him, they would not dare to think a thought, or speak a word and much less presume to lift a finger against him; struck with wonder at my condescension, and their hearts won by my love, they would instantly throw away their weapons of rebellion, and return most cheerfully to their bounden allegiance, therefore rather than that they should perish, I will send my dear Son to save them; but instead of this, instead of receiving, instead of reverencing His Son, God perfectly well knew, that they would indignantly exclaim, this is the heir, come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." Full well! did He know, that whatever credentials His Son might show, however indisputable the evidences of his divine mission might be, they would not believe him, but deride him as a worthless impostor, cast him out of the vineyard and put him to death. Yes, and He knew that they not only would crucify His Son, but that were it in their power, they would even pluck him from his throne and subvert the universe. What then could men calculate upon with the least degree of probability, but that if God sent His Son into the world, it would be in wrath and not in mercy; not to save but to destroy. But we proceed to remark, that though this was expected, yet,

II. God actually sent His Son, His only begotten Son into the world to save it. This is a declaration which might well astonish and fill us with surprise; yet so sottish are our hearts, and so frequently do we hear of this stupendous transaction, that though angels are amazed it passes by us unheeded. But whatever the ignorance of the stupid and unfeeling, and the pride of infidels and scoffers may suggest, know assuredly, my Brethren, that God sent His Son into this wicked, wretched world, for the purpose of making re-

conciliation of iniquity, bringing in everlasting righteousness, and exalting to Glory all them who believe in him.

1. To make reconciliation for iniquity. It was no less impossible for God to lie, than that sin should be forgiven without an atonement. But God knew that neither of these was less impossible, than it was that man should atone for his guilt. What then was to be done. Unless Divine Majesty could be honored, by the violated laws being magnified, man the transgressor must perish. But this even angels, supposing they were willing, were not able to accomplish; all the honor and service of which they are capable they owed already to their Maker. There was but one in heaven who was sufficient for this mighty task, who could honor insulted Majesty and satisfy offended justice. And that one was he of whom, a voice from the excellent Glory, testified: this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; from eternity he had lain in the bosom of the Father, and was always his delight; and would the Father send him on this super-angelic service? The gift is not only unspeakable, it is incredible. No, hear O Heavens, give ear O Earth, "God spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

Yes, He prepared him a body, and sent him to be a propitiation, and that not for our sins only, but for the whole world. Let Divine testimony silence all the cavil of vain philosophy and put to shame every scolding infidel. Behold, my Brethren, what manner of love is this! Eternity alone will suffice to explore and celebrate this stupendous heaven—astonishing mystery. But God sent His Son not only to make atonement, but

2. To bring in everlasting righteousness. Rebellious men were not only inadequate to make expiation for past offences, either by doing or suffering, but totally to provide for themselves those robes of righteousness in which they could appear with acceptance in the presence of a Holy God. But let the heavens rejoice and let all the ransomed nations shout for joy, God has himself provided a righteousness, which He declares "shall be unto all and upon all them that believe." On this very account, my Brethren, it is, that Jesus is named "the Lord our righteousness," clothed in his unspotted robe; the vilest of all the host of vile. Returning prodigals, may now present themselves without fear of an angry frown, perfect and complete in the presence of their God. Yes, to every one of this character it is now given under the deepest sense of personal weakness and pollution, boldly to say, "in the Lord Jesus have I righteousness and strength."

3. God sent His Son into the world to exalt to glory and eternal blessedness all those who believe and obey the Gospel. Christ came into the world, not only to begin and prosecute, but to perfect the salvation of sinners; he is no more the author, than he is the finisher of our faith; with respect to all them that believe, he not only delivers their souls from the dominion of sin and the damnation of hell, but will also raise their bodies from the power of the grave, and exalt them at the last day to thrones of glory and ceaseless joy. He whom the Father has willed and sent will never cease till he has fulfilled the duties of his high commission, and can say in respect to

every creature given him to save, and in the hearing of all worlds assembled to judgment, "It is finished." My Brethren, the theme we contemplate is wonderful, it would be indeed passing belief, did not testimony divine and infinite, confirm the fact. Instead of condemning the world as was to be expected, God sent His Son to save; yes, to save from death, by the sacrifice of his own life, and by conducting all the concerns of every individual of his chosen, till he shall perfect their holiness, and introduce them to the full possession of the inheritance incorruptable, undefiled and immortal prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Hear, O heavens, and be astonished O Earth, this is the Lord's doing, and wonderful in the sight of angels, and all that dwell on high. But alas, by our subject we are led to

REFLECT;

How little effect all the wonders of wisdom, love and power, produce upon the world at large. Most appear wholly regardless of the great salvation, yes, what angels desire to look into, and what constitutes the theme of heaven's highest praise, stupid mortals treat as a thing of nought. O how base their ingratitude, and how awfully aggravated will be their guilt, in thus pouring contempt upon the compassionate Savior, "the beloved Son of God." These are despisers who will one day wonder and perish, and this stupendous mercy of God, will prove their heaviest, their most dreadful curse, devils themselves have something to plead in their vindication, something which these Christ-dispisers will never be able to alledge. Satan himself will be able to say, no Savior was provided for me, I never had the offer of salvation, none, either in heaven, earth or hell can charge me with the madness and folly of rebelling against redeeming mercy. Let stupid thoughtless sinners consider a moment, and may the awful truth prick them to the heart, you are despising the blood of the cross, you are trampling under foot the Son of God, that compassionate Jesus, who lived, who suffered and died to save you from the wrath divine and make you partakers of ceaseless joys. O lay it to heart, and may this wonderful love win your souls, constraining you instantly to embrace him and exclaim, "my Lord, and my God." There are some whose views of the riches of pardoning love, and of the value of Christ's blood are so limited and scanty, or their consciences are so burdened with a sense of their numberless sins, that they are disposed and ready to believe, that they are reprobates, that it is in vain for them to ask for forgiveness, and that it is actual presumption in them for a moment to imagine that they may be made the subjects of saving mercy. But was not the Most High from the beginning perfectly acquainted with your unnumbered transgressions and all their aggravating circumstances? Did He not see all your vileness, pollution and guilt, when he gave forth the decree "to save them from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom?" Dare you for a moment entertain the blasphemous idea, that God sent His Son into the world, to execute a work which after all he was not able to perform, and of course, that his purposes of love will fail

of accomplishment? Read the history of Jesus's life, and say can you there discover, that he ever manifested the least backwardness to fulfil his undertaking, did he ever frown upon one single suppliant and send him away grieved and disappointed, did he ever say to the vilest publican, the most notorious sinner, your crimes are so many and so great that they cannot be forgiven, my blood is not sufficient to wash away their stain. Yes, read the thousand great and precious promises of God, to the distressed, the broken hearted, self-abased sinner, and say are you prepared to think that God is not sincere and will not fulfil His promise? O be not faithless but believing. If the blood of Christ can save a world, surely it must be sufficient for all your guilt. Come then to Jesus, and know assuredly that he will never cast you out, commit your soul to him, and he will save you with a finished and everlasting salvation, "arise, behold he called you."

Let our subject this evening awaken the reflection of all who are enjoying this great salvation. While you are made to rejoice in a sweet sense of pardoned sin, and an assurance of final victory over every spiritual foe, while you have the testimony of conscience, and the witness of the Spirit that you are born by a new celestial birth, are walking back to God, yes, while you feel the flame of divine love burning within you, and have good hope that God has loved you with an everlasting love. O let this wonderful love of the great God your savior constrain you this evening to devote yourself anew to his praise, giving away afresh your whole self, body and spirit. Now at this joyful commemoration, of the conversion of the pagan part of the Oneida tribe to the christian faith, perform the solemn transaction. May I once more indulge the hope that those of you who were then made the subjects of saving mercy; (when we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,) may be among the happy number who will then appear as the seals of my ministry, of whom I may say, "Lord here am I and the children whom thou hast given me." As a preparation for this solemn scene, may I exhort you once more, to devote you time and talents to the service of Him who died for your offences and rose again for your justification. O come my Brethren, with devoted hearts and united hands, "let us crown him Lord of all." Hail, thou once despised Galilean, who for our sakes, poor and guilty sinners, was an infant in Bethlehem, and the scorned sufferer on Calvary. Come in all the splendour of thy celestial glory, and the glory of the Father, and fill our souls this evening with thy heavenly benedictions.

Now to the God of all Grace, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory now and forever. Amen.

APPENDIX.

“ Eleazer Williams, son of Thomas Williams, a War Chief of the Iroquois nation of Indians, has officiated as a religious instructor among the Oneida Indians for nine months past. He is employed as a Catechist, Lay reader, and Schoolmaster, by the Bishop, and the Committee of the Protestant Episcopal Church for propagating the Gospel in the State of New York. One part of that nation who have heretofore adhered to Paganism, and have been always denominated the “ Pagan party ” of the Oneida nation of Indians, have resolved to embrace Christianity. Their communication to the Governor on the subject, will appear in the next number.”—*Christian Journal for February, 1817.*

The following communication, addressed to the Governor of this State, evinces the success of Mr. Williams’ exertions, who as mentioned in the last number of the Journal, is employed by the Protestant Episcopal Church in this State, as a Lay reader, Catechist and Schoolmaster among the Oneida Indians. It will be pleasing to the patrons of missionary labors in particular, and to Christians in general.—*Idem.*

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOV. OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

May it please your Excellency,

We, the Chiefs and principal men of that part of the Oneida nation of Indians heretofore known and distinguished as the Pagan party, in the name of the said party, beg leave to address your Excellency, on a subject which we hope will be as pleasing to your Excellency as it is to us.

We no longer own the name of Pagans; we have abandoned our Idols and our sacrifices and have fixed our hopes on our blessed Redeemer. In evidence of this assertion, we here tender to your Excellency, and unequivocally, our abjuration of paganism and its rites; and take the Christian’s God to be our God, and our only hope of salvation.

We believe in God the Father, the creator and preserver of all things—as omniscient and omnipresent—most gracious and most merciful. We believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God—the Savior of the world—the Mediator between God and Man, and all must believe in him and embrace him in order to obtain salvation. We believe in God the sanctifier and comforter of all the children of men; we believe in a general resurrection, and a future judgment, in which all mankind shall be judged according to their works: we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God and that in them are contained all things necessary to man’s salvation.

We present to your Excellency this abstract of our faith, in order to remonstrate against our retaining any longer the name of Pagans. We trust, that, through the mercy of God, we have abandoned the character of Pagans; let us also abandon the name.

We therefore request your Excellency, that in all future transactions with this State, we may be known and distinguished as “ The Second Christian Party of the Oneida Nation of Indians.” And we pray that your Excellency will take such means as may be necessary and proper to cause us to be known and recognised in future by that name. And in the name of the Most Holy Trinity we do here sign ourselves, your Excellency’s most sincere friends.

Done in general Council at Oneida this twenty-fifth day of January, 1817.

The following Indians subscribed to the above, each one making his mark:

COM. OTATSHETE,
JOHN CANNELIUS,
WM. TONIATEKEN,
NICHOLAS GARONGONTIE,
Wm. TEGARENTOTORHON,
PETER TEWASERATE.

ANIYOST TORONYONGO,
JACOB ATONI,
PETER SATEKARENHES,
MOSES SCHUYLER,
WM. TEHORATATHE,

"The exertions more recently made for the conversion of the Indian tribes have not been so successful, partly because not united with efforts to introduce among them those arts of civilization, without which the gospel can neither be understood nor valued; but principally because religious instruction was conveyed through the imperfect medium of interpreters, by those unacquainted with their dispositions and habits, and in whom they were not disposed to place the same confidence, as in those who are connected with them by the powerful ties of language, of manners and of kindred. The religious instructor of the Oneidas, employed by our church, enjoys all these advantages. Being of Indian extraction and acquainted with their language, dispositions and customs, and devoting himself unremittingly to their spiritual and temporal welfare, he enjoys their full confidence; while the education which he has received, has increased his qualifications as their guide in the faith and precepts of the Gospel. Mr. Williams repeatedly explained to them, in councils which they held for this purpose, the evidences of the divine origin of christianity and its doctrines, institutions and precepts. He combated their objections, patiently answered their inquiries, and was finally through the divine blessing successful in satisfying their doubts. Soon after their conversion they appropriated, in conjunction with the old christian party, the proceeds of the sale of some of their lands to the erection of a handsome edifice for divine worship, which will be shortly completed."—*Bishop Hobart's address to the Convention, from Journal of Convention, 1815, pp. 18-20.*

UTICA, September 25, 1819.

"On Tuesday last the Chapel erected for the Oneida Indians, at Oneida Castle, was consecrated by the Right Rev. Bishop Hobart, by the name of St. Peter's Church, and 56 Indians who had been previously prepared for that purpose by their instructor, Mr. Williams, received confirmation. At the visit of the Bishop last year, 91 Indians were confirmed. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the exertions and pious zeal of Mr. Williams, in his successful efforts to bring into the christian church, his pagan brethren. When he arrived among them two or three years ago, more than half of the Oneidas were of that character. Now many are professed christians, and the attention to religious services is general and apparently sincere. It has often been lamented that the exertions of the missionaries among the natives of this country has been attended with so little success; the causes of disappointment are not now a subject of inquiry, but the friends of humanity and religion have the satisfaction to see the labors of Mr. Williams crowned with the most unexampled success; and to witness the rapid advancement of the Indians in a knowledge of the useful arts, of the principles of the christian religion, and to perceive the general amelioration of their miserable condition. —*Utica Patriot.*

From the Onondaga Gazette of July 30, 1817.

"It may not be improper, to notice in this place the exertions of Mr. Williams, a Catechist and Lay reader of the Episcopal Church among the Oneida Indians; which have produced the most happy results. Hundreds of these once bewildered beings, who joined in the war song of murder on their foes, are now uniting in the anthems and responses of our church, singing praises to the Savior who has brought them out of heathenish darkness into marvelous light.

This worthy young Gentleman is peculiarly well qualified to preach the Gospel to the natives, and it is expected he will be ordained by the Bishop for that purpose the ensuing fall, and he will extend his mission to the Onondaga tribe; where he visited last week in company with the Rev. Mr. Clarke of Manlius, and the Rev. Mr. Gear, when about 15 of those people were baptized, openly professing faith in the Redeemer. Mr. Williams is of Indian extraction, is well versed in their language, and possesses talents, erudition, and that pleasing urbanity of temper, so essential in one whose business it is "to win souls into Christ."

The Onondaga Indians are already passionately attached to him, and it is confidently expected, that his visits will be productive of the most beneficial effects. Do not despair, that all those who really wish well to the poor Indians, will co-operate with Mr. Williams in the only probable means of their lasting and everlasting good.¹¹

AN EPISCOPALIAN.





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