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Cloagh







June 10 1871

Dear Mother  
I received your letter  
of the 7th and was  
glad to hear from  
you.

Yours affectionately  
John





A

SERIES

OF

ARTICLES AND DISCOURSES,

DOCTRINAL, PRACTICAL, AND EXPERIMENTAL;

CONSTITUTING THE

SELECT WORKS

OF

SIMON CLOUGH.

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NEW YORK:  
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

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1843.

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## P R E F A C E .

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IN presenting this volume to the public, the author deems it proper to remark, that the Articles which compose the first part of the book were intended for a Magazine, expected to have been published by the "General Christian Book Association," and which was to have been placed under his direction; but, in consequence of the occurrence of unexpected and unforeseen events, the executive committee of the said Association decided not to proceed in the publication of the said Magazine for the present. But, in the meantime, the author had made preparations to proceed in the publication of the said Magazine, before he was notified of the resolution of the said committee. After this notification, he decided to engage in the publication of his own select works, using the same type and paper which had been provided for the Magazine. This circumstance will be sufficient to account for the Articles being inserted in the first part of the book; and, also, for having inserted two Articles, one from the pen of Elder Hazen, and the other from the pen of Elder Shaw, which were originally intended for the Magazine, and not for the present volume.

The Discourses, which constitute the second part of the book, were written by the author at different and distant periods of time, during the course of his public ministry, and without any special reference to publication. Several of the Discourses should have been re-written, but the state of the author's health would, by no means, admit of this laborious exercise, having entirely wasted and exhausted his strength in writing the Articles; so that he was under the necessity of either presenting the Discourses in their original dress, or of withholding them entirely from the public. The plain style, however, in which these Discourses are now presented, may be as acceptable and as profitable to common readers,

as though it had been more labored, and had received a higher polish; but the author is not insensible of their defects, and is, also, aware that they would have been more acceptable to scholars, had he devoted more time in preparing them for the press. He has, however, done all he could, in the feeble state of his health, and the limited time allowed him in making them ready for publication; and he trusts that, under these circumstances, any defects which may be discovered, will be viewed with a favorable eye.

In making a selection of the Discourses, which are inserted in this volume, the author has been guided with a special reference to their utility. He was desirous of presenting his friends with a book, which, while it may enlighten the understanding, will improve the heart, and elevate the affections to things above; and be the means of preparing the soul for the enjoyment of God, both here and hereafter. There is a vein of spirituality and piety, running through these Discourses, which cannot fail of making them interesting and profitable to every pious and devoted heart; while the warm and lively exhortations to the unconverted, which are interspersed through several of them, must make them beneficial to this portion of the community. The author trusts that a portion of that fire and zeal, which animated him in the delivery of some of them, and by which they became the means of the conversion of many souls, has been infused into their composition; and will still make them efficacious in the conviction and conversion of many more.

Although several important and interesting subjects are discussed in the Articles and Discourses, yet the work is far from being either of a doctrinal or controversial cast. It has been the object of the author to give to it an experimental and practical character. In the discussion of the great questions which have been considered, the author has endeavored to treat them, not as a polemic, but as a Christian; and to deduce from them such experimental and practical results as might be profitable and beneficial to all classes of readers. He has, however, clearly and fully stated his views on all the doctrinal questions, which have come under consideration, and which the reader will find interspersed throughout the book. But, on the 184th page, the author has given a short summary of his religious faith; and which he believes to be the faith generally entertained by the Christian Connexion, to which he has the honor of belonging. And here the author would take the liberty of correct-

ing a misunderstanding. It has been stated that this summary was borrowed from an English publication ; but this is a mistake. This summary was written by the author, and first published in the preface to the third volume of the Gospel Luminary, in 1830. And this is the only summary of the religious faith of the Christian Connexion which the author has seen, all the abstracts of the faith of the Connexion, which have come under his observation, having been taken from this summary ; which is conclusive evidence that it meets with general approbation, among his brethren.

Sensible of the numerous defects which this work contains, it is with much diffidence that the author presents this volume to the public ; but he still cherishes the hope that it will be productive of good, and that it will be read, with interest, by his friends. With his best wishes, and with his most devout aspirations for their present peace and future felicity, he now submits to their consideration these humble sheets ; trusting that they will regard with a favorable eye whatever imperfections they may discover in them.

*New York, May 20th, 1843.*

S. C.



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## A SERIES

OF

# ARTICLES AND DISCOURSES.

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### ARTICLE I.

#### *On the Importance of a Pious and Enlightened Ministry.*

THE Christian ministry is of Divine origin. It is the instrumentality by which the cause of truth, righteousness, and piety are maintained; the means ordained of God for the salvation of men. In the arrangements of Christ for the establishment of his kingdom in the earth, the institution of the gospel ministry is very prominent. He selected the men, trained them for the great and arduous work under his own eye, sent them forth to preach the word of truth, and gave them directions for perpetuating the holy order. The wisdom of this appointment has been demonstrated by the experience of the whole history of the gospel church. Every great interest needs special supervision; and the greater the interest, the more thorough and systematic should be the supervision by which its affairs are to be guarded and directed. And the guardian influence which is exerted by the ministry over the church, is clearly seen to be wisely adapted for the accomplishment of its great and momentous objects. It was designed of God to exert a great moral power over individuals and communities, for the advancement of the highest interests of mankind, both for time and for eternity. Hence, good men have always looked with anxious solicitude to the character and qualifications of the ministry. This solicitude is natural and right; for the state of public morals, and the prosperity of the church, depend, in a great degree, upon the piety, ability, and faithfulness of the gospel ministry. Both the state of the church, and

the character of the times in which we live, require as devoted, as able, and as faithful a ministry as at any former period.

The first and most important characteristic of a gospel ministry, is *decided piety*. This qualification is indispensable; it is demanded both by the Scriptures and the nature of the ministerial office, and, for the absence of which, nothing can atone. Unsanctified learning and talent will rather obstruct than advance the Redeemer's kingdom; will rather tarnish than promote the glory of God among men. Every Christian teacher should be a truly converted man, and should possess the graces of the Spirit in a strong, vivid, and prominent exercise. He should be truly and eminently *a man of God; full of faith and the Holy Ghost*; and should be *rooted and grounded in love*. Without a decidedly pious ministry, no church can possibly, for any length of time, sustain a devotional and spiritual character. Her graces will languish, her energies will dry up, and her spiritual life will vanish away.

But, while piety is indispensable, it should not be forgotten that there are other qualifications, which are also essential in rendering a minister of the gospel useful and successful as a public teacher. The great head of the church would have an *energetic*, as well as an honest and devoted ministry. And hence, the necessity of looking into the intellectual, as well as the moral and religious character of the ministry. The enlightened age in which we live, and the general intelligence which is disseminated among all orders and conditions of men, obviously require an intellectual as well as a pious and devoted ministry. It is absurd to suppose that a man who possesses a rude and uncultivated mind, is properly qualified to preach the gospel with success, to a polished, intellectual, and intelligent congregation, merely because he is truly pious. Pious, he may be; but if his talents and learning are not sufficiently commanding to gain and fix the attention of his audience, he can be the means of doing them but little good. There seems to be a great absurdity in giving our children a polite and polished education, and then doom them to hear an uneducated ministry. Where education is widely diffused and disseminated among all classes of the community, as in this country, the ministry should also be educated, in order that they may become competent and useful teachers of the Christian religion. And if the church duly respect herself, and have a proper regard for the glory and honor of God, she will, with a proper feeling, insist on those qualifications in the ministry, which are essential in rendering them useful as pastors.

That God has ordained an able as well as a devoted ministry for his church, is clearly manifest from the *precepts of the Bible*. *The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth. Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate upon these things. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.* These precepts speak a language clear, plain, and decisive; a language that cannot be misunderstood. And,

in accordance with these positive precepts, there are also individual expressions of the Divine will. *The same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others. For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* It is said of Paul, that *his letters were weighty and powerful.* And, speaking of himself, he testifies, *though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge.* It is also said of Apollos, in the way of commendation, that he was *an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; that he spake boldly in the synagogue, and mightily convinced the Jews.* From these Scripture testimonies it is evident, that it is well pleasing to God to have a ministry of a vigorous and well cultivated mind, as well as of a pious and devoted heart; of a high intellectual, as well as of a religious character; able to teach and instruct the ignorant and those who are out of the way; of sound speech that cannot be condemned; well furnished with all the qualities for making a deep, vivid, and lasting impression upon the public mind.

That an able ministry is ordained of God as a blessing to his church, is also evident from the fact, that *all the most important movements in the church, have taken place under the instrumentality of such a ministry.* Why were Moses and Aaron selected to rescue Israel from bondage, to instruct them on their journey to Canaan, and to arrange for them a splendid system of civil and religious polity? Why, but for their peculiar qualifications? the one being learned in all the wisdom of the age, as well as divinely inspired, and the other, a man of ready and commanding address. Who have displayed nobler powers, a superior genius, a higher and more commanding eloquence, than David and some of the prophets? But why were not men of inferior capacity selected to be thus honored of God, if talents and intellectual power are of no account with him? In moral, as well as in physical results, the means must be adapted to the end. *Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.*

So, also, in the gospel age, the chief actors in establishing the Christian religion have not been less illustrious. The twelve disciples, who were selected as the chief instruments in planting the gospel among the nations of the earth, although taken from men in the humble walks of life, were not sent forth to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ till thoroughly trained, and fully qualified for the most wise and powerful action. The Apostle Paul, was the most eminent man of the age. He had great mental capacity; he had a quick and penetrating perception; he had a warm and lively imagination; he had genius; he had a well cultivated and disciplined mind; he had stores of varied, important, and useful learning. Commissioned by the great Head of the church, and animated by the spirit of his Master, he went forth bearing *his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.* He labored in this cause with unremitting diligence and untiring zeal for the

space of thirty years; exhibiting a firmness of purpose which neither difficulties nor dangers could shake, and a purity of life the breath of calumny could not tarnish. During this short space of time, he visited all the principal countries of the old world, and proclaimed to them the gospel of the Son of God. And how brilliant and triumphant was his course from city to city, and from province to province! And why did Divine wisdom enlist those gigantic powers, cultivated, enlarged, and disciplined at the feet of Gamaliel, in the work of the ministry? Why, but that the work called for a powerful instrumentality?

Another period of the gospel history has also been marked by its wonderful achievements; the reformation from papal corruptions. And who were the men first to discover, refute, and demolish the papal errors and the papal tyranny? Who, but the men of the most vigorous minds, cultivated and enlarged by sound learning, and deep piety? This event gave immortality to the names of Wickliffe, Huss, Jerome of Prague, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, Knox, and a hundred others, as eminent for literature as for religion, for integrity and courage as for zeal and ardor in the cause of truth. They seem to have been eminently fitted for the accomplishment of the great work assigned them by Divine Providence. Men of less learning, talent, wisdom, and courage, could hardly have accomplished what they effected. Think of the torrent of wickedness which had nearly deluged the Christian world, and nearly buried in ruins the whole Christian fabric; think of the ignorance and prejudice which had bound the multitude with the chain of superstition for ages; think of a domination over reason and conscience, supported by the combined energies of church and state, throughout an entire continent; think that every stir for freedom, every movement for the acquisition of knowledge, was watched with a jealous eye by prelates and emperors; think that the church had slept for centuries, had nearly become extinct, and that pomp, show, and the mummery of pagan rites and superstitious ceremonies, had superseded almost every vestige of piety. What must have been the inflexibility of character, the moral courage, the intellectual strength, the rich resources, the bold daring, that could successfully engage in an onset against such an array of sin and despotism? The conflict came, the powers of darkness were scattered, and nations were emancipated from the yoke of ignorance and superstition, and brought into the possession and enjoyment of religious and civil freedom.

But the great work of reformation did not stop here; at a later period, another emergency brought up a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Penn, the immortal Edwards, and a host of others, to emancipate the world from the thralldom of spiritual bondage, and to reinstamp upon the heart of man the image of his God; to rescue the church from worldliness, formality, and the most fatal errors. From the days of these eminent and devoted servants of God, the great work



of spiritual reform has been gradually and steadily advancing. The church has been roused from that deadly stupidity and lethargy into which she had been sunk for ages, and measurably waked up to a sense of her duty; the most active and efficient measures have been devised and put in operation for the conversion of the world, both at home and abroad. And who does not know that the pioneers and chief actors in these great movements, have been men of vigorous intellects and accomplished scholars, as well as of deep piety and expansive benevolence? And the work still demands, for its advancement and final success, a ministry of equal piety, talents, and learning, to that which commenced its operations.

Finally, the sanctified learning and talent of the church, is the source from whence we derive the principal means of *religious instruction*. Who wrote the commentaries, the church histories, and the valuable sermons which have been handed down to us? Who have translated the Scriptures into the various languages of the earth? Who are the authors of the various books that enrich our Christian libraries? Who have furnished us with the evidences of Christianity? Who have successfully assailed and demolished the bulwarks of infidelity, which genius and learning have reared up, from the earliest period of the gospel history to the present time? Have they not been the most acute, the best disciplined, and the most learned men the church could furnish in the ages in which they flourished? And is not this remark true in relation to every period of the gospel history, from the days of the apostles to the present time? We, then, are indebted to the sanctified learning and talent of the church for nearly the whole of our ideas of religion. If all the monuments of genius and learning, which the church has reared up for the last eighteen hundred years, were levelled to the earth, and the church herself flung back into a state of ignorance, and then the Scriptures put into her hands in the native language in which they were written, how deplorable would be her condition! And what a length of time, and what an amount of labor it would take to advance her to her present happy state. From these remarks, we may learn something of the value and importance of a Christian education.

Thus, it appears that cultivated talent and learning, as well as deep piety, have been associated with every important moral revolution, under both the Jewish and Christian dispensations. When learning declined, religion degenerated. When learning had vanished, religion was nearly extinct. When letters revived, religion again flourished and assumed a purer form. From this fact, we deduce an argument for a ministry of native talent, cultivated intellect, and elevated character. There is as much scope for effort, as much demand for energy, for skill, for comprehensiveness of plan, and boldness of action now, as at any former period of the church. The great principles upon which the Divine Sovereignty has always acted, are still in operation, and will continue to remain

in operation through successive ages to come. And, that ministry which would be useful and successful, must be conformed to the Divine plan of operation. If the providence of God has glorious objects to be achieved, and the gospel ministry be its chief instrumentality, it will still demand a ministry of intellectual strength, of moral courage, of rich resources, as well as of personal piety.

The importance of an able ministry may be further argued from *the express provision God has made for training and supporting it*. Under the Jewish economy, various regulations were made, designed to secure eminent qualifications in the sacred office. There were nearly fifty schools established, for the express purpose of educating those designed for the priestly office. None were allowed to enter the priesthood till thirty years of age. Large funds were appropriated and set apart for sustaining men, both in their preparation and actual service; funds so ample and so abundant, as to take away all temptation to deviate from all appropriate study and labor. And none were expected to entangle themselves in the affairs of this life, either before or after entering the sacred office. These wise and salutary provisions proved a most effectual bulwark and safeguard to the Jewish religion; and, especially, to the preservation, in their original purity, of both the law and the prophets.

The spirit of these arrangements was transferred to the Christian dispensation. The twelve apostles, as has been already observed, had the very best of instruction and training, before they were authorized to preach the gospel. They were under the direction and tuition of the great Teacher himself, with little interruption, during his ministry of three years. When he sent them forth on special messages to the different parts of Judea, he forbade them taking either bread or money, or even two coats a piece; but instructed them to rely entirely on others for the means of support. He also conferred upon them miraculous powers. After his crucifixion and resurrection from the dead, he bestowed upon them still higher gifts, larger measures of the Spirit, and the power of speaking in different tongues; gifts, all designed and adapted to make able ministers of the New Testament. Thus, qualified with both gifts and graces, they assailed the powers of darkness with astonishing and surprising success. The word of God, as proclaimed by them, had free course and was glorified. How efficacious and resistless was the majesty of truth from their lips!

But the personal example and instructions of Christ are now withdrawn. The power of miracles, the gift of tongues, and the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have ceased. And what does this providence indicate, but that other preparatory means of corresponding efficacy and force, are to be substituted? There is the same perverseness of human nature, and the same indisposition to the reception of Divine truth now, as in the days of the apostles. The opposition of a corrupt heart to the gospel is the same in every age. The minister of this day, then, needs as fully to understand

the gospel, and to proclaim it with as much energy as did the apostles themselves.

The importance of an able ministry is further evident, *from the strength and number of the forces to be encountered and overcome.* The human heart, in every age, is desperately wicked, and, consequently, opposed to the holiness and purity of the gospel. It is stealed against every impression of Christianity. It has its false attachments, its thousand errors and prejudices, its thick darkness and delusion. To attack, with success, this heart filled with enmity against God, demands all the skill and power of the best cultivated, as well as sanctified talent. There is also a deep-spread and wide infidelity, which embraces in its service, talent, genius, learning, wealth, and station. And it never exhibited more stratagems, boldness, or energy and malignity of purpose, than now. To expose its sophistry, to silence its blasphemies, and to rescue the millions it would ensnare and ruin forever, requires a ministry that can pour forth light like the sun in its strength. But, error is continually breaking forth in new forms, assuming different shades, and taking different directions. It sometimes approaches us masked in friendship, and by its artful insinuations, would *beguile us from the simplicity that is in Christ.* But we wrestle not merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, against the prince of the power of the air. Here are a host of enemies combined, under the direction of a wily adversary, of strong intellect, and of great knowledge. And where is an adversary whose movements are more insidious, varied, complicated, and rancorous against God and human welfare? Who can count the armies, and estimate the resources, wielded by this master-spirit of sin and delusion? And can it be wise to send out men of feeble minds, of slender intellect, and of small resources, to expose the devices, thwart the schemes, and subvert the empire of such an adversary? It is not thus that Christianity is to make its way over the earth. While it trusts in the grace, it demands for the conflict, the ablest as well as the best minds heaven has created and sanctified. The better these forces are disciplined, furnished, and directed, the more sure and speedy will be the triumph of truth.

A ministry of power and strength is called for, *by the greatness and importance of the object to be obtained.* The field of action is a revolted, degraded, and ruined world. The Christian ministry is an embassy of reconciliation from its rightful and legitimate Sovereign. Its aim is to bring back an erring world to the path of rectitude, to restore sinful man to the favor of God, and to re-stamp upon him the Divine image. What enterprise in the whole compass of thought is so grand, so momentous? Who can measure the interest at stake in the issue? Who can contemplate the fearful consequences of a failure of success? Who can tell the

happy consequences of a favorable result ; its importance to God, to the world, to the universe ? And how obviously absurd to communicate the keeping and direction of such a cause to the undisciplined, to the rash, or to the ignorant. When difficulties arise between a monarch and a portion of his subjects, or between two independent states, who is commissioned to adjust them ? When life, or character, or property is at stake, who is sought for a defence ? When a high-minded people, stung by reproach, and roused by oppression, resolve on freedom, who are selected to guide her counsels and direct her armies ? Men of genius, of learning, of talents, and of power. And strange, indeed, if to men of inferior capacity can be intrusted the rights of God, and the everlasting interests of men ! Strange, if slender powers and ordinary gifts can sanctify, when a world of intellect, an empire of mind in ruin, is to be restored to God, and trained for heaven ! What are liberty, or property, or character, or life, or thrones that perish, compared with the honor of God, and the salvation of souls ? The loss of a single soul, in itself considered, is a greater calamity than the extinction of the sun, or the destruction of the universe ! The conversion and final salvation of one sinner, is an event of higher moment, of deeper interest, than the creation of a whole system of worlds ! The soul of man, from the extent of its capacities, and from its capability of endless improvement, has obviously, a value above that of the material universe. And, the recovery of such souls, has been deemed an object worthy the solicitude of angels, and the sacrifice of the Son of God. Indeed, it has called forth the highest expression of the Divine benevolence, in the gift of his Son, to seek and to save that which was lost. Does not the object then, demand the consideration of the most gifted minds, the highest and best cultivated intellect, as well as of sound and deep piety ?

A powerful and gifted ministry is, furthermore, demanded from *the dazzling and attractive nature of the objects of time and sense which surround us* ; such a ministry as, in the name and power of God, may arrest attention, and turn off the eye from beholding vanity. We live in an age of great enterprise, and in a country affording scope for bold and daring experiment in every direction. Genius is on the stretch for improvement, and continually throwing out new discoveries. The nation is rapidly advancing in wealth, and putting on strength, power, and influence. Railroads and canals are rapidly multiplying, and intimately connecting the most distant parts of our country. Emigration is pushing its onward march, clearing away forests, spreading over the vallies, covering the hills, and building up cities. In the older states, manufactories are increasing, and monied institutions are multiplying, and they rising in influence, pride, and power. The spirit of the age is also inspiring the *intellectual* world, and moving it onward to greater and higher attainments in knowledge. The press is pouring out its

periodicals and volumes with surprising and astonishing rapidity, and literary institutions, of every description, are rising up in all directions, to beautify and adorn our sons and daughters. Science is inspiring enthusiasm, and richly repaying the toils and labors of her votaries. The hall of legislation, and the bar of justice, are opening a wide field for the display of eloquence, and inviting thousands to the conflict. Learning, and genius, and eloquence, are attracting the gaze of the world, and enthroning themselves in the hearts of all civilized nations. At no age of the world, at no period of time, has the human mind, in all departments of worldly ambition and enterprise, been excited to keener intensity, or brought out results more adapted to absorb public attention, or to hide eternity from view.

Now, we would not arrest this spirit of enterprise, we would not allay this imposing march of improvement, but we would have it sanctified by the gospel, and made subservient to the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men. To accomplish this end, we perceive in these imposing movements, occasion for corresponding increase of energy in the church, and a redoubled power in her ministry. And who, if not the angels of the church, can be expected to draw down light from heaven, and throw around a celestial radiance, which will present worldly men and worldly objects in their proper light? And what other influence, indeed, can be expected to save the church herself from being led captive *by the god of this world*? The church was never exposed to greater peril than at the present moment. Agitated by internal divisions, and moved by external excitement, she requires the direction of a strong and skilful hand. Besides, the allurements of avarice and ambition are dazzling her on every side, and inviting her embrace. And how is her pride thus fostered, her spirit of prayer checked, and her mind diverted from the great business of her high and holy calling! At such a crisis, what but an increased energy in the ministry of God, can be rendered effectual to save her and her children from being engulfed in that general tide of worldliness, which threatens to drown millions in perdition, and, if unchecked in its operations, will deluge the whole world? The times call for a ministry of deep sanctity, of great piety, and of extensive influence; a ministry who can beat back the powers of darkness, and carry forward the church of God to perfection.

The Christian ministry is also a profession; and needs for its success, *the confidence and respect of the community*. But, to secure these, it must possess an elevated, moral, and religious character. It must advance with the general progress of society. Should it retrograde, or even remain stationary, while everything else is advancing, by losing its *relative* standing and power, it will be soon crippled, and its influence weakened, if not annihilated. It should be the policy of the church to give to her ministry such resources, such energy, as to enable it to grapple with the stoutest minds, and

become, by its well directed strength, the object of respect and esteem, instead of scorn or pity. Yes, true wisdom says, give it the learning that can enlighten every circle; give it the power of reasoning, that will carry conviction through all ranks; give it a Divine eloquence, that will thrill and move, and charm, at pleasure. Yes, give it the ability, and courage, to hold up the cross of Christ, and to present the eternal realities of the gospel in all their greatness and power; and then it will become mighty through God. Let the cause of salvation be thus sustained, and all the bustle, and parade, and imposing grandeur of worldly enterprises, cannot obscure its majesty, or impede its progress. The march of truth will be onward, and the subjection of the world to the cross of Christ will be certain. Then will the Christian ministry command respect, and exert a healthful and saving influence upon the world of mankind.

A ministry of moral power and discernment, is called for *by the prospect of great excitement in the civil and religious world.* The signs of the times indicate scenes of excitement and conflict; and the word of prophecy has foretold the days of agitation and revolution. Says Jehovah, *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come, whose right it is; and I will give it him.* Again, he says: *The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: the Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake.* St. John also refers to similar scenes, under a variety of figures, in the Revelations; he speaks of *lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail,* which are to shake the earth, and agitate the nations. From such striking illustrations, scattered through the Bible, we are led to anticipate fearful collision and devastation, such as the world as yet has never seen. Nations will be agitated, kingdoms will be moved, thrones demolished, old organizations broken up, and new organizations formed, harmonizing with the spirit and genius of the gospel. The church will cast off her sloth, be kindled to her primitive zeal, and unite her powers, and boldly assert for her Sovereign, the spiritual empire of the world. Every movement of the church may be expected to rouse the jealousy, kindle the wrath, and excite the resistance of her great adversary, and all his legions. He will never surrender up his dominion without a struggle. We are taught this by the history of the past, as well as by the word of prophecy. When have important changes ever been effected in public sentiment, or in the state of society, without a degree of agitation and violence? In science, in government, in religion, the conflict has usually been long and severe. And often have the hearts of the fearful and timid failed, before the battle was won. The occasions for excitement are seen in the conflicting symptoms of religion, in the organizations of civil society. They are seen in the spreading sway of infidelity, superstition, and law-

less violence. Before men can be universally brought to concede to each other their rights, and to God his dominion, immense changes, of an exciting character, must obviously take place. The storm is certainly advancing; already are the elements in motion; we hear the distant thunder; we perceive the agitation; we see, here and there, the uplifted hand of violence, and, should God permit, very little seems necessary to plunge the nation into either a domestic or foreign war. And should the torch of war be kindled, who can tell how wide would be the conflagration, or how long it might burn, or what ruin and destruction it might involve in its course? Now, for such a crisis, we need a ministry of deep piety, of great power, and of penetrating foresight; a ministry who will display, in the discharge of its duties, energy, and wisdom, and prudence, and zeal. We need in the holy office, men of calm and collected minds, who can look at the raging tempest without agitation; men who can stand amidst high excitement, without losing their balance; men who can take a comprehensive view of truth and duty; men of enlarged and liberal views, as well as of inflexible firmness and integrity. We need a ministry above all selfish considerations, and all petty bickerings; a ministry who can steadily guide and direct the church of God, come what may; a ministry who enjoy the presence of God, and can inspire the confidence of the church under the darkest trials. Such a ministry is the greatest boon God can bestow upon his people, and never fail of sustaining the church under the sharpest conflicts, or of leading them safely through the most trying and afflicting scenes. But what can the church do in the day of trial, with a weak, ignorant, injudicious, and inefficient ministry? Such a ministry will hang like an incubus about her neck, and will strangle her to death. The value and importance of a pious, devoted, and efficient ministry, can never be overrated.

I will suggest but one other consideration. A ministry of elevated piety, and enlarged views, will greatly contribute to promote *union among the truly faithful*. Our Saviour, at his last interview with his disciples, before his passion, devoutly prayed that all his true followers *might be one*; and, who can look over our beloved Zion with anything like an angel's love, or an angel's pity, and not desire the same result? Who can calmly survey the divided and distracted state of the church, wrent, torn, and cut up as she is into sects, parties, and factions, without being deeply affected with the appalling scene, and without putting forth a helping hand to arrest an evil fraught with so much mischief? The time is coming, and the day is foretold, when this evil shall be banished from the church. And, like all other events, this will undoubtedly be brought about by human instrumentality. And such a ministry as we now contemplate, a ministry of deep piety, freed from narrow and selfish views, embracing in its comprehensive survey the great truths, and designs, and interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and looking

at things on the comprehensive scale of eternity, and confiding in God, can easily keep in subjection its native pride, worldly ambition, and warring lusts; can easily merge all minor matters of difference and disunion, in the glorious enterprise of strengthening and extending the empire of Christ. Then no jarring-notes, no discordant sounds shall be heard; then the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and lift up their voices together; then will the dissensions of the church cease, and all her energies be concentrated for preparing and sending forth the charriots of salvation; and then will the work of the Lord speed its way onward, till all nations are blessed.

We shall now proceed to consider some of the most prominent objections which have been urged against ministerial education. It has been assumed as a fact, by many pious and good people, that ministerial education is designed to supercede the necessity of true piety, and the teachings and influences of the Holy Spirit. Now, we admit that the spirit of piety and true devotion has departed from some of the Christian sects, and that young men are educated and trained for the ministry, as they are educated and trained for the other learned professions, without any spiritual call to that sacred office. But we advocate no such system of measures; we as heartily condemn and repudiate them as do any of our brethren. We wish to see no man aided or assisted in acquiring an education for the ministry, who has not given evidence of decided piety, and who is not moved by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel of the grace of God to perishing sinners. The Constitution and By-laws\* of the Christian Education Society have effectually guarded against this objection, by proposing to assist those young men only, whom the church may solemnly pronounce to be pious, and, in her opinion, to be called of God to preach the gospel. Consequently, this objection, however justly it may be urged against the proceedings of some of the Christian sects, cannot be urged against any system of measures proposed or advocated by us.

It has been supposed by some, that the apostle Paul *strongly discountenanced the use of all human learning* in preaching the gospel. To the church at Corinth he says, *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* That the apostle rejected the system of religion inculcated by the Pagan priests and Grecian philosophers, and the modes by which they recommended these systems to the people, is certainly true; and this is what he affirms in the words we have cited. He, adopting their own language, calls their system of religion *wisdom*, and the arts and tricks they used in propagating and sustaining it, the *enticing words of man's wisdom*. The apostle affirms that he neither taught the doctrine nor copied the example of the Grecian priests and phi-

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\* Not yet published.



losophers, but that he preached the gospel *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*. The apostle is not here condemning true learning, and advocating ignorance, but he condemns a state of things which at that time existed in the Grecian States, and which were arrayed against the spread of the gospel.

We do not, however, suppose that the apostle considered true science, and true eloquence, as the choice armor in which he was to confide, and by which he was to plant the gospel among the nations of the earth. Yet, at the same time, as subordinate instruments, and incidental aids, he not only allowed, but he himself continually and successfully employed them. The Christian pastor, who makes the acquisition of a reputation for eloquence or learning the first and highest object of his labors, or trusts in them as his chief weapons, fearfully sins against God; but the man who, in the fear of God uses them, and sanctifies them to his service and to the service of the church, and to the good of souls, he acts judiciously and wisely. If he confide in them, or glory in them, he does it at his peril. But if God has conferred them upon him, and he prostitutes them to other purposes, or withholds the exercise of them when animated by a spirit of true love to God and man, he does this also at his peril. As the chief instruments in teaching and propagating the Christian religion, they are to be rejected; but as the hand-maidens and helpers of the gospel, they are to be received and employed. To cultivate them for their own sake, were an idolatry which Paul would have sternly rebuked; to use them for the service of God and his church, is the very practice which Paul himself exemplified.

But, how shall such a ministry as we have been describing, be prepared and trained for God? Shall the work of rearing and training such a ministry be left entirely to the operations of Divine Providence? Or is human agency, the agency of the church, to be employed in this great and good work? It must be admitted by all, that God employs human instrumentality in the salvation of men, and in carrying forward the great designs of the gospel in the conversion of the world; otherwise, we shall be compelled to reject all ideas of a ministerial agency in the gospel scheme of salvation. If a ministerial agency is to be employed at all, it should be an agency which, in the providence of God, is the best adapted to accomplish the end in view. If such an instrumentality is to be employed, then means are to be used in training and preparing it, because this is in harmony with the whole system of means included in the gospel plan of salvation. We are accordingly directed, *Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest*. God alone has the wisdom to select, and energy to inspire and summon forth the ministry that is needed. If the church has a ministry of the proper character, she will receive them from God; and he has promised to supply her wants: *I will give you pastors after mine own heart. He gives some evangelists, and some prophets, and some pastors and teachers*. The church, then, should re-

member, in all her efforts to increase the number and strength of the ministry, that *Promotion cometh not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south*:—that *except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*. And shall we remain silent while the cry for laborers is coming forth from every quarter—from vacant churches, and dreary wastes in our own land—and from waking millions whelmed in Pagan darkness in foreign countries? Let the church, then, carry the moving appeal at once to the throne of mercy—let her cry day and night go up to heaven. Does the enemy come in like a flood? does the tide of worldliness appear overwhelming? does iniquity send forth its blasphemies, and the man of sin his emissaries? is the church suffering reproach, shame, and trouble, from foes within and without? let her not despond, but let her be humbled in the dust, and pour forth her cries to God; let her rise up in all the omnipotence of faith;—such faith as in former days *subdued kingdoms, and obtained promises*. Let her still trust in the power, wisdom, and faithfulness of God, who, in answer to prayer, will *send forth laborers into his harvest*, such as the signs of the times demand;—a ministry of wisdom, of strength, of zeal, kindled from heaven. Let the church keep near her King, obey all his commandments, and trust for success only in the Lord of Hosts, and he will, in the use of appropriate means, raise up for her deliverance and triumph, men of genius, of talent, of elevated character, and of enlarged mind, *mighty in the Scriptures, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost*.

But to our prayers for such a ministry, we should *add our alms to assist in preparing and training it*. To obtain eminence in the ministry requires time and effort. The requisite mental discipline and stores of knowledge are not the miraculous gifts of heaven; they are the result of long and close application. He who will not submit to discipline, nor use the means of storing his mind with useful knowledge in his profession, can never acquire eminence; or if he does, he cannot sustain it for any length of time. If young men rush into the gospel field without preparation—without maturity of judgment—without discipline of mind—without knowledge,—without that balance of powers which is the result of well proportioned cultivation—they will, they must labor under great disadvantages; and there will be found only here and there an individual among them, magnifying his office, pouring forth light on his generation, and blessing mankind. Some will become discouraged in not meeting with success—others will become vain from a show of attention—and others again, through ignorance, will be ensnared in the wiles of the devil, and dishonor that holy office into which they have been introduced. It is as necessary for the ministry as the church, that they should be properly trained and instructed before they are introduced in the holy office. How, indeed, can any man be suitably qualified to teach and direct others, before he himself has been properly trained by a course of instruction and disci-

pline? To instruct, to train, to discipline the young, the ignorant, and the inexperienced for the ministry, requires time and means. Many pious and godly young men are ready to devote themselves to the Lord, and to the service of his church, but they are destitute of the means of sustaining themselves in a preparatory course of study and discipline, to render themselves competent and useful teachers. Could they be encouraged and brought forward, could they be educated, instructed, disciplined, and properly prepared for the great and good work, they doubtless would become devoted and eminent ministers of the gospel, and some of them shine as stars of the first magnitude in the spiritual heavens. And is it not as much the duty of the church to encourage and assist such young men, as it is to pray the Lord of the harvest to send them forth into his harvest? Ought not the alms, as well as the prayers of the church, to go up to heaven in their behalf? Indeed, will her prayers ever reach heaven, unless they are perfumed with the sacrifice of worldly substance? Has not God commanded her *to bring her tythes and offerings into this store-house*, and declared if she refuse to do this he will shut the windows of heaven against her? How, then, can she expect, while she cherishes a spirit of avarice, while she continues to withhold from God what he so justly demands, that he will hear her prayers, and give to her a faithful, devoted, and enlightened ministry? Let the church do her whole duty, let her send up her prayers and her alms together as a memorial before God, then will the windows of heaven be opened, then will the rich blessings of God descend upon her as the dew of heaven, then will she be as trees planted by the river courses, whose leaf is always green, and whatsoever she doeth will prosper. In enriching others, she herself will be enriched; and in blessing others, she herself will be blessed. Thus shall ministers and people rise up and call each other blessed. A new and vivifying life will inspire the church, and she will rise up in all her beauty, and go forth in the greatness of her strength. *Then shall his people go out with joy, and be led forth in peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before her into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands for joy. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree, it shall be to the Lord a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. Then shall her sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and her daughters will be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. Then the Lord will create in Zion a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night; indeed, he will be a wall of fire round about her, and the glory in the midst of her.*

## ARTICLE II.

*Predictions Relating to Jerusalem's Tribulation, and the Coming of the Son of Man.—By Elder Jasper Hazen.*

THESE predictions are recorded by three of the four evangelists. Mat. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi. In the exposition of these predictions, two systems very different from each other, have been adopted. The one regards the language relating to the coming of the Son of man, as highly figurative, and treating of events immediately connected with, and involving the destruction of Jerusalem. That those predictions received their fulfilment during the life of some of the persons living at the time the predictions were uttered. Another exposition regards them as predictions of events, which are to receive a literal accomplishment: that they have never been fulfilled, but are to be in time yet future. An investigation of this subject, and a fair comparison of those systems of exposition with the predictions, and with other scripture, is designed by the writer of this article. In order to a fair investigation of the subject, I will just present the predictions relating to the principal events, as recorded by the three, transcribing such portions as may be necessary to our object, and referring to others.

Sec. 1. *Signs of the approaching tribulation of the Jews.* It is unnecessary, in this quotation, to go back further than the sign at which the disciples were to leave Jerusalem.

Mat. 15—18. "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand,) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."

Mark 14—16. "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains; and let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take anything out of his house. And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment."

Luke 20—22. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains: and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

Sec. 2. *This division embraces the predictions of the tribulation of the Jews.* It includes the death of those who perished by the war, the captivity of the survivors, and the destruction of their city, expressed by the treading it down for an indefinite time.

Mat. 19—22. "And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Mark 17—20. "But wo to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

Luke 23, 24. "But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Mat. 23—28, and Mark 21—23, give cautions against false Christs, with such a description of the manner of Christ's coming, "As the lightning," as to prevent danger of deception to those that believe his word.

Sec. 3. *The signs of the coming of the Son of man.* Mat. 29. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Mark 24, 25. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." Luke 25, 26. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after the things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Sec. 4. *The coming of the Son of man.* Mat. 30. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Mark 26. "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Luke 27. "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory."

Sec. 5. *Events following the coming of the Son of man.* Mat. 31. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Mark 27. "And then shall

he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven." Luke 28. "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

In the remaining part of these chapters, the disciples are taught in a parable, that when all these things come to pass, the kingdom of God is nigh. And by the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants, admonished to their duty.

I. *The order of the events.* The things spoken of in these predictions, in their order, are, 1. The signs of Jerusalem's tribulation; concluded by that sign, at which the disciples are to flee to the mountains, that they may escape the vengeance about to be poured upon Jerusalem. 2. The tribulation of the Jews, declared by Mathew to be "Great tribulation;" by Mark, "Great affliction;" by Luke, "Great distress;" and particularly described by Luke: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword." &c. 3. The signs of Christ's coming, given by Matthew and Mark: "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall;" which Luke declares to be signs in those heavenly bodies, and adds others upon the earth, and in the sea. 4. The coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. This event, arranged in the same order, in relation to the other events, coming in a cloud, or the clouds; and *to be seen coming*, according to all three of the witnesses. 5. His coming, followed by the gathering his elect by the angels, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven. This embraces, or includes the redemption of the elect. These predicted events are arranged in this order by the three evangelists, interspersed with such instruction, counsel, and caution, as the circumstances of the case render proper and needful. This arrangement is distinctly observed in the three, and is important to a right understanding of the prophecy.

II. *Explanation of terms.* There are two instances in which terms are recorded by Luke, not named by the other evangelists, that may render a few words proper by way of explanation. 1. **REDEMPTION.** This term is introduced by Luke in such connexion, as to show that it is cotemporary with the gathering of the elect: (see section 5.) Without reference to the opinions of others, we may gather from the New Testament that there were those in Jerusalem that looked for *redemption*: Luke ii., 38. That Christ is made *redemption* to us: 1 Cor. i., 30. That this *redemption* is in Christ: Rom. iii., 24. That it embraces deliverance from sin, by forgiveness: Eph. i., 7., Col. i., 14; and deliverance from corruption and death, by change to immortality: Rom. viii., 23, compared with 1 Cor. xv., 51, 52. That this *redemption* is an eternal deliverance: Heb. ix., 12. And by the Holy Spirit of God, the saints are sealed to the day of *redemption*: Eph. iv., 30. It also embraces deliverance from the curse of the law: Gal. iii., 13. And from our vain

conversation : 1 Pet. i., 18. Then the term embraces deliverance from the guilt of sin—from the curse of the law—from our vain course of life—from the bondage of corruption, (death,) and an eternal inheritance of the purchased possession, of which the saints now have an earnest, by the seeking of that Holy Spirit of promise : Eph. i., 13, 14. This *redemption* spoken of by Luke, is to be experienced at the coming of Christ, and the gathering of the elect ; compare with Luke, 1 Thess. iv., 16, 17.

2. *Kingdom of God.* See Luke verse 31, compared with Mat. v. 33, Mark v. 29. This term is supposed sometimes to mean that state into which persons enter, when they, by embracing the gospel, become the willing subjects of the government of God, and enjoy his favor and protection. Its most common meaning is that glorious state of perfection into which the righteous will enter, through much tribulation, which God has promised to them that love him ; in which, when it comes, the will of God will be done in earth, as it is done in heaven, prepared for the righteous, in which they will inherit eternal life.

III. *Principles of right exposition.* 1. A right exposition of this prophecy, will embrace the whole record made by the three evangelists. In this manner they will throw light upon each other, and all help to a right understanding of the predictions. For neither record everything Christ said on the Mount of Olives, nor did either record anything he did *not say*. By a comparison of them with each other, we come at what Christ would communicate. 2. A right exposition will accord with, and not derange the order of the events as predicted ; and that order preserved by all three of the witnesses. In the historical part of their writings, very particular attention appears not to have been paid to the exact order in which they occurred, in relation to each other. Nor was it necessary. If Jesus restored a blind man to sight, restored the withered hand, and raised a dead man from his grave, it is not necessary to our conviction that he is the Messiah, to know which miracle was performed first ; but only that they were performed. Then, a witness of those facts, would testify to the facts, without being very particular as to their order. But when we have predictions of future events, the right order and arrangement of which events, is necessary to a right understanding of the predictions, it is very necessary that this order should be preserved. This will be found to have been the case, exactly, by the evangelists in this record, so far as the great and important events predicted are concerned. A right exposition will preserve, not derange and destroy that order. 3. A right exposition will accord with, not contradict, the plain declarations of Jesus Christ. I need not support this principle by illustration or argument. 4. A right exposition will meet all the important events predicted, and show their accomplishment, in a satisfactory manner, according to the common use of the terms in which the predictions are given. 5. By a right exposi-

tion, the predictions will accord with, give support to, and receive support from, other passages of scripture, other portions of the word of God, and not stand single and alone from every other part of the inspired record.

IV. *Figurative exposition.* I shall only give some of the principal points relating to the coming of the Son of man. I see not much occasion to dispute about the predictions relating to the tribulation of the Jews. 1. This exposition supposes that Christ's coming was the manifestation of his power and glory, by the signal display of Divine vengeance, in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army. 2. That this figurative coming of Christ took place at the approach of that army. (See Clark on verse 27 of Mat.) 3. That the darkening of the sun, and moon, and the falling of the stars, must be the destruction of Jerusalem. "The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the sun and moon of its glory, and happiness shall be darkened, brought to nothing. The sun is the religion of the church; the moon is the government of the state; and the stars are the judges and doctors of both." 4. *The angels* mean the apostles, and their successors in the Christian ministry. 5. *A great sound of a trumpet*, the call of the gospel. 6. *His elect*. The Gentiles chosen instead of the Jews. (Some I believe, think the disciples of Christ.) 7. Gathering together his elect, of course meaning the conversion of the Gentiles; or, as some say, the gathering of the scattered disciples after the departure of the Roman army. 8. "*The kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*" "After the destruction of the Jewish state, the doctrine of Christ crucified shall be preached everywhere, and everywhere prevail." 9. *Redemption* means deliverance, either from the tribulations, or persecutions of the Jews.

V. *Objections to the above exposition.* Obj. 1. It is figurative. The predictions preceding those relating to the coming of the Son of man, receive a literal accomplishment. This should lead to the conclusion that these predictions will receive an accomplishment equally literal, unless good reason to the contrary can be shown. It would, at least, seem improbable, that after a train of predictions literally describing the death and captivity of the citizens, and the treading down their city, that this should be followed by a train of predictions, foretelling the same events, in language so highly figurative, as to be hardly possibly understood. Obj. 2. This exposition entirely deranges the order of the events, as predicted by Christ, and that order carefully preserved by the three evangelists. It will be observed that the order of the predictions is, 1. Signs preceding Jerusalem's tribulation, the last of which is the Roman army surrounding Jerusalem. (See scriptures in Sec. 1.) 2. The great tribulation of the Jews described: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Sec. 2.) 3. The signs of Christ's coming. "And there shall be signs in the sun &c. (Sec. 3.)



4. The coming of the Son of man. (Sec. 4.) Now, the above exposition makes the fourth event (Christ's coming) simultaneous with the first event, (the approach of the Roman army). Thus, merging the first and fourth events in one. Then, again, the third event, the darkening of the sun, &c., is made simultaneous with the second event, the destruction of Jerusalem; and both are made to be the same event. Then, the darkening of the sun, &c., which Luke declares to be signs of Christ's coming, and which all three of the evangelists place directly before that event, are made to follow Christ's coming, with the Roman army, and the immediate consequences of that coming, instead of signs of it. Thus, is there an entire confusion of the order of the events, as stated in the prediction. Can it be a right exposition? Obj. 3. The figurative exposition, directly and plainly contradicts the express declaration of Jesus Christ. In the second section of scriptures, at the head of this article, we have predictions of the tribulation of the Jews. It is said by Matthew to be "Great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Mark gives nearly the same language. Luke says, "For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Is there, *can there* be any doubt, that this tribulation involved the destruction of Jerusalem? Let it be remembered, after this description of this tribulation, he adds, "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man *coming* in the clouds with great power and glory." Thus, Jesus declares his coming by following signs, *AFTER* that tribulation: this exposition contradicts him, and says it was before that tribulation with the Roman army, and was the cause of the tribulation. If it was *before*, or *at* the tribulation, it could not be *after*. If it was *AFTER*, it could not be *during* the tribulation, nor *before* it. Thus, there is a plain contradiction irreconcilable; we have only to choose between Christ, and these expositors, which we will believe. Again, Christ says, those signs, *the darkening of the sun, &c.*, are after that tribulation; this exposition, that it was in that tribulation. Was not the destruction of Jerusalem, the extinguishing of the light of her prosperity, and the fall of her judges and doctors, involved in the 2d Section? ending, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." But Jesus declares, "The sun shall be darkened," &c., *after* that tribulation. Hence, I object that this exposition expressly contradicts the Saviour. Obj. 4. This exposition fails of meeting the predicted events, and showing their accomplishments in a satisfactory manner.

1. To see in the destruction of Jerusalem "Such a remarkable in-

stance of Divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will, in consequence of this manifestation of God, be led to acknowledge Christ and his religion," is not an accomplishment of "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory." To see that Christ has been there some months executing vengeance, before they found it out, and to see him coming in the clouds are very different things. To "Gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven," is not fulfilled in the conversion of the Gentiles to become the people of God, (the elect,) and still leave them scattered abroad, some in heaven, some on earth, some living, and some in their graves. That event does not answer the prediction. Nor does the gathering of a few of the scattered disciples of Christ, (not at the coming of Christ with the Roman army, but after the Roman army, and, consequently, Christ, if he came figuratively with the Roman army, had gone away,) to weep over the smoking ruins of their dwellings, and mourn over the desolations of their country, answer the prediction. How would an apostle who was desiring to depart and be with Christ, who gloried in tribulation, who did not count his life dear unto himself so that he might finish his course with joy, who was waiting for the *redemption* of his body, who was expecting eternal *redemption*; how would he regard such a *redemption*, as deliverance from the tribulation or persecutions of the Jews. The idea is enough to almost raise a smile at the thought of its puerility. Can that be the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus, for which his disciples hope, and pray, and wait? Again, can it be a satisfactory exposition of, "The kingdom of God is nigh at hand," to speak of the coming of a kingdom that had been set up forty years before, and they been in it, and preached in it to others? If Dr. Clarke is to be credited in this case, before the time of the Jews tribulation, the gospel had been propagated as far north as Scythia, as far south as Ethiopia, as far east as Parthia and India, and as far west as Spain and Britain. Was not *this* the kingdom in which the will of God shall be done on earth, as it is in heaven, that was then nigh at hand? In every prediction, there is a failure of meeting it in a satisfactory manner by the events, and showing the accomplishment of the prediction. Obj. 5. No other scriptures accord with this exposition of this scripture. No other scriptures tell of setting up the kingdom of God at that time. If it was preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and planting the church of Christ in the world, that had been done before Jerusalem's destruction. If it was the gospel superseding the law, that had taken place before this time: "The law and the prophets were until John, since that, the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." If it was that state of perfect glory in which the will of God is done on earth as it is done in heaven, it is yet to

come. There is no other place that speaks of the redemption of the saints at that time. No other place that speaks of the gathering of the people of God at that time. No other scripture that speaks of the coming of the Son of man at that time. This coming is abundantly spoken of; the kingdom of God is frequently mentioned; the redemption of the saints is the subject of scripture remark; and the gathering together in one, all things in Christ; but no where in connexion with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Another exposition gives these predictions a just, literal, and exact accomplishment. It supposes the coming of Christ yet future. That at some future period, he will come in the clouds of heaven; that all the tribes of the earth will see him; that he will be attended by his mighty angels, who with a great sound of a trumpet, will gather his people from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven; that they will be redeemed from corruption, and from death; that they will enter into the kingdom of God, to go no more out; that they will possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever! That these events are preceded by the signs in the sun, moon, and stars: and that those signs follow the tribulation mentioned, Jesus himself explaining what he means by that tribulation.

VII. This exposition is sustained by other scriptures. By other testimony we learn that Christ is personally to come; that this personal coming is yet future; and at that future personal appearing of Jesus Christ, every prediction connected with his coming, in this prophecy, is to receive a literal accomplishment.

1. Christ is personally to come. Acts. i., 9—11. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Here is full assurance given of the literal personal appearance of Jesus. He had for the space of forty days given many infallible proofs to his apostles that he was alive after his passion: and now personally leaves them, with the assurance given by angels, that he should return in like manner. 1 Thess. iv., 16. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Not figuratively, not by his messengers, not by the Spirit's influence, but "The Lord himself."

2. Christ's personal coming is yet future. It was so at the time the apostle wrote; we must suppose it so yet, if history furnishes no account of such personal appearing since that time. But we have testimony which puts the matter beyond doubt. We have events connected with his coming, that certainly have not yet transpired. 1 Thess. iv., 15—17. "For this we say unto you by the

word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Here we have the coming of Christ connected with the resurrection of the dead in Christ; and connecting this with 1 Cor. xv., 51, 52. "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." We learn that the living saints are changed, and both caught up together to meet the Lord. 1 Cor. xv., 22, 23. "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." These scriptures prove the resurrection of the dead saints, and change of the living, at the coming of Jesus Christ. If this has not taken place, Jesus Christ is yet to come.

3. At this personal future appearing of Jesus Christ, all the events predicted by Jesus, following his coming, are to take place; also the circumstances connected with his coming are to be the same that are there predicted. I will notice a few particulars named in the 24th of Matthew. 1. "He will come in the clouds," v. 30. 2. "He will come unexpectedly as a thief," v. 43. 3. "His coming will be as the lightning," v. 27. 4. "And the tribes of the earth shall see him," v. 30. 5. "He will be attended by his angels," v. 31. 6. "He will gather his elect," v. 31. 7. "This gathering shall be with a great sound of a trumpet," v. 31. 8. "He will reward his faithful servants," v. 45—47. 9. "He will punish the unfaithful," v. 51. 10. "In gathering his elect, one will necessarily be taken and another left," v. 40, 41.

As the particulars here recapitulated are all joined in one connected portion of scripture, so the other scriptures which I shall introduce, will embrace several particulars in one quotation. Rev. i., 7. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." In this quotation we have the first and fourth particulars embraced and fully sustained. See also Acts i., 9—11., Mat. xxvi., 64., Mark xiv., 62.

1 Thess. iv., 13—18, and v., 1—3. "But I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again: even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For

the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.” ;

The connexion in this quotation is of such a character, and the coming of the Lord is here so intimately, so directly joined with the resurrection and gathering of all who are in Christ Jesus, as to render this a very important witness in this case. We have here almost every particular, named or implied, connected with Christ's coming in Matthew. 1. His coming in the clouds, we imply from “They shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” 2. Unexpectedly as a thief: “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” The *fifth* particular, that he will be attended by his angels, is implied from their being caught up to meet the Lord. 6. The gathering his elect: “The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we that are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them.” Here is the gathering of all the dead and living saints. 7. With the trumpet. “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. 8. He will reward his faithful servants. “And so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 9. And punish the unfaithful. “For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” 10. Then, wherever the godly and ungodly are associated, “One shall be taken, and another left.” If we may add the suddenness of the event, also the clearness of it, will render it “As the lightning.” And that thus manifested to the world, all must see him, (the 3d and 4th particulars,) then we have every particular here embraced, which we have noticed in Matthew, connected with Christ's coming.

These things are to take place at the resurrection of the dead. Then so certainly as the dead are not yet raised, and the living saints are not yet changed, and both caught up together, so certainly the coming of Christ in the clouds, the gathering his elect with the great sound of a trumpet, the rewarding his faithful servants, and punishing the unfaithful with sudden destruction, is future, is yet to come.

Then, whatever opinion we may form of the figurative exposition of these predictions, we may be assured they are yet to receive a literal and full accomplishment in all their particulars. One quo-

tation more to this point, among the numerous list that presents itself, must suffice.

2 Thess. i., 7—10. "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." We have here the coming of Christ, "With his angels," "Like the lightning," "In flaming fire." I have now finished quotations embracing every particular, named in connexion with the coming of the Son of man, in Matthew. Every one who believes the testimony of the witnesses, must believe that those predictions are yet to receive their accomplishment.

VIII. It will be seen that this exposition agrees with the order of the events as recorded by the three evangelists. 1. The signs of that destruction which has involved the Jews, as a nation, in unparalleled tribulation. 2. The tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world, to this time. Take the national calamities of that people, consider both their severity and their duration, and they have no parallel in the world's history. 3. The signs of Christ's coming, after that tribulation. "Signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring." 4. The appearing of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. 5. The gathering of the elect by the angels, with the sound of the trumpet. 6. The reward of the righteous and wicked. All the events, in their several classes, by the literal exposition, occur precisely in the order in which they stand in the predictions. And this is certainly a circumstance to which some importance should be attached. In the historical part of their writings, particular attention is not paid to the order of time in which the events occurred: nor is it important. But when we come to prophecy, when that order is necessary to a right interpretation, they all preserve the order of the predicted event, and a right exposition should agree with, not derange it.

2. When that arrangement of the events is expressly sanctioned by the Lord Jesus Christ, and he has explicitly told us that one event follows, is "*after*" another event, who would feel authorised to contradict the Saviour by their interpretation? This exposition does not contradict him. It admits, it places *after* that tribulation, the signs of a Saviour's coming. It gives credence to, it accords with, the Saviour's declaration. This cannot be said of the figurative exposition.

3. This exposition allows and exhibits a satisfactory fulfilment of all the particulars in the prophecy. By this exposition they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great

glory. The elect, the people of God, are gathered together from one end of heaven to the other. They are all included and gathered, how much soever they may have been dispersed and scattered abroad. The work of redemption is, indeed, completed; they are redeemed from corruption and death; they are caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with the Lord. Then the kingdom of God will come, and his will be done in earth as it is done in heaven; this is the redemption, this the gathering the elect, this the kingdom of God, for which the saints of God sigh, and hope, and wait. No redemption short of that will meet the wishes of the disciples of Jesus. "We wait for the adoption, to wit: the redemption of our body."—"Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness."

4. While the figurative exposition is entirely unsupported by other scriptures, there not being a passage found in all the New Testament, which connects the tribulation of the Jews, and the coming of the Son of man, in point of time, this literal exposition receives abundant support from other scripture, as we have already seen. The coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, and every following prediction is sustained by other scripture. And that other scripture is so connected with the resurrection of the dead saints, and the change of the living to immortality, that they cannot be carried back to the destruction of Jerusalem. There is such exact agreement in the particulars connected with the coming of the Son of man, in Mat., chap. xxiv., and 1 Thess., chap. iv., that we can hardly doubt their reference to the same events.

IX. If the reader will turn to his New Testament, and draw a line across after Mat., v. 22, Mark, v. 20, Luke, v. 24, and then will examine closely, he will find, 1. that the coming of the Son of man is not named in the preceding part of the chapters; save in the disciples question, not a prediction refers to it; but signs and admonitions followed, and concluded by the great and enduring tribulation of the Jews. This tribulation, bounded by no specified time of centuries or years, but by the undefined, uncertain time, "Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

2. After this mark he will find the prediction of the coming of the Son of man, preceded by the signs of his approach, and preceded and followed by cautions and admonition. He will not find the calamities of the Jews, their tribulation referred to at all, not named. It is the coming of the Son of man: "And they shall see the Son of man coming."—"So shall also the coming of the Son of man be."—"Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."—"For, in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."—"Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing."

3. He will find the coming of the Son of man, preceded by another class of signs, differing from the signs of the first event. And

that the signs of the second event, the coming of the Son of man, are expressly declared to be *after* the other event, the tribulation of the Jews, is terminated. Can it be possible, that events thus differing in the language of their description, and in the signs that precede them, distinct from each other in the order of their arrangement, and severed from each other by the express declaration of Jesus Christ, declaring the signs preceding one, to be *after* the conclusion of the other, can be believed to be the same event?

X. There are some difficulties in the way of this exposition. I will consider them. 1. Mat. xxiv., 29. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened." The word "Immediately," presents the only difficulty in this passage, and it may be regarded as a singular fact, that the very words fatal to one exposition, should seem also to interpose difficulties in the way of the other. It is "*after*," consequently cannot be *at*, or during the tribulation. It is "*immediately after*," and there would not seem to admit of so long delay as the centuries that have followed the time of the prediction.

We will insert what Luke records, which Matthew omits. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."—"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened."—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened." Does the death of those that perished, the captivity of the survivors, the destruction of their city and temple, and its possession by their enemies, all go to make up the tribulation of those days? Or did the tribulation consist of but a part of those particulars named? If we suppose the whole included in the "Tribulation of those days," then the difficulty vanishes; for then the tribulation continues so long as the Jews are without a home and a country, and Zion, the city of their solemnities, is trodden down by the Gentiles. And why should we restrict the tribulation of those days, by the continuance of the days of war and siege? Did the tribulation end with the days? That the tribulation of days of war and siege, continues long after the close of the war, the sighs of the homeless captive, and the groaning of the prisoners abundantly prove. As Jesus himself so describes the tribulation, as to embrace that tribulation which was suffered, and also that occasioned by the war, we are under obligation so to accept it.

Mark says, "In those days, after that tribulation." This has led some to suppose that he means the same days previously named: "For in those days shall be great affliction." But the language of the evangelist makes them necessarily different. Looking forward to the future, speaking of future days: "Those days of great af-



fliction," and "Those days, after that tribulation," would be as evidently different days, as language could make them so. When we consider that Jesus had previously described the tribulation as recorded by Luke: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled;" and add, "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened," it would seem as though the subject was placed beyond doubt.

Luke, and only Luke, records the language, particularly describing the tribulation. Mark assures us the signs of Christ's coming, "Shall be in those days, after that tribulation." Matthew, that it shall be "Immediately after."

Now, whoever would explain this differently, let them remember that they must do it so as to admit Luke, v. 24, before Mat., v. 29. And then they must place the signs of Christ's coming, after that tribulation, not *before*, nor *at*: and then, Christ's coming must follow the signs. Then if they can get the coming of Christ before the tribulation of the Jews, with the approach of the Roman army to invest the city, they can make themselves believe that which I cannot.

It may be proper to add to this section, the language of an apostle: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."—"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" 2 Pet. iii., 3.

Mat. xxiv., 34. "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Several different expositions are given to this passage. 1. That the age then present, the men then living should not die, until all the preceding predictions were fulfilled. 2. That the age who should witness the destruction of the sun, the moon, and the falling of the stars, should not pass away until Christ came. 3. That family, the Jews, the family of Abraham, should be preserved, notwithstanding the persecutions and trials to which they should be subjected, until the accomplishment of all those predictions. 4. The disciples of Christ, who are a chosen generation, should be preserved, and the true religion continued in existence, until all those predictions should meet their accomplishment. The first exposition of this passage only presents objections to the literal exposition of these predictions. That only, therefore, need be particularly considered in this place. The definition given to the Greek word, here used, by Grove, in his Greek Lexicon, is, "descent, succession, birth, parentage, a race, breed, kind, sort, species,

age, the time from the birth of a man till he has a son, about thirty years." There are to this exposition, then, the following objections.

1. There are predictions preceding this declaration that are not yet fulfilled. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," is certainly yet in its course of accomplishment, is yet unfulfilled. One single prediction unaccomplished, is fatal either to the exposition, or the prediction. We would not invalidate the prophecy, but only question the exposition. The prediction of the coming of the Son of man, and every prediction following that, remains unfulfilled. The figurative coming of Christ with the Roman army, at the commencement of, and causing the tribulation of the Jews, could it be made to appear, would not fulfil the prediction of a coming of Christ, after signs that are after that tribulation. Could it be made to appear that Christ left the mediatorial seat, and became the executioner of his father's vengeance by the Roman army, that would still leave the prophecy of his coming, after that tribulation, to be fulfilled. Is there any pretence of an appearance, a coming of Christ, after that tribulation, in any past event? There is not. Then all those predictions remain yet to be fulfilled. But even the destruction of Jerusalem did not take place before that age passed away. None of this age shall pass away. This age shall not pass away: or, all of the men of this age shall not pass away, would each convey a different idea to the mind. By the first, we should understand that it must occur at once, before death had time to make any sensible inroads upon the living. By the second form of expression, we should suppose it must happen while the greater portion or body of them were living; by the other, we might suppose the term protracted, while any of the men were alive. Jerusalem was destroyed from thirty-seven to forty years after this prediction. Was the great body of the men of that age still living to prove those calamities? Or had they, with a few exceptions, left the stage, and the next generation or age succeeded to taste the cup of Jerusalem's calamities?
2. It does not appear to have been the Saviour's design to answer the question as to the time. His answer to the question, "When?" is, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."—"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Nor are we taught that it was then nigh: but only that it might be known to be so, when all these things should come to pass. If generation, then, means age, it must mean the age living on the earth at the time these signs shall be accomplished; and to this the language "Ye shall see," is no more objection, than the apostle's language, "We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord," proves that the dead were raised in his day, and is an objection to the doctrine of the future resurrection of the dead.

But whatever exposition may be given it, such an one as will accord with Luke xxi., 24, will answer all our purposes, on the ground here taken; and he who, to support a favorite view, would array one part of the prophecy against another, does it at his own peril.

Mat. xvi., 28. "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." The subject of the Jews tribulation, and the destruction of Jerusalem, are not named in this connexion. There is nothing said here that refers to that time of calamity. Hence, there is no reason for applying it to that event, unless, from other scriptures it can be proved that the Son of man did come in his kingdom at that time. The scriptures, and the only scriptures relied upon, in which the two subjects, Christ's coming, and the destruction of Jerusalem are embraced, are those at the head of this article. We have seen, that instead of asserting that Christ came in his kingdom at that time, that the two events are distinct from each other, introduced by different signs. The signs of one event declared to be *after* the tribulation of the other, and they separated from each other by the undefined term of time, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." So we have yet to seek the place where they begin to be made the same, or simultaneous events. The only ground on which this can be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, is, that there were some standing there that should not taste of death till they saw it, and John was alive at the time of Jerusalem's destruction. Hence, it is assumed that it must mean the time of Jerusalem's destruction, and that Christ came at that time.

The three most satisfactory expositions of this passage which I have ever seen, are given by Matthew xvii., 1—8, by Mark ix., 2—8, and by Luke ix., 28—36. The inquirer will learn from them, that one week after this saying, Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, into a mountain apart, and was transfigured before them. That his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. That two men, Moses and Elias, appeared in glory, talking with him. That a bright cloud overshadowed them. That the whole was such a display of glory, as to be overwhelming, overpowering to the disciples. That by the voice of God both the law and the prophets, represented by Moses and Elijah, were superseded, and Jesus Christ invested with full, supreme authority in the kingdom of God. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." I can find nothing more satisfactory to me than this.

The objection to this is the improbability that Jesus would say they should not taste of death, till they had seen it, and it occur within eight days. But to this it may be answered, it might have been the meaning of the Saviour. Although the kingdom of God is

not of this world, although flesh and blood cannot inherit it, and man must be changed from this dull, mortal, earthly state, to see and enjoy it, yet I will exhibit its glories to some of you, without passing through death ; or, in your present mortal state. That this transfiguration was the fulfillment of the promise in the minds of the evangelists, I think is rendered certain from the immediate introduction of the events, with all the minuteness with which they describe them. That Peter, one of the witnesses so understood it, I think is evident from 2 Pet. i., 16—18. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." This I believe the fulfillment of this promise. If it were not, it must have been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. But I have no doubt it was the former.

Mat. x., 23. "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." There may be some doubt what this may mean. There can be no doubt that it does not mean that they shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the destruction of Jerusalem: for, before that event, they had preached the gospel of the kingdom throughout the cities of Israel, and had received a commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and had planted churches in most of the heathen cities in the world. Probably, as good an explanation as can be found, is in Luke x., v. 1. "After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also; and sent them two and two, before his face, into every city and place whether he himself would come." While Jesus thus sent his disciples before him into the cities of Israel to preach the gospel, he assured them that he would overtake and be with them, before they should have completed their tour on which he sent them.

But it may be replied to every objection of this character, that a thousand circumstances which we can not satisfactorily solve, or which we may imagine have a little bearing towards a given position, weigh not a feather in the balance, against the direct testimony of an unimpeachable witness. Jesus has said, the signs of his coming are *after* that tribulation. Now, suppose we were without any light upon the texts last named, we might say we did not understand their meaning; but we should have no authority whatever, to apply them to Christ's coming at the time of the Jews tribulation, when no such coming is mentioned, or hinted at, at that time; but the express testimony of Jesus, places his coming *after* that tribulation. It is certainly surprising what should have led to an exposition of those scriptures, in a manner so to derange the order of the events, and contradict the "True witness."

XI. 1. I have presented in this article that part of the chapters I discuss, in such divisions as I have supposed was best calculated to exhibit the order of the predicted events, and give the reader an opportunity to compare the evangelists with each other.

2. I have given a few rules of right exposition of this portion of the writings of the evangelists; rules, which I presume, no reader will call in question or dispute.

3. I have referred to some of the principal predictions given in this prophecy, embracing the two principal events, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of the Son of man. The two classes of signs that precede each event, and the important circumstances depending upon those events, or following them.

4. I have noticed that there are two different expositions of the predictions relating to the coming of the Son of man; one, making the language highly figurative, and referring to the destruction of Jerusalem for its accomplishment; the other, giving a literal exposition of the language of the predictions, and looking forward to the future for their accomplishment. I have given some of my objections to the figurative exposition, and some of the reasons which led me unhesitatingly to adopt the literal. I will here repeat them. I object to the figurative, because it is figurative. I can see no sufficient reason why, after a course of predictions which receive a literal accomplishment, the same events should be predicted again in language highly figurative.

I object to it, that it entirely deranges the order of the events as predicted, and that order, preserved by the three evangelists who record the prophecy. If this objection be founded in fact, it must require a weight of evidence to counteract it.

I object, that it plainly and positively contradicts the Saviour's express language, declaring the signs of his coming to be after the tribulation of the other event. This objection is to me insurmountable. I can see no way to question it; I can see no way to obviate it.

I object, that there is an entire failure of meeting the particulars of the prophecy in a satisfactory manner. Such as his being seen by all the tribes of the earth coming in the clouds of heaven, the gathering the people of God, (the elect,) from one end of heaven to the other, the redemption of the saints, and the approach of the kingdom of God.

That there are no other scriptures that connect his coming with the destruction of Jerusalem; no other scriptures that speak of redemption, or the gathering of the saints at that time. To adopt the figurative exposition, I must find a satisfactory answer to these objections, and many more. But when all these objections are obviated, were it possible to do it, and the figurative exposition established, what should we gain? We have still the certainty that every prediction there given is to receive a literal accomplishment in future time.

5. I have shown that the literal exposition agrees with the order in which the events are predicted, as recorded by the evangelist. That it accords with the language of Jesus Christ; that it answers all the predictions, fully and satisfactorily; and that it agrees with, and is fully sustained, by other scripture in every particular.

6. I have endeavored to answer the objections raised against the literal exposition, arising from several passages of scripture; and have designedly avoided no objection in my answer that I regard as of any weight. It is now for the reader to examine the subject, and I would entreat him to remember, whatever may be his view of this argument, that Jesus Christ is yet to come, and at that coming, every prediction here given is to receive its accomplishment. Are you ready? Let not preparation for that event be delayed a single moment.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### *Illustration of Scripture.*

“AND I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded, for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they *ezesan, lived* and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead, *anezesan, lived* not again till the thousand years were finished. This is the first *anastasei, resurrection*. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first *anastasei, resurrection*; on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years;” Rev. xx., 4—6.

Those who maintain the doctrine of the second advent, in 1843, contend that this passage teaches the doctrine of the literal resurrection of all the righteous, at the second coming of Christ, who are to reign with him on the earth in his everlasting kingdom, not merely for a thousand years, but for ever and ever. On the other hand, we shall attempt to show that the resurrection here spoken of, is not a literal, but a metaphorical resurrection, and that those who are the subjects of this resurrection will enjoy a spiritual reign, under Christ, of exalted piety and of great blessedness.

I. To sustain their position, they affirm that the word resurrection uniformly means, in the Holy Scriptures, a revival of the dead, and, consequently, to give it any other interpretation, in this place, is a violation of the analogy of Scripture. But this assertion is a

very great mistake. The original word, *anastasis*, here employed by St. John, and rendered *resurrection*, is derived from the verb *anistemi*, and which is rendered to *raise*, or *arise from the dead*. These two words are generally employed in the Scriptures to express the resurrection from the dead, especially in the New Testament. See Heb. xi., 35. Acts i., 22; ii., 31; iv., 33; xvii., 18—32; xxiv., 15—21; xxvi., 23. Mat. xvii., 9; xx., 19. John vi., 39—40, and many other passages, too numerous for reference. The simple question then is, is this the only sense in which these words are used in the Bible? Certainly not, as every man well knows who has properly examined the subject. These words are employed to express the idea of rising up from a seat, in opposition to sitting down. “Behold their sitting down, and their *anastasei*, rising up;” Lam. iii., 62. Here the same word is used in the Septuagint, which is employed by St. John. The verb *anistemi*, is frequently used in this sense in the New Testament. “And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he, *anastas*, arose, and followed him;” Mat. ix., 9. See also Mark i., 35, ii., 14, xiv., 60; the same original word is used in all these places; and, surely, it will not be contended that in these passages any literal resurrection from the dead is intended.

This word is also used to express a *rising up*, as in a civil resurrection. “Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I *rise up* to the prey, for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation, even all my fierce anger; Zeph. iii., 8. The verb *unistemi*, is frequently used in this sense, in the New Testament. “After this man, *aniste*, rose up Judas, of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed; Acts v., 37; see also verse 36. This word is also used in the following places; Acts ii., 30; iii., 22—26; vi., 9; vii., 18; xiii., 32. Mat. xix., 1; xxii., 24. Mark iii., 26; vii., 24; x., 1. Rom. xv., 12. Heb. vii., 11, 12. The verb *anistemi*, is used in all these places, not one of which has any reference to a literal resurrection.

But this word is employed to express a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin. “Wherefore, he saith, awake thou that sleepest, and *anasta*, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;” Eph. v., 14. That the phrase *to arise from the dead*, here means a resurrection from the death of sin, will appear evident, by comparing it with the following passages. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live;” John v., 25. “Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;” Eph. ii., 5, 6. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which

are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ;” Col. iii., 1. Surely, it will not be contended that the word is here employed to express any literal resurrection from the dead.

Nearly allied to this passage is one in St. Luke, where the same word is used : “ And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and *anastasin*, rising again of many in Israel ;” ii., 34. That part of the Jewish nation who rejected the Messiah, are said to *fall*, in allusion to a prophecy of Isaiah. “ And he shall be for a sanctuary ; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both houses of Israel ; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken ;” viii., 14, 15. And while this part of the Jewish nation should stumble, and fall, and be scattered, those who embraced Jesus as the promised Messiah, should be raised from the death of sin, to a holy and heavenly life.

The deliverance of the people of God from a state of the lowest depression, is expressed by images plainly taken from the resurrection of the dead. In this sense we are to understand the language of Isaiah, where he says *anastesontai oi nekron* ; “ Thy dead shall arise, and be raised out of their tombs ;” xxvi., 19. In the same language, God speaks to the Jewish nation by their prophet Ezekiel ; “ I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel ;” xxxvii., 13, 14. The prophet Hosea uses this metaphor in the same language : “ In three days we *exenastesometha*, shall rise up again, and we shall live before him ;” v., 2. And the apostle Paul, speaking of the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, says, “ It shall be even to the Gentiles *zoe ek nekron*, as life from the dead ;” Rom. xi., 10. Here, then, is a resurrection of the church of God, agreeable to that which our interpretation of this passage of the Revelation imports ; nor is there any more reason to say the words of St. John refer to the literal dead, and not to the churches, than to say the same of many of the passages cited.

St. John, in this passage, uses another word *ezesan*, rendered *lived*, of similar import to *anastasis*. This word *zao*, although sometimes employed to signify *to recover to life, to raise the dead*, as in Rev. ii., 8 ; 2 Kings, xiii., 21 ; Job, xiv., 14 ; yet this is by no means its only signification. This word is frequently employed in the Scriptures, as a strong metaphor to represent the restoration of the church, or people of God, from a low and affected state, to a state of prosperity and happiness. Such a change in the condition of the people of God, is frequently represented as *a new life, a life from the dead, a revivification of the church and people of God*. When God moved the Persian kings to let the Jewish nation return to their own land, he is said by Ezra to give them a *revivification*. “ And now for a little space, grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to es-



cape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little *zoopoiesin*, *reviving* in our bondage. For we were bondmen, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a *zoopoiesin*, *reviving*, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judea and in Jerusalem;" ix., 8, 9. The Psalmist, speaking of the people of God, says: "Thou, which hast shewed us great and sore troubles, *shall quicken us again*, and shall bring us up again from the depth of the earth." And the church is represented as speaking thus to God; "Thou *zooseis*, *wilt quicken* us, and we shall call upon thy name;" lxxx., 18. Again, "Thou wilt return *kai zooseis emas*, *and revive us*, and thy people shall rejoice in thee;" lxxxv., 6. See also Isa. xxvi., 19; Hosea, vi., 2, 3; xiv., 17. The son of Syrach says, at the coming of Elias, "*zoe zesometha*, *we shall live again*;" xlvi., 11. In the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, we have a very striking example of this metaphor. God is here introduced as inquiring of the Jews in Babylon, "*ei zesetai*, *can these bones live?*" and promising to put into them "*pneuma zoes*, *the breath of life*," and saying, "I will put my spirit into you, *kai zesethe*, and ye shall live," and bidding the prophet blow upon them, "*kai resatosan*, *that they may live*," and declaring that when he had done so, "breath entered into them, *kai ezesan*, *and they lived again*, and stood upon their feet;" in all which places, the very words which St. John uses to express the first resurrection, is here employed to express the return of the church from her obscurity and thralldom, to a glorious and happy state. The same word is used twice, at least, in the same sense in the New Testament. It is applied by the father to the return of his prodigal son, in that delightful parable of our Lord: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, *kai anezese*, *and is alive again*; and was lost, and is found;" Luke xv., 30. It is also employed by St. Paul, who declares that the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, shall be even to the Gentiles "as *zoe ek nekron*, *life from the dead*;" Rom. xi., 15. Seeing then, that this word is employed both by the writers of the Old and New Testaments in a metaphorical sense, there can be no good Scriptural reasons why it should not bear the same sense in the passage under consideration. The very words then, which are here employed by St. John to express the first resurrection, are used by prophets, apostles, and even by Christ himself, in a metaphorical sense, so that we have the highest possible authority for the interpretation we have given to his language.

It is generally agreed by those who believe that the prophets and apostles have foretold the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, that this event is not to begin to be accomplished, till after the destruction of the beast, or the downfall of anti-christ, mentioned in the eighteenth chapter, and, therefore, in the following

chapter he begins his discourse by saying: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready;" that is, she who was formally put away, because she was not prepared for the bridegroom's coming, was now to be married to God again. And in the twenty-first chapter, he reassumes this subject, and shows the bride the Lamb's wife, in such a description, as will not permit us to doubt that she is the Jewish nation converted to God; for he calls her the holy, and the New Jerusalem, and tells us in the very words of the prophet Isaiah, that the "nations which shall be saved, shall walk in the light of this city;" lxi., 10. St. John also calls her the bride to be married to the Lamb; which is the same description the prophets have given of this converted nation; they represent her as "a bride adorned with her jewels, and as one that is to be married to the Lord;" Isa. lxi., 10; lxii., 4, 5. St. John goes on in a continued description of this New Jerusalem, in the very words of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, speaking of the conversion of the Jewish nation to the Christian faith. This city coming down from heaven, is the new church of converted Jews, said to come down from heaven, agreeable to an idiom of the Hebrew language, because she is adorned with that divine wisdom, and those spiritual gifts and graces which she has received from heaven. Agreeable to this Hebrew idiom, the pouring down of these gifts and graces is represented as the *opening of heaven*, and letting them down upon the earth. Thus, when St. John received his prophecy, he "sees a door opened in heaven, and hears a voice, saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee what shall be hereafter;" iv., 1. He then heard a voice, like "the voice of a trumpet," and probably, the same voice which he heard when he was "in the Spirit;" Rev. i., 10. The two witnesses, when they lived again, were also "called up into heaven," because they are represented as being filled with heavenly wisdom; xi., 11, 12. And since the spiritual gifts, imparted to the church, are said to come "from above, from the Father of lights," James i., 17, and they who were made partakers of them to have "tasted of the heavenly gift," seeing the church of Christ is "the Jerusalem which is from above;" Gal. iv., 25; "the heavenly Jerusalem;" Heb. xii., 22; it is no wonder she is represented here as coming down from heaven, when she was, as it were, to have a "new birth," which is "from above;" John iii., 3: and to be adorned with spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus;" Eph. i., 3: and to be reinvested with her primitive luster and purity; for then shall the purity of the church return, and shine with all the luster and brightness she possessed in the times of the first martyrs, for the faith of the gospel; and Christianity shall be professed without any anti-christian mixture, as those who oppose the beast endeavor to preserve it; and thus shall these martyrs, and opposers of the beast, live again. I understand, then, that the passage under consideration will have its accomplishment in the conversion of the Jews

to the Christian faith, and the prosperous events of Christianity at that time, and in the succeeding ages of the gospel.

II. Having shown that the language here employed by St. John may be interpreted to mean, according to Scripture analogy, a metaphorical, and not a literal resurrection, I shall now proceed to show that it is not the bodies, but the *souls* of them that were beheaded, who are said *to live* again. The word *psuche*, here rendered *soul*, occurs six times in this book, this place excepted; and in all these places it signifies the soul in separation, or distinction from the body, or the living soul. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar *tas psuchas*, *the souls* of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;" vi., 9. These *souls* not only *cry with a loud voice*, but they are *clothed with white robes*, expressions which cannot well be applied to dead bodies; 10, 11. "And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had *psuchas*, *souls*, died;" viii., 9. Here the *ktismata echonta psuchas*, evidently means the creatures having animal souls by which they lived. "And they overcame him, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not *ten psuchen*, *their lives*, unto the death;" xii., 11. Here it clearly signifies their lives; that is, the souls by which men live. "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every *psuche zoso*, *living soul* died in the sea;" xvi., 3. Here it is expressly called the *living soul*; that is, the soul by which these creatures lived. "And the *psuchas anthropon*, *souls of men*;" xviii., 13. Here it signifies the *lives of men*. "And the fruits that *epithumias tes psuches*, *thy soul lusted after* are departed from thee;" 14. It here signifies the *desire*, not of the body, but of the *soul*. I would then ask on what grounds do our second advent friends affirm that the word *psuche* here does not signify the *soul*, but that dead body opposite it, which alone can properly be said to rise from the dead, and live again? It is a bold assumption without any shadow of authority; for a proper and literal resurrection is never in the whole Bible expressed, or represented *by the living of the soul*, but always by the living, raising, or the resurrection of the dead, the raising "of the bodies of the saints, of them that slept in the dust," or "in their graves and sepulchres," or who were buried in the sea," or "in the earth." If the Holy Spirit, then, here meant a literal and proper resurrection, why does he vary so widely from the terms he so uniformly uses in other places, whenever he speaks of such a resurrection, and use the terms so often applied in the Scriptures to a moral and metaphorical resurrection? When St. Matthew spoke of "the arising of some that slept," and their "going into the holy city, and appearing unto many," he did not say, as does St. John, that "many souls lived," but that *polla somata*, "*many bodies* of those that slept, arose out of their sepulchres;" his words, therefore, must be understood of a literal and proper

resurrection of the dead bodies of the saints ; but it cannot from hence be inferred, that the words of St. John are to be understood in the same sense.

It should be remembered that the prophetic parts of this book are highly *figurative*, and cannot, therefore, be interpreted *literally*. This very chapter is full of figurative and emblematical representations, which, if interpreted *literally*, would introduce the greatest confusion. The key, the chain, the binding of satan for a thousand years, and the thrones are emblematical representations ; and why not understand the resurrection of the souls which are said to live again emblematically ? Such an interpretation corresponds with the analogy of Scripture, and especially with the prophetic parts of this book. Thus, “the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,” may be considered as meaning, not the identical persons who suffered martyrdom for his sake, but their successors in the same spirit of faith, patience, zeal, and fidelity ; and professing the same doctrine, and, consequently, were one body with him ; and, thus, in the prophetic style are spoken of as though they were the same persons ; in like manner, as *John the Baptist* is called *Elias*, because he came *in the spirit and power of Elias* ; Matt. xi., 14 ; xvii., 12 ; compared with Luke i., 17 ; and as anti-christian *Rome*, in several places in this very prophecy, is called *Sodom*, *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, on account of its being like them in idolatry, pride, luxury, and cruelty. And these are said to live again, as “the beast which had received *ten pleigen thanaton*, the wound of death, and one of whose heads was wounded to death, *ezesen*, lived again ;” Rev. xiii., 3, 12 ; that is, in the succession of the anti-christian beast, to him who exercised the power of the heathen emperors over the earth, and revived the idolatry of the heathen empire. And, also, as the two witnesses when slain are said to live again : “The spirit of life from God, entering into them ;” xi., 7, 11 ; because a succession of men, of the same faith, and of the same opposition to the beast, revived, and flourished again, after they were slain. And, as the restoration of Israel from their captivity, is called their “living and standing upon their feet,” and God’s “opening their graves, and causing them to come out of their graves ;” Ezekiel xxxvii., 9, 10, 12. Now, this is not spoken of the identical persons who were carried captive into Babylon ; but of their successors, who were brought back from that captivity, to the land of Caanan. And St. Paul uses the same figure, when he calls the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, “life from the dead ;” Rom. xi., 15. In the same sense, the ashes of the martyrs were said in the ages of persecution to be the seed of the church. These souls are not only said to live, but also, “to reign with Christ ;” which relates to their abundance of spirituality, purity, and glory ; light, love, and joy ; tranquility and safety ; and to the power of civil magistracy, which being in their hands, and exercised with great authority and success, is used in

the suppression of all iniquity and profanity, and in the promotion of true religion and holiness in those happy days.

But what are we to understand by the thrones which St. John here mentions? Our Lord promised his apostles that they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. His words are these: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" Matt. xix., 27. The *palingenesia*, which is here translated *regeneration*, was applied by the Greek fathers to the *renovation* of the world, at the commencement of the millennial state, when they supposed this reign would commence. This *renovation* may refer to the *new state* of things which will occur at the commencement of this millennial reign, and particularly, to the glorious conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, which I understand to be the next great event spoken of in this book, following the destruction of anti-christ, at which time the twelve apostles are to sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, not by a resurrection of their persons, but by a revivification of that spirit which they possessed, and of that purity and knowledge which they delivered to the world; and chiefly, by admission of their gospel to be the standard of their faith, and the rectitude of their lives. Justin Martyr says: this *palingenesia*, "is the mystery of the *regeneration* of all that expect Jesus Christ to appear at Jerusalem, spoken of by Isaiah;" lxvi. And that "All Christians entirely orthodox expect to spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, as the prophet Isaiah has foretold:" saying, "There shall be a new heaven, and a new earth;" for, as these things are spoken by one who was sent as a prophet to the Jews, they must chiefly and immediately concern that nation, and her new birth of a numerous offspring, after a long barrenness; lxvi, 7, 8, 9; and her exaltation to a high state of excellency and glory, which should be so visible to the Gentiles, that all nations and tongues shall see her glory.

These thrones, however, are not peculiar to the twelve apostles, but are represented as belonging to all who have a share in the first resurrection, not by a restoration of their dead bodies to life, but by a revivification of that spirit which dwelt in them, as already explained; all of which imports the high state of honor and dignity to which Christians will be advanced in those happy days. Hence, it is said of these persons: "They shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." There are two sorts of dead persons spoken of in this prophecy; those who were slain for the *witness of Jesus*, and were the martyrs, whose *souls* are said to *live again*, which we have already considered; but there are another class who are said to be dead; those that were slain by *the sword of him that sat*

on the horse. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone; and the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh;" xix., 19—21. These are the persons who slew the martyrs, but are now slain by Christ himself, and are denominated by St. John, the *remnant*, "the rest of the dead." It was by the Pagan emperors first, and by the beast afterwards, that satan, "The great dragon, made war with the seed of the woman which kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus;" xii., 17; these instruments of satan being now slain, and overcome by Christ, satan is bound a thousand years, and for this period of time, is disabled from persecuting and molesting the church of God, and during this space she is raised up to her primitive purity, and prospers, and flourishes gloriously, and so is represented as having a resurrection from the dead. This thousand years being ended, satan is let loose again, and again gathers his instruments, "The nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog to battle, and they compass the camp of the saints;" xx., 8, 9. And this is the living of the rest of the dead again, after the thousand years are finished. For it is only *oi loipoi*, *the rest* that were slain that lived again; it is only those who had no share in the first resurrection, and so were neither blessed nor holy, nor had their names written in the Lamb's book of Life; and, consequently, those who suffered a second death, which death took place when fire came down from heaven and devoured them, and they were cast into the lake of fire with the devil.

According to this interpretation, the metaphor used by St. John is applied to both classes of the dead in the same sense, and they are said in the same sense to live again; thus, the dead church raised to life, and living and reigning for a thousand years, and the enemies of the church remaining dead, and not living again till the thousand years were finished, will exactly agree in the same figurative meaning.

III. If we maintain that the resurrection here spoken of is to be understood literally, and means a resurrection of all the saints with whom Christ is to reign personally on the earth in a state of immortality, then we must admit that this principle of interpretation is to be applied to all this class of prophecies, in both the Old and New Testaments. Our second advent friends have said but little on this part of their theory; they occasionally make a passing remark by the way of objecting to the views of their opponents, by which we are enabled to ascertain that they intend to carry out their principles of interpretation. I am informed that

Mr. Litch, in the recent tent-meeting in Newark, preached a sermon on this subject, in which he fully avowed this principle of interpretation, and maintained that the new earth would be like the earth in its primeval state, before the transgression of Adam; and then went on to illustrate the state and condition of things in this new earth, according to the representations of the prophets, during this personal reign of Christ. We shall not pretend to follow Mr. Litch in his remarks, for we did not hear them; but to carry out this principle of interpretation, and to show it cannot be reconciled to the doctrine of the Bible. If we consider the Scriptures on which this personal reign of Christ is grounded, we shall perceive it necessary to maintain, with the ancient millenaries, the following doctrines.

1. If the New Jerusalem, spoken of in the Revelations, be understood as a literal city, it must have a location. Those who, in the early ages of the gospel believed in the personal reign of Christ on the earth for a thousand years, located the New Jerusalem in the holy land, agreeable to the representations of the prophets. According to their representations, "Mount Zion was to be established upon the top of the mountains;" Isa. ii., 2; xxvii., 13; lvi., 7; and God promised to "beautify the place of his sanctuary, the house of his glory, and to make the place of his feet glorious;" lx., 7, 13; and of all "nations flowing into her," and being gathered to her, and of all "nations and tongues coming to see her glory;" lx., 5. Mr. Litch gave it as his opinion, that this great city must be located in the land of Judea, in the *new earth*. But how can a city fifteen hundred miles square, be located in the small country of Judea, or even in Palestine? The city itself is many times larger than the whole country of Palestine. Instead of its being located in the small country of Palestine, it would cover nearly the whole of Europe. Besides, the Revelator says: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie;" xxii., 14, 15. But, according to the second advent doctrine, the wicked are destroyed from the face of the whole earth when it is *renovated*, so that during this personal reign of Christ upon the earth, there will not be a wicked man upon the whole face of it to annoy the righteous, except for a short space during the resurrection and destruction of the wicked at the battle of Gog and Magog. There is no intimation here that these wicked persons had been raised from the dead, and yet they are represented as dwelling upon the earth, outside of the city, who were excluded from the privilege of entering into it. If these wicked persons were dwelling on some other planet, I see no force or propriety in this language.

But Isaiah says, speaking of this city and these very times, that the nations shall serve them, and even build up Jerusalem for them,

which cannot be denied by those who literally interpret the words of the prophets : "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee ; the sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet ; and the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish ;" Isa. lx., 10, 12, 13. "And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks ; and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughman, and your vine-dressers ; you shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall you boast yourselves ;" lxi., 5. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people ; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers ; they shall bow down to thee with their faces towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet ; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord ; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me ;" xlix., 22, 23. If these things are to be accomplished during this personal reign of Christ upon the earth with his saints, who are these servile nations that are to be in subjection to them, and who are to minister to them ? If these nations cannot be produced, then there is some misconception of the doctrine of the Bible, or misapplication of these prophecies. And how can the advocates of the second advent doctrine produce the servile nations, when they have swept from the whole world, all the wicked nations at the *renovation* of the earth ? And that these passages refer to the times of the New Jerusalem, cannot well be denied, for the walls of the city are expressly mentioned, and the connexion in which they stand requires this reference of them. These difficulties must be met and obviated, before I can subscribe to the doctrine that the New Jerusalem, spoken of by St. John, is to be a literal city.

2. If this resurrection be understood as a literal resurrection, then it must be extended to all the righteous, and they must reign with Christ on the earth, agreeable to the words of St. John : "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us kings and priests to God, and we shall reign on *the earth* ; Rev. v., 9, 10. Compare this passage with xx., 4 ; xiii., 8 ; xvii., 8 ; and also with 2 Pet. iii., 13, 14. Mat. v., 5. In this view of the subject, the ancient millenarians and the advocates for the second advent, in 1843, are perfectly agreed. But, to carry this analogy through, this resurrection must also include the brute creation. And in this sense, the language of St. Paul was explained by Mr. Litch in his discourse at Newark ; "For the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope ; because the creature itself, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious



liberty of the children of God ; for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now ; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body ;" Rom. viii., 19—23. Agreeable to this exposition, this passage is supposed to correspond with the declarations of Isaiah the prophet : "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ;" xi., 6—9. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock ; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord ;" lxxv., 25. So, according to the second advent doctrine, the *new earth*, on which Christ is to reign personally with the righteous, is also to contain wolves, lambs, lions, cows, bears, asps, serpents, and all the brute creation that ever lived. And what is still more remarkable, if they are correct in the exposition and application of these prophecies, these beasts are to procreate on this *new earth*, "for their young ones are to lie down together," and this state of things is to continue, not merely for a thousand years, according to the doctrine of the advocates of the second advent, in 1843, but for ever and ever ; so that this new earth is to constitute the everlasting abode of the righteous. Now, admitting that in this earthly paradise of men and brutes, the brute creation may lose their ferocity and become harmless, yet, so long as they remain brutes, they can never become either rational, moral, or religious, and, consequently, cannot be suitable companions for intelligent, and moral, and religious beings. It is true that some of these brutes may be employed as beasts of burden, and others may be used for food, as the ancient millenaries imagined, but neither of these can be the case with the whole brute creation ; the serpent, the asp, the leopard, are never employed for either ; and surely it can be no very great privilege for a brute to be raised from the dead, to be killed and eaten up at some splendid feast ! But what is to be done with the ten thousands of animals whose very presence is disgusting and annoying to man ? Is this, indeed, the heaven of the saints ; a heaven in the midst of snakes, and toads, and lice ; a heaven swarming with noxious reptiles, and overrun with brute beasts ?

But there is one other consideration to which we have not yet adverted ; and that is, here are also to be "sucking children," and, consequently, the marriage state is to be continued in this new

earth, for it is only in the use of the marriage bed, that children can be lawfully begotten. And this was the sentiment of the ancient millenaries, as we are informed by Stephanus Gobarius. They maintained, says he, that "The just shall rise first, and for a thousand years shall share deliciously, eating and drinking, and *getting children*, and after this shall be the general resurrection;" that is, the resurrection of the wicked. In accordance with this view of the subject, Irenæus says: "The virgins shall rejoice in the assemblies of the young men, and they that are left shall be multiplied upon the earth."—"They shall beget an infinite multitude," says Lactanius, "and their seed shall be holy." They who maintain that the reign of Christ will be personal upon the new earth, must either subscribe to this doctrine, or give up the principles of interpretation by which they explain the prophecies; they must also give up the application of this class of prophecies to this personal reign; for our Saviour has expressly contradicted this doctrine: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven;" Mat. xxii., 29, 30. To maintain that brute beasts are to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven with immortal saints, and to be subjected to the everlasting reign of Christ, and that they and the saints are to procreate their species in that state, is an idea too gross to be admitted.

3. If we carry out this principle of literally interpreting the prophecies, as did the ancient millenaries, then the following state of things will exist during this personal reign of Christ upon the new earth: the righteous will fare deliciously, drink precious wines, and hold splendid feasts. According to these declarations, "The righteous shall inherit the earth," they shall "drink new wine with Christ in his kingdom," and shall "receive an hundred fold increase of goods and lands;" that there shall then be a recompence of their alms-giving, and their feasts made for the poor. And then all the sayings of the prophets respecting the fruitfulness of the earth, and the enjoyment of earthly blessings, shall be accomplished, according to these declarations: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever;" Dan. ii., 44. "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But ye shall be glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be heard no more in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old,

shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat ; for as the days of a tree, are the days of my people ; and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands ; Isaiah lxx., 17—22. “ The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies ; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast labored. But they that have gathered shall eat it, and praise the Lord ; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness ;” lxii., 8, 9. “ And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory ; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth ; for the Lord hath spoken it ;” xxv., 6—8. It will be readily seen that these passages refer to the same period of time, and have their accomplishment under the same reign of the Messiah ; and if they are to be fulfilled literally, and during the personal reign of Christ with his saints on the new earth, after the resurrection of the just, then the advocates of the doctrine of the second advent, in 1843, and the millenarists are further agreed in their views of their terrestrial paradise. Irenæus says : “ They shall have a table prepared for them by God, who shall feed them with dainties.” “ The earth,” says Lactantius, “ shall open its fertility, and of its own accord produce fruits plentifully ; the rocks of the mountains shall sweat with honey, wines shall run down with streams, and the rivers flow with milk.” Thus, this terrestrial paradise is to consist principally in the enjoyment of eating, and drinking, and feasting, and banqueting, and all the grocer enjoyments, wholly inconsistent with those refined, spiritual, and celestial felicities, of which the righteous are to be made the partakers in the future state of existence.

4. If this reign of Christ be a personal reign, then he must forsake heaven, and come to this new earth to accomplish this reign upon the earth with the righteous. This is maintained by all the advocates of the doctrine of the second advent, in 1843. And in this sentiment all the ancient millenarists were also agreed. Papias, the first asserter of this doctrine, declared that “ It shall be a reign of Christ, bodily, upon the earth.” Irenæus declares that Christ cannot “ drink new wine with his disciples whilst he remains in the celestial regions.” Thus, both classes believe in an earthly paradise, the one for a thousand years, but the other for ever and ever.

5. Finally, “ This doctrine of the millennium,” says Dr. Whitby, “ was not the general doctrine of the primitive church, from the

times of the apostles to the Nicene council, for then it could have made no scisms in the church, as Dionysius, of Alexandria, said it did, declaring how fully he confuted it, and reconciled the brethren that were contending about it, and prevailed upon Coracius, the author and ringleader of the doctrine, to own he was convinced of his error, and promised he would no more embrace, or discourse of it to the people." Accordingly, Origen says: "They who deny the millenium, are *they who interpret the sayings of the prophets by a trope*: and they who assert it, are styled *disciples of the letter of the Scripture only*; the first assert, the passages which they produce from Scripture ought to be figuratively understood; the other, understand the Scripture after the manner of the Jews." Euphrosynus, speaking of the millennium, asserted by Apollinarius, says: "there is, indeed, a millennium mentioned by St. John; but the most, and those pious men, look upon those words as true, indeed, but to be taken in a spiritual sense." Justin Martyr says, speaking of this personal reign of Christ upon the earth, in reply to a question by Trypho: "I have before confessed that I and many others are of this mind, that these things shall happen. But then, again, I have intimated to you, that many Christians of a pure and pious judgment do not own this."—"This doctrine," says Eusebius, "had its rise from Papias, a man of slender judgment. But the antiquity of the man prevailed with many of the ecclesiastics to be of that opinion, particularly with Irenæus, and if there were any other of the same judgment with him." Origen declares that "There were only some that held this doctrine, and that they were only the simpler sort of Christians." This doctrine, then, of a personal reign of Christ on the earth, is but the revival of an old exploded heresy. If, then, these Scripture testimonies, and the authority of these fathers are insisted upon to prove the personal reign of Christ upon the earth with his saints, our second advent friends must admit the consequences which so naturally flow from these scriptures, as understood and explained by these fathers; and what man can be found, in this age, who is prepared to do this? I am aware that a large proportion of the advocates of the second advent doctrine will be shocked at these views, for the very reason that they have very limited views of the doctrine they are promulgating, and the consequences which legitimately flow from the passages quoted to prove it.

IV. This doctrine of the personal coming of Christ, in 1843, to reign on the earth with all the righteous raised from the dead, is inconsistent with many things which are clearly taught in the Scriptures.

1. This doctrine, in the first place, is inconsistent with the happy state of departed souls, as taught in the Holy Scriptures. For can it be reasonably supposed, that those "spirits of just men made perfect," and, "being absent from the body, are present with the Lord," should leave those blessed mansions to live on earth again;

that they who have already "entered into rest," and who enjoy all the pleasures and delights which heaven itself affords, should quit those mansions to enjoy peace and plenty upon the earth? Can any man expect to be more righteous and holy, or to have more divine and heavenly contemplations, or better companions, or a more full fruition of our Lord and Master on earth, than we can enjoy in heaven? If not, who can imagine that God should degrade us after so long enjoyment of those celestial regions, or that we should voluntarily quit those mansions for any temporal enjoyments of the body, any meat and drink, or earthly gratifications which we had formerly denied ourselves, and were even dead to them whilst we were living here upon the earth. The primitive saints, while they held converse here upon the earth, "confessed themselves to be pilgrims and strangers," and were continually "looking for a better country," that is, "an heavenly country," and not for an earthly paradise. Now, if this change is inconsistent with the state of happy souls in general, much less will it comport with those high prerogatives and exalted privileges which the fathers supposed belonged to the souls of the martyrs. They conceived that the souls of the martyrs were received immediately into heaven, and there crowned with glory, and were admitted to a fuller vision, and a more intimate enjoyment of the God of heaven; so that the higher they are advanced, the greater must be their degradation, when they return again to live upon the earth. So that this doctrine appears not only inconsistent with the present happy state and condition of the martyrs, but also with the present felicities of all the departed spirits of the righteous.

2. In the second place, St. John assures us again and again, that the righteous are not to be raised from the dead till the last day; John vi., 39, 40, 44, 54; how then can it be supposed that St. John is here speaking of a literal resurrection, when he assures us that this resurrection is to take place at least a thousand years before the *last day*; Can it be supposed that St. John would thus flatly contradict himself? Or must we resort to some mystical interpretation to reconcile these different statements? This might be justifiable, if the doctrine supposed to be taught by St. John, was clearly revealed by the other apostles; but as it is not, and as the passage under consideration is highly figurative, and may be understood in a metaphorical sense, there seems to be no necessity to resort to any such interpretation. Besides, it is absurd in the extreme to build an important doctrine on one single passage, and that a highly figurative one, and especially when such a doctrine is flatly contradicted by many plain passages.

3. Again, this doctrine of an earthly paradise which is maintained by these second advent friends, is inconsistent with the admirable instructions of our Lord in his sermon upon the mount. "Lay not up," says he, "for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; for where your

treasure is, there will your heart be also ;” Matt. vi., 19, 21. And again, “Provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not ;” Luke xii., 33, 34. St. Paul exhorts all who are risen with Christ, to “Set their hearts and their affections, not on things on the earth, but on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God,” and that because they are dead with Christ unto these earthly things, “and their life is hid with Christ in God,” so that when “Christ who is their life, shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory.” Now if Jesus Christ, in this very sermon, as the advocates for the personal reign of Christ on the earth suppose, encouraged his disciples to suffer with patience and meekness upon the consideration that they should *inherit the earth*, and had pronounced them blessed upon this account, surely they might have suffered upon this very prospect of laying up for themselves treasures upon the earth in this personal reign of Christ, and might have had their hearts and affections placed upon them ; since they are directed to lay up treasures in heaven, and to set their affections on things above, because these are the blessings promised as the reward of Christian piety and patience ? If, then, these blessings are to be enjoyed on the earth, after the resurrection, and are to be the rewards which God has promised to the piety and patience of the Christian, what reason can be given why he should not seek, and set his heart upon them also ? If it be so great a privilege to have a part in the first resurrection, to enjoy this plenty, peace, and indolence upon the earth, that St. John styles them blessed who have part in it, should they not seek and set their affections upon the very things in which their happiness is to consist ? And yet the consolation which our Lord and his apostles present to the minds of Christians to console them under sufferings, is only this, that “great is their reward in heaven ;” that “when they are tried, they shall receive a crown of glory ;” and that they “have in heaven a better, and more endearing substance ;” which places the reward and comfort of Christ’s suffering members not on the earth, but in heaven, and so gives us just reasons to conclude that our Lord and his apostles knew nothing of this personal reign of Christ on the earth with his saints, or thought it no great matter of consolation. It was this which induced some of the ancients to say, “If the inheritance of martyrs be in heaven, their reign on earth can be no better than a fable.”

4. Once more, this doctrine of an earthly paradise is inconsistent with the spirit and teachings of the New Testament. The New Testament writers represent the Christian as one who is entirely dead to the world, and to the things of the world ; one who is not to love it, nor the things of it, who is to use it as if he used it not ; as one “whose conversation is in heaven ;” and on the other hand, they make the character of one who is the enemy of the cross of Christ, that he minds “earthly things ;” whereas if this be the sum of the gospel promises made to Christians for their

consolation and encouragement under the troubles of this present world, that they shall, after this life is ended, live again on the earth, and enjoy a life of plenty, peace, and indolence; if this be the principal reward which God has promised to those who suffer for his name, surely, it becomes them to have their minds and their affections set upon it, to live in expectation of it, and to desire to enjoy these goods of fortune, this peace and plenty upon the earth; hence, it would be the character of those who bear the cross, in the prospect of this blessing, to mind earthly things. It is this consideration, says St. Paul, which makes the sufferings of this present life so easy to Christians, that they "look not at things which are seen, but which are not seen," not at things "temporal" but "eternal," even at "an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." But if to reign with Christ personally upon the earth include the great and precious promises of the gospel, and made for the encouragement of Christians to suffer for Christ's sake, then they must look at the things which are seen, and not at the things which are not seen; and for an earthly house, and not for one eternal in the heavens.

5. Finally, this doctrine of an earthly paradise cannot be reconciled with the approved conduct of the patriarchs. It is maintained by all the advocates of the doctrine of the second advent, in 1843, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs and prophets, are to be sharers with the righteous in this reign on the earth, and that then will the promised Caanan be made good to them; whereas, the apostle plainly tells us, that they expected no reward on earth, nor did they mind that Caanan where they dwelt, but waited for an heavenly country: "They confessed," says the apostle, "that they were strangers and pilgrims upon the earth," that "They were not mindful of that country whence they came out, but sought a better country, that is, an heavenly;" Heb. xi., 13, 16. Since, then, these holy patriarchs, and choice friends of God, disdained any inheritance on earth, but sought an inheritance in a heavenly country, and seeing that this was the only inheritance that God, as their God, provided for them, this then must be the inheritance which they will possess at the resurrection. Surely, then, in vain must Christians hope for any reign on the earth with them, who, professing themselves to be strangers and pilgrims in it, declared that they were not mindful of such a habitation in the land of Caanan, and who are at the resurrection to be made like the angels, and to enjoy not an earthly, but that heavenly country, which God has graciously prepared for them. Such an earthly paradise as our second advent friends proclaim, where we are to enjoy the goods of fortune, and live in a state of indolence and peace, is too mean, too much beneath the sublime spirit of Christianity, to constitute the substance of her great and precious promises.

## ARTICLE IV.

*On the Conversion of the Jews.*

It is asserted by those who maintain the second coming of Christ, in eighteen hundred and forty three, that the Jews will never be converted to the Christian faith, and that all expectation of this event is false and founded in error. But it should be recollected, that they are necessarily driven to assume this position, in order to maintain a favorite hypothesis; and that no class of men are more liable to be misguided by error, than those who are blinded by a favorite dogma. It would be well, then, to examine this subject in the light of truth, and ascertain what the Scriptures teach concerning it. We, therefore, propose, to enter upon the discussions of this subject, and inquire what the prophets and apostles have said respecting it; and we hope to do this with a mind free from the prejudices of party, and also free from the controlling influence of any favorite dogma. We desire to be guided in our inquiry by the light of truth, and to come to such results as are clearly stated by the Holy Scriptures.

1. In the covenant which God made with Abraham, was laid the foundation of all the promises which God made to the Jewish nation. These covenant transactions which God had with Abraham, the father of the Israelites, are recorded by Moses in the following passages; Gen. xii., 1—3, 14—16; xv., 1—7, 18; xvii., 1—8; xviii., 10—18. According to the exposition of this covenant, which St. Paul has given in his Epistles, it had both a literal and mystical meaning. Abraham was to be a father in a double sense; he was to be the natural father of a numerous offspring; and he was, also, to be the constituted head and father of a spiritual race; he was, consequently, to be the father of a double seed, a natural and spiritual seed. His natural seed was to be his legitimate offspring, descending down through Isaac and Jacob, to the exclusion of Ishmael and Esaw. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." His spiritual seed, of whom he was to be the constituted head and father, was to be all true believers in every age and among all nations. "They who are of faith," says St. Paul, "are blessed with believing Abraham." And "if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Here the two seeds are particularly mentioned.

One of the promises contained in this covenant, is expressed in the following words: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant. And I will be their God;" Gen. xvii., 7. This promise, though expressed in the most simple language, is exceedingly comprehensive. It consists of two parts; the *first* is contained in these words: "I will establish my covenant between me



and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant." This establishment of God's covenant with Abraham and his seed in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, in its literal meaning implied, that Abraham's natural seed were to remain a distinct people in their successive generations, without ever being destroyed; because, if they were to be destroyed by ceasing to exist as a distinct and separate people, God's covenant with them would not be everlasting. To this interpretation we are led by Moses, who declared that if God destroyed Abraham's natural seed, it would be a breaking of the covenant with them: "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; Lev. xxvi., 44. Agreeable to this promise, God declared by Jeremiah, that he would utterly destroy the nations who had oppressed the natural seed of Abraham, but would never make a full end to his posterity: "Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee;" xlvii, 28. It is in allusion to this covenant obligation, that St. Paul, personating a Jew, proposes this question: "I ask then, have they stumbled so as to fall forever?" to which the apostle answers, "By no means." The apostle was aware that if God should cast off the natural seed of Abraham for *ever*, he would break his covenant promise to Abraham, and to his seed in their generations after him. He, therefore, maintains that this rejection of the literal seed of Abraham, was merely a temporary rejection, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; at which time "a deliverer would come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

In this promise, according to its literal meaning, an event is foretold of a most extraordinary and singular nature, viz: that Abraham's natural seed are always to continue a distinct race, and are never to be lost by mixing with other nations. Nothing has ever happened like this. For where are the people who, being scattered over the face of the whole earth, have preserved themselves distinct from the rest of mankind, so that after continuing in a state of dispersion for thousands of years, the individuals, in their successive generations, are known to be of that people? The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans, have all in their turns conquered, but have not kept themselves distinct from their conquerors, although they were not carried captive from their own country, far less were they scattered over the face of the earth, as the Israelites have been. All these nations are now so mixed with their conquerors, that the individuals of them cannot be distinguished. The continuance of Abraham's natural seed distinct from all the rest of the world, foretold in this promise, must, to the reason and experience of mankind before it happened, have appeared an event utterly improbable. Yet this improbable

event has actually taken place, through a long succession of ages. For from the time of their going down into Egypt to the present day, the Israelites, notwithstanding the many calamities which befel them, have still been preserved a distinct and numerous people, and they will be continued a distinct and numerous people, till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and their existence as a separate race is no longer needed to strengthen the evidence of the gospel. When the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, at that period, they also shall be converted to the faith of Christ; and, entering into the Christian church, they will, with the other disciples of Christ, assist in preserving the knowledge and worship of the true God among mankind to the end of the world.

The second article of this premises is contained in these words: "I will be thy God." This implies that Abraham's natural seed were in general to know and acknowledge the true God as their God, that he would reside among them, and that he would be their constant protector, and bestow on them all the blessings which men expect from the objects of their worship. And I would here remark, that God frequently declared himself to be the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, and the God of Abraham's seed in their generations after him. And again he says: "I will be their God." This promise God has fulfilled in the preservation of Abraham's seed, as a distinct people, for three thousand years. He preserved his seed in Egypt, and delivered them from their Egyptian oppressors; he sustained them miraculously in the wilderness during forty years, and introduced them into the possession of the land of Caanan; he preserved them in their captivity in Babylon, and brought them back again to their own land, and they have remained a distinct and separate people during their long dispersion, since they were driven out of Caanan by the Romans. Since their long dispersion, they have suffered many evils for their faith, not only from Mahometans and heathens, but from Christians also; but they have continued to know and to worship the God of their fathers agreeable to the rites of Moses, so far as their circumstances would permit, and God has continued to preserve them, agreeable to his covenant promise, a separate and distinct people to the present time. They are still beloved for their father Abraham's sake, and they will be preserved a numerous and distinct people, till the whole purposes of their separation from the rest of mankind are accomplished.

We admit that this promise has, also, a secondary sense, a mystical meaning, and refers to Abraham's spiritual seed, which God has fulfilled to them in their successive generations, and which he will continue to fulfill till time shall end. But as this branch of the covenant does not come under our immediate observation, in the discussion of this subject, we shall not here enlarge upon it.

The Jews were the first nation which were owned by God as his people, and, therefore, styled *his first born*. "And thou shalt

say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy first born;" Exo. iv., 22, 23. Israel is also styled his elect: "For Jacob, my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name, I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me;" Isa. xlv., 4. They are, furthermore, called *the children of Jacob, his chosen ones*: "O ye seed of Israel, his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones;" Chron. xvi., 13. God having chosen them *to be a peculiar treasure to himself, above all the people of the earth*; Exo. xix, 5. Deut. vii., 6. So all nations of the earth have ever since received the word of God, and the true religion from the Jewish nation, and Jerusalem has been styled the mother of all churches. Before the first advent of Jesus Christ, to them alone, says St. Paul, "Belonged the adoption, the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;" Rom. ix., 3; and none then could be *joined to the Lord*; Isa. lvi., 3; and worship him aright, unless he joined himself to the Jews, and became a worshipper of the God of Israel, or a member of that church.

When Christ came in the flesh, the gospel was first preached to them, as being *the children of the kingdom*; Matt. viii., 12. Our Lord also exercised his ministry exclusively among them, whence he is styled, "The ministry of circumcision;" Rom., xv., 8; and he himself declared that he was not sent to any but only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" Mat. xv., 24. And when he sent out his apostles, he instructed them, while he was here on the earth, to preach the gospel to none but to the Jews. "These twelve sent Jesus forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" Mat. 5—7. And after his ascension, they were charged to commence preaching at Jerusalem. "And he said unto them, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;" Luke xxiv., 47. And they, accordingly, at first preached the word to none but to Jews only. "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but to the Jews only;" Acts xi., 19. And St. Paul, who is styled the apostle to the Gentiles, first offers his ministry to the Jews, "preaching Christ in their synagogues, as his manner was;" Acts ix. 20; xiii., 5; xiv. 1; xvii., 12, 17; xviii., 4. He declared it was necessary that the gospel of God should be first spoken to the Jews. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been preached unto you;" Acts xiii., 46. St. Paul also declared, "That the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to

every one that believeth, to the Jew first ;” Rom. ii., 10. He furthermore asserts, that “through the fall of the Jews, salvation is come unto the Gentiles ;” xi., 11. Our Lord also himself teaches the same doctrine in the parable of the great supper ; in consequence of the refusal of those who were first bidden to come, the invitation was afterwards sent out to the lame, the halt, and the blind, by which we are to understand the Gentiles ; Luke xiv. 21.

Notwithstanding the infidelity of the great body of the Jewish nation, the first Christian church which was ever planted, and received the doctrine of the gospel, and the institutions of Christianity, was wholly composed of Jewish converts. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved ;” Acts ii., 42—47. All the churches of the Gentiles received the gospel from the Jews, they being made partakers of their spiritual things ; Rom. xv., 27. And the word of God coming out from them to other churches, the Gentile converts are represented as all “grafted into their good olive-tree ;” Rom. xi., 17. Hence, in the primitive times, the church of Jerusalem had the pre-eminence of all other churches ; to her they went for the decision of their controversies ; Acts xv. ; and the bishop of Jerusalem is, therefore, styled by the ancients, “The first bishop, the guide of priests, the top of the heads, the bishop and chief of the apostles ;” Cotel, note, p. 138. And the church of Jerusalem is said to be the church “Which all favored as the mother of Christians.” And St. Paul declares, alluding to this very church, “But Jerusalem which above is free, which is the mother of us all ;” Gal. iv., 26.

At the fall of anti-christ, and before the second coming of our Lord to judgment, the Jews shall be converted to the faith of the gospel, and become again a most famous church. This mystery St. Paul clearly revealed in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. The reader is requested to turn to that chapter and read it through with care and attention. St. Paul there says : “For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of the mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob : for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins ;” Rom. xi., 25—27. Again, “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the

world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Rom. xi., 15. "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again;" Rom. xi., 23. The prophets had foretold the infidelity and rejection of the nation of the Jews at the introduction of the gospel, and had especially declared that "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim;" Hosea iii., 4. "For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sive, yet shall there not the least grain fall upon the earth;" Amos ix., 9. We have seen the accomplishment of all these prophecies which speak of the rejection and dispersion of the Jews among all nations, and of their remaining a distinct and separate people from all the nations of the earth, and also their wonderful preservation as a numerous people, and why should we doubt the fulfilment of those prophecies which declare their conversion to the Christian faith, and restoration to the divine favor, especially when it has been so plainly and so fully declared by St. Paul himself? What St. Paul asserts respecting this subject in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, will serve as a key to the great things spoken by the prophets, relating to the Jewish nation, and teach us to interpret them of their glorious conversion to the faith of the gospel. In connexion with this rejection and dispersion of the Jewish nation, it is declared: "I will bring again the captivity of my people, Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall be no more pulled up out of their land, which I have given unto them, saith the Lord God;" Amos ix., 14, 15. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days;" Hosea iii., 5. "It shall come to pass, in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand a *second time* to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shina, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim;" Isa. xi., 11—13. The *second time* of God's setting his hand cannot refer to the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, for though that event might be so denominated in respect of their being brought out of Egypt, yet the period of the whole prophecy does not answer to it. That which is here referred to, is something which should be wrought for Israel under the

reign of the Messiah, and at a time when "the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" and what it can be, but their conversion to him, I am not able to conceive.

This doctrine is also taught in the following passages: "And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcast in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem, that they may fear the Lord from the east, and his glory from the rising sun;" Isa. xxvii., 13; lix., 19. This same sentiment is expressed by Tobit; he says: "When the times of the age shall be accomplished, they shall return from all places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem, and the house of God shall be built in it gloriously, as the prophets have spoken thereof;" Tobit xiv., 51; vi., 7. And when they shall be thus converted, and receive the gospel, then shall salvation be again derived from them to the Gentiles, and they shall be the means of converting such of them as still remain to be converted; and shall draw them to as great purity and zeal, and as great knowledge of the truth as the church ever enjoyed; for, says the apostle, "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? And of the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall be the reconciling them but life from the dead," to the same world? Rom. xi., 12, 15. These great truths have been clearly foretold by the prophets: "As I have sworn, that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee *any more*; for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee;" Isa. liv., 9, 10. "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people; and to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious;" xi., 10. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord. My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth, and forever;" lix., 20, 21. "I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness, shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning

shall be ended;" lx., 15, 18, 19, 20. "Behold, I will then lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders; and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their faces towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet;" xlix., 22., 23. "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that have not known thee, shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the holy one of Israel, for he hath glorified thee;" lv., 5. "The Lord God that gathered the outcasts of Israel, saith, yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered to him;" lvi., 8. "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side; the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee;" lx., 3—5. "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be heard no more in her, nor the voice of crying;" lxx., 19. "For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain;" lxxvi., 22. "And I will give them one heart, for the good of them, and their children after them. 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;" Jer. xxxii., 39, 40. "And they shall be no more a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more;" Ezek. xxxiv., 28, 29. "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob, my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them, forever more. My tabernacle shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" xxxvii., 25—27. "I have gathered them into their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them;" xxxix., 28, 29. "Many nations," says Tobit, "shall come from far to the name of the Lord, with gifts in their hands, even gifts to the king of heaven, when his tabernacle shall be built again with joy, and he shall make his captives joyful in Jerusalem; yea, all nations shall turn, and shall fear the Lord God truly;" xiii., 10, 11.

It is evident, that scarcely any of these things which have been foretold by the prophets, were accomplished on the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon; for, since that time, "his kindness has departed from, and his covenant of peace has been removed," for nearly eighteen hundred years; "violence has been heard in their land, and wasting and destruction within their borders," and their land has been made "desolate;" the days of wrath, of mourning, and of weeping, have been long upon them; agreeable to the prediction of our Lord, their "sun has been darkened, and their moon has not given her light; their sanctuary and tabernacle has been "consumed," and they have been "a prey to the heathen;" they have long since ceased to be "his people," and he to be their God, agreeable to the terms of the new covenant.

Neither can we, with propriety, confine these promises to the small remnant which embraced the gospel in the apostolic age; for they were never "gathered out of all lands," nor did they "inherit the land forever;" but were banished thence, as well as the unbelieving Jews, by Hadrian; they cannot, with any propriety of speech, be styled "the house of Israel," the "whole house of Israel." Nothing indeed, seems more unlikely, than at the time of their rejection, the casting them off, the breaking off the branches, the leaving them under spiritual slumber, the taking the kingdom from them, and casting them into utter darkness, the cutting them down as the barren fig-tree, the exclusion of them from the gospel supper, should be the time of the completion of these glorious promises; and that this sense cannot accord with the apostle Paul, in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans.

Neither can these prophecies and promises be applied to the believing Gentiles; for surely they could not be "a prey to the heathen," or "bear their shame," or be the people "whom God had led into captivity," and afterwards "gathered into their own land," and so planted them, as never to be plucked up again; the promise could not be made, that they should "suck the breasts, and eat the riches of the Gentiles."

These passages then, and many others, with which the prophets abound, have never received their full accomplishment; they, consequently, remain to be fulfilled. And to what do they relate, but to the conversion of the Israelites, to the true faith of the gospel, as declared by St. Paul, in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans? This chapter unlocks the prophecies, and fully declares the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith in the latter days. Then the "Gentiles shall come to their light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising; and nations that have not known them, shall run unto them, because God hath glorified them."—"Then," says God, "I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come to see my glory;" Isa. lv., 5; lxvi., 18, 22. Then "all nations shall turn and fear the Lord truly," says Tobit. And this is the time, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, of



which St. Paul speaks, in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans.

II. We shall now proceed to show that the prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel, have foretold the general conversion of the natural seed of Abraham to the Christian faith, under the figure of their restoration to their own land; and their practising the Christian worship, under the idea of their worshipping God in Canaan, according to the purity of the Mosaic ritual; and their happiness in their converted state, under the emblems of their employments and enjoyments in the earthly country; and that this description of the conversion of Abraham's natural seed to the Christian faith, answers to the millennium of St. John, who uses the very words by which these prophets had foretold this glorious conversion of the dispersed of Israel to the faith of the gospel.

1. St. John speaks of the *revivification* of the church of the primitive martyrs who suffered for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years;" Rev. xx. 4. It is not the bodies, but the souls of them that were beheaded, who are said to live again. The word *psuche*, here rendered *soul*, occurs six times in this book, this place excepted; and in all these places it signifies, either the soul in separation, or distinction from the body, or the living soul; for "the souls under the altar," not only "cry with a loud voice," but are "clothed with white robes;" vi., 6, 10, 11; which expressions cannot be well applied to dead bodies. The *ktismata echonta psuchas*, are the creatures having animal souls, by which they lived; viii., 9. In this passage, it plainly signifies their lives; that is, the souls by which men live;" xii., 11. Here it is expressly called, *e psuche zooso, the living soul*; xvi., 13. It signifies the lives of men, or else the souls of men, which they did hunt or devour; xviii., 13; as in Ezekiel xiii., 18, 20; xxii., 25. And the *epithumia tes phuches, is the desire*, not of the body, but of the soul;" xviii., 14. How, then, can it be supposed that the word here employed does not mean the soul, but the dead body in contradistinction to it, which alone can be said literally to rise and live again?

The very words, *anastasis* and *ezesan*, here employed by St. John, are frequently used by the prophets to express the glorious state of the Jewish church at her conversion; and by St Paul, to signify the flourishing condition of the Gentiles at the same period. St. John says, they who enjoy this millennium, shall be "priests of God and of Christ;" 6. And the prophet Isaiah says, of the converted Jews: "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord, and men shall call you ministers of our God;" lxi., 6. And of the Gentiles

that come to them, "I will take of them to be priests and Levites;" lxi., 21. This was the very thing promised to the Jewish nation when God entered into covenant with them. that they should be a kingdom of priests. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation;" Ex. xix., 6. The Septuagint reads this passage, *a royal priesthood*; and the Targum, *kings and priests*. This all Christians are already made. "Ye also," says St. Peter, "as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;" 1 Pet. ii., 5. And St. John says: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father;" i., 6; v., 10. "We are," says Justin Martyr, "truly priests to God;" it may, therefore, be expected men should be more eminently so, in that glorious state of the church.

2. St. John furthermore says: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea;" xxi., 1. He introduces our Lord saying, "Behold, I make all things new;" 5. The prophet Isaiah also introduces God, thus speaking at the conversion of the Jews: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind;" lxx., 17. And again, "I have put my word in thy mouth, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people;" li., 16. And in the very words of the author of the Revelation: "Behold, I make all things new;" xliii., 18, 19. As these new heavens and new earth are to be contemporary with the conversion of the Jews, surely they must be before the Jewish nation is destroyed at the conflagration of the world; and, therefore, can only be a new heaven and a new earth, in that moral and religious sense in which Maimonides explains the phrase, when he says, "It signifies that God will place them in perpetual joy, in view of their former sorrow and anxiety; so that the memory of their former sorrow and anxiety shall no more remain."

It will be observed, however, that there is a peculiarity in St. John's new earth. He says, "and there shall be no more sea;" because he had all along represented the beast as ascending out of the abyss: "And sitting upon many waters," which were "the people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," that had submitted to her: xvii., 1, 8, 15. Now, as the beast was utterly destroyed, and satan was bound for a thousand years, and Gog and Magog were not to be gathered till the thousand years were ended, nor were the armies of the beast which were slain to rise again till the thousand years were past; xix., 21; xx., 6. Therefore, the apostle says that in this new earth, "there was no more sea."

3. Again, St. John says, "I heard a great voice from heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself with them

shall be their God;" xxi., 3. And the prophet Ezekiel, who by the ancients was supposed to speak of the millennium, says, in like manner, "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" xxxvii., 26, 27. This temple and sanctuary are described at length by the prophet Ezekiel, in the forty-first and forty-fifth chapters, and they are the same with the new heaven and the new earth, and the heavenly Jerusalem, which was seen by St. John in vision. This tabernacle is to be pitched in the land described by Ezekiel, (xlvi., 13—23,) which is to be divided among the twelve tribes; all of which we understand to be a figurative representation of the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, and their happy state and condition after that conversion.

4. Once more, St. John says, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away;" xxi., 4. The prophet Isaiah has given the same representation of the state of things in Jerusalem, after the former heaven and earth are passed away: "The voice of weeping shall be heard no more in her, nor the voice of crying;" lxxv., 19. "The Lord will wipe away tears from all faces;" xxv., 8. "They shall not hunger nor thirst neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them;" xlix., 10. This language of the prophet exactly corresponds with that of the Revelator: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" vii., 16, 17.

5. Furthermore, St. John says, "The building of the wall of the city was of jasper; and the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass; and the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones;" xxi., 18, 19. And Isaiah says, "I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones;" liv., 11, 12. And Tobit also says, "Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stones; thy walls, and towers, and battlements, with pure gold; and the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl, carbuncle, and stones of Ophir;" xliii., 16—18.

6. Again, St. John speaks of "The tree of life planted there," and of "a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb;" xxii., 1, 2. And the prophet Zechariah speaks "of living water going out of Jerusalem;" xiv., 8. And the

prophet Ezekiel says, that "The waters which issued out from under the threshold, became a river that could not be passed over;" xlvii., 1—5. "And by the river upon the bank thereof on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine;" 12. So on either side of St. John's river, "was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations;" xxii., 2. And he who passed under the name of Esdras, says, "They shall have the tree of life planted for an ornament of sweet savor; for unto you is paradise opened, the tree of life is planted; 2 Esd. ii., 12.

7. Once more, St. John says, "There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light;" xxii., 5. And Isaiah declares the same thing: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended;" lx., 19. And the prophet Zechariah says, "It shall be one day which shall be known unto the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light;" xiv., 7.

8. St. John, moreover, so represents the state of things following the fall of anti-christ, as plainly to inform us that he is speaking of this glorious conversion of the Jewish nation to the Christian faith, and God's marrying her again whom he had formerly divorced. For as the church of Christ is represented as *the commonwealth of Israel*; Eph. ii., 12; *the Israel of God*; Gal. vi., 16; *the Jerusalem which is above*; Gal. iv., 26; *the celestial Jerusalem*; Heb. xii., 22; so St. John represents the new state of things in the same language, saying: "I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, come down from God out of heaven;" xxi., 2. And, again, "he showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God;" 10. Now, that this great and holy city, this new Jerusalem, is the Jewish church converted to God, the characters he gives of it will not permit us to doubt. For, in the first place, he says, "The city had no need of the sun, neither the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof;" xxi., 23. Now, God speaks of the conversion of the Jews to the gospel in the same language: "They shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the holy one of Israel. Thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory;" Isa. lx., 14, 18, 19. St. John says, "The gates of this city shall not be shut at all

by day, neither shall there be any night there, and they shall bring the glory and substance of the nations into it ;” xxi., 25, 26. Isaiah declares the same thing, respecting the conversion of the Jews : “ Thy gates shall be opened continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought ;” lx., 11. Finally, St. John says : “ And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it ;” 24 ; which we have fully shown to be the very thing foretold by the prophets at the conversion of the Jewish nation to the Christian faith.

9. St. John, finally, introduces this holy city, this new Jerusalem, “ Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ;” xxi., 2 ; and says, “ come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” and then he “ showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God ;” 9, 10. He also says, “ I heard a great voice, saying, The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready ; and to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints ;” xix., 7, 8. Now, the prophets have given the same representations of the Jewish church when she is converted. She is introduced speaking thus : “ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me in the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decked himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels ;” Isa. lxi., 10. And again, “ Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken ; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate ; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah ; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee ; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee ;” lxii., 4, 5. Thus, it appears that the new Jerusalem of St. John, is a figurative representation of the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, immediately after the fall of anti-christ, and that this is the great event spoken of by the prophets, which is to succeed the overthrow of mystic Babylon, and not, as some suppose, the end of the world.

III. Those who deny that the Jews will be converted to the Christian faith, maintain that the Israel spoken of in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which St. Paul says shall be saved, means the spiritual Israel of God ; that is, true Christians, and not Jews. According to this interpretation, then, St. Paul gravely asserts, that all Christians shall be saved, and enters into a long argument to prove this assertion, than which nothing can be more absurd. It is evident, that those who maintain this idea, are driven to this most unreasonable construction, because the true interpretation of the chapter stands in the way of their favorite dog-

ma, that Christ will come to destroy the world, and put an end to the present state of things, in eighteen hundred and forty-three. The fact is, St. Paul, in discussing the question of the rejection and restoration of the Jews, has introduced into his argument both the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham, and has shown that God did not cast away that part of Abraham's natural seed who believed in Christ, because by faith in Christ they became the spiritual seed of Abraham, and, therefore, were entitled to the promises made to the spiritual seed. Isaac and Jacob were not only the legitimate descendants of Abraham, but they were also eminent types of this spiritual seed, especially Isaac. St. Paul also tells us, that God cast away the natural seed of Abraham, who had rejected and crucified the Lord of life and glory; that he rejected them from the gospel church for their infidelity; and that as long as they remained in unbelief, they did not belong to the spiritual seed of Abraham, and, consequently, could not claim any promises which God had made to this spiritual seed. Three questions here naturally arise, which we shall now proceed to answer: Who were the persons St. Paul says God rejected? Was their rejection to be final, or temporary? And are they ever to be brought in again?

1. *Who were the persons St. Paul says God rejected?* God did not reject the spiritual seed of Abraham, the spiritual Israel, the believing Jews. This St. Paul has positively declared: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded;" Rom. xi., 1, 2, 5, 7. It is a fact, evident and notorious, that the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, as well as all the members of the first Christian church which was planted at Jerusalem, were all believing Jews. According to the Acts of the Apostles, many thousand converts were made to the Christian faith from among the Jews, before the gospel was ever preached to the Gentiles. In fact, it is asserted again and again, in the Acts of the Apostles, and also in their Epistles, that the spiritual Israel, the inward Jew, the believing Jew, instead of being cast off, were accepted of God, and incorporated into the Christian church. This, then, is a fact so clear and so evident, that I presume all will readily admit it.

The persons, then, whom God cast off, were the unbelieving Jews, who constituted the great body of that church and nation. The Jews and Israelites here mentioned, are evidently distinguished from the elect of Israel by this character, that they were "the blinded of Israel;" 7; who lay under a "spiritual slumber;" 8; whose "eyes were blinded that they saw not;" 10; who "stumbleth at the stumbling-stone;" 11; they are the Israel "whose casting away was the riches of the world, whose diminution was their

fulness;" 12; they are Israel "according to the flesh;" 14; "the branches broken off for unbelief;" 17, 19, 20; they "who believed not;" 23, 30, 31, 32; and "who were enemies to the gospel for the Gentiles' sake;" 29; this is the Israel of whom the apostle here asserts, "they shall be saved," of this "blinded," this "unbelieving," this Israel "cut off," these "branches broken from their own olive-tree," these "enemies" to the converted Gentiles; as there has been, says the apostle, "a diminution," so there shall be "a fulness;" as there has been "a casting them off," so shall there be "a reception of them;" as there has been "a breaking them off from their own olive-tree," so shall there be an "inserting them into it again;" 24; as there has been a time of their "unbelief," and so of "severity" and of "wrath" to them; ix., 22; 1 Thes. ii., 16; and so shall there be of "mercy;" 31, 32. Now, since the "unbelief," the "diminution," the "rejecting," the "breaking the branches off," must necessarily be understood of "Israel according to the flesh," of the "natural branches" of the stock of Abraham; 22, 24; "beloved for the father's sake;" 28; "of the seed of Jacob," whose sins were not taken away; 26. If we understand the "fulness," the "reception," the "ingrafting" of them, the "salvation" here mentioned of the "spiritual Israel," and the "elect" opposed to "Israel that was blinded;" 7; the *antithesis* is wholly lost; since the "diminution," and the "fulness," the "rejection," and the "reception," the "breaking off," and the "insertion," the "severity" and the "mercy," will not relate to the same persons. Again, "blindness in part hath happened to Israel," says the apostle, "till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and then all Israel shall be saved;" now, certainly, the blindness happened to Israel, "according to the flesh," and must not the *antithesis* require that the "salvation" should belong to the same Israel? It happened not to the elect, for "the election," says the apostle, "hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded;" and, therefore, the salvation cannot respect them only.

Once more, to whom did this blindness happen? was it not to the national church, and the great body of the Jewish nation? The very persons to whom our Saviour had said, "Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, lest darkness come upon you;" John xii., 35. Is it not of the same children of Israel of whom the apostle says, "They could not see to the end of that which was to be abolished, but their minds are blinded, for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away?" 2 Cor. iii., 13, 14. Was it not this very people "who had eyes, and saw not; ears, and heard not; whose heart was waxed gross, their ears dull, and their eyes closed?" Isa. vi., 9. Acts xxviii., 26, 27. Rom. xi., 8, 10. And from whose eyes were "hid the things that belong to their peace, because they knew not the time of their visitation?" Luke xix., 42, 44. To whom belonged this *apobole*, *rejection*, or casting off? Does it not relate to the great body of the Jewish church and nation? Does not our Saviour say of them, "The children of the kingdom

shall be cast out into outer darkness?" Matt. viii. 12; that their house shall be left unto them desolate? xxiii., 38; that "The kingdom of God shall be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof?" xxi., 41. Who were the branches cut off? Are they not the unbelieving Jews, who composed the great body of that church and nation? Does not our Saviour say, that "Their vineyard shall be let out to other husbandmen?" Matt. xxi., 41. Are they not that barren tree which was to be "hewn down?" Luke, xiii., 7—9. And must not, then, the recovery of them from this blindness, the receiving of them again, the ingrafting them into their own olive-tree, refer to this very same class, the great body of the Jewish church and nation, who had been rejected for their infidelity?

2. We shall now proceed to the next point of inquiry: *Was this rejection to be final, or temporary?* This rejection of the natural seed of Abraham, was not a final rejection; it was merely a temporary rejection, from which they are to be recovered. This is evident from the express declaration of the apostle himself: "I say, then, have they stumbled that they should *pesosi, fall!* God forbid: but rather through their *paraptomati, fall,* salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy;" 11. Here, the mere English reader does not acquire a distinct and full idea of the apostle's meaning. In the original, St. Paul used two words of very different signification, which have both been rendered into our language by the word *fall*. In the first instance he used the word *pesosi*, which signifies, like the English word, *fall*, a ruinous fall, a fall from which one does not rise again, a fall ending in death. Hence, in all languages, death is expressed by falling,—*He fell in battle*. The original word here employed by St. Paul, is used in the following passages: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them *ou peseitai, shall not fall* to the ground without your father;" Matt. x., 29. "And thy *pesountai, shall fall* by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations;" Luke xxi., 24. "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and *epeson, fell* in one day three and twenty thousand;" 1 Cor. x., 8. "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases, *epesen, fell* in the wilderness?" Heb. iii., 17. Thus, this fall of the literal seed of Abraham was not an utter rejection, so that they should cease to be a people; it was not a fall which was to end in death; it was not a fall *forever*, from which they were not to be recovered. In the second place, St. Paul uses the Greek word *paraptomati*, which is always employed in the New Testament in a moral and religious sense, and signifies the loss of the divine favor, by the commission of some *offence*. The same original word is rendered *offence* in Romans, v., 15, 17, 18. The *offence* which the Jews committed, was the rejection of the gospel through unbelief, and through this offence salvation came to the Gentiles; not that it was the absolute cause of the calling of the Gentiles, but



that it became the occasion of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, as stated by St. Paul: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judging yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth;" Acts, xiii., 46, 47. The apostle, then, only means by *their fall*, and *the fall of them*, such a *lapse* as was *recoverable*; as in the case of Adam's offence.

As a further evidence that the rejection of the natural seed of Abraham was not a final, but a temporary rejection, St. Paul expressly says, that their rejection was only for a limited and definite period. "For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Here it is asserted that this blindness, which happened unto Israel, is to remain only till "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." There appears to be a double fulness of the Gentiles spoken of in the Scriptures. Hence, St. Paul says: "If the diminution of them was *the fulness of the Gentiles*;" 12. This fulness of the Gentiles consisted in preaching the gospel to all nations, and was in a great measure to be accomplished before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the Jewish church and state, according to our Lord's prediction, in these words: "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come;" Mat. xxiv. 14; that is, the end of the Jewish church and state.

But there is another fulness of the Gentiles spoken of in this passage under consideration, which is to consist in a more glorious conversion of them to the Christian faith, and a coming in of those nations which have not, as yet, embraced the gospel, or have relapsed into heathenism, or Mahometanism, to be accomplished when the rejection of the Jews shall cease, and God shall send the Deliverer out of Zion, to turn away iniquity from Jacob; for only in this sense can the words of the apostles be consistently understood. "If the fall of the Jews hath been (already) the riches of the (Gentile) world, and the diminution of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more shall their fulness;" 12; that is, the time of their conversion be the increase and fulness of the same Gentiles. And "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, (to the same world,) but even as life from the dead;" 15. And "Blindness in part hath happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." This blindness, therefore, continuing upon the Jewish nation as much as ever, another fulness of the Gentiles is to be expected, when this blindness shall be entirely removed from them, and so "all Israel shall be saved."

Jerusalem is yet trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Jews are still captives in all nations; whereas the captivity, and the treading down of Jerusalem, are to cease when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, agreeable to the prediction of Christ concerning the dispersion of the Jewish nation. "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be carried captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down till the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled;" Luke xxi. 24: that is, till the times when the Gentiles shall have a plenary conversion by the coming in of the Jews, and shall no more lord it over them, as they now do, but shall serve them, and "flow in unto them."

If we consult the ancient prophecies concerning the vast extent of the Saviour's kingdom over all nations, we shall find reasons to believe they have not had their full accomplishment; the Saviour has not yet had "The uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;" Ps. ii., 8. God has not yet made "All people, nations, and languages to serve him," and all "Dominions to obey him;" Dan. vii., 4. 27; he has not yet "Filled the whole earth," or "Broke in pieces, and consumed all other kingdoms;" ii., 34. 35. The prophecy of Micah, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth; v., 4; nor that of Zechariah, "There shall be one Lord, and his name one;" xiv., 9: nor that of David: "All kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him; all the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations worship before him;" Ps. lxxii., 8; is not yet fulfilled. These, and numerous other prophecies of similar import, yet remain to have their full accomplishment. If the known regions of the world were divided into thirty equal parts, the Christian part is only as five, the Mahometans as six, and the Pagans as nineteen; whence we have reason to conclude, that there is yet a time to come, before the consummation of all things, in which our Saviour will yet display, more victoriously, the banner of the *cross*, and, like a mighty man of war, march on conquering and to conquer, till he has confounded his enemies, and finally consummated his victories in a glorious triumph over all the powers of the earth, and make "all nations, tongues, and languages to serve him." From hence, it is evident, that the blindness of Israel is only to remain for a limited and definite period.

3. We shall now proceed to consider the third and last question proposed: *Are the rejected Jews ever to be brought in again?* We have already anticipated the answer to this question, in the discussion of the two former propositions; but, nevertheless, we shall proceed to give a more clear and full answer to the inquiry. The Jews affirmed if they were cast off for rejecting the gospel, God would violate his covenant obligations to Abraham, and to his seed, in their generations after him. And to this the apostle refers in the following words: "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid:

yea, let God be true, but every man a liar ; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged ;” Rom. iii., 3, 4. Dr. Macknight’s paraphrase on these words runs thus : “ But what benefit have we received from the oracles of God, if the greatest part of us have not believed on him whom ye call the seed, and are to be cast off? Will not their unbelief destroy the faithfulness of God, who promised to be a God to Abraham’s seed in their generations ? “ By no means: the faithfulness of God will not be destroyed by the rejection of the Jews. But let God be acknowledged true to his covenant, although every Jew be a liar, in affirming that Jesus is not the promised seed, and be rejected on that account ; for, as it is written, in all cases God will be justified in his threatenings, and will appear just as often as he punishes.” It seems the apostles, in their discourses to the Jews, had told them, that for crucifying Jesus, and rejecting the gospel, they were to be cast off from being the people of God, and to be driven out of the land of Canaan ; the Jews affirmed that if this was done, then God would violate his covenant with Abraham, and with his seed in their generations after him ; and that the oracles of God, instead of being an advantage to them, and the faithfulness of God, in performing his promises, would be destroyed. In the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of this Epistle, the apostle shows how God could punish the Jews for their infidelity and wickedness, and still be faithful to all his covenant engagements with that people. He does it by showing that Abraham had a twofold seed—a literal seed, and a spiritual seed. He then explains how the promise is made good to the spiritual seed of Abraham in the following words : “ Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel ; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children ; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, they are not the children of God ; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise : At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this ; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to the election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated ;” Rom. ix., 6—13. A believing Gentile is merely the spiritual seed of Abraham, while a believing Jew is both the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham. Hence, the word of God did take effect upon the natural seed of Abraham, as many of the Jews did embrace the gospel when it was first preached, and consequently were incorporated into the Christian church. But by far the greater proportion of that nation was rejected for their infidelity.

In the eleventh chapter, the apostle proceeds to show how God could be true to his covenant engagements to the natural seed of Abraham, and to his seed in their generations after him, and still reject them for their infidelity, and punish them for their sin and wickedness. They were to be cast off and rejected from the blessings and privileges of the new covenant, and to be scattered among all nations, yet they were to be preserved in their long captivity as a distinct and separate people, and never suffered to become extinct; and when the fulness of time was come, a "Deliverer should go out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins;" 27. Hence, St. Paul asserts that the natural seed of Abraham, who were broken off, *shall be inserted in again*; who were rejected, *shall be received again*; who were blinded, *shall be enlightened again*; and so "all Israel shall be saved;" that is, as a part of the natural seed of Abraham were saved when the gospel was first preached, and a part rejected for their infidelity, when the rejected part are brought in and restored to the divine favor, these two parts will constitute the whole of Abraham's natural seed; and this is what the apostle means when he says, "So all Israel shall be saved."

But, in order to make this subject still more plain, let us consider from what the unbelieving Jews were rejected. They were not rejected from any of the privileges and promises contained in the Abrahamic covenant; this is certain, for all things in that covenant were ordered and sure, and can no more fail than the throne of God itself. They were not rejected from any of the privileges and promises contained in the Mosaic institution, for this institution was imposed upon that nation only till the time of reformation. The Mosaic institution was defective in many respects, and was merely designed to occupy a temporary space, and was to be superseded by a complete and perfect institution; that is, the gospel institution. Now, before the Jews were rejected, the whole of the Mosaic institution had become a dead letter, its authority was entirely superseded by the introduction of a new and perfect dispensation; so that the Jews could not have been rejected from any privileges or promises contained in this dispensation. The unbelieving Jews were rejected from the privileges and advantages of the new covenant, which God said, by the mouth of Jeremiah, he would make with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their

hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" Jer. xxxi., 31—33. As this covenant is said to be made with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, it was necessary that the gospel should be first preached to the Jews, so that the whole nation might enjoy the opportunity of entering into this covenant with God, agreeable to the stipulations which he had prescribed. Many of the natural seed of Abraham believed, and entered into these new covenant relations with God, while the greater part of the nation rejected the covenant through sin and unbelief; hence, God in his turn rejected them from its privileges and advantages, which, as St. Paul has shown, he had a perfect right to do. As a case in point to sustain his argument, the apostle refers to two instances, in the dealings of God with that people. He had formerly rejected both Ishmael and Esau from participating in the advantages of the Abrahamic covenant, and had preferred Isaac and Jacob, and had directed that the promised seed should be reckoned through them. That, in doing this, he had displayed his sovereign power, which, as the Lord of the universe, he had a perfect right to do. So, now, a parallel case had occurred, in the establishment of this new covenant; he received into it the believing Jews, and rejected from its privileges and advantages the unbelieving Jews, just as he formerly had received into the Abrahamic covenant Isaac and Jacob, and excluded from its privileges Ishmael and Esau. In the last instance, he only displayed the same sovereignty that he did in the two former instances. Here is a clear, forcible, and logical argument, which an unbelieving Jew would find difficult to repel.

Here, also, is the origin of St. Paul's figure of the Jewish *olive-tree*. As this covenant was to be made with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, and as the natural seed of Abraham were the first to be admitted into it, under the figure of an olive-tree, St. Paul calls the Jews the natural branches, and represents the unbelieving Jews, who constitute the great body of that nation, as branches broken off, and the believing Gentiles, who were admitted into the covenant, as wild olive-branches grafted into this olive-tree in their stead. St. Paul uses the words and phrases, rejected, cast off, broken off, stumbled, blinded, spiritual slumbers, diminution, and severity, all to express the simple idea that God had rejected the unbelieving Jews from the privileges and advantages of the new covenant, and also the reasons for that rejection. And this is the covenant into which the rejected seed of Abraham are to be received, when they are restored to the divine favor; the olive-tree into which they are to be inserted, when they obtain the favor of the Lord. Thus we hope that we have clearly proved, and fully elucidated, this part of our subject.

IV. But, in the further prosecution of our subject, there is another inquiry which calls for our consideration: that is, have the rejected and dispersed of Israel ever been brought in? To this in-

quiry, it seems to me, we must return a negative answer. That part of the Jewish nation who embraced the gospel, and are called by St. Paul the *election*, and are said to have obtained the favor of God, are never reckoned among the number of those who were cut off and rejected. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." These blinded Jews, constituting the great body of that church and nation, were the persons whom God rejected for their obstinacy and unbelief. The Jews expected that the promised Messiah was to be their deliverer, and so far they were right. But that which they expected to be delivered from, at his appearing, was the power and dominion of strangers; in this they were mistaken. When our Saviour came, their reckoning was up; and the miracles which Jesus performed, persuaded them that it was he; but his obscure birth, and mean appearance, did not accord with that power and splendor they had fancied to themselves, he should come in. This, with his denouncing to them the ruin of their temple and state at hand, set the rulers against him, and held the body of the Jews in suspension till his crucifixion, and that gave a full turn of their minds from him. They had figured to their minds a mighty prince, at the head of their nation, setting them free from all foreign power, and themselves at ease and happy under his glorious reign. But when, at the passover, the whole people were witness of his death, they gave up all thought of deliverance by him. He was gone, they saw him no more, and it was past doubt a dead man could not be the Messiah, or deliverer even of those who believed in him. It is against those prejudices, that what St. Paul says, in Rom. x., 6—9, seems directed; wherein he teaches them that there was no need to fetch the Messiah out of heaven, or out of the grave, and bring him personally among them. For the deliverance he was to work for them, the salvation by him was salvation from sin, and condemnation for that; and that was to be had by barely believing and receiving him as the Messiah, their king, and that he was raised from the dead: by this they would be saved, without his personal presence among them. But this view of the subject they entirely rejected, and became more and more obstinate and hardened in unbelief. Hence, St. Paul declares, that they "Both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they pleased not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for the wrath is come upon them to the utmost;" 1 Thes. ii., 15, 16. This Epistle was written in the year of our Lord *fifty-two*, and that to the Romans in *fifty-eight*, and this continued to be their general character down to the year *seventy*, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Roman army; when an end was put to the Jewish polity, and they themselves carried captive into all nations.

After this terrible calamity happened to that nation, the survivors still remained impenitent, incorrigible, and unbelieving. Hence, Jus-

tin Martyr says of them : " That after their country was destroyed, and their city laid waste, they repented not, but proceeded still in their execrations of Christ, and of all that believed in him ;" Dial. cum. Trypt., p. 335. And Tertullian adds : " That seeing from the time of Tiberius to Vespasian they repented not, their land was made desolate, and their cities burned with fire." Justin Martyr declares again in his apology, written in the year of our Lord one hundred and forty, that they were in all places, " As great enemies to the Christians as the heathens were, and as ready to torment and kill them, when they could do it ; and that this was evident from the last Jewish war, in which their captain, Barchochebas, commanded only the Christians to be tormented, if they refused to deny, and to blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ ;" p. 72. From this period to the days of Constantine, the fathers generally represented them as a nation *whose ears were shut, and their hearts hardened* ; declaring, " That the Scriptures had clearly foretold they should be disinherited, and fall off from the grace of God." Origin testifies, " That God had turned his providence from the Jews to the Gentiles ; that they were wholly deserted, and they retained nothing of what before was venerable among them, nor any footsteps of the divine presence with them ; that after the crucifixion of our Lord, they were perfectly deserted, and not to be converted till the end of the world ;" Adv. Celsum., l. 2, p. 62. Tertullian says : " That from the time they crucified their Lord, God had taken from them the prophet, wise men, and the Holy Spirit, and had left them destitute of his grace ; and that only at his second coming he should be received by them who had thus rejected him ;" Adv. Marcion, l. 3, c. 23. And from the days of Constantine down to the present period, the same blindness has remained upon this people, and they have cherished the same enmity to Christ, and hostility to the Christian religion, as did their forefathers.

If, then, the rejected Jews, who were cast off for their infidelity, have not yet been brought in, the prophecies respecting their conversion to the Christian religion, and their restoration to the divine favor, remain to be accomplished. And this event has been as clearly and distinctly foretold by the prophets, and especially by St. Paul, as any thing in the Bible. Indeed, these things have been stated with so much clearness and precision in the holy Scriptures, it is difficult to perceive how any man can believe the Bible and deny them ; for St. Paul as fully and as distinctly asserts, that the unbelieving Jews, who were cut off and rejected from the advantages and privileges of the new covenant, for their blindness and infidelity, shall be converted to the Christian faith, and restored to the divine, when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, as words can convey ideas ; and we might as well deny the whole Scripture testimony as to deny this doctrine. It is not contended that the Jews are to be brought in, in a state of carnality and unbelief ; but that they, through faith, shall embrace the Christian religion, and,

then, at their conversion, they are to be married to the Lamb, and so again become the people of God. This is the doctrine so clearly and plainly taught by St. Paul, and serves as a key to unlock the prophecies respecting this singular people. Hence, we infer that the world cannot be destroyed till all the prophecies and promises respecting this people are accomplished, and, consequently, that it will not be destroyed in eighteen hundred and forty-three.

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## ARTICLE V.

*The New Testament Preacher.—By Elder E. Shaw.*

It is true, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the ministry of the church forms its character, and, to a great degree, moulds its sentiments. Whether we look at the Catholic or Protestant church, this truth is apparent. Long established errors are perpetuated, and new ones are introduced, everywhere, and at any time, provided the ministry is strongly and perseveringly engaged in them. So, also, on the other hand, reform will certainly prevail, and old truth will be maintained, if the ministry is found firmly and unflinchingly engaged in behalf of it. Scripture, reason, and observation, combine to establish immovably these facts.

If such are the results of the character and sentiments of the Christian ministry, whether they be good or bad, then surely it is of immense importance that the ministry be of the right kind, and that the true standard be clearly presented, and every means employed to place it on a right foundation, and to so mould it, that its influence may produce such effects as are clearly shown in the word of God to have followed the labors and influence of the primitive gospel preachers.

It is undeniable that there are errors in the church, and among the ministry, and that these have been brought in through the influence of erroneous standards. Standards of human creation admit nothing to rise higher than themselves; therefore, a ministry moulded by human standards must necessarily bring in and perpetuate error, perversion, and distraction, among the people of God.

But we are thrown back upon first principles. Human standards are death to the ministry, and ruin to the church. They first divide, then destroy. To none of them can we safely go; in none of them can we safely confide. But when we turn our eyes to the New Testament, there we find the truth; the unadulterated truth, as taught from heaven. The model is here given for every preacher of the gospel; and the standard is perfect. We may not fully understand this standard, owing to the prejudice of education, and the darkness of the human understanding; still, it is perfect,



and so far as we conform to it, we are right beyond all controversy. Besides, the character of the gospel preacher, there given, is plain, and not hard to be understood, provided we receive it in its obvious sense, shorn of all mysticism. But, admitting every objection that can be raised, it still remains a truth, that we can find no certainty relative to the doctrine or character of the preacher by having recourse to human rules; and it is equally true, that all we gain from the New Testament on these points is correct, and according to the will of God; and all the influence exerted by the preacher whose doctrine and character are derived from this source, is invariably good, and promotes the best interests of the church and of the world.

With these facts before us, who can but see and feel that the true minister of Christ must be formed and moulded in all things according to the directions given in the New Testament? Such an one is emphatically a New Testament preacher.

As the design of this article is to impress more deeply, both upon preachers and churches, the vast importance of a scriptural improvement in the ministry, in order to a proper advancement in holiness in the churches, I shall call attention to several directions to preachers, as given in the holy oracles of the New Testament; because nothing can make a New Testament preacher, but for him to be conformed to that holy book, and to feel, to act, and to think in strict accordance with its divine directions. Such a man, and no other, is to be regarded as a New Testament preacher.

I. He that would preach the gospel as the ancients did, must first be partaker of its benefits, in his own soul. Christ first made men his disciples, and then sent them to preach. Paul was first converted, then entered upon the work of the ministry. "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits." As this point is conceded on all hands, these brief remarks may suffice.

II. The New Testament preacher must possess good natural capabilities. 1. Without a door of utterance he cannot speak to edification, instruction, or comfort; therefore, he must be able to speak with a good degree of fluency and distinctness. This is a natural gift with many; and where it exists in nature, it may be greatly improved by use, and by observing certain rules; but where no gift of utterance exists, there can be no hope that such an one is designed of God for a preacher. 2. He must possess a mind, to a good degree, strong and discriminating. There are men who evince their piety, and who speak with fluency; but still their minds are so weak, and their judgment so imperfect, that they are never capable of performing the duties of a pastor; and even as evangelists, they can never be safely trusted alone, but must be under the watchful eye of some wise and prudent man of God; or, by some injudicious management, they will build again the things they have destroyed, and throw into confusion what a little good judgment might have continued peaceful and prosperous. A little

attention to the New Testament will show that the first ministers were men of discernment, sound mind, and good judgment. But they complained of some who knew nothing, prated against them, understanding neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed. It would be better for the church if no such pretenders were within her borders at this day. 3. A natural aptness, and disposition to be firm, industrious, and persevering, seem absolutely necessary and indispensable in the minister of the New Testament. Such were all those whose history is given in the book of God. Such, I say, seems to have been their natural turn, and to have characterized them before they entered the ministry. Matthew faithfully filled his office as receiver of the customs, till Jesus called him. Simon and Andrew, James and John, industriously pursued the fishing business, when fishes could be caught, and mended their nets at intervals; and when other business seemed to fail, we hear Peter say, I go a fishing; and the others at once say, "We also will go with thee." And their perseverance led them to toil all night, though they caught nothing. This natural turn of mind was of incalculable service to them in the ministry, and is clearly seen in all their history. Paul showed the same aptness, and perseverance, in persecuting the church of God, that he did in building it up, in after life. A dull, dronish, stupid, and undecided man, seems quite unfit for the gospel ministry, and does not at all compare with the natural turn and temperament of those whose history is recorded in the Bible.

III. The gospel ministry should employ all the time and powers of those who engage in it. Paul said to a young minister, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself *wholly* to them." Peter said, "We have left *all*, and followed thee." Although Paul wrought occasionally with his hands, yet it was only when he saw no door open to employ all his time in preaching, or when his own wants, or the good of the cause, required it. So Peter, and others, continued in the work of preaching, regardless of all worldly considerations, till a short respite gave them time to spend one night in fishing. Then, the moment he heard his master say, "Feed my sheep," he was ready to enter upon the work, employing all his time and talents in the great cause. There is work enough in the ministry to employ all the time and powers of any man of God; and the wants of Zion call for it. It is true, those who give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry, must receive a support from some source or other, than the labor of their own hands. But God has made ample provisions for this. He does not send a man into the war at his own charges. He does not require his servants to feed the flock, and not eat of the milk of the flock. But they that wait at the altar, are partakers of the altar. So God has ordained that those who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. Paul clearly represents that God has given his servants this power over the churches; and that, if they are partakers of the

spiritual things communicated by the gospel minister, he ought also to receive of their earthly substance, sufficient to supply his temporal wants. But if they fail to do this when able, or if duty calls him where there are no friends able to do it, then the circumstances justify the preacher in procuring his own sustenance, by pursuing, for the time being, some lawful business, sufficient to relieve him from present want. But when present wants are supplied, he is bound to go on with his master's work, and give himself wholly to it. The fact that Paul wrought at tent-making, and Peter went a fishing, is no sort or degree of justification for those ministers, who leave the work of the ministry, and plunge into worldly projects to get rich. Nothing but stern necessity can justify a preacher in relaxing his labors, to attend to worldly pursuits. The first preachers said it was not meet that they should leave the word of God to serve tables. But, said they, "We will give ourselves *continually* to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

IV. As to the private character of a New Testament preacher, it should be kept in mind, that he is bound to the strictest observance of those rules of private life, plainly laid down in the book of God. It is the maintenance of this private character, that gives the gospel minister confidence and hope, in common with other Christians; and it is this that gives him influence in the community, while they behold in him every mark of an honest Christian, and the strongest possible proof that he fully believes the truth of what he preaches. The New Testament sets forth this private character in the following particulars: 1. He must be *blameless*—that is, he must be guiltless, innocent. Without a clear moral character, a preacher falls into reproach, and brings dishonor upon the cause he pleads. *Blameless* is a sweeping word; it condemns every species of wrong, and enjoins every kind, and every degree, of honesty, uprightness, morality, and piety. 2. He must be *sober*—that is, he must be calm, free from inordinate passion; serious, solemn, grave. This is an important trait in the preacher's character. A light, trifling, vain appearance, in a minister, not only proves his heart not to be imbued with the spirit of the gospel, and prevents his holding communion with heaven, but it necessarily prevents sinners from receiving good at the hands of such a man. 3. He must be *given to hospitality*—that is, he must be in the practice of entertaining strangers. No other man has a better opportunity to exercise hospitality, and no other man is more bound to do it. Not that it is right for every traveller to live upon him, or that he is bound to feed and lodge every one who may take advantage of his office. But placed as he is, he should not feel disposed to free himself from the obligation to entertain strangers, to a reasonable extent. 4. He must not be *given to wine*. He must be a perfectly temperate man, abandoning and avoiding whatever intoxicates. 5. He must not be a *brawler*—that is, he must not wrangle and quarrel. A contentious, disputing, quarrelling preacher, is a curse to the church,

and should reform, or be deposed. A mild, kind, gentle spirit, is the spirit of Christ, and his gospel. 6. He must not be *covetous*—that is, he must not be avaricious, or greedy of gain. No man is qualified to preach who is not so dead to the world as to be content with food and raiment. Many a good preacher has been ruined by cultivating the love of wealth, and plunging into speculations, or employing his powers to gain property, which ought to have been fully enlisted in the work of saving souls. 7. He must *rule his own house well*—that is, he must maintain family government as head, by teaching, leading, and ordering his household, according to the gospel: not being a tyrant, nor yet being the slave of his family. 8. He must have a *good report of them which are without*—that is, his general character and deportment must be so unexceptionable as to command the respect of those who are not Christians; they having no evil thing to say of him. 9. He must not be *self-willed*. A greater fault can hardly be found in a minister, than a determination to have his will and his way, right or wrong. If he would be useful and prosperous, he must be courteous, condescending, and yielding. While he is not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, he, like Paul, should be made all things to all men, that he may by all means save some.

These are a few of the many traits in the daily life and character of the New Testament preacher. Other qualifications, great and numerous, are to be sought, possessed, and employed; but nothing that can be named or conceived, can supply the place of a true heart and a holy life.

V. *The motives* which incite to action, and which urge on the New Testament preacher in his work. 1. The danger of the wicked, and the “fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries,” are strong motives that move him to engage and continue in the work. “Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,” and warn them to flee from the wrath to come; because, “he that believeth not shall be damned;” for God has appointed a day of judgment, which shall be the day of perdition of ungodly men. While this motive acts in its full force upon the heart, the preacher feels to wave all minor considerations, to save souls from going down to utter darkness. When this motive ceases to affect the heart, the man ceases to be a New Testament preacher, for this was a powerful motive with the apostles; and we have seen many, either leave the work, or speak lies in the name of the Lord, wholly because they ceased to know the terrors of the Lord. 2. The prospect of saving souls is another motive. God has made the gospel the greatest of all instruments to accomplish so great a work. This is shown in the promises of Christ to his ministers; in the success that attended their labors, as recorded in the book of God; in the ecclesiastical history of all ages of the church; and in the astonishing reformation which are now spreading through the world. No man can be a New Testament preacher who does not

preach to save souls. "I endure all things *for* the elect's sake." "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ *for* my brethren." "My heart's desire is, that they may be saved." 3. The true minister preaches because God requires it of him. "He hath commanded us to preach unto the people." "We ought to obey God rather than man." The New Testament preacher is sent forth by the Holy Ghost, and feels that he is not under the authority of man, but that he acts under the authority of the Most High. While this motive acts upon him in its full force, neither tribulation, poverty, nor persecution, can shut his mouth. He is not subject to the casualties of this world, nor to the whims of mortals; but so long as the divine commission remains in force, its authority impels him on in his holy work.

VI. The New Testament preacher is constantly making advancement and improvement. He grows from a youth to a strong man. He grows in grace, in experience, and in knowledge. And in proportion as they increase, his usefulness increases; and in proportion as he ceases to improve in these respects, he ceases to be a New Testament preacher.

The means of improvement are numerous and should be improved; some of which are the following: 1. Meditation. "Meditate on these things." This was Paul's direction to Timothy. Reflection and thought must be bestowed upon the gospel in general, and upon its parts in particular. Retirement is important, to give opportunity for meditation. It is in this way that errors are expurgated, and truth is arranged and matured. By this means, hurried conclusions are avoided, and sound truth systematized. That man meditates but little who usually speaks his first thoughts. The sober second thought is the result of close investigation, and calm meditation. 2. Prayer is a mighty means of improvement. Personal, secret prayer, aids and improves the spiritual state of the soul; and it is an auxiliary not to be dispensed with. The Messiah himself set an example of secret prayer. Peter employed the interval of his public labors in prayer. The imprisoned apostles prayed at midnight, and the released lifted up their voice in prayer. Communion with God is the spring of life to the soul; without this all is cold, contracted, and dead. 3. Another means of improvement, is *reading*. "Give attendance to reading." This is the direction Paul gave to his son Timothy. To search the Scriptures is the first and last of all reading, and should be daily attended to by every preacher. Other books, calculated to improve the mind, are at hand, and should not be neglected. Such books should be read as are calculated to improve the heart, elevate the affection, instruct the understanding, store the mind with valuable ideas, and enable the preacher to communicate his ideas properly and profitably. Although Timothy had, from a child, known the holy Scriptures, still he was directed to continue to give attendance to reading. Paul was a great reader, and left some of his books at Troas, with

Carpus. These he directed Timothy to bring to him, that he might still read them, and through them be benefited, and benefit others. Paul was a reader of heathen poetry, for in Acts xvii., 28, he says: "As certain also of your own poets have said, For we also are his offspring." This proves that works may be read by ministers, which are not particularly of a theological nature, and that to profit. Habits of reading may be formed and continued by use; so also these habits may be diverted into a wrong channel. For instance: the world seems full of light and trivial reading—thousands of newspaper articles, and a flood of trifling books, pamphlets, and hand-bills, which contain nothing that is solid or valuable. These are always thrown in our way, and the temptation to read them is strong, especially to a man whose reading habits are confirmed. Hence, the New Testament preacher should give himself to reading, but, at the same time, studiously avoid such as can add nothing to his stock of useful knowledge. Another reason why he should study and read much is, that we all are constantly forgetting, especially after we arrive at the meridian of life. Therefore, if there is not a constant replenishing by reading and study, the fund will be exhausted, and the style, matter, and language, will become stale repetition; and, of course, little interest will be felt, and his usefulness will come to an end. 4. Writing is a valuable means of improvement. It is certain that primitive ministers wrote much. The New Testament is made up of the writings of nine individuals; and these books mention many epistles, and commendatory papers, written by churches and individuals. It is also evident that the early preachers of the church wrote much, else materials could not have been found for those apocryphal books still extant. There are many advantages which a preacher derives from penning his thoughts. He thereby secures them for future reference and for future use. He also is thereby enabled to systematize his thoughts. Writing enables him in correcting his language and style, and often strengthens the memory. But the advantages are not confined to himself. The habit will enable him to benefit the world by the productions of his pen—the result of experience and reflection. Indeed, the preacher should seize upon every means and every opportunity within his reach, both to improve his heart, and to add to his qualifications to communicate the greatest amount of truth, in such a manner as to produce the greatest amount of good. A vast variety of other means of improvement lie in the path of every preacher, none of which should be suffered to pass unimproved.

VII. The real object of the New Testament preacher should be *one* and undivided. That object shall be the final and eternal salvation of the children of men. It was to accomplish this object that Christ came from heaven, suffered in life, and endured the cross; preached the gospel, and wrought miracles; arose from the dead, and now fills the mediatorial seat. It was to accomplish

this object that the Messiah sent forth the apostles, and all his ministers, to preach the gospel to the world. That the labors of a minister may ultimately effect the salvation of the souls of men in heaven, he must aim to accomplish several specific objects in this life. 1. He must instruct men in the great and first truths of the gospel, such as the apostasy of man from his God; the wickedness of his heart and life; the guilt incurred, and the condemnation and wrath which now abide upon all unbelievers; future judgment and damnation of the finally impenitent, with the eternal glorification of the righteous; the terms of salvation, as faith in Christ, repentance of sin, submission to the gospel, and entire obedience from the heart. 2. He must labor to awaken his hearers from their stupidity and slumbers in sin; to arouse them to repentance, and thereby produce conviction and a spirit of revival among the people. He must seek to be imbued with that power of the spirit, that God may, through him, make sharp his arrows in the heart of his enemies, and that sinners may be born of God. 3. Not alone should he labor for revival, but also to establish and build up the church in the truth, that he, who hath begun a good work in them, may perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. A journey must be commenced, it is true, or never accomplished; but to prosecute the journey, is as important to the final issue as is the commencement. A seaman or a soldier must first be enlisted, it is true; but the voyage or the campaign must follow the enlistment, or the harbor or the victory can never be realized. Therefore, as without conversion to God no man can be saved, so a godly life and gospel order are indispensable to a safe conduct to the heavenly Jerusalem; hence the ministers of Jesus must labor to accomplish this, that those who have embraced the gospel may not fail of the grace of God, but enter into life and glory. Very much of the work of the New Testament preacher, is to preserve the church from error and backsliding, and to maintain gospel order. Thus, whatever be the work, whether the conversion of sinners, or the building up of the church, the final ultimatum constantly kept before the mind of the gospel minister must be the eternal salvation of the soul, when glorified with Christ.

VIII. In view of the things here stated, and of the peculiar relations sustained by the man who is entitled to the solemn and important denomination of a New Testament preacher, and in view of the awful short comings so apparent among those who take upon themselves this high profession, my brethren will not take it ill though I address them pointedly and faithfully, as one who expects soon to give an account to the judge of quick and dead.

1. Dear brethren, do you reflect as you should, that you have bound yourselves by a most sacred obligation to conform to the New Testament, and to give yourselves wholly to the work and will of Christ your king? It is binding, like the most solemn oath, upon us all, as ministers, to drink deeply into the spirit of the Lord

Jesus Christ and his gospel. We are not our own, nor are we engaged in our own work. Are we like the first preachers, willing to make sacrifices for the salvation of souls and the glory of Christ? Or have we our own ease and emolument in view? Do we feel the same readiness that Paul did to be subject to the divine direction, when he avoided going to Bithynia, because the spirit so dictated; and went to Philippi because he was divinely taught to go to Macedonia? Ministers should be the holiest men on earth, and the most free from the love of the world, and from the contaminations seen all around us. The temptations to depart from the truth and the true spirit, are strong and numerous. Nothing but "more grace" can preserve us from falling into the tide of this world; but the grace of God is sufficient, if we throw ourselves wholly into his work, and upon his sustaining power.

2. As the present occupants of this high station are the men authorized to introduce others to the holy calling, our responsibility in this respect is very great. Paul directed Timothy to commit these things to *faithful men*, who should be able to teach others also. No man should be solemnly inducted into the holy office, who has not proved himself a faithful man of God, and who gives the most positive evidence that he will remain faithful. If the ministry become corrupt by the introduction of unfaithful ministers, then woe to the churches who are guided by such unfaithful shepherds, or rather wolves in sheep's clothing! Paul's direction was, "lay hands suddenly on no man." If a man wishes to obtain the eldership, or if a few partizans are anxious to lift up their friend to a higher seat, they can easily find some pretext for urging his ordination. Shall the ministers of Christ be governed by such small things? God forbid! The New Testament rule and usage is, to fast, pray, and be persuaded that the Holy Ghost says, Separate them to me.

3. Steadfastness, and unremitting zeal and perseverance, particularly at the present time. It has long been a leading sentiment with us, that the belief and promulgation of no one sentiment, be it ever so good, should be made a test of Christian fellowship. Holiness, and entire consecration to God and his cause, are the great objects, and should be pursued first and last. Here let us be steadfast, leaving the divers and strange doctrines of this prolific age to attend faithfully to the divine rule.

*Finally*, brethren, let us be holy. Let us give ourselves wholly to God and his work. Let us search the word of God, and conform to its precepts, independent of human opinions. If we sustain the character of New Testament preachers to the very letter, God will never forsake us even in the most trying times. But woe to those who forsake the right way of the Lord. Lift up your eyes to the crown of glory that fadeth not away. The true New Testament preacher has the promise of him who cannot lie. Let us feel that we watch for souls, as they that must give account, that we may do so with joy, and not with grief.



## ARTICLE VI.

*Jesus Christ the Son of God.*

THE phrase Son of God, is used in different acceptations in the Holy Scriptures, and referred to different orders of beings. It is applied to both angels and men. But it is used in relation to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a high and peculiar sense, in a sense in which it appears never to have been applied to any other being whatever. Jesus is styled in the New Testament, *The Son of the God*, and no other person is so styled in the whole Scriptures except Jesus Christ himself. This pointed distinction shows that the use of both articles, *ho* and *tow*, are intended to carry peculiar emphasis with them, and to convey a higher and more dignified meaning by this name, when applied to Jesus, than when referred to any other being. This idea is also confirmed by the sublime attributes which are annexed to this title, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and from the superior rank which the Son of God is there represented as sustaining above the angels. He is, furthermore, described as being *the proper Son of God*, and God is declared to be his *proper Father*. He is, moreover, said to be *God's own Son, God's only Son, and the only begotten of the Father*. All these phrases and expressions are applied to Jesus Christ, and represent him to be the *Son of God* in a high and exalted sense, in a sense peculiar to himself.

The doctrine that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, is a doctrine of the first importance, for a belief in this doctrine was made a leading article in the primitive profession of faith. "And we believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." These passages speak a language clear and decisive, and imply that whatever disputes may have arisen among Christians on this subject in modern times, there seems to have been none in the times of the apostles. Both Jews and Christians, appear then to have agreed on this subject; the only question that divided them was, whether Christ was or was not the *Son of God*. If there had been any ambiguity in the term, if it was not well defined and understood, it would have been very unfit to express a leading article of the Christian faith.

The title Son of God, is a relative term, and is designed to point

out the relation in which he stands to the Father, and not any relation in which he stands to men. This obvious import of the phrase *Son of God*, has been generally overlooked. It is used to express what he is in himself, and not what he is by any appointment of the Father. It designates his personal character, and not any official station which he filled by the appointment of God. The term *Son of God* is not, as some have supposed, synonymous with *Messiah*. The title *Messiah*, is wholly official, and especially designed to exhibit that relation in which Jesus stands to us. These terms are not, as some have supposed, convertible, since they convey distinct and essentially different ideas; the one relating to the personal, and the other to the official character of our Lord—the one referring to the relation in which he stands to God, and the other to the relation in which he stands to men.

It has been supposed by some, that Jesus Christ has been denominated the *Son of God*, in relation to his miraculous conception, and by others with reference to his resurrection from the dead. But both of these reasons cannot be true. If he is called the Son of God, with reference to his miraculous conception, he cannot be so called in relation to his resurrection from the dead: and if he is called the Son of God with reference to his resurrection, he cannot be so called as it relates to his miraculous conception. So far from our Lord being called the Son of God in relation to his resurrection from the dead, his resurrection is urged as the proof by which the doctrine of his Sonship is established: hence the apostle says, he was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead*. It is true that our Lord was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit, and that such a conception was peculiar to him; but it does not follow that on this account he was called *the only begotten of the Father*. In the numerous instances in which Jesus declared himself to be the *Son of God*, he made no allusion whatever to his miraculous conception. On this subject he observed a total and uniform silence; and so also did his apostles. In the numberless instances in which they declare him to be the Son of God, they make no allusion whatever to this fact as laying the foundation of his Sonship.

In seeking for the true grounds upon which Jesus Christ is called the *Son of God*, we must look higher than his miraculous conception, or of his Messiahship, or of his resurrection from the dead, or of the power given to him of God; none of these circumstances, singly considered, or all of them put together, will be sufficient to account for the title. He is truly and properly the *Son of God*, having derived his existence from him before all worlds; and, therefore, he is in himself truly and properly what the Scriptures declare him to be, *the only begotten of the Father*. This doctrine is inculcated and enforced by the Apostle Paul in his Epistles to the Colossians and to the Hebrews. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. He is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." It is here

affirmed, that God is invisible—that Jesus Christ derived his existence from God—that he bears the express image of the Father, and that he is the first being God produced.

As to the *invisibility* of God, this is frequently affirmed by the sacred writers. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. No man hath seen God at any time. If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

God is here said to be invisible by the way of contrast to the visibility of Christ. Jesus Christ is never represented as invisible in any part of the Scriptures; and it might seem strange had he been so represented, since he actually took upon him flesh, and appeared and was seen in the world; which things the nature of the Father cannot possibly admit. His being here called the image or the invisible God, implies his own visibility, for the perfections of God eminently shine forth in him. This view of the subject is confirmed by the apostle in his Epistle to the Corinthians: “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, least the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” Besides, Jesus Christ, as the angel of God’s presence, frequently appeared to the Patriarchs, and they saw him and conversed with him. He also appeared to the Apostle Paul, after his ascension to heaven. Jesus Christ is, therefore, the visible image of the invisible God, in whom the glorious perfections of the Father have been revealed to mankind. It is on this account Jesus is called *the brightness of his glory*. And for the same reason St. John says, “The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as or the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

It is here also affirmed, that the existence which Jesus Christ possesses, he derived from the Father. In the Epistle to the Colossians, the apostle says he was *born*; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he represents him as a *ray*, proceeding immediately from the God of *light*. This idea is fully expressed in both of these declarations, that Jesus Christ possessed a derived existence, and that his existence was derived from the self-existent God. All the passages in which Christ is called a *Son*, in which he is declared to be *born*, and to be *begotten*, affirm him to have had an origin, and fully and plainly contradict the idea of his self-existence. In the

Epistle to the Hebrews, he is said to be *The brightness of the Father's glory*. Here the Father is represented under the similitude of *light*, which is a common figure of the Bible to illustrate the nature of the divine perfections. But to raise our thoughts still higher, the apostle sets forth this light by which he describes the Father, under the title of *glory*; the design of which is to express the purity, perfection, and lustre of his attributes. Agreeable to this figurative representation of God, he considers the Son as a ray derived and proceeding from the Father. God, by reason of his own immensity, is in his own nature invisible; it was, therefore, necessary, in order that his glorious perfections might be revealed, that he should bring forth a visible Son in his own likeness, and in him his perfections shine forth in the clearest manner.

Christ is here described by the apostle, not only as proceeding directly from God, but as possessing *an exact image of his substance*. Now, it seems evident from this language, that the being of the Son must be distinct from that of the Father, since the one is the express image of the other. The original word here employed, and rendered image, signifies the impression a seal makes upon wax, by which an exact likeness is transmitted from the seal itself to the wax. The true sense of the passage, then, seems to be this: that Christ is the *impressed image of God's being*. The Father and the Son then, are two distinct beings, but the Son, possesses an exact likeness of the Father. This resemblance, however, refers not to the natural, but to the moral perfections of God. The moral perfections of Christ, are an exact counterpart to the moral perfections of God. The holiness, purity, and goodness of both, are the same.

In calling Christ *the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person or substance*, the apostle has distinguished him from all other beings, and represented him as far transcending them in the excellency of his nature and perfections. He is here described, as proceeding immediately from God, the Father, without the intervention of any ministering agent, or means of that derivation. And this is not true with reference to any other being whatever, for all other beings derived their existence from God, by the Son, as a ministering agent. The glory of the divine perfections shine forth in other beings, and particularly in the noblest of them, the holy angels, but not as they do in the Son, since they are not immediately created by the Father, but mediately, the Son having been employed by the Father, as the ministering agent in their creation. Now this must of necessity make a vast difference between him and them, and bespeak his superiority to them both in the excellency of his nature and perfections. The idea we desire to convey, may be illustrated by the following easy allusion: the light we have from the moon is derived originally from the sun, and the rays of light we have thence, are really and truly the rays of the sun; but yet, as we do not receive this light immediately and directly from the sun, the rays of the sun being reflected

to us by the moon, we perceive a vast difference between this light and the other light which is derived directly and immediately from the sun himself. Thus, as God is light, the more near and immediate light is derived from him, the more glorious and brilliant will be its splendor. And as the Son derived his existence from the Father, without the intervention of any ministering agent, and as he is the only being who ever possessed such an existence, he must, therefore, transcend all other beings in the excellency of his nature and perfections.

So with reference to the other expression: man was made in the image of God, and the higher order of intelligence, as the holy angels, more nearly resembles him than we do; but this image was impressed neither upon them, nor upon us immediately from the substance or being of the Father, as was his image in his Son. And as an image may be taken either from the original seal itself, or from that which was taken from it, so it is easy to perceive the former must be the most perfect and exact.

The reasoning of the apostle, in the commencement of his Epistle to the Hebrews, is highly nervous, and his discourse carries with it great strength and perspicuity. The scope of his reasoning, if we have been able to gather his meaning from the connexion, seems to be this: "I intend to prove the superiority of Christ to the angels from what I have mentioned, the constitution of God, who has appointed him to be heir of all things. Upon this I will presently insist. But I may briefly hint some other arguments, as particularly that God made the worlds, and all things in them by him; and it is very natural to suppose, that the creation which God employed him to make, must be in their nature inferior to him, who was their immediate author, that is the Son, in whose production or generation no intermediate agent was employed, he being immediately derived from God himself, a ray emitted directly and only from his glory, and an image formed from his own substance, and nothing else." Such appears to me to be the scope of the apostle's reasoning, in the commencement of this epistle, and is substantially the same as his reasoning on this subject, in his Epistle to the Colossians.

But there is one more idea, with reference to this subject, which remains to be noticed; it is this: the Son of God is not only the highest, but the *first* intelligence the Father produced. Hence, the apostle declares that he is *the first born of every creature*, and that *he is before all things*. Agreeable to this view of the subject, St. John says, he is *the beginning of the creation of God*; that is, he is the first being derived from him. These expressions convey the idea fully and distinctly that he was *begotten before all creatures*, and was the first being the Father produced. The reasoning of the apostle absolutely requires this construction; for if all things were made *by him*, and *by him* all things consist, then surely he must be *before* all things, and the *first born of the whole creation*.

“It is observable,” says Dr. Clark, “that St. Paul does not here call our Saviour ‘the first created of all creatures,’ but ‘the first born of every creature,’ the first begotten before all creatures;” thereby making an evident distinction between the *Son of God*, and the creatures God has made *by him*. Such are the views we entertain of the Son of God; and such are the sentiments respecting him, we understand to be inculcated in the Sacred Oraeles.

We shall now proceed to show that the terms, Son of God, and only begotten Son of God, are used in the Holy Scriptures as expressive of divine personality, antecedent to all consideration of his being conceived of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin, as will fully appear by attending to the following considerations.

1. This doctrine is expressly declared in the *Old Testament*. Under this designation Jesus Christ is introduced in the second Psalm. “The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul institutes an argument upon this very passage, to prove the superiority of Christ to the angels. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee?* The force of the argument lies in the expression *begotten*, importing that the person addressed is the Son of God, not by *creation* but by *generation*. Christ’s pre-eminence over the angels is here stated to consist in this: that whereas they were *created*, he is *begotten*; and the apostle’s reasoning is fallacious, unless this expression intimates a proper and peculiar filiation. He hath obtained a more excellent name than the angels; namely, *to be called*, and *to be* the Son of God, not by grace and adoption, but by *generation*; deriving his existence immediately from God the Father.

The same is furthermore asserted by Solomon, in the Proverbs, where he introduces not the personified, but the personal wisdom of God, under the same relation as a Son, and ascribes to him personal attributes.

“Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way.

Before his works of old,

I was anointed from everlasting,

From the beginning, before the world was,

When there were no depths I was born, &c.”

The language which is here employed, conveys precisely the same idea, as it relates to the personal wisdom of God, as that used by the Apostle Paul with reference to the Son of God. Wisdom is here said to be *born*, to be *anointed*, and to be possessed by Jehovah before his works of old; and St. Paul declares that the Son of God was *before* all things, and was the *first born* of the whole creation. It appears obvious to me, that the inspired writers refer to the same person and events.

Once more, the same doctrine is clearly and fully set forth in the prophecy of Micah. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though

thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." It is declared in this passage that the person spoken of had a twofold birth, or *going forth*. By a natural birth, he came forth from Bethlehem of Judah; by another and higher, he was from the days of old, from everlasting. One is opposed to the other; but the last is carried back into the days of eternity, and plainly asserts an existence prior to the birth in Bethlehem. And this also agrees with the declaration of the Apostle Paul, that the Son of God was *before* all things, and was the *first born* of the whole creation.

*Finally*, the doctrine of the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ, is also clearly and fully taught in the Proverbs. "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the water in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" Here the Deity is contemplated, not in his redeeming acts in any respects or degree; not as providing for the recovery of a lost race, or that of the Jewish people, by the gift of his Son; he is placed before the reverend gaze of the prophet in his acts of creating and conserving power only, managing at will and ruling the operations of nature; and yet in these, as well as the other offices of the divinity, he is represented as having a Son, and a Son who possesses a high, deep, and mysterious nature. *What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?*

Thus, it appears that the doctrine of the divine Sonship of Jesus is clearly taught in the Old Testament, and must have been known to the Jews. It also appears evident, that they were familiar with the doctrine from the frequent application of the term "Son," "Son of God," "first and only begotten Son," "offspring of God," to the Logos, by *Philo*; and that in passages where he must, in all fair interpretation, be understood as speaking of a *personal*, and not of a *personified* Logos. The same terms are also found in other Jewish writers before the Christian era.

2. It is said in the *New Testament*, that God created all things by his Son; consequently, Jesus Christ must have been the Son of God previous to his incarnation, because, as such, he was the agent of God in the creation of the material world. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." And this also agrees with the declaration of the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and

for him, and he is the head of all things, and by him all things consist." The position which the apostle here assumes, and for which he urges this passage as proof, is that Jesus Christ is the *first born of every creature*; for, says he, *all things were created by him*. Now, if Jesus Christ is the *first born of every creature*, he must have been the Son of God before he was made of a woman, and appeared as God's visible image among men. The same doctrine is also affirmed by St. John of the Word; for, says he, speaking of the Word, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Now, since all things were made by the *Word of God*, and also by the *Son of God*, it evidently follows, that the *Word of God*, and the *Son of God*, are convertible terms, and, consequently, mean the same being. As the Word of God existed before he *was made flesh*, so the Son of God existed before he was *made of a woman*; all of which is clearly demonstrated in the creation of the material world, *for by him were all things created, visible and invisible*.

3. The glory of the *only begotten of the Father*, and the glory of the *word*, are used as convertible terms, consequently they are the same. It is admitted that the *Word* denotes the divine person of Christ, antecedent to his being made flesh; and since these terms are convertible, it follows that the *only begotten* must signify the same thing. "The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." If the epithet *only begotten* referred to Christ's miraculous conception, then the *glory as of the only begotten* must be a glory of the human nature of Christ only, for that alone was capable of being thus conceived. This is, however, clearly contrary to the scope of the passage, which does not speak of the glory of that *fleshy* nature which the *Word* assumed, but of the glory of the *Word himself*, who is here said to be the only begotten of the Father. It is true, it was by the *Word being made flesh and dwelling among us*, that his glory became *apparent*, but the glory itself was nevertheless the glory of the *Word*; and this is the same as the *glory of the only begotten of the Father*. It is, therefore, the glory of his divine nature which is here intended, and not of that *fleshy* body which this nature assumed.

4. That Jesus Christ is the *proper Son* of God, is further evident from his *heirship*. The whole argument of the Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is designed to prove our Lord superior to angels; and he adduces, as conclusive evidence on this point, that to none of the angels was it ever said, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." And again, "I will be to him a *Father*, and he shall be to me a *Son*." It is, therefore, clear, that on this very ground of *Sonship*, our Lord is argued to be superior to angels; that is, superior in *nature*, and in *natural relation* to God, for in no other way is the argument conclusive. He has his title *Son*, by *inheritance*; that is, by *natural* and *hered-*



itary right. It is by *inheritance* that he hath obtained a more excellent name than the angels; that is, by his being *of* the Father, and, therefore, by virtue of his immediate derivation from God. Angels may be, in an inferior sense, the sons of God by *creation*; but they *cannot inherit* that title for this plain reason, that they are *created* and not *begotten*; while our Lord inherits the *most excellent name*, because he is *begotten*, and not *created*.

5. The Son of God is said to dwell in the bosom of the Father; that is, he is intimately acquainted with his character and designs, and, therefore, fit to be employed to make them known to the sons of men. "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." If this be applied to his divine person, or "to that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us," it is natural and proper; it assigns his knowledge, as qualifying him for making known the mind of God; but if he became the only begotten of the Father by his miraculous conception, or by his resurrection from the dead, or by his being anointed to the office of Messiah, or by any other means than of *generation*, the whole force and beauty of the passage vanishes, and is at once converted into unmeaning declamation.

6. God is frequently said to have sent his Son into the world; but this implies that he was the Son of God, antecedently to his being sent. To suppose otherwise, is no less absurd than supposing, that when Christ sent forth his twelve disciples, they were not disciples but that they became such by Christ sending them, or by his conferring upon them some qualification pertaining to their mission. The absurdity of such a proposition is obvious from its first apprehension; it requires merely to be stated, to be rejected.

7. Christ is called the Son of God antecedently to his miraculous conception, and, consequently, he did not become such by it. This is clearly stated by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians. He says, "In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law. God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." The terms *made of a woman, made under the law*, are a parenthesis. The position affirmed is, that God sent forth his Son to redeem the transgressors of the law. His being made of a woman, and made under the law, expresses the necessary means for the accomplishment of this great end; which means, though preceding our redemption, yet follow the Sonship of our Redeemer. There is equal proof that Christ was the *Son of God* before he was *made of a woman*, as that he was *the Word* before he was *made flesh*. The phraseology is the same in the one case as in the other. If it be affirmed that Christ is here called the Son of God on account of his being *made of a woman*, I answer, if so, it is also on account of his being *made under the law*, which is too absurd to be entertained for a moment. Moreover, to say that *God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*, is equal to saying

that the Son of God assumed a fleshly body ; he must, therefore, have been the Son of God before his incarnation.

8. Christ is called the Son of God antecedent to his being *manifested to destroy the works of the devil*, but he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil by taking upon him a human body ; consequently, he was the Son of God antecedent to his being *manifested to destroy the works of the devil*.

9. The doctrine of the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ is also implied in the great love which the Father manifested to the world in the gift of his Son. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." This passage is clear and decisive, and furnishes the most unequivocal proof of the truth of the doctrine for which we are contending. It is also fatal to the opposite doctrine, for that doctrine restricts the love of the Father, in the gift of his Son, to the gift of a mere man only. According to this doctrine, the permission of the sufferings of Christ was no greater manifestation of God's love to the world, than his permitting any other good man to die for the benefit of his creatures. If Jesus is the Son of God with reference to his miraculous conception, and suffered and died merely as a man, then God displayed no more love in his death than he did in the death of St. Paul, or in the death of any other martyr. But if Jesus Christ is the *proper Son* of God, and was with the Father before the world was, then the gift of Christ was the highest manifestation of the love of God to the world which he could possibly give. We may, then, well repeat the expressive language of the apostle, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

10. The doctrine of the divine Sonship of Christ, is furthermore confirmed by the frequent declarations of the inspired writers, that God was the FATHER of Christ. Indeed, our Lord himself frequently claimed God to be his *proper Father*. Thus, in his reply to the celebrated confession of Peter, *Thou art the Christ, the Son OF THE LIVING GOD*, he says, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my *Father* which is in heaven." Peter had been specially taught this doctrine of the Sonship of Christ by God ; an unnecessary thing, certainly, if the miraculous conception had been the only ground of that Sonship ; for the evidence of that fact might have been collected from Christ and the Virgin Mother, and there was no apparent necessity of a revelation from the Father so particular, a teaching so special, as that mentioned in our Lord's reply, and which is given as an instance of the peculiar *blessedness* of Simon Barjona. God also declared, with an audible voice from heaven, Jesus Christ to be his Son, both at his baptism and transfiguration, and thereby confessing himself to be the *proper Father* of Christ. We have, then, the express testimony of God himself to the truth of the doctrine

under consideration, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in his divine nature.

11. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, in his divine nature, is expressly affirmed by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans: "Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The apostle is not here speaking of what Christ is officially, but what he is personally and essentially, for the truth of all his official claims depends upon the truth of his personal ones; if he be truly and properly the Son of God, he is everything else he assumes to be. Jesus was accused of blasphemy, and adjudged worthy of death by the Jewish Sanhedrim, *because he made himself* the Son of God. As our Saviour hung upon the cross, they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will save him; for he said, I am the Son of God." The great controversy between Christ and his opponents was, whether he was or was not the Son of God; he affirming that he was, and they denying his claim to that honor. It was for setting up this claim, the Jews put him to death; and God vindicates his claim, and powerfully demonstrates the truth of his declaration, by raising him from the dead. "Now, when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was *the Son of God.*" Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, was of the seed of David, and, consequently, a son of David; but he possessed another and higher nature, a nature which he derived immediately from God, and, therefore, he was the Son of God. This was the question in dispute, the truth of which was *powerfully determined* and *marked out* by his resurrection from the dead. *The spirit of holiness* is here considered as expressive of the sense in which he is *the Son of God*, and evidently signified his divine nature, in opposition to what was according to the flesh; and so the antithesis is very beautiful between *according to the Spirit*, and *according to the flesh*. When the term *Spirit* refers to Christ, and is put in opposition to the *flesh*, it denotes his divine nature, and it is in relation to this nature he is called the Son of God.

12. *Finally*, this doctrine was maintained by the primitive church, and the immediate followers of the apostles. In this sense, they understood the title only begotten, or only Son, as Bishop Bull has shown at length, and "to him and others," says Dr. Waterland, "I may refer for proof, that the title, Son of God, or only begotten Son, in Scripture, cannot be reasonably understood either of our Lord's miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost, or of his Messiahship, or of his being the first begotten from the dead, or of his receiving all power, and his being appointed heir of all things.

None of these circumstances, singly considered, nor altogether, will be sufficient to account for the title, only Son, or only begotten; but it is necessary to look higher up, to the pre-existence, and divine nature of the *Word*, who was in the beginning with God. Angels and men have been called sons of God, in an improper and metaphorical sense, but they have never been styled only begotten, nor, indeed, sons, in any such distinguishing and emphatic sense as Christ is. They are sons by adoption, or faint resemblance; but he is truly, properly, and eminently the Son of God."

Having shown that Jesus Christ is truly and properly the Son of God, we shall now proceed, in the third place, to draw such inferences as may naturally grow out of the subject.

1. If Jesus Christ be the Son of God in his divine nature, then he cannot be simply a man, or even belong to the human race. We admit that the fleshly body of our Lord was human; for it is said, *He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*. But the fleshly body which was prepared for our Lord, was merely the instrument through which he spoke, and acted, and suffered, and died, and is nowhere called the Son of God. We apprehend that this title properly and exclusively belongs to that divine person *who was with the Father before the world was*, and who is said to be the *First born of the whole creation*. St. John expressly informs us that *Jesus Christ came in the flesh*, and that the *word was made flesh*; and St. Paul says, *He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*; that *God prepared a body for him*, and that *God sent forth his Son made of a woman*. I understand the inspired writers in these passages to declare, that the Son of God assumed a human body, through which he spoke, acted, suffered, and died for the sin of the world. I also understand them to declare, that the body which our Lord assumed was really, truly, and substantially, a human body, and not merely such in shape and appearance; that he truly resided in the body, giving to it life, activity, and motion; and that the body could not exist as a living body, only by and through the inhabitation of the Son of God, any more than our bodies exist as living bodies without the soul. The Son of God was the life of his fleshly body, as our souls are the life of our bodies. I also understand the sacred writers to affirm, that while the body of Christ was a living body, it was subject to hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, and death, precisely as our bodies are. Hence, in speaking of this fleshly nature, I have called it human nature, because it was truly and properly human, being *made of a woman, and of the seed of David*. But this by no means constitutes our Lord a mere man, or one of the human race, for he possessed another and higher nature; a nature truly and properly divine; and, therefore, he was the divine Son of God, for his *person* was not changed by the assumption of this human body.

2. *Again*, if Jesus Christ be the *only begotten* Son of God, then it necessarily follows that he does not belong to any angelic orders.

This question has been discussed and fully decided by the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. In the first chapter of this Epistle, the apostle has instituted an argument to prove the superiority of Christ to the angels: that is, superior in *nature* and in *natural relation* to God; for on no other construction is the argument conclusive: *Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?* The apostle's arguments, taken from the name Son of God, is this: he received that name by inheritance, or on account of his descent from God; and Jesus, by calling himself *the only begotten of the Father*, has excluded from that honorable relation, angels and every other being whatever. That Jesus Christ is called a messenger, and is said to be anointed above his fellows, that is, fellow-messengers, we freely admit; but here the inspired writers are speaking of his *official*, and not of his *PERSONAL* character. In this, and in no other way, are the different passages relating to this subject made to harmonize.

3. *Once more*: If Jesus Christ be the Son of God, and the only Son of God in his divine person, then it follows that he cannot be the Father. The Father and the Son are uniformly spoken of in the Bible as two distinct persons, two intelligent agents, two living beings, capable of performing any and every action that any person, agent, or being, is capable of performing. They are never confounded as one person, agent, or being, by any of the sacred writers. To confound these persons, would necessarily be a denial of either the one or the other. And St. John says, "He is anti-christ, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also."

4. If Jesus Christ be God's *only begotten* Son in his divine person, then he cannot be self-existent, independent, unoriginated, nor eternal, in the true and proper sense of these words. This will appear evident from the following considerations:

(1.) He who begets, must necessarily be in duration before him who is begotten. In duration, the Father must be before the Son. We do not mean to say, that God sustained the relation of a Father to the Son before the Son was begotten; but we mean to say, that God must have existed before he put forth that *AGENCY* by which he begat his Son; consequently, God must have existed in duration before his divine Son was BORN. If God existed in duration before his Son, then the Son of God cannot, strictly speaking, be eternal; for eternity has no beginning or ending, and stands in no reference to time.

(2.) No existence which has been *produced*, can be said to be *unoriginated*, consequently, as Jesus Christ is the *begotten* Son of God, he must have had his *origin* from the Father; and whatever has an *origin* must be *originated*, and whatever is *originated* can-

not be *eternal*. If Jesus Christ, then, is the divine Son of God, he must have received his *origin* from God, and, therefore, he was not eternally begotten.

(3.) One unoriginated being cannot produce another unoriginated being. No man in his senses can tell, no mind can conceive in what sense an *unoriginated* being can be a *begotten* being. Hence it follows, that if Jesus Christ in his divine nature has been *begotten* and was *born*, he cannot be *self-existent* nor *unoriginated*. Existence which has been *begotten* must have had a *beginning*, and, consequently, cannot be *eternal*.

(4.) Action and volition are necessarily implied in the term *begotten*. This term, when applied to the divine nature of our Lord, implies action and volition on the part of the Father; consequently, Jesus Christ owes his existence to the previous action of God. As the divine nature of Christ was begotten, his existence was a consequence of the act by which he was begotten. To beget, signifies to bring that into existence which did not exist before; consequently, Jesus Christ had no personal, conscious existence before he was begotten, and, therefore, he cannot be *eternal*.

(5.) There can be no real difference between eternal generation, and eternal creation. The advocates of eternal sonship tell us the Son of God was *produced* by an eternal generation. The atheist tells us the world was *produced* by an eternal creation. Now there is no more contradiction in the one than in the other. If the Son of God can be *begotten*, and, at the same time, be self-existent, unoriginated, and eternal, then the world may be created, and at the same time be self-existent, unoriginated, and eternal. There is no more contradiction in saying that God *created* this world from all eternity, than there is in saying that he begat his Son from all eternity.

(6.) Creation and generation which never had a beginning, never did exist. Nothing can be said to be without beginning, only the self-existent and unoriginated God; he alone is truly and properly eternal.

(7.) *Ineffable generation* and ineffable creation, are precisely similar, and inexplicable terms. We are told that the generation of an unoriginated being is *ineffable*; truly, and so is an unoriginated creation *ineffable*.

(8.) A being whose existence is predicated on an act of another, cannot be unoriginated. When it is said, therefore, that the divine nature of our Lord was *begotten*, *generated*, *produced*, and *born*, it is asserted as clearly and as fully as language can express ideas, that this divine nature of Christ, *per se*, owes its existence to the act of the Father by whom it was *begotten*.

(9.) Infinitude precludes the bounds of number, so that we cannot say of any one of God's volitions that it was the first, or, of another, that it is the last; and hence it is intuitively evident, that though there may never have been a time when the Deity did not

act, yet each of his actions had a beginning, just as truly and really as that they have had an existence.

(10.) If any one of God's actions (say that of his begetting his Son) can have been without beginning, then each of his actions may have been without beginning, and if they are without beginning, then they are *eternal*; and hence, we have as many *eternals* as there have been actions, attributable to the divine agency to all past eternity, and not only so, but his actions in all coming time must be unoriginated, though not performed till to-morrow, or after the general judgment.

(11.) To affirm that the divine nature of Jesus Christ is begotten from all eternity, is to say that it is not eternal. That existence which is eternal is from eternity to eternity, without having been begotten, produced, made, or born.

(12.) *Finally*, the terms Father and Son are relative terms: Son implies FATHER; and father implies, in relation to Son, precedence of time. Father and Son imply the idea of generation; and generation implies a TIME in which it was effected, and time also antecedent to such generation. Generation, furthermore, implies volition and action, and volition and action imply the existence of an intelligent, agent by which they are performed. It is evident, then, as the Son was begotten by the Father, that there was a period in which he did not exist. To say he was begotten from all eternity, is manifestly absurd; and the phrase eternal Son, is a positive self-contradiction. *Eternity* is that which has had no beginning, nor stands in any reference to time. Son supposes time, generation, and a father; and time, also, antecedent to such generation. Therefore, the conjunction of these two phrases, Son and eternity, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and opposite ideas. So that the doctrine of the eternal generation and eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, is manifestly false. The generation of Jesus Christ certainly took place in time, for God himself says, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

5. If Jesus Christ be the Son of God in his divine nature, then he cannot be truly and properly God. If the Son derived his existence from the Father, and if God be the Father of Christ, then the Son of God cannot be God, any more than he can be the Father. To maintain that the Son is the Father, is, in other words, to affirm that Christ is the Father of himself; a position which no man in the exercise of his senses would assume. To affirm that the Son of God is God, is to affirm the same thing, unless we mean to assert a plurality of Gods: God the Father, and God the Son. This would be the same as to maintain that one God generated another God, a position which none but a heathen would be likely either to maintain or believe. Such a doctrine would contradict every page of the Bible, which uniformly asserts that there is but "one living and true God." It also as fully and clearly asserts that this one God is the *Father*. I am aware it has

been maintained, that if Jesus Christ be the proper Son of God, then he must possess the same nature and perfections as the Father, and, therefore, he is truly and properly God, equal with the Father. It seems to me, however, that this position involves many inextricable difficulties. It involves the absurdity that one God has generated another God, or that God generated himself, and, consequently, acted before he existed, and yet, at the same time, was self-existent. The position also affirms that there is no difference between a self-existent, unoriginated, independent, and eternal being, and one who is begotten, derived, and dependent. The Father is a self-existent, independent, and unoriginated being, but the Son is a begotten, derived, and, consequently, a dependent being; therefore they, in some respects, must necessarily differ; and whosoever, in any respects, differs from God, cannot be God. As the Son of God, in some respects, differs from God, therefore he cannot be God. To maintain that God is self-existent, and at the same time begotten; eternal, and at the same time born; unoriginated, and at the same time derived, would be undeifying the Deity, and representing him to be the most changeable being in the universe.

We have already explained the sense in which we understand Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. He is the Son of God by deriving his existence from God, the Father, without the intervention of any ministering agent, or means of that derivation. And this is not true with reference to any other being whatever, for all other beings derived their existence from God by the Son as a ministering agent. According to this view of the subject, the supreme and underived majesty of God, the Father, remains unimpaired, and, at the same time, the glory of the Son remains equally unobscured.

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## ARTICLE VII.

### *An Address to the Ministers of the Christian Connexion.*

“No professors of the genuine gospel,” says the pious Booth, in his Pastoral Cautions, “have more need to be on their guard against self-deception, respecting the state of religion in their own souls, than those who stately dispense the gracious word of truth. For as it is their *calling*, and their *business*, frequently to read their Bibles, and to think much on spiritual things, to pray, and preach, and often to converse about the affairs of piety, they will, if not habitually cautious, do it all *ex officio*, or merely as the work of their ministerial calling, without feeling their own interest in it.” If these sentiments are correct, if such is the tendency of the exercise of the ministerial office, we should not only do well to guard



and fortify our minds against it, but also use all the means in our power to stir up each other's minds to a greater degree of engagedness in the important work of saving souls. Indeed, this should be one of the great objects of our coming together in our yearly and quarterly conferences. It has been too much, and too often neglected. And would to God that, on the present occasion, one stood before you more capable of imparting instruction, of kindling a brighter flame of devotion, and of exciting a more intense and ardent desire for the salvation of perishing sinners. To accomplish this object shall be the aim of this address.

When the Romans heard Cicero, says Fenelon, they cried out, "O, what a fine orator!" But when the Athenians heard Demosthenes, they called out, "Come on; down with Philip!" If I can excite within you, my brethren, that determination to attack *the world, the flesh, and the devil*, and to overthrow the dominion of sin in the hearts of men, which Demosthenes excited in the breasts of his fellow-citizens to oppose the invaders of his country, I shall have gained my object in this address. And, indeed, these should be the kindling desires, the ardent aspirations, of all our hearts. To awaken these emotions in our souls, permit me to call your attention to a few important considerations. And,

I. *A minister of the gospel should be deeply impressed with the importance and responsibility of the station he occupies.* This state of feeling should be constant and abiding, in his study, in his closet, in his parochial visits, and in the pulpit. And except these be the all-absorbing feelings of the soul, no man will be likely to discharge the functions of the ministerial office, with either pleasure to himself, or profit to his people. It is to be feared that many young men enter the ministerial office, and take upon themselves the vows of God, without due consideration, that they are influenced by other motives than the love of souls and the glory of God. But such men seldom fail to dishonor their calling, and uniformly prove a curse to the people. When a man enters into the ministerial office under proper influences, he will be led to consecrate himself wholly to God—he will employ all his talents and all his learning to promote the welfare of souls, and to advance the cause of the Redeemer. When the celebrated George Herbert informed a court friend of his resolution to enter into sacred orders, he endeavored to dissuade him from it, as too mean an employment, and too much below his birth, and the excellent abilities and endowments of his mind. To whom he replied: "It hath been formerly judged that the domestic servants of the King of heaven should be of the noblest families of the earth; and though the iniquity of the late times have made clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of priest contemptible, yet I will labor to make it honorable, by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor abilities, to advance the glory of that God who gave them, knowing that I can never do too much for him, that has done so much for me. as to make me a Christian.

And I will labor to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus." What a noble determination—an example worthy the determination of an angel.

Our office, my brethren, is no ordinary one. We are ambassadors from the King of kings and Lord of lords, to a revolted world. Never had men committed to them an embassy of so deep, so important, and so everlasting moment. No work ever undertaken by mortals was so solemn, or connected with such amazing consequences. Among all the thousands to whom we preach, not one but will take an impression from us that will never wear out. The fate of millions, through succeeding generations, depends on our faithfulness. Heaven and hell will for ever ring with recited memorials of our ministry. And O, our own responsibility! There is for us no middle destiny. Our stake is for a high throne of glory, or for a deeper hell; for, to say nothing of the souls committed to our care, our work leads to the altar. Our home is by the side of the Shechinah. We have daily to go where Nadab and Abihu went, and to transact with him who darted his lightning upon them. It is a solemn thing to stand so near that holy Lord God. Let us beware how, by unhallowed fervor, we bring false fire before the Lord. Let us not fail to devote to our work our best powers, an unceasing application, consecrated by unremitting prayer. Anything but a careless preparation for the pulpit, and a sleepy performance in it. Forget your father, forget your mother, but forget not this infinite work of God.

Soon we shall appear with our respective charges before the judgment-seat of Christ. What a scene will then open between a pastor and his flock; when all his official conduct towards them shall be scrutinized, and all their treatment of him and his gospel shall be laid open; when it shall appear that an omniscient eye followed him into his study every time he sat down to meditate, to read, or to write, and traced every line upon his paper, and every motion of his heart; and followed him into the pulpit, and watched every kindling desire, every drowsy feeling, every wandering thought, every reach after fame. Ah! my dear brethren, when you hear on the right hand the song of bursting praise that you ever had existence, and on the left behold a company of wretched spirits sending forth their loud lamentations that you had not warned them with a stronger voice, will you not regret that all your sermons were not more impassioned, and all your prayers more agonizing? But what is that I see! A horrid shape, more deeply scarred with thunder than the rest, around which a thousand dreadful beings, with furious eyes and threatening gestures, are venting their raging curses. It is a wicked pastor, who went down to hell with most of his congregation; and these around him are the wretched beings he decoyed to death. My soul turns away, and cries, Give me poverty, give me the curses of a wicked world,

give me the martyr's stake; but O, my God, save me from unfaithfulness to thee and the souls of men!

When a minister feels the importance of his station, his reflections, on his way to the sanctuary, will run thus: "I am now going to the sanctuary—going to meet God—going to engage in his worship—going to preach his word; that word by which myself and all my hearers must be finally judged. I shall soon be surrounded by a number of beings, whose existence is never to terminate; but who, after millions of millions of ages, will be still immortal. Every man, woman, and child among them, will dwell in everlasting misery or endless joy. As soon as they have passed the bounds of this life, they must rise to the companionship of the highest order of beings, or sink to the doom of the lowest.

"Providence has appointed me to declare to them the misery of their condition as sinners, and to direct them to that blessed way which infinite mercy has opened for their restoration and happiness. I am to represent to them the character of a Saviour, who is waiting to be gracious. I am to show them the utter impossibility of their being saved by any other means. I am to watch for their souls; to labor, that I may be instrumental in their everlasting welfare; and when I have finished the short period allotted to me on earth, I am to appear before the tribunal of my Creator, to give in my account—to say how I have used, and how I have improved my talents—what exertions I have made in the office I sustain, and what effects have resulted from them. What responsibility attaches itself to my situation! If I am not faithful, how shall I appear at that solemn season? If I am ashamed of the faces of men, I shall be *confounded before them*; and, what is still more awful, shall be punished with the divine displeasure, and with misery in my soul.

"The condition of my hearers may be various. Some will need comfort and encouragement; some may have backslidden, and will require admonition to return; some may be less attached than they should be, to rules of moral obligation; some may be questioning the evidences of Christianity; some may be discouraged with doubts and fears; some may be much exposed to the agency and artifice of the devil; and some may have their hearts and affections in heaven, and be waiting for fresh discoveries of the love of Christ to their souls. To all these I must administer a portion in due season.

"Some, perhaps, will be wishing for doctrinal, some for practical, and others for experimental discourses. If I am very practical, many may think I am legal; if I am general in my invitations, some may be weak enough to imagine that I set aside the necessity of the influence of the spirit: many may differ widely from me in their views of the gospel. But if these things move me, or make any alteration in my public addresses, I am not a faithful servant of Christ: I shall be guided by the opinions of men. It will be as if they weighed more with me than the Bible. I shall expose myself

to the censure of my conscience, and to the curse of God. I will, therefore, endeavor to follow the directions of the highest authority. Whatever may be the result, I will strive to be faithful to my views and to truth, and leave the event with God. I will exert myself to the utmost of my power, to turn sinners from darkness to light. I know that the co-operation of divine influence is necessary to make my exertions effectual; but I recollect that all means are to be employed, while the effect rests upon the sanctions of heaven."

Such are the reflections of a faithful pastor; and such, my brethren, have been our reflections when our minds have been deeply imbued with the spirit of piety, and when we have realized the responsibility that rested upon us as ministers of the everlasting gospel.

II. *Ministers should make preparation for the pulpit.* All must agree that some preparation is necessary; but as to the kind and degree of preparation, there is a great diversity of opinions among able and faithful ministers of the gospel. Perhaps different methods of preparation may be adopted with success, by ministers of different powers and acquirements. Much, very much, depends upon the course adopted in early life, and pursued through a series of years. When our habits are formed, in this as in other respects, it is difficult to change them. An aged and faithful minister, after trying various methods, and acquiring much experience on this subject, expresses himself thus: "In my public discourses, I feel more of the unction of the Holy Spirit, and have a more single eye to the glory of God. I am led to study my own heart, my own experience; to depend more on the teachings of the Spirit; and I believe my preaching is rendered more edifying. I now seldom write a sermon: in general, I think as much as possible on the text and the context, arrange the order of the subject and ideas well, dwell upon the truths till I am properly affected with them, and, ascending the pulpit in the spirit of prayer, I speak to the people out of the abundance of my heart. I have found this way of preaching most profitable to myself and them. When one understands a subject, and is interested in it, we are at no loss for words, if we wish to deliver our sentiments upon it. To get a sermon by heart, and speak it *verbatim*, is, I believe, destructive of all genuine eloquence. To be eloquent, the heart must be fired with passion or sentiment; and how can this be the case, when the speaker's attention is tied and bound, as it were, to what he has committed to memory? This power of the mind alone is engaged, while the noblest faculties of the soul are excluded from all participation of the subject, however important or interesting; it is delivered without animation: a dull and tiresome uniformity of sound supplies the place of that pleasing variety of tone and emphasis, cadence, and expression, which give life and energy to discourse."

One thing should never be forgotten or neglected, in preparing for the pulpit; and that is, humble and devout prayer to Almighty

God, that he would bless our labors, and give success to our ministry. Those are the best sermons that are obtained by prayer. Some ministers have studied upon their knees. Luther obtained more in this way than by any other means. A preacher who is not a man of prayer, cannot have a proper knowledge of the nature and design of the gospel ministry; cannot be alive to God in his own soul; nor is he likely to become instrumental in the salvation of others. In order to *do* good, a man must *receive* good. *Prayer* is the way in which divine assistance is received; and in the work of the ministry, no man can do anything, unless it be given him from above. In many cases, the success of a preacher's labors depends more on his prayers than on his public teaching. A preacher of the gospel should, then, be a man of prayer. He should go from his knees to the pulpit. He should obtain a renewal of his commission every time he goes to preach, in a renewed sense of the favor of God. He should carry his authority to proclaim the gospel of Christ, not in his hand, but in his heart.

III. *Ministers of the gospel should preach Christ.* To preach Christ and to preach the gospel is the same thing, expressed by different terms. Christ and his gospel should never be separated—they are bound together by invisible, but indissoluble bonds. To speak merely of the nature of moral duties, to discuss the various attributes of God, to describe Christian virtues, to speak of a future state and of its retributions, is not preaching the gospel. It may be very well in its place, but it is not the gospel. It may be some help to devotion, but it is not the gospel. It may have some influence on our secular pursuits, but it is not the gospel. It may help to dissipate the darkness and superstition of heathen nations, but it is not the gospel. If there be not warm, clear, and explicit statements of *Christ, and him crucified*, then there is a blank in the counsels of God! My brethren, we fail to discharge the duties of the ministerial office aright, except we proclaim *the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.*

Christ and his cross were the constant theme of the apostles—the diamond that sparkled in all their public discourses. They did not glory in the beauty of their composition, in the flowers of rhetoric, in the force of oratory, in the harmony of periods, and leave Christ and his cross out. Paul is going to Greece, the eye of the world; and what was his determination? *I determined not to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* He is going to Rome, the imperial city—among sages, and generals, and poets, and legislators, and statesmen. Will he not there change his theme? Will he not expatiate upon the Supreme Being, eternal providence; destiny, &c.? No. *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.* And when he heard that the Galatians were about to conceal the cross, O! what were his feelings? They were about to blot the

sun out of the firmament; and what would they have left but darkness, desolation, and death! The cross of Christ is the grand luminary of the Christian system, from which all its parts derive light, life, and influence. All else is darkness; and God forbid, my brethren, that we should glory in earth or heaven, in life or death, save in the cross of our crucified Lord.

The hearts of the apostles were so filled with admiration of the person and work of Christ, of the system of redemption through him, of the infinite benefits resulting from a personal interest in him, of the obligations arising from a knowledge of him, that it was not possible they could preach anything else. They had not leisure to go over the wide field of speculation; their lips were touched with a live coal from God's altar, their hearts were filled to the overflowing of the love of Christ, which constrained them to adopt this subject and this manner of preaching. And whoever shall drink into this spirit, will not miss of the apostolic method. Christ was preached—Christ only—Christ always—Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The ordinance of preaching was instituted for the same great purpose for which the Scriptures were written: that the honors of Jesus' name might be published to the nations, and that, *believing, men might have life through his name*. It is perverted from its true design when it is employed in secular affairs, in explaining the philosophical or moral theories of the age, or in promulgating *the doctrine and commandments of men*. Let the historian, the philosopher, the politician, speak and write as much as he pleases on his favorite topic, if he does not in speculation oppose Christ, or in practice forget him; but let the ministers of the altar reserve the pulpit to its appropriate use—the *preaching of Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. How can it be supposed that the name of Jesus can be remembered elsewhere, if it be forgotten in the pulpit? What evidence is there that it is precious to the soul of the man whose lips with reluctance pronounce it? who, professing to teach the religion of Christ, seldom mentions his master's name, and when he does, carefully conceals its peculiar glories?—that name which is adored in heaven, and admired by all the wisest and best on earth—that name which cannot be painted in colors too glowing, or praised with too much warmth—that name in which all those excellencies and virtues, which are scattered over the universe in detached portions or broken fragments, exists united and entire—that name which, in one word, is *the chief among ten thousands; yea, and altogether lovely?*

There has never been a revival of religion, from the earliest ages of the gospel to the present period, but what Christ Jesus the Lord has been the prominent, attractive, commanding subject. This subject is the life of the Christian ministry, the soul of all our energies. Forget this, and though all the perfection of science, and taste, and eloquence, and genius, adorn our ministrations, no con-

verted sinner will form our spiritual diadem; no crown of *joy and rejoicing* will flourish upon our heads. From the scene of our labors, the spirituality, and ardor, and purity, and zeal of religion, will retire; and on the walls of our temples will be inscribed in mystic characters, traced by the finger of desolation, *The glory is departed*. Yes, my brethren, we may roll the thunders of eloquence—we may dart the coruscations of genius—we may scatter the flowers of poetry—we may diffuse the light of science—we may enforce the precepts of morality from the pulpit; but if we do not make Christ the great subject, the all-inspiring theme of our ministry, we have forgotten our errand: we shall do no good. Satan trembles at nothing but the cross: at this he does tremble; and if we would destroy his power, and extend the holy and benevolent kingdom, which is *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, it must be by means of the cross.

If we preach Christ plainly, if we preach him prominently, if we preach him in power and demonstration of the Spirit—if his name and grace, his spirit and love, shine in our discourses—if we labor to render him amiable and lovely in the eyes of the people, to lead them to him as a sanctuary to protect them, a sacrifice to reconcile them, a treasure to enrich them, a physician to heal them, an advocate to present them and their services to God; as wisdom to counsel, as righteousness to justify, as sanctification to draw, as redemption to save, as an inexhaustible fountain of pardon, grace, comfort, victory, glory—God will bless our labors, and give success to our ministry. “Yes,” says Mr. James, “raise me but a *barn*, in the very shadow of St. Paul’s cathedral, and give me a man who shall preach *Christ crucified* with something of the energy which the all-inspiring theme is calculated to awaken, and in spite of the meanness of the one and the magnificence of the other, you shall see the former crowded with the warm and pious hearts of living Christians, while the matins and vespers of the latter, if the gospel be not preached there, shall be chanted to the cold and cloistered statues of the mighty dead.”

It was preaching Christ and his cross which gave the astonishing success that attended the preaching of the celebrated Whitefield. An intimate friend of the infidel Hume asked him what he thought of Mr. Whitefield’s preaching; for he had listened to the latter part of one of his sermons, at Edinburgh. “He is, sir,” said Mr. Hume, “the most ingenious preacher I ever heard. It is worth while to go twenty miles to hear him.” He then repeated a passage towards the close of that discourse, which he heard. “After a solemn pause, he thus addressed his numerous audience: ‘The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold, and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner, among all this multitude, reclaimed from the error of his ways?’ To give the greater effect to this exclamation, he stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and,

with gushing tears, cried aloud, 'Stop, Gabriel! stop, Gabriel! ere you enter the sacred portals, carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God.' He then, in the most simple but energetic language, described what he called a Saviour's dying love to sinful men, so that almost the whole assembly melted into tears. This address was accompanied with such animated, yet natural action, that it surpassed anything I ever saw or heard in any other preacher."

It was not the exclamation of Whitefield, nor his oratorical powers, that so deeply affected his hearers, but his subject—the love of Christ, in laying down his life for sinners. He, himself, was first electrified by this subject, and then he was able to electrify his hearers.

IV. *Ministers of the gospel should be eloquent.* Criticism, when confined to moderate limits, may be useful; but beyond these bounds, it is pernicious. There is no work of man, however perfect, in which even bungling observers may not find defects. No sermon can be so accurately composed, or be so imbued with the spirit of the gospel, as not to afford either substantial or plausible ground for criticism. Mere dunces can criticise—can point out defects. They acquire a talent for criticising, and they love to indulge their skill; and they feel a sweet complacency in sitting in the critic's chair, and exposing the defects of the work of some master of eloquence.

And it is to be feared that this business of criticism is carried to an extreme in the preparation for the sacred desk, and in the means employed for improvement in the ministry. Mere critics can never be eloquent. As long as men are slaves to criticism and to rhetorical rules, they cannot be eloquent. There must be warmth; there must be boldness; there must be entire ease and indifference about criticism, or we shall never have genuine eloquence in the pulpit. Where there is an object to be gained—where an orator speaks on a topic of the deepest interest to his hearers and of the greatest moment to himself, to be truly eloquent, all his thoughts and all his energies must be entirely absorbed by his subject; he must not, for the time, even think of criticism and rhetorical rules. Then will he be eloquent as far as his intellectual powers will allow him. You may call his gestures uncouth, his illustrations homely, and his language coarse, but the effect on your own mind will tell others he is eloquent—the general aspect of the audience will declare he is eloquent.

No object in the whole creation is half so grand and interesting as a minister of the cross of Christ, who, indifferent to his own fame, with a heart full of sacred jealousy for the honor of his Saviour, and a countenance beaming with tender benevolence for his hearers, pours forth, from an overflowing soul, the words of eternal life. On the contrary, nothing is more contemptible than a man who, professing to plead for the authority and honors of Almighty



God in a rebellious world, is, in reality courting applause, and offering incense to the vanity of a depraved heart! And, as far as eloquence is concerned, the one must be eloquent—the other never can. He may flourish, and figure, and dazzle, and be very rhetorical and majestic; and he may raise to his talents the extolling applause of the multitude, but nothing can be further from true eloquence. Eloquence is the language of the heart: eloquence carries the mind from the speaker to the *subject*: eloquence raises us from words to things. The man who is false to his subject, *cannot* produce this effect; nor does he wish it. He would deprecate a mode of thinking and speaking, that should teach his hearers to *forget him* in the greatness of his subject. How can that paltry being rise to the grandeur of real eloquence, who is wooing a smile, rounding a period, or deciding on a gesture, when the whole soul should be absorbed by the sublime object of saving an immortal spirit from destruction?

The secret of all true eloquence, is the inward emotions of the mind—a deep and intense feeling that wholly swallows up the speaker in his subject. “Artificial eloquence,” says Bishop Burnet, “without a flame within, is like artificial poetry; all its productions are forced and unnatural, and in a great measure ridiculous. A man must have in himself a deep sense of the truth and power of religion: he must have a life and flame in his thoughts: he must have felt in himself those things which he intends to explain and recommend to others. There is an authority in the simplest things that can be said, when they carry visible characters of genuineness in them.” A sincere desire to win souls to Christ will most effectually make a minister of the gospel eloquent. Does he declare evangelical truth clearly? Does he utter it earnestly? Does he proclaim and apply it with feelings correspondent to its nature? If he does, he is eloquent.

Would you rise, my brethren, to the highest pitch of sacred eloquence? let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus. Let no trials, no sacrifices, no temptations, no discouragements, turn you from the path of duty. Walk with God, live by faith, reside at the throne of grace, and habitually commune with him that sits upon it. One hour’s communion with God daily, amidst the realities of eternity, will do more to make a minister excel in eloquence, than a whole life of laborious study without it. Select your text, prepare your sermon, and preach for *eternity*. This will make you truly eloquent. This was the grand secret in the eloquence of Baxter, when there was scarce a family, through an immense congregation, which was not a family of daily prayer, and which did not become such through his instrumentality. It was because the fire was kindled from heaven, which glows on the pages of his “*Saint’s Rest*,” that it has lighted its thousands to glory. It is because it was thus kindled, that it continues to burn, and

will continue with increasing brightness and glory, till the last conflagration.

This was the grand secret in the eloquence of Whitefield. It was this that gave to his ministry such powerful attractions—such wonderful charms. When he rolled the thunder of the gospel, his eloquence struck his hearers with awe, and made them tremble like Felix before the apostle.

This was the grand secret in the eloquence of Brainard: as it echoed through the trees of the forest, the savage dropped his tomahawk, and with streaming eyes, cried, *have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me.*

This was the very soul in the eloquence of St. Paul, as kings on their thrones trembled, and beggars leaped for joy. It made songs of triumph echo in the dungeon, and carried transports of joy to the rack and the flames.

Nor has it lost the least degree of its power in eighteen hundred years. No! even now it melts icy hearts on the cliffs of Greenland, lights with celestial brightness the plains of Hindostan; it removes blackness even from the Hottentot, and opens upon the Otahcitan *the light of the world.*

Excel, my brethren, in this kind of eloquence, and extend it through the world, and the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be *seven-fold*, and the *Light of Zion* will eclipse them. Kings will come to their light, and princes to the brightness of her rising. Her sun will not go down by day, her moon not withdraw herself; the Lord will be her everlasting light, and the Lamb her glory. A voice will be heard, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ. And the whole earth will be full of his glory, as the waters fill the seas.*

V. *Ministers should seek a revival of religion in their own hearts, that they may be the means of reviving others.* If there is to be a revival of religion, where should it begin? Who may be supposed to be the first partakers of it? *The ministers of religion.* As the sunbeams strike first upon the mountains, and as the clouds pour forth their treasures first upon the hills, which often form a kind of reservoir for the vallies, so may it be looked for, that the spiritual rain will descend first into the pulpit, before it reaches the pew. The influence of ministers upon their flocks is very great, for good or evil. "Like priest, like people," is a proverb founded upon truth. We are in the midst of our people, like central fires, producing a glowing atmosphere around; or like icebergs, which chill every thing in their vicinity. If we are eminently spiritual and devotional, the influence will be felt by our people. Our prayers and sermons in the house of God, and our conversation in private intercourse, will all tend to keep up the power of godliness in their hearts. But if we are secular, lukewarm, and trifling, the same spirit may be looked for in them. Should a revival take

place among them, and not in us, we should undo what has been done; but if our piety be increased, the influence of it will, in all probability, be spread through the church.

But does the state of religion need to be revived in our minds? I am of opinion that it does. I am fully and painfully convinced, that the bulk of the present race of ministers are by no means distinguished for the more spiritual and elevated exercises of religion. Do we not fall very short in what may be called devotional habits, in spirituality of mind, in communion with God, in self-examination? Let us read the memoirs of eminent and pious ministers in former ages, and compare ourselves with them, to see how dwarfish our piety. Permit me to ask, *What is the state of our closet devotions?* Do we spend much time in reading the Scriptures, not as critics, but as Christians, anxiously desirous of drinking deeply into the spirit of the word of God? Do we spend hours, or even an hour, every day, in that breathing, panting, and wrestling after God, which characterized the ministers of a by-gone age? Have we our seasons of extraordinary devotion, our days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, as they had? My dear brethren, does the fire of devotion burn with that intensity upon the altar of our hearts, which is necessary to form a central flame, from which the whole church should ever be receiving a renewed warmth and glow of holy feeling.

*Are we in our families men of God,* ministers of Christ, prophets of the Lord, always teaching both by our word and actions? We should be domestic ministers; pastors of the church in our houses, looking well after the souls of our wives, children, and servants; breathing the spirit of devotion through our habitations. A minister's house should be the element of piety, the vestibule of heaven.

How do we act and appear in the houses of our friends? Are we mere guests and companions? or do we preach from house to house, not ceasing to diffuse the knowledge of Christ in every place? If religion be revived in the church, it must be revived in the house; and if it spread with greater vigor round the greater circle of the vestry, it must be nourished with care in the smaller circle; and if this be done at all, it must be done instrumentally by us. And in our intercourse with each other, let us remember, while we cultivate cheerfulness, and discountenance gloom and grimace, that we bear a high and sacred character; that our vocation is religion, our great business is salvation, our labor for immortality; that we are ambassadors of Christ, and should be consistent, and maintain that dignity and seriousness which become our office. Let there be much of mutual edification, of mutual excitement to deeds of piety and zeal, of earnest prayer, of conversation upon the difficulties and encouragements of our office. While we entertain each other as men and brethren, let us improve each other as Christians and as ministers.

Are we spiritual and devotional in our public services? Are our

sermons the fruits of our experience, as well as of our studies? We should lay before our flocks that which we ourselves have tasted and handled of the word of life, and never preach to others what we have not first preached to ourselves. Discourses full of thought, yet at the same time characterized by fervor, simplicity, and spirituality, are too rare; if we take pains, it is too often merely to shine. We look for tokens of approbation, and expressions of admiration, and are, perhaps, disappointed if we do not receive them; and seem to feel as if we had preached in vain, if we hear not the language of applause. I do not say that this is the case with all, or with any of us always; but it is too much the case with many of us, and must grieve the spirit of God.

It is also to be feared that our prayers are not characterized by that solemnity, spirituality, and earnestness, which are essential to the cultivation of devotional feelings in the people. A minister's prayers, when they are of an intense and elevated character, do more, perhaps, to keep up the spirituality of his people, than his sermons.

My dear brethren, do let us examine ourselves. We must begin with our own souls; we must seek, first, the revival of religion in our own hearts; we must exhibit to our people the example of a state of piety, renewed and invigorated. Of a revival of religion, it may be said, "This kind goeth not forth, but by fasting and prayer on our part." The impulse must be given by us, not by words, but by example. All our operations are influenced by the *kind* of religion which prevails; the members of our churches, the teachers in our Sabbath-schools, the singers in our galleries, the people who wait upon our ministry, the heads of families, all feel the influence of a revived state of religion: they cannot be expected to be active while their souls are lukewarm; or if they do anything to circulate religion, they will circulate only a poor, feeble, and heartless kind of piety. Suffer me, dear brethren, to exhort you most seriously, to inquire whether an improved state of our churches must not begin with us, who are ministers of the word; and whether we should not immediately and most earnestly apply ourselves to this business? Let us begin afresh to live *for* God, and to commune with him. Oh! what preachers shall we be, if we preach from the full, rich experience of a renewed and revived piety! An earnestness and freshness will be imparted to our public services, and this, by the grace of God, will clothe them with new power, and invest them with new attractions.

## ARTICLE VIII.

*Remarks on the Doctrine of Immersion for the Remission of Sins.*

THE doctrine of immersion for the remission of sins, as taught by Mr. A. Campbell, and embraced by his followers, is contained in an essay of some seventy-five pages, duodecimo, and published in 1835. The subject of this essay is highly important, and it becomes the more so, as Mr. C. is making the attempt to introduce a new system of theology, entirely unknown to any sect of the Baptists, since the period of the Reformation. The claims which he has set up for the new theory, require an impartial and candid investigation; and if it be founded in truth, it ought to be received; but if it be founded in error, it ought to be exposed and rejected. It is our intention to give the subject a fair and candid hearing, and fully yield to it all of truth it can justly claim. One great evil which has arisen from theological discussions, is an attempt, too often made, to widen the breach between the parties, and to represent the difference of sentiment much greater than it really is; but I sincerely hope that, in this case, nothing of the kind will be attempted, but that, on the contrary, an effort will be made to break down prejudices, to remove error, and to unite the Disciples and the Christians in the truth, as it is in Jesus. These two great bodies of the professed followers of Christ, holding as they do so many sentiments in common, should, if practicable, be brought to act together in harmony, and unite their efforts to build up the cause of truth. So far as the writer of this article is concerned, he most sincerely desires that this may be the case.

In entering upon the discussion of the question contained in this essay, the writer of this paper freely admits that he labors under some embarrassment, arising from fears that he may not have been able fully to perceive all Mr. Campbell's abstractions. His mind is so metaphysical, his style so abstruse, and he has such a command of words, and pours forth such a torrent of them, that the reader often finds himself inundated with words, but sometimes finds it difficult to perceive the true idea intended to be conveyed. This always enables Mr. C. to rebut the most logical argument, by merely saying, "I am misapprehended;" but when he re-states his positions and his arguments, the reader labors under the same difficulty as at first, arising from the circumlocution and verbosity of his style. The writer of this paper is not alone in this view of Mr. C.'s style of writing, and method of debating; he has heard the same idea expressed by some of the first men in the country; and he has heard them assign this as a reason for not replying to some of the positions assumed by Mr. C. in his theory of religion. It shall be our object, however, fairly to state Mr. C.'s views, and then, if we dissent from them, fairly to refute them by Scripture

argument and testimony. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

We shall now proceed to state Mr. Campbell's theory, as laid down in this essay, in his own words. He says: "The converts made to Jesus Christ by the apostles, (by immersion,) were taught to consider themselves pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; and were addressed as pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved persons, by all who first preached the gospel of Christ. These terms are expressive, not of any quality of mind—not of any personal attribute of body, soul, or spirit—but each of them represents, and all of them together represent a *state*, or *condition*." That "this change of state is effected by an act of faith." This "act of faith is immersion into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;" that when a person is "immersed *into* Christ, he is then *in* Christ," and "not before;" that "conversion, immersion, and regeneration, are all descriptive of the same thing, different names for the same act, contemplated in different points of view, are convertible terms, and all signify immersion in water, constituting the process by which a change of state is effected; so that a man's state is changed when he is immersed." I understand this to be Mr. C.'s system, as laid down by himself; having received his last finishing touch, and being rendered perfect and complete.

This system, including merely a change of state, and not of character, merely a relative holiness, and not a personal holiness, can give to no man a title of future blessedness, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away; and, consequently, all such converts, if they have nothing more to entitle them to the promises of everlasting life, will certainly perish. If a man be personally unholy and impure, no change of state, without a change of character, can make him personally holy and pure. Pluck up a thorn and a thistle, growing in the wilderness, and plant them in a vineyard; and although their states are changed, yet they still remain a thorn and a thistle, and will produce neither grapes nor figs. A corrupt foreigner may leave his native land, and emigrate to this country, and his state may be changed by naturalization, by which he will become a citizen of the United States; but if his character be not changed, he will still remain the same corrupt man he was in his native country. A dissolute woman may enter into the bonds of matrimony, by which her state may be changed; but if her character be not changed, she will still remain the same dissolute woman she was before this change of state. A minister of the gospel may incorporate into the temple of God, by immersion, *hay*, *wood*, or *stubble*, by which the *state* of these materials will be changed; but this change of *state* will make them neither *gold*, *silver*, nor *precious stones*: the materials will remain essentially the same after, as before this change of *state*. And so a cor-

rupt and dissolute man may be immersed into Christ, by which his *state* will be changed; but if his character be not changed—if he do not acquire by this change of *state* “any new quality of mind, nor any personal attribute of body, soul, or spirit”—he must necessarily remain the same corrupt and dissolute man he was before this change of *state*. We, therefore, maintain that no mere change of *state*, without any change of *character*, without *personal holiness*, and without *love to God*, can give to any man a title to that *rest* that remaineth to the people of God. It is the unchangeable law of Christianity, that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” This system, it appears to me, by leaving out a change of character, is radically defective, and admirably calculated to build men up in the cold formality of religion, who are destitute of its spirit and power. The system, then, cannot be founded in truth; it must be built upon mistaken notions of the true meaning of the Bible.

By referring to history, it will be seen that this doctrine was derived from pagan origin, and constituted one of the corruptions of Christianity in the dark ages. Purifying by water is a ceremony of the highest antiquity. Grotius maintained that it was practised in commemoration of the flood. Whatever might have been its origin, it was practised by the Romans and the Greeks, the Etruscans and the Egyptians, the Druids and the Celts. In general, the pagan purifications were divided into two classes: the one common, which was immediately before divine worship, or at sacrifices, or public festivals; and the other special, at an initiation into mysteries.

It was customary with the Greeks, when persons re-appeared alive and well, who had been absent for a long time, either in war or travel, and had been reputed dead, and had received funeral rites and honors, to account them *deutero-geneis*, born again, or come to life again; and the return was called *ecnagenesis*, or *pal-ingensis*, a being born again. The Romans adopted the phraseology, and passed a law that slaves manumitted under certain conditions, should enjoy the right of *regeneration*; that is, the manumission should be regarded, in the eye of the law, a natural birth: they should enter into the same perfect freedom as if they had been free-born. Origen, who was full of the lore of oriental literature, finding in the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, *water*, *new birth*, and *kingdom of heaven*, united, without attending to the connexion and drift of the discourse, applied the passage to baptism; and it seemed to answer his purpose admirably, for here was the external sign, *water*, and the internal something, *new birth*, and both connected with the kingdom of heaven. The doctrine, however, was attended with difficulties. Cases were frequently occurring, in which persons must die without baptism. But Origen was an extraordinary genius, and he got over all difficulties by distinguishing baptism into three sorts. Baptism was *fluminis*, *flaminis*,

*sanguinis*; that is, *river-baptism*, *fire-baptism*, *blood-baptism*. River-baptism is a being dipped in *water*. The baptism of fire is *repentance*, or a *disposition* to receive grace. Blood-baptism is *martyrdom* for Christ. In case the first cannot be come at, the two last supply its place, and a person may be saved without the application of water. This exposition of Origen was received by the church of Rome; and in the final settlement of the question, she decreed that water-baptism was necessary to salvation, in all conceivable cases. This doctrine the Catholic church still retains at the present time.

Retaining the necessity of water, to cleanse human nature from sin in order to salvation, exposed the church of Rome to great and almost insurmountable difficulties. Having adopted the doctrine, it became necessary to admit the consequences, that no person can be saved without being baptized in water. All pagans inevitably perish. All infants, dying unbaptized, were in the same unhappy condition. The absolute necessity of dipping in order to a valid baptism, and the indispensable necessity of baptism in order to salvation, were two doctrines which clashed; and the collision kindled up a war between the clergy and the people. The doctrine was cruel, and the feelings of humanity revolted against it. Power may give law, but it is more than power can do to make unnatural laws sit easy upon the minds of rational beings. This state of things rendered it very inconvenient for the clergy, for they were under the necessity of attending any woman in labor, at a moment's warning, night or day, in any season of the year, at the most remote parts of their parish, without the power of demanding a fee, whenever a case of necessity required; and if they neglected their duty, they were most severely punished.

To remedy the evils which grew out of the doctrine, a great many expedients were tried; but, for a long season, nothing succeeded. They accumulated on every hand. At first, infants were baptized in public, at two different seasons of the year. When it was observed that some died before the season for baptizing came, priests were authorized to baptize at any time, and in any place, in case of sickness. But it sometimes happened that a priest could not be obtained. To remedy this evil, midwives were licensed. Then cases occurred that, while the midwife was baptizing a child not likely to live many minutes, the mother was neglected and died. To prevent such accidents in future, it was decreed that anybody, licensed or unlicensed, a Jew or a degraded priest, a scullion or a felon, might baptize. It happened at other times, that a vessel large enough, or a quantity of water sufficient to dip an infant, could not be procured on a sudden; and while in the dead of night, and perhaps in a severe frost, the assistants were running to borrow utensils, or to procure water, the ill-fated infant expired. In vain were laws made expressly to require women, in certain cases, to have everything ready prepared; the laws of nature defied human con-



trol, the evil was incurable, and the anguish intolerable. Some infants died the moment they were born, others before, both unbaptized; and all, for the comfort of distressed mothers, doomed like fiends to descend into a place of torment. In short, it became impossible to maintain the two propositions, that baptism was dipping, and that dipping was essential to salvation.

Finding that both propositions could not be maintained, the church of Rome was finally driven to another expedient, to substitute *sprinkling* for dipping, which at first was only done in extraordinary cases. This, however, remedied the evil but in part, for the doctrine of some sort of baptism, in order to salvation, was still retained, and gathered strength by this new provision. Since that time, a thousand ingenious devices have been invented to administer sprinkling in extraordinary cases. It would shock the modesty of persons unaccustomed to such a ceremony, to relate the law of the case. It must suffice, therefore, to observe, that if the hand or foot of a babe, dying with its mother in the birth, be sprinkled, it is baptism, and the child is saved. But it sometimes happens, in extraordinary cases, that pure water cannot be obtained; in such cases, casuists have determined that beer, distilled spirits, the juice of herbs, and liquids in which it may be doubtful whether there be any drops of pure water, may be used for the purpose of baptizing. But enough of these disgusting legends.

Mr. C. will doubtless say that he rejects the doctrine of infant baptism altogether, which we grant; but by rejecting this doctrine, and retaining the *necessity* of *immersion*, in order to salvation, he increases the difficulties of administering baptism, in at least a ten-fold ratio; for baptism in no period of human life can be so certainly administered as in infancy. This period presents the fewest obstacles to be overcome of any period of our mortal existence. It must be remembered, that Mr. C. regards all persons as unbaptized who have not been immersed. The necessity of immersion, is an essential part of his plan. Baptism administered to persons who do not unite *faith* with the *act*, is also invalid, because, in order to the remission of sins, faith and immersion are both necessary; that is, necessary for the candidate to believe that through immersion God will pardon his sins. Mr. C. has now the Christian world before him, the principal part of whom, according to his views, are unbaptized. Let him now, if he can, reduce his doctrine to practice.

Let Mr. C., in the first place, define who is an authorized administrator of baptism under the new economy. Must the administrator be a man, or will baptism, administered by a woman, be valid? Must the administrator be a believer in Christianity, or will an unbeliever do? If a believer, must he be ordained, or will baptism be valid administered by any Christian person? Must the administrator be a believer in the doctrine himself, or will baptism be valid if a man plunges into the water without any administrator,

and without any witnesses? These questions are of vast importance, for it is a subject of great moment; it is the salvation of the soul.

What is to be done in those cases in which a legal administrator cannot be obtained? Persons frequently sicken and die at sea, or are wrecked in a violent storm. Must they die in their sins, notwithstanding they may repent and exercise faith in the Son of God, because there is no one to baptize them? Mr. C. must know that every dissipated seaman is not a proper subject of baptism before he sails from a port; and that a man may have serious reflection upon the ocean, may repent, may exercise faith in the Messiah, and may pray to God, as well as on land; but, according to his doctrine, they all must be rendered inefficacious merely because it is impossible for him to be immersed. Cases are also frequently occurring upon the land in which an administrator cannot be seasonably obtained; as when persons die of accidents, or by the plague, or in battle, or when they live in new countries, or in pagan lands. Let these cases occur ever so often, Mr. Campbell's system places salvation beyond their reach. In many cases, also, when an administrator can be obtained, the means of immersion are not at hand. In cases of sickness, it must sometimes happen that a utensil sufficiently large enough to dip a person in, cannot be obtained on a sudden, and the health of the person will not admit of his being conveyed to a river, or stream, or pool of water. In some parts of the globe there are immense sandy deserts, these must be crossed; here are no rivers, or streams, or pools of water. How frequently does it happen in crossing these deserts, immersion would be wholly impracticable. In other parts of the world, at some seasons of the year, the whole face of the land and water is covered to a great depth with ice and snow. In these cold and desert regions, at such seasons, it would be impossible, in many cases, to administer baptism. Now, according to Mr. C.'s doctrine of saving souls by immersion, whenever it so happens, in all conceivable cases, that it is impossible to administer baptism to a penitent believer before death, he dies in his sins; for he expressly asserts that immersion is the *act*, and the *only act*, by which a believing penitent can be saved, can come to Christ, can have his sins remitted. And not only so, but all those persons who have entertained mistaken views of the mode of baptism, and have been sprinkled instead of being immersed, must also have had mistaken views respecting their salvation, for they have not as yet performed the *only act* by which a penitent under the new economy can be saved.

Mr. C., indeed, says, "I doubt not but such Pedobaptists as simply *mistake* the meaning and the design of the Christian immersion who, nevertheless are, as far as they know, obedient disciples of Jesus, will be admitted into the kingdom of glory." By the kingdom of glory, we suppose that Mr. C. means heaven itself. But, according to his doctrine, they are not saved in the present life;

while in this world they must remain under "the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin." It appears that Mr. C. makes no provision at all, either in this world or the next, for those believing penitents who do not receive in any mode the application of water; they must as certainly perish as Calvin's reprobates. But I would ask Mr. C. when, and where, and how any person is saved from "the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin," so as to be admitted into "the kingdom of glory," if it is not done in this life, nor through water, nor under "the new economy?" Will God open another economy, at some future period, under which water will not be necessary to salvation? Is this Mr. C.'s belief? Does his doctrine drive him to such an expedient?

To us it appears evident, that the doctrine of cleansing human nature by water was derived, not from the Scriptures, but from a pagan origin; and that it has no foundation in the word of God. We are, moreover, confident, the two propositions, that baptism is dipping, and that dipping is necessary to salvation, can never be maintained; that cases must and will frequently occur in which it will be morally impossible for persons to be immersed, who are sincere believing penitents, which will place salvation beyond their reach, and render their condemnation inevitable.

Mr. C. *asserts* that to pardon, to justify, to sanctify, to reconcile, to adopt, and to save, merely signify a change of *state* by immersion, without a particle of proof. But, on page 196, he says, "It has been proved that these terms represent *states*, and not feelings; *condition*, and not character; and that a change of views or of heart, is not a change of state. To change a state is to pass into a new relation, and relation is not sentiment nor feeling." Mr. C. first *asserts* his position, and then *affirms* "it has been proved," when in fact no such evidence has been adduced. This is a remarkable trait in the writings of Mr. C., first to assert a proposition, and then *assume* that the proposition has been proved, and then claim the victory, and defy the world to prove to the contrary. But in this controversy, nothing is to be taken for granted, nothing is to be assumed as proved, till the testimony is adduced, thoroughly examined, shown to be applicable to the case under consideration, and to sustain the proposition advanced. We are not discussing the civil or the political condition of either men or women, but a moral and religious condition. What, then, is the meaning of condition in a moral and religious sense? Johnson defines it to signify "quality; that by which anything is demonstrated good or bad." But the *condition* of which Mr. C. speaks, is not "expressive of any quality of mind," and, consequently, cannot be a religious condition, but merely a civil or political condition. Now, we admit that in the change of a man's civil or political condition, there is no change of character; but in the change of a man's moral and religious condition, there is generally a change of character, either for the better or for the worse. Mr.

C. also affirms that "no person whose condition has not been changed by immersion, into Christ, is either pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, or saved; and, consequently, all whose condition has not been changed by immersion into Christ, still remain unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost to all Christian life and enjoyment." In opposition to these views, we shall now proceed to show that the apostles baptized none, unless it was done from mistaken views, till they were disciplined or converted, pardoned or justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; and that these terms and phrases, as used in the Scriptures, express or imply a change of character, as well as a change of state.

I. The apostles baptized none till they were first *disciplined, or converted to the Christian faith*. This was in conformity to the practice of our Saviour himself; he first made, and then baptized disciples; John iv., 1, 2. This is also in conformity to the commission of our Lord to his apostles, as recorded by St. Matthew, xxviii., 19, 20. "There are," says Dr. Campbell, "manifestly three things which our Lord here distinctly enjoins his apostles to execute with regard to the nations, to wit: *matheteuein, baptizein, didaskein*; that is, to convert them to the faith, to initiate the converts into the church by baptism, and to instruct the baptized in all the duties of the Christian life." *Matheteuein* is to preach the gospel to all nations, in order to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, and by this knowledge to persuade them to embrace Christianity. If, upon this instruction, they receive and embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, they became the proper subjects of baptism. This is evident from the following considerations: *first*, it agrees with the parallel commission as recorded in the gospel according to St. Mark: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." *Secondly*, it agrees with the Scripture notion of a disciple: as in the question of the blind man, *Will you also be his disciple?* That is, will you believe that he is a prophet sent from God, and receive him as your teacher? It also agrees with the answer of the Pharisees: *We are the disciples of Moses, for we know that God spake to him, and, therefore, believe what he spake in the name of God*. Hence, not merely the twelve were called *Christ's disciples*, but all who received him as a Prophet sent from God. And we find many of his *disciples* at one time murmuring, and at another time his *disciples* departed from him. For a long period after the resurrection of Christ, all his followers were called *disciples*. But they were at length called Christians.

How was it possible for the apostles to *matheteuein, make a disciple of a heathen, or unbelieving Jew*, without being their *Mathetai, teachers?* It was then by *teaching* that they made *disciples* of those who received their instruction, and not by baptism, as Mr.

C. erroneously supposes. We find the same original word employed by St. Matthew, to convey both the idea of instruction, and of a disciple: "Then said he unto them, every scribe which *mathetentheis*, is instructed into the kingdom." And again we read, that "Joseph was himself *emathetiuse*, a disciple of Jesus." From the use of the word in the above quotations, nothing can be more evident than that Joseph became a disciple of Jesus by instruction, and not by immersion. The same original word is also used in the Acts of the Apostles: "And when they had preached the gospel in that city, and *matheteusantes*, had made many disciples;" xiv., 21. The original word is here rendered in the common version *taught*, and points out the manner of making a disciple. Finally, the derivation of the original word, is another argument in support of the views we have advanced on this subject. *Matheteuo*, to make a disciple, is derived from *matheus*, a disciple; and *matheus* is derived from *matheo*, to learn. This word, through all its various ramifications, includes the ideas of either *imparting* or *receiving* instruction. To make a disciple implies both a teacher and a learner, the one imparting and the other receiving instruction; and those who are made disciples in this way, are the proper subjects of baptism, and none others. In accordance with these views, we have the testimony of Justin Martyr, that it was the universal practice in the first ages of the church, to preach the gospel to both Jews and heathens, and to teach them that Jesus was the Christ, and to baptize none, only those who did believe this; p. ii., p. 93. It is clear and evident, then, that in the first ages of the gospel, men were first converted to the Christian faith by instruction imparted by the ministers of the gospel, and not, as Mr. C. affirms, by immersion; and that none were immersed till they were first made disciples by instruction.

In opposition to these views, Mr. C. maintains that this commission directs the apostles to make disciples by immersion. He says, "The construction of the sentence fairly indicates that no person can be a disciple, according to the commission, who has not been immersed; for the active participle, in connexion with an imperative, either declares the manner in which the imperative shall be obeyed, or explains the meaning of the command. To this I have not found an exception—for example: "Cleanse the house, sweeping it." "Cleanse the garment, washing it," shows the manner in which the command is to be obeyed, or explains the meaning of it. Thus, convert (or disciple) the nations, immersing them, and teaching them to observe, &c., expresses the manner in which the command is to be obeyed." It is admitted that *baptizontes* is an active participle, but it should be remembered that *didaskontes* is also an active participle, and stands precisely in the same relation to *matheteusate* that *baptizontes* does; so that if the active participle, in the one instance, expresses the manner in which the command is to be obeyed, it

must also in the other. So, then, if disciples are to be made, according to this commission, by immersion, by the same rule they are to be made over again by teaching. From this conclusion Mr. C. cannot escape, so long as he adheres to this rule of interpretation. The fact is, St. Matthew observed no such rule in the composition of his gospel, as Mr. C. supposes; and he has not produced a single passage from the whole of his gospel to sustain it, the one excepted under consideration. When Mr. C. establishes this rule of the construction of language, by quotations from the gospel of St. Matthew himself, we are ready to abide by it; but it will be more fatal to his system than to our own.

If the authority already adduced be insufficient to establish the position which we have assumed, we will now produce one to which Mr. C. cannot reasonably object—it is Mr. Campbell himself. He says the verse reads: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.” *Teaching* precedes *baptizing* in the order of the commission, and is, in the original, different from the word rendered teaching in the next verse—*Matheteusate* in the 19th verse, and *didaskontes* in the 20th. The first signifies *disciple*, or *make disciples* in all nations—the latter signifies instructing those when made disciples. The former denotes teaching the first principles, to make disciples; and the latter, teaching those disciples the sublimer doctrines, principles, and practices of Christianity. But, that this criticism may not rest upon my authority, I will quote some Pedobaptist critics. Parkhurst and Wakefield, render it “*make disciples*.” Pyle and Campbell, “*convert* ;” Guise and Scott, “*disciple all nations*.” Wyne, “*make disciples in all nations*.” That the latter meaning, which is the same in substance with the preceding, fully expresses the meaning intended to be conveyed in the words of the commission, is incontrovertibly evident from the following criticism:—The object of “*discipling*,” is expressed “*panta ta ethne*,” *all nations*; but the subject of baptizing is another gender than *ta ethne*; it is *autous*, *them*. The word “*autous*,” *them*, in the original, is masculine, and does not agree with “*panta ta ethne*,” *all nations*, which is neuter, but refers to “*mathetas*,” *disciples*, which is included in the verb *matheteusate*, “*make disciples* ;” the verse then reads, teach or make disciples out of all nations, baptizing them that are taught, or made disciples, and this is clear from the parallel passage in Mark: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; *he that believeth and is baptized* shall be saved.” None, then, are commanded to be baptized but such as are first *taught*, or made disciples. To accommodate this verse to the Pedobaptists, it should read thus: “go, baptize all nations, and then teach them. For this is their practice, first to sprinkle, and then to instruct—but the commission of Christ says, first teach, and then baptize—so that this

passage authorizes Baptists in their practice, and condemns the practice of the Pedobaptists." *Appendix to Debate with Walker on Baptism*, p. 147.

II. Mr. C. also affirms, that the original words *epistrephe* and *epistrophe*, rendered in the common version, *convert* and *conversion*, likewise mean *immerse* and *immersion*. Without entering into a labored criticism of this subject, we shall proceed to consider the meaning of conversion in the sense under consideration; that is, the conversion of a sinner: "And sinners shall be converted unto thee." Now, are we to understand by this conversion, merely that sinners are immersed into Christ, and that, by such immersion, the condition of sinners is changed, but that their moral and religious characters remain the same? This is by no means what I understand by a scriptural *conversion*. Conversion is a turning from darkness to light, from sin to holiness. It implies an inward change of principle, as well as an outward change of conduct. Hence, converts are said to be *new creatures*, *old things are passed away*; *behold, all things are become new*. Conversion, then, in the Scripture sense of the phrase, signifies a change of mind, placing the affections on new objects, altering the conduct, and adopting a new course of life. The sinner, in his conversion, loses his fondness for vice, and acquires a love of virtue. And in this sense conversion is used by our Saviour, in a quotation which he made from a prophecy of Isaiah: "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and *epistrepsoi, should be converted*, and I should heal them;" Matt. xiii., 15. Now, will any one assert that, in this passage, the phrase *should be converted*, here means *should be immersed*? And Mr. C.'s argument requires this construction of the phrase. Again, St. Paul says, speaking of the same unconverted Jews: "But even unto this day when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it *epistrepse, shall turn* to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away;" 2 Cor. iii., 15, 16. Here conversion is expressly applied to the heart, and consists in the removal of the blindness of sin, and the introduction of the light of truth into the understanding, when the heart is truly turned to God. And the Lord Jesus used this word precisely in the same sense in his commission to Saul: "I send thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and *epistrepesai, to turn* them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the forgiveness of sin, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in me;" Acts xxvi., 18. Now, what sense would these passages make, to substitute *immersion* for *turn*, and read them thus: "I send thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to *immerse* them from darkness to light," &c. Again, "Nevertheless, when the heart *shall be immersed* to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." Every one must perceive that by such a change

of words, the true force and meaning of the passages are entirely destroyed. There is no more allusion in any one of these passages to *immersion*, than there is to the Lord's supper.

Mr. C., to sustain his argument, relies principally upon Acts iii., 19, 20: "Repent ye, therefore, and *epistrepsate*, be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus, which before was preached unto you." He has drawn an ingenious, but fanciful comparison between this passage and that which is recorded in Acts ii., 38. But by turning to these passages, the reader will see that these addresses of St. Peter were made to two very different classes of persons: the first address was made to believing, and the last to unbelieving Jews; under the first, three thousand were converted to God; but as to the results of the last, Peter and John were cast into prison. How, then, can it be imagined that St. Peter could have exhorted these two classes, the believing and the unbelieving Jews, both to be *immersed*? As he used different language on these two occasions, we are to suppose that he used it in its common acceptation; and we are, therefore, not allowed to put upon it a forced and unnatural construction. *Conversion*, in this passage, means precisely the same thing that it does in 2 Cor. iii., 16; for St. Paul and St. Peter, in these passages, are both speaking of the same class of persons, the unbelieving Jews, whom sin had blinded; and it was by conversion that this blindness, darkness, ignorance, and pollution of sin, was to be removed; and, therefore, *conversion* cannot mean *immersion*, for immersion in water can produce no such effect.

That the views we entertain of conversion are correct, will receive additional confirmation by other uses of the original word in the New Testament. It is applied to the action of the body: "But Jesus *epistraphais*, turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole;" Matt. ix., 22. See, also, Mark v., 30; viii., 33; Acts ix., 40; xvi., 18. Somewhat analogous to this sense, the word is used by St. Luke: "He that is in the field, let him not *epistrepsato*, turn back;" xvii., 31. See, also, Matt. x., 13; xxiv., 18; Luke ii., 20. This word is also applied to one's returning back to his former course of *evil life*: "Then he saith, *epistrepso*, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished;" Matt. xii., 44. "For it had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, *epistrepesai*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it happened unto them according to the true proverb. The dog *epistrepas*, is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that washed, to her wallowing in the mire;" 2 Peter ii., 21, 22. When this word is used *transitively*, it signifies to *convert, turn to God and holiness*. "And many of the children of Israel *epistrepsei*, shall he turn to the Lord their



God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, *epistrepesai*, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord;" Luke i., 16, 17. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one *epistrepse*, convert him, let him know that he which *epistrepas*, converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins;" James v., 19, 20. Now, it will not be pretended that in any one of these quotations or references, there is the smallest allusion to immersion, or that there is the least analogy in the use of the original word in any of these passages to immersion; while, on the other hand, there is a striking analogy in the use of the original word in all these passages to that change the Scriptures call conversion, a turning from sin and Satan to the service of God.

Conversion, then, according to the doctrine of the Bible, is an experimental and practical turning of the heart and life to God, a change of the affections from vicious to virtuous objects, altering the course of one's life, the reformation of Christian habits. The man who has given an uncontrolled indulgence to irregular passions, and formed habits of vice, under divine influence corrects the disordered affections of his mind, and subdues the corrupt passions of his heart. He ceases to do evil, and learns to do well. By the diligent study of the truths, and by the serious observance of the directions of the gospel, he acquires the qualifications of the Christian character. By adding to his faith the graces and virtues of the Christian religion, he makes his election sure. Having learned how he ought to walk to please God, he abounds more and more in every good word and work. From the commencement of the Christian life, he makes constant progress in the path of goodness, and with quickened steps he presses towards the goal of perfection. Such is the conversion and sanctification which the sacred writers declare to be essential to our acceptance with God, and not merely a change of state by immersion, without any moral and religious change of character.

Mr. C., himself, once viewed the doctrine of conversion in the same light as we have represented it. In his Appendix to his Debate with Mr. Walker on Baptism, he says: "We challenge Mr. R. to produce one instance of a Jew being admitted into the Christian church, from its first exhibition on the day of Pentecost, without professing repentance or *conversion*. If Mr. R. cannot do this, as we are sure he cannot, what avail a hundred volumes of theories, and conjectures, and assertions, and romances, upon the similarities, and congruities, and expediencies of covenants, and states, and dispensations, and privileges;" p. 231. He here uses the word conversion as signifying a change of character, and not merely as signifying immersion, by which a change of condition is effected, as he now affirms. He then repudiated the very system which he now maintains.

III. Mr. Campbell affirms, in the third place, that the sinner is pardoned or justified by an *act* of faith, and that this act of faith is immersion. That by justification we are to understand the pardon of sin, Mr. C. admits, in which interpretation we are also agreed. He then affirms that we are justified by immersion, or *in the name* of the Lord, which he understands to mean immersion, "as the immediate and connecting cause." To sustain this assumption, he relies upon 1 Cor. vi., 11, which reads thus: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord, and by the Spirit of our God." But this passage by no means sustains the doctrine of justification by immersion, for certain I am, he cannot produce a single passage in all the Epistles of St. Paul, where *dikaióthenai, to be justified*, has any such meaning; it signifies, to be absolved from the guilt of sin, and approved as righteous, either at present, or before the tribunal of God. And so the name of Christ, when we are said to be justified by it, must signify, not the profession of Christianity by baptism, but faith in Christ's dying for us, according to the Scriptures, and, consequently, be the same with *en auto, in him*: "For in him all that believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses;" Acts xiii., 39. Justification is also here ascribed to the name of Christ, that is, to faith in him; sanctification, to "the Spirit of God;" which shows they cannot signify the same thing; for where the cause is different, the effect must also be different.

Mr. Campbell goes on to say, "Whatever the *act* of faith may be, it necessarily becomes the line of discrimination between the two states before described. On this side and on that, mankind are in quite different states. On the one side, they are pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; on the other, they are in a state of condemnation. This act is sometimes called immersion, regeneration, conversion." Here regeneration and immersion are only different words, which Mr. C. uses to signify immersion; and to show that we are justified or pardoned by immersion, he produces the following passages: "Who are they who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord? Paul replies, 'They who know not God, and *obey not the gospel of his Son.*' To 'obey the gospel,' to 'become obedient to the faith,' were common phrases in the apostolic discourses and writings. 'By whom we have received apostleship, in order to the *obedience of faith* in all nations, on account of his name.' 'By the commandment of the everlasting God, the gospel is made known to all nations, for the *obedience of faith.*' 'A great company of the priests became obedient to the faith.' 'But they have not all obeyed the gospel;' and, 'What shall be the end of them who obey not the gospel?" Now, we would appeal to every critic in the universe, to know whether one of these passages, on which Mr. C. relies to prove his doctrine, establishes any such thing. It cannot be

shown that *the obedience of faith, or the obedience of the gospel*, is to be restricted to the single *act* of immersion. Indeed, Mr. C. himself does not attempt to prove any such thing; and till this is done, his quotations are irrelevant, and altogether insufficient to establish the doctrine under consideration. Besides, these passages do not relate to the doctrine of the pardon of past sins, as is evident from the connexion in which they stand. It will not be pretended that St. James, when he says, "We are justified by works," has any allusion to the act of immersion.

That we are not justified by the obedience of faith, or by any act of faith, or by works of righteousness done by us after faith in Christ, is evident, because they follow the faith which justifies; that is, procures the pardon of our past sins. "For," says the apostle, "by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;" Eph. ii., 8—10. So that we must be first in Christ, by virtue of this faith, before we can be fitted for the obedience of faith, or before we can perform any act of faith, or before we can do any works of evangelical righteousness. And this accords with the doctrine of justification, as taught by St. Paul. In the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he describes justification by the non-imputation of sin, and the forgiveness of it: "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Since, then, the blessedness of which the apostle is here speaking, is that of justification, the justification of the ungodly, that is, of the Gentiles: and since this blessedness is said to consist in the *forgiveness, covering, the not imputing his sins to him*, it cannot be reasonably denied that the blessedness of a justified person is here described by the blessedness of a pardoned person, as being one and the same thing. And there is not the least intimation that this justification was conferred through any *act* of faith; but, on the contrary, it is declared that faith itself was imputed for righteousness.

That we are justified by faith, is also evident from the example of Abraham's justification, and the passage whence St. Paul adduces it. "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." Here it deserves special notice, that Abraham had faith, or was a believer, before this was said unto him; for, "by faith Abraham being called, obeyed, and went forth." And afterward, by a strong faith, he offered up his son Isaac, believing that "God was able to raise him from the dead." But neither of these

instances are cited by the apostle, because in both obedience was joined with faith, and, therefore, inapplicable to the doctrine he wished to establish; but the passage he cited was pure faith in the testimony of God, without obedience; and of this faith it is said, what is not said of either of the other instances of faith, it was imputed to him for righteousness. Abraham, then, was justified by faith without works; and his justification is set forth as the true model of the justification of all believers in after ages, and, consequently, he was constituted the head and father of the faithful, and they are styled the children of Abraham, because they have the like precious faith with him. Now, if Abraham was justified by faith without works, and we are justified by an *act* of faith, or by the *obedience* of faith, that is, by *immersion*, then Abraham is not our father, neither are we his children. But the Scriptures frequently and expressly affirm, that "believers are justified by faith;" in which expression, faith must include *the obedience of faith*, or it must not; if it does not, then we must be justified by faith without works of righteousness, or any *act* of faith whatever. And that it does not formally include works of righteousness, is evident from the following considerations:—

It is evident, in the first place, from the plain and obvious distinction which the Scriptures put between them, when it informs us that "faith works by love," "acts with our works," "and is made perfect by them;" when it calls upon us to "show forth our faith by our works," and to "add to our faith virtue, knowledge, goodness, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, and charity;" and when it speaks of the works of faith, and the obedience of faith; Gal. v., 6; James ii., 18, 22; 2 Pet. i., 5, 6; Rom. xvi., 26; 1 Thess. i., 3.

It is evident, in the second place, from the nature of faith itself. Faith, in its true nature, is merely an assent of the mind to testimony: divine faith, is assent to divine testimony; faith in Christ, is an assent to the testimony given by God of him. Now, it is unreasonable to suppose that Christ and his apostles, when they knew that faith had this known and fixed import, should mean more by the word than what it signified in common use, as they certainly must have done, had they included in the meaning of the word the whole of our evangelical obedience, or any of its particular acts. It is admitted that faith is the spring and foundation of righteousness, and where it is cordial and lasting, will certainly produce it; yet this righteousness is not included in the very nature of faith, or contained in its true import. And with this definition of faith, Mr. C. is also agreed. He says: "Faith is only the belief of testimony, or confidence in testimony as true." "Where testimony begins, faith begins; and where testimony ends, faith ends." "The quality or value of faith, is found in the quality or value of testimony." Now, how can Mr. C. contend, after having given this definition of faith, that the faith by which St. Paul says we are justified, is

not the belief of testimony, but an *act* of faith, which he affirms to be immersion? His doctrine and reasoning on this subject are in direct opposition to all St. Paul has written on justification by faith.

We trust we have now made it evident, that no person is justified by immersion, or, as Mr. C. calls it, by an *act* of faith, by which he means immersion; and, consequently, that his doctrine and teaching on this subject is erroneous. Now, as the apostles immersed none but believers, and as we are said to be justified by faith, and since faith is the belief of testimony, it follows that the apostles immersed none but those who were already justified; and, therefore, the doctrine of justification, by immersion, is erroneous and false.

IV. In the fourth place, Mr. C. maintains that the sinner is sanctified by immersion. By sanctification, I understand him to mean consecration to the service of God, which he affirms is done by the institution of baptism. As this sanctification is merely a change of condition, without a change of character, it does not include the idea of personal holiness; and, consequently, the doctrine maintained by Mr. C. is, that unholy and impure persons are consecrated to the service of God by immersion. In opposition to this view of the subject, we shall proceed to show that the apostles required personal holiness, a change of character, before they consecrated them to the service of God by baptism; and if we succeed in establishing this position, then the doctrine of Mr. C. is erroneous and false. And here, I would remark, it seems to me that his views on this subject are in direct opposition to the genius and spirit of the Christian institution. He merely inculcates, according to his system, a relative holiness, or relative sanctification, while the Christian institution inculcates a personal holiness, a personal sanctification; and, therefore, the two systems are diametrically opposed to each other. His system includes the form of godliness, but is destitute of the power thereof; while the true system of the gospel includes both.

Mr. C., to sustain his argument that unholy and impure persons are consecrated to the service of God by immersion, relies upon one single passage of Scripture. He says: "St. Paul connected his sanctification with the *name* of the Lord:" "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord, and by the spirit of our God;" 1 Cor., vi., 11. But the true question is, does sanctification, in this passage, merely relate to a change of condition, or does it refer to a change of character? Dr. Macknight says, "The passage may be restrained to those who were true believers, and really holy persons." This passage, says Cruden, signifies, "to cleanse a sinner from the pollution and filth of sin, to free him from the power and dominion of sin, and endue him with the principles of holiness; and thus God, by his Spirit, sanctifies true believers." And with

this interpretation, Whitby, Clark, Doddridge, Gill, Scott, Guise, and the great body of learned critics, commentators, and divines, are also agreed; and it seems to me that the connexion in which the words stand, require this construction.

I shall now proceed to show, in opposition to the view Mr. C. has taken of this subject, that the apostles consecrated none to the service of God, by immersion, but believers, and that they not only taught the doctrine of justification in Christ, but also connected sanctification, or the purification of the soul from the pollution of sin, with the same faith, through the operation of the word and Spirit of God; and, consequently, they administered the institution of baptism to none, only to sanctified persons. In conformity to this view of the subject, St. Paul says, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit;" Rom. xv., 16. Dr. Macknight's paraphrase on these words runs thus: "In order to my being a public minister of Jesus Christ among the Gentiles, ministering to them as a priest the knowledge of the gospel of God, that, by their believing it, there might be an offering of the Gentiles most acceptable to God, being cleansed from their former impurities by the influences of the Holy Ghost accompanying my preaching." Here is a plain allusion, says Dr. Whitby, to the Jewish sacrifices offered by the priest, and *sanctified*, or made acceptable, by the *libamen* offered with them; for he compares himself, in preaching the gospel, to the *priest performing his sacred functions*, preparing his sacrifice to be offered. The *Gentiles*, converted by him, and dedicated to the service of God, are his sacrifices and oblation. The *Holy Spirit* is the *libamen* poured upon his sacrifice by which it was sanctified, and rendered *acceptable* to God. Here it is asserted that before the *Gentiles* were offered up to God by baptism, they were sanctified by the Holy Spirit; and it was this sanctification that rendered them acceptable to God. And this doubtless was the uniform course of procedure by the apostles, throughout the Gentile world, wherever they planted churches, and consecrated believers to the service of God by baptism.

The same sentiment is contained in the commission which was given to the Apostle Paul: "I send thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are *sanctified* through faith that is in me;" Acts xxvi., 18. How this commission was understood and executed by the apostle, we are informed in the preceding quotation from the Epistle to the Romans. Here it is affirmed, that the *Gentiles* were to be justified, or pardoned, through faith in Christ; they were also to receive an inheritance among the sanctified; and, consequently, these persons must be cleansed from the impurities of sin as well as justified; otherwise, they could

not receive an inheritance among the *sanctified*. And certainly this change includes something more than merely a change of *condition*; it must also include a change of character.

Speaking of the various senses in which the original word *hagios* is employed in the Old and New Testaments, Dr. Campbell has the following judicious remarks: "The last sense mentioned, was *moral purity* and innocence; a sense which, by a natural turn of thinking, arises out of the two first meanings assigned, namely: clean, in the common import of the word, and clean in the eyes of the ceremonial law. This meaning might, in respect of its connexion with these, have been ranked in the third place. But, because I consider this originally a metaphorical use of the word, and requiring a greater degree of refinement than the other meanings, I have reserved it for the last. This acceptation is, accordingly, much more frequent in the New Testament than in the Old. In the latter, it oftener occurs in the prophetic and devotional writings, than in the Pentateuch and the other historical books, where we never find *holy* mentioned in the description of a good character. But in the time of the Evangelists, this moral application of the corresponding word, *hagios*, was become more familiar; though the other meanings were not obsolete, as they are almost all at present. Herod is said to have known that John the Baptist was a *just man, and hagion, holy*; Mark vi, 20. There is nothing like this in all the Old Testament. When David pleads that he is *holy*, it is not the word *kadosh* that he uses. The many injunctions to holiness given in the law, as has been already hinted, have at least a much greater reference to ceremonial purity than to moral. The only immorality against which they sometimes seem immediately pointed, is *idolatry*, it being always considered, in the law, as the greatest degree of defilement in both senses, ceremonial or moral.

"But as every vicious action is the transgression of the law, holiness came gradually to be opposed to vice of every kind. The consideration of this, as a stain on the character, as what sullies the mind and renders it familiarly disagreeable to a virtuous man, as dirt renders the body to a clean man, has been common in most nations. Metaphors, drawn hence, are to be found, perhaps, in every language. As the ideas of the people become more spiritual and refined, and, which is a natural consequence, as ceremonies sink in their estimation, and virtue rises, the secondary and metaphorical use of such terms grows more habitual, and often in the end supplants the primitive and the proper. This has happened to the term *holiness*, as now commonly understood by Christians, or rather to the original terms so rendered. It had in a good measure happened, but not entirely, in the language of the Jews; in the days of our Lord and his apostles. The exhortations to holiness in the New Testament, are evidently to be understood of moral purity, and of that only. On other occasions, the *holy* and

*saints, hagioi*, even in the New Testament, ought to be explained in conformity to the fourth meaning, above assigned, devoted or consecrated to the service of God." This is precisely the view we have taken of this subject, that believers are to be first made holy by the word and spirit of God, through the preaching of the gospel, and then consecrated to the service of the Lord by baptism.

That this word includes the idea of *moral purity*, is also evident from the following passages: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be *hagious, holy*, and without blame before him in love;" Eph. i., 4. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you *hagious, holy*, and unblamable in his sight; if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard;" Col. i. 22. "But as he which hath called you is *hagion, holy*, so be ye *hagioi, holy*, in all manner of conversation;" 1 Pet. i., 15. "And the very God of peace *hagiasai, sanctify* you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ;" 1 Thes. v., 23. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is *hagios, holy*, let him *hagistheto, be holy* still;" Rev. xxii., 11. It will not be denied that these passages include the idea of *moral purity*. We, therefore, conclude the sentiment that the apostles consecrated unholy and impure persons to the service of God by baptism, knowing them to be such, finds no countenance or support from the New Testament.

Mr. C., himself, has as effectually put the stamp of reprobation upon the whole system, which he now maintains, as it can be done; and especially upon this particular branch of his theory. In reply to Mr. Ralston's review of his Debate with Mr. Walker on Baptism, he says: "Mr. John Walker, of Dublin, once a minister of the established church, and fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and, (his enemies themselves being judges,) confessedly one of the best, if not the *best* linguist in Europe, in his letters to Alexander Knox, Esq., M. R. I. A., has gone much farther on his criticism on *hagios* than Dr. Campbell, and has *unanswerably* shown, from the use of *hagios* and its corresponding term in Hebrew, viz: *kadosh*, in the sacred dialect, that all believers in Christ are *perfectly* sanctified *in* him, the moment they believe the gospel—that there are no degrees in a sanctified state, any more than there are not different degrees in the state of matrimony; consequently, that *sanctification* is not a *progressive work*, as the Presbyterian church teaches. He demonstrates that all Christians, by faith, are as perfectly sanctified as justified in Christ; that it is as instantaneous in the one case as in the other; that Christ is equally *made unto them holiness as made unto them righteousness*. This is a legitimate conclusion from the true import of *hagios*. That Christians *grow* in grace, and increase in living *conformably* to a *state* of holiness, is



also demonstrated by Dr. Walker. We presume that this is a conclusion from the import of *hagios*, very unacceptable to Mr. R., and contrary to his *strain* of doctrine. We refer him to the seven letters above mentioned. Mr. R. insists that Paul did not address the Christians composing the churches to whom he wrote as 'real saints,' but only 'as persons devoted to, or destined for a sacred purpose.' Dr. Owen teaches that the apostles always addressed the churches as *real*, not as *professed* saints, for it would have been a violation of Christian charity to have thought otherwise. Dr. Walker maintains, that Paul addressed them as perfectly sanctified *in* Christ Jesus. But these were not acquainted with the meaning of *hagios*, as well as Mr. R. But, laying no stress on Mr. R., Dr. Walker, or Dr. Owen, let us judge for ourselves. I ask, then, in what sense is *hagios* applied to a Christian? The only answer that can be given from the divine oracles is, that it is applied to him *only as being in Christ*. It is worse than mere trifling, then, to say that being in Christ does not denote a *real saint*. But let us see how this term is used by the apostles—Ephesians i., 4: 'As he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be *hagious, real saints*;' not only *devoted* to a certain use, but *really* fit for it. 1 Cor. 6, 11: 'But ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified, *hegiasthete, in* the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Surely this denotes real saints. Col. i., 22: 'To present you holy, *hagious*, and unblameable, and unproveable, in his sight.' Does not this denote real saints? 1 Pet. i., 16: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy;' *hagioi genesthe oti ego hagios eimi*. Does not *hagioi* here denote real saints? It is quite unnecessary to write out all the portions of Scripture in which this word occurs, for in no one place is it applied to Christians, but only in relation to their being in Christ, or being conformably to such a state. Thus Paul addresses the Romans, *kletois hagiois*; the Corinthians, *hegiasthenais en Christo kletois hagiois*; the Ephesians, *hagiois kai pistois en Christo*; the Philippians, *hagiois en Christo*, &c. I had said, that the apostles addressed the churches as saints, all saints in Christ Jesus, this destroyed Mr. R.'s tri-formed church; therefore, he attempted to show that *hagios* does not denote a real saint. I think I have shown that it does. But he says the members of the primitive churches are not called *hosioi*, or pious, but only *hagioi*, devoted to a sacred use. Now what is the import of this? If not one of the saints in the New Testament is called *hosios, pious*, must we infer that not one of the saints was *pious*? This would defeat Mr. R.'s tri-formed church, equally with the truth which he opposes; for the one-third of his church must be *so pious*, as to preserve the other two-thirds from putrefaction. So that, in fact, Mr. R.'s abuse of the terms *hosios*, and *hagios*, avails to the destruction of his own system, on his own hypothesis, and affects the subject nothing. The term *hosios*, occurs but eight times in the New Testament;

five times it is applied to Christ, as primarily applicable to him; once, indeed, he is called (Rev. xv., 4) '*monashosios*,' '*Thou only holy one*?' 1 Tim. ii., 8; it is applied to the hands of saints, '*lifting up holy hands*?' Titus i., 8; it is applied to the bishop; *he must be holy*, or benign. Once it is translated *mercies, tu hosia*; Acts xiii., 34. Approving, then, of Dr. Campbell's dissertation on *hagios* and *hosios*, and also of Dr. Walker's and Dr. Owen's, I cordially disapprove of Mr. R.'s *abuse* of such criticism; which, in fact, if it proved anything, would prove that *not one* of the saints, addressed by the apostles, was *pious* or benign. The apostle, moreover, not only used the term *hagios* to express the real saintship of the churches addressed, but he spoke of their *election*, their *justification*, their *pardon*, their being *accepted*, and acceptable in the Beloved. *And never, in one instance, does he address the churches as designedly, or intentionally composed of any but real saints; and, if any appeared not to be a real saint, he was to be put away from amongst them.* This fact excludes Mr. R.'s tri-formed church from any place in the oracles of Christ:" p. 249.

V. In the fifth place, Mr. C. maintains that sinners are reconciled to God by immersion. But he is so hard pushed for Scripture testimony to sustain this position, that he has not been able to find one solitary passage on which to rest the doctrine; he, therefore, merely says, the apostle "represents God as in Christ, reconciling a world unto himself; and so all under Christ, are frequently said to be reconciled to God through him; which was the point to be proved." But this was by no means the point to be proved; we are ready to admit that all sinners who are reconciled to God, are reconciled to him through Christ; but we deny that any sinner was ever reconciled to God by immersion, and call for proof. This proof Mr. C. has not furnished, neither can he furnish it, because no such doctrine is taught in the word of God.

Justification and reconciliation, are two words conveying nearly the same idea, contemplated in different points of light, as is evident from the following passages: "Much more being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life;" Rom. v., 9, 10; where, to be justified by his blood, and reconciled by his death, seem plainly to be the same thing. "Now, that reconciliation is effected by the removal of the guilt of sin, and cleansing the heart from its impurities, is evident from the language of St. Paul in these words: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" 2 Cor. v., 19; and, therefore, justification must also be obtained in the same way; for if, upon the not imputing sin to us, God did not account us as righteous, he could not be reconciled to us, because he cannot be reconciled to any man continuing to be unrighteous, or polluted with sin and transgression. Sin has put the sinner and God

at variance; and as long as sin continues, the parties can never become reconciled; but when sin is taken out of the way, then the parties become friends. And how is sin removed? by faith in Christ. "For in him," says the apostle, "all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Now, since the apostles immersed none but believers, therefore, they immersed none but justified persons; and as all who were justified were also reconciled to God, they, consequently, immersed none but such as they had reasons to believe were reconciled to God. Hence, their ministry was called the ministry of reconciliation; not because they were authorized to administer the institution of baptism, but because they were commissioned to publish the doctrine of reconciliation, and to be the chief instruments, under God, of turning men from sin to holiness. "Therefore," says the apostles, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation:" 2 Cor. v., 17—19.

VI. In the sixth place, Mr. C. affirms that sinners are "adopted into the family of God" by immersion. The remarks of Mr. C., under this head, are very general, and little to the point. His reasoning on this subject is vague, indefinite, and unsatisfactory. He has not quoted one passage of Scripture, nor offered one argument to sustain his position. The true question is, by what means do sinful men become the sons, and, consequently, the heirs of God? Mr. C. maintains, if I understand him, by adoption, and that the sinner is adopted by immersion. But do the Scriptures teach this doctrine? I think not. St. John says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God;" 1., 12, 13. The same doctrine was taught by the Apostle Paul. He says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" Gal. iii., 26. "And," again, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise;" 29. Abraham's spiritual seed are called the children of God. "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed;" Rom. ix., 8. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." "So, then, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free;" Gal. iv., 28, 31. It is a doctrine so well established, that the spiritual seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promise, are true believers, I presume none will controvert it. Hence St. Paul says, "So, then, they which be of faith, are blessed with believing Abraham." It is evident, then, that we become the children of Abraham, and the

sons of God, and, consequently, the heirs of the promise, not by immersion, but by faith in Christ Jesus.

The foundation of adoption is laid by Christ in the glorious plan of redemption. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;" Gal. iv., 4. That adoption implies not merely a change of condition, but also a change of character, is evident from the following passages: "According as he has 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 to the *adoption* of children by 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, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" Eph. i., 4—7. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" Rom. viii., 9. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of *adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" 14, 15. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ;" Gal. iv., 6, 7. "There is no adoption," says Charnock, "without regeneration. Adoption is not a mere relation: the privileges and the image of the sons of God go together. A state of adoption is never without a separation from defilement; 2 Cor. v. 17, 18. The new name in adoption is never given, till the new creature be formed; Rom. viii., 14. Yet these are to be distinguished. Regeneration as a *physical* act, gives a likeness to God in our nature; adoption, as a *legal* act, gives us a right to an inheritance. Regeneration makes us formally his sons by conveying a principle, adoption makes us *relatively* his sons by conveying his power; John i., 12. By the one, we are instated in the divine affection; by the other, we are partakers of the divine nature."

VII. Once more, Mr. C. maintains that the sinner is saved from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, by immersion. But how immersion in water *washes away sins*, he admits to be "incomprehensible;" but maintains that God gives to water this efficacy, and declares, "He has given it an extension far and wide as sin has spread—far and wide as water flows." And again he says: "Some ask, How can water, which penetrates not the skin, reach the conscience? They boast of such an objection, as exhibiting great intellect, and good sense. But little do they think that in so talking, they laugh at and mock the whole divine economy, under the old and new institutions; for, I ask, did not the sacrifices, and Jewish

purifications, some way reach the conscience of that people? If they did not, it was all mere frivolity throughout." Mr. C. here takes a bold stride; finding himself unable to answer the question proposed, he turns around and attacks the objector, in severe language. By proposing this question, we neither "laugh at" nor "mock" the institutions of God; we only ask Mr. C. to show that the means he proposes for cleansing the soul from the pollutions of sin, are in themselves sufficient to produce this effect. And is this unreasonable? Certainly not. After admitting the thing to be "incomprehensible," he assumes, without a particle of proof, that God gives to water this miraculous "efficacy;" and so he is compelled to rely upon a miracle to sustain his doctrine, in the last resort. Then, after singing the praises of water, Mr. C. is compelled to admit that it possesses in itself no more "efficacy" to cleanse the sinner from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, than clay and spittle have to restore sight to the blind. If Mr. C. will demonstrate the "efficacy" of clay and spittle to restore sight to the blind, we will admit that he can *wash away sins* by the "efficacy" of water; and till he does this, or something equivalent to it, we shall certainly claim to be a dissenter from his doctrine. A man who professes to work but one miracle, and to repeat this at will and pleasure, must give us unquestionable proof of the validity of this miracle, before we can yield our assent to the claims he sets up. What evidence has Mr. C. ever given that water possesses this "efficacy?" or what evidence have the immersed ever given that the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, have been removed in the act of baptism? Just as much evidence as the dead give of this "efficacy," and not a whit more. Here all practical demonstration is out of the question; we see, we hear, we feel, we know nothing, respecting it, that can give us any light on the subject. The doctrine is a mere theory, and a theory that rests on testimony lighter than air.

Mr. C. asks, "Did not the sacrifices and Jewish purifications *some way* reach the conscience of that people? If they did not, it was mere frivolity throughout." What does Mr. C. mean by "reaching the conscience?" If he means anything to the purpose, he must mean cleansing the conscience from the pollution of moral guilt. Now, did the sacrifices and Jewish purifications, under the old covenant, in *any way* do this? They did not; neither were they appointed for this purpose. There were no sacrifices appointed by God, under that economy, to take away moral pollution. Idolatry, going to witches, cursing of parents, bestiality, incest, and all immorality, properly so called, or offences against the law of nature and reason, committed wilfully, and not through ignorance, have no sacrifices appointed; but all propitiation was made only for ignorance, or errors in rituals, or offences against the positive laws of the land.

When the congregation was guilty of any offence through igno-

rance, then the priest was to make an atonement for the congregation, because it was committed through ignorance, without the knowledge of the congregation; and it shall be forgiven all the congregation, seeing all the people were in ignorance; Num. xv., 22, 26. And if any soul sin through ignorance, he was to bring a sin-offering, and the priest was to make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him; Ibid., 27, 28. Thus far an atonement might be made. But then it follows, the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and the soul shall be cut off from among his people; because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandments: that soul shall be utterly cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him; ver. 30, 31. The same sentiment is expressed by the apostle Paul: he says, "But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the *agnomata, errors, ignorances*, of the people;" Heb. ix., 7. And again he says, "The blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;" ver. 13. That is, the Jewish sacrifices, washings, and sprinklings, appointed by the Mosaic economy, which are called carnal ordinances, (ver. 10,) took away those legal impurities which debarred the Jews from an attendance upon the public service. But the apostle uniformly inculcates the sentiment that these Jewish rites did not take away moral guilt, "did not make the comers thereunto perfect," did not "purify the conscience." We would inform Mr. C. that neither the blood of bulls, nor of goats, nor of birds, nor of lambs, were "necessary," under the former economy, to take away moral pollution; neither were they ever appointed for that purpose. The only blood which the Scriptures represent as possessing efficacy to take away moral pollution, is the "precious blood of Christ," that "blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." Neither is water any more "necessary," under the new economy, to cleanse a soul from moral pollution, or the "means" by which it is effected, than thunder, lightning, or any of the works of God. God can speak to the mind by the stormy ocean, or the majestic river, or the limpid stream, or the refreshing showers, or the gentle dew, or out of a whirlwind, or in a still small voice, or by the forked lightning, or by any other of his works or ways; and so make them the means of saving a soul, by calling up to the mind the subject of religion. But that a minister is to cleanse the soul from moral pollution, by dipping the body under water, just as a woman "cleanses a room by washing it," is to us a very extraordinary idea.

If this idea of cleansing human nature, by the act of immersion, should generally obtain in this country, the Protestant clergymen will be as busily engaged in baptizing, as the Papal priests are in Italy in pardoning sins; and, for myself, I should as soon think of

applying to a priest to get my sins pardoned, as to a clergyman to have them washed away by dipping the body under water.

But Mr. C. relies upon another passage to sustain this dogma. It is the address of Ananias to Saul. "Why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." This passage cannot furnish any evidence in support of the doctrine, as will appear evident by the following considerations.

From the account of the apostle's conversion, as recorded in the ninth chapter of Acts, it is certain that he was regenerated previous to the act of baptism. When the Lord directed Ananias, in a vision, to inquire for Saul of Tarsus, he said, "Behold, he prayeth." This expression was designed to inform Ananias that Paul had acquired a new character. Ananias replied to this communication, by observing, that he had been advised that Paul was a very bitter persecutor of the church. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Here God declares that Paul was a "chosen vessel unto him," previous to the act of baptism. The apostle says that "we are chosen through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Hence, as Paul at this time was a "chosen vessel," he must have been already sanctified, and had his sins remitted. Ananias went agreeably to the direction of the Lord, and when he was introduced to him, "putting his hands upon him," he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way, as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received his sight." Here Ananias acknowledged him to be a Christian "brother," and God, by the instrumentality of Ananias, wrought a miracle upon his eyes; and it is probable, as the Holy Ghost was generally communicated by the imposition of hands, at this time he was "filled with the Holy Ghost." Thus it appears that Paul was characterized from heaven as one who "prayeth," and declared to be a "chosen vessel unto the Lord," was recognised by Ananias as a Christian "brother," received the "imposition of hands," by which a miracle was wrought upon his eyes, and "filled with the Holy Ghost;" all of which took place previous to his baptism. From this testimony, I am persuaded, that previous to the act of baptism, he was a converted man. These facts, in themselves, are sufficient to show that the baptism of Paul can furnish no evidence in support of the truth of the doctrine in question.

In order for Mr. C. to avail himself of this passage as proof of his favorite dogma, he must consider the phrase, "wash away thy sins," as synonymous to "remit thy sins." But can this expression be supported? I think not: for the obvious reason that it was a command given to Paul, a work which he himself was to perform.

Did God ever give power to any man to pardon his own sins, to remit his own transgressions? What! has the criminal authority to remit his own crimes? A strange doctrine indeed; yet this is the doctrine the advocates of this dogma advance from this text. We do not misrepresent them; here is the evidence in the following quotation: "Paul's sins were not forgiven, or washed away till he was baptized;" that is, he did not forgive his sins till he was baptized. Into what strange absurdities men will fall, when they undertake to support a doctrine from the Bible! which is wholly unevangelical!

The direction which Ananias gave to Paul, to "wash away his sins," refers to a course of conduct which he was to pursue after his baptism, by which the stains of character he had acquired, in persecuting the saints, would be wiped away. That this is the idea inculcated in this verse, is evident from the frequent use of the terms "wash," and "cleanse," in both the Old and New Testaments, as applied in a moral sense. "To wash one's hands in innocency," imports a course of upright conduct. When we are, therefore, commanded in the Scriptures to "cleanse our hands," and to "wash ourselves, that we may be clean," these phrases, when used in a moral sense, signify a change of conduct, as is evident from the following passages: "Wash ye, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow;" Isa. i., 16, 17. "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved; how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" Jer. iv., 14. "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord?" 2 Cor. vii., 1. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded;" James iv., 8. Thus, it appears that this passage has been forced into the services by the advocates of this dogma, and compelled to speak a sentiment never intended by the writer.

Mr. C. also produces this passage, to prove that sinners are saved by immersion; "eight souls were effectually saved by water. To which water, the antitype baptism, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) now saveth us, also, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" 1 Pet. iii., 21. This passage, rightly understood, instead of affording any evidence in support of Mr. C.'s theory, is directly against it. The salvation of the eight souls by water, has no allusion to any deliverance from either "the guilt, pollution, or dominion of sin;" and, consequently, the antitype can have no such meaning. The word *antitype* denotes the thing formed in imitation of the type or pattern. Hence, believers are to receive a salvation by immersion, like that which the eight received by water. Now, what was that salvation, which the eight souls received by water?



They were conveyed in the ark, by water, out of the old into the new world, and thus escaped that general deluge which destroyed the inhabitants of the old world. The salvation which believers are to receive by baptism, must be a salvation analogous to this, a salvation which conveys them from this to another world; and this is done, emblematically, by baptism. Hence, St. Paul says: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection;" Rom. vi., 5. Dr. Mac-knight's paraphrase on these words runs thus: "For, seeing Christ and we have been planted together in baptism, in the likeness of his death, as occasioned by sin, certainly by being raised out of the water of baptism, we are taught that we shall be also planted together in the likeness of his resurrection." The resurrection of Jesus Christ is both the proof and the example of the resurrection of believers. Hence, our baptism, called in the preceding clause of this verse, "a planting together in the likeness of his death," being both a memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, and a pre-figuration of our own, it teaches us, that we shall die, indeed, through the malignity of sin, as Christ died; but through the merit of his death, and the efficacy of his power as Saviour, we shall, at the last day, be raised as he was, to live with him and God eternally. Again, says the apostle: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein, also, ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead;" Col. ii., 12. Jesus Christ began his ministry with receiving baptism from John, to show in an emblematical manner that he was to die, and to rise again from the dead. And, after his resurrection, he commanded his disciples to initiate believers into his religion by baptizing them, as he himself had been baptized; to show, that although they shall die, like him, through the malignity of sin, yet, as certainly as he rose from the dead, believers shall be raised at the last day, with bodies fashioned like unto his glorious body. Now this is the very thing spoken of by St. Peter in the passage under consideration: our safe and certain passage from death to the resurrection, from time to eternity, from our earthly to our heavenly habitation; and which he calls the *antitype* of the passage of eight souls by water, from the old into the new world, all of which is signified to believers by baptism.

Once more: these persons are also said to have "a good conscience towards God" before they were baptized; consequently, they must have been accepted of God, and justified in his sight, before they were immersed. Beza renders the original word *eperotema*, which is translated in the common version *answer, stipulation*; because he supposes the apostle had in his eye the answer which persons to be baptized gave to the questions put to them before baptism, of which Cyprean has given an account. That questions were proposed, and answers given, by the candidates for baptism, cannot well be denied, unless it be supposed that the apostles aban-

done every principle of safety, every rule of propriety, and immersed all indiscriminately who applied. They, certainly, had a test of qualifications for baptism, as is evident from the case of the Ethiopian eunuch; he requested baptism: "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." On this answer, Philip administered to him the institution of baptism.

Mr. C. says again, "The apostles taught all the disciples to consider not only themselves as saved persons, but all whom they saw, or knew to be immersed into the Lord Jesus. They saluted every one, on his coming up out of the water, as *saved*, and recorded him as such. Luke writes, "The Lord added *the saved* daily to the congregation." This passage is direct proof against the correctness of this theory, for it declares *the saved* were added. They were added to the church by immersion; but it is not here affirmed that the process of adding saved them, but, on the contrary, they were saved before they were added, and, consequently, before they were immersed: "The Lord added *the saved* daily to the church." Baptism is designed of God to be the safeguard of the church, to keep out unholy and impure persons, and to admit *the saved*. Hence, it becomes important, that ministers of the gospel do not prostitute this holy institution to unworthy purposes, and make it the passport of the unholy, the impure, and the profane, into the church of the living God. Baptism is designed of God to be the great dividing line between the sinner and the saint, the world and the church; and if this barrier be effectually broken down by the prostitution of baptism to unhallowed purposes, and all classes and conditions of men are freely admitted into the church, then farewell to her purity; her glory will fade away, her beauty will be tarnished, and she will be plunged into formality, worldliness, and corruption.

To sustain the doctrine of salvation by immersion, Mr. C. also produces this passage: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." This salvation is present, and is a salvation of the soul from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin; it includes the ideas, both of justification and of sanctification; that is, a freedom from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin. Now, how can Mr. C. maintain, with any degree of propriety or consistency, that this great change is wrought in a sinner, and, at the same time, that there is no change of "character," no change of "any quality of mind," but merely a change of "state or condition?" To me, these positions appear contradictory and absurd. If a sinner is freed from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, a change must be wrought in the "quality of his mind." To be freed from the dominion of sin, as clearly implies a change of affection and of conduct, as words can express ideas. St. Paul says, "knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more *dominion* over him. For in that he died,

he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also, yourselves, to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin ; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have *dominion* over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace ;” Rom. vi., 9—14. The law exacted obedience, without giving any *power* to obey ; but the gospel provides *pardon* for past transgressions, and gives *grace* to help in time of need. The man who is under the dominion of sin, is said to be the servant of sin ; and the condition of such a man is represented by St. Paul, by the following terms and phrases : “ To serve sin, to be servants of sin, sin to reign in our mortal bodies, to obey sin in the lusts of our bodies, to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, or servants of uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, to be freed from righteousness, to walk, live, or be after the flesh, to be carnally minded ;” all of which signify to be under the dominion of sin. But the man who is freed from the dominion of sin, is represented as possessing entirely a different character, and as leading another life. St. Paul describes him by the following terms and phrases : “ As walking after the spirit, or in newness of life, the crucifixion of the old man, the destruction of the body of sin, the deliverance from the body of death, to be freed from sin, to be dead to sin, alive unto God, to yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead ; yield your members servants of righteousness unto holiness, or instruments of righteousness unto God, to be servants of obedience unto righteousness, made free from sin, servants of righteousness, to be after the Spirit, to be spiritually minded, to mortify the deeds of the body ;” all of which, implies a state of mind and course of conduct entirely different from those who are under the dominion of sin. And if this language does not imply a “ change of character,” as well as a change of condition, then we do not understand the meaning of the term. And all this is implied in the salvation of the soul from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin.

VIII. We shall now proceed to consider Mr. C.’s remarks on the meaning of the terms *in Christ*, and *into Christ*. He says, “ These things premised, the question presents itself, *When are persons in Christ?* I choose this phrase in accommodation to the familiar style of this day. No person is *in* a house, *in* a ship, *in* a state, *in* a kingdom, but he that has gone, or is introduced *into* a house, *into* a ship, *into* a state, *into* a kingdom ; so no person is *in* Christ, but he who has been introduced *into* Christ. The Scripture style is most religiously accurate. We have the words “ *in Christ*,” and the words “ *into Christ*,” often repeated in the Christian Scrip-

tures; but in no one place can the one phrase be substituted for the other. Hence, in all places, when any person is said to be *in Christ*, it refers not to his conversion, regeneration, or putting on *Christ*, but to a state of rest, or privilege, subsequent to conversion, regeneration, or putting on Christ. But the phrase "*into Christ*" is always connected with conversion, regeneration, immersion, or putting on Christ. Before we are justified in Christ, live in Christ, or fall asleep in Christ, we must come, be introduced, or immersed into Christ. *Into* belongs only to verbs implying motion towards; and *in* to verbs implying rest, or motion in. He eats, sleeps, sits in the house. He walks into the field; he rides into the city. "*Into Christ*" is a phrase only applicable to conversion, immersion, or regeneration, or what is called putting on Christ, translation into his kingdom, or submission to his government."

There is much sophistry in these remarks of Mr. C., which ought to be detected and exposed. He says a man must be introduced *into* a house, before he can be *in* it; and so a man must be immersed *into* Christ, before he can be *in* him. The illustration which Mr. C. here introduces is irrelevant and unsatisfactory. A house is a container, and when a man is introduced into it, he is merely brought within its enclosure; but who will pretend that any man is ever introduced into Christ in this sense? It is true that believers are said to be immersed *into* Christ, but not in the sense in which a man is introduced *into* a house. When a believer is immersed into a public profession of religion, he is incorporated into the building, as a constituent part of it, and not merely brought within its enclosure; and so, when a man is immersed *into* Christ, he makes a public profession of religion by baptism, and becomes a member of his church; and this is all we are to understand by the phrase. Besides, the introduction of a man *into* a house, *into* jail, or *into* the state prison, as frequently implies a *bad* as a *good* character, and such an introduction neither alters nor changes his character; and will Mr. C. admit this in relation to the Scripture immersion *into* Christ? Will he admit that the Scripture immersion *into* Christ, is like the introduction of knaves and villains *into* jail? for they are as truly *in* jail, after such an introduction, as a man is *in* a house, after he is introduced *into* it. What wretched work a man makes of the Bible, when he attempts to give a literal interpretation to a figurative expression!

It may be proper here to make a few remarks on the peculiar, yet forcible, language of Scripture. We read in Matthew: "I indeed baptize you *in* water *into* repentance;" and in the first of Corinthians: "And were all baptized *in* the cloud and *in* the sea *into* Moses." Here are two prepositions used in the original, *en* and *eis*, and correctly rendered into English, *in* and *into*; which should be critically and carefully noticed, and which are never confounded in the original Scriptures. By what inadvertency the translators of the common version have confounded these prepositions, when

speaking of the institution of baptism, we do not presume to say. But they have been followed by most modern translators, and with them they translate *eis*, *in*, *into*, and *unto*, when speaking of this institution, indiscriminately; they also translate *en*, *in*, *with*, and *by*, under the same circumstances; which is the occasion of much confusion to the mere English reader. In the following passages they have rendered *eis*, *into*: "For by one Spirit we are all baptized *eis*, *into* one body;" 1 Cor. xii., 13. "Do ye not know that as many of you as were baptized *eis*, *into* Christ, were baptized *eis*, *into* his death?" Rom. vi., 3. "As many of you as have been baptized *eis*, *into* Christ, have put on Christ;" Gal. iii., 27. Now, by the same rule, they ought to have rendered the following passages in the same way: "Only they were baptized *eis*, *into* the name of the Lord Jesus;" Acts viii., 16. "*Eis*, *into* what name then were ye baptized? When they heard this, they were baptized *eis*, *into* the name of the Lord Jesus;" xix., 3. "Were you baptized *eis*, *into* the name of Paul?" "Lest any should say I had baptized *eis*, *into* my own name;" 1 Cor. i., 13. "Baptizing them *eis*, *into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" Matt. xxviii., 19. These examples are sufficient to show that the apostles observed a strict uniformity in the use of these prepositions, and the same uniformity should have been preserved in the translation, when speaking of the institution of baptism.

When the preposition *en* is used, it stands in connexion with the element in which the candidates are immersed; but when the preposition *eis* is used, it points to *the design, the purport, the end*, of the institution. Furthermore, in all those places in the New Testament where we are said to be baptized *into* Christ, *into* the name of Christ, or *into* the body of Christ, *en hudate, in water*, is understood, and, agreeable to the examples above given, when the ellipsis is supplied, will read thus: Baptized in water into Christ, in water into the name of Christ, in water into the body of Christ, in water into repentance, in the cloud and in the sea into Moses. Thus, this consistency and harmony of language runs through the New Testament, and forms a beautiful consistency in the doctrine of the gospel.

To be baptized, then, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," is to be *initiated*, by baptism, into a public profession of that religion which was instituted by the Father, and taught by the Son, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost; or into the public profession of that religion which came from the Father as its author, which was communicated to the world by Jesus Christ, and confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, is publicly to enter one's name as his disciple. To be baptized into any one, or into any one's name, is solemnly, by that ceremony, to enter himself a disciple of him into whose name he is baptized, with profession to

receive his doctrine and rules, and submit to his authority. In this sense the Israelites were "baptized into Moses;" and, for this reason, St. Paul rejoiced that he had baptized so few at Corinth, lest they should say he had "baptized into his own name;" that is, made disciples to himself.

We are said to be baptized into Christ; but in all those passages where we are said to be baptized into Christ, Christ is put for his body, the church. This is evident from the following passage: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ;" 1 Cor. xii., 12. By Christ here we are undoubtedly to understand the body of Christ, the church; so in all those passages where we are said to be baptized into Christ, Christ is put for his body, the church. Then, in all those places in the New Testament, where we are said to be baptized into Christ, it is simply affirmed that we are *initiated* into the church by baptism. Publicly to enter one's name as a disciple of Christ by baptism, is the same thing as to be *initiated* into the church by baptism. And in this sense, when a believer is baptized into Christ, he is *in* Christ; that is, he is a member of his church; and this is all the phrase signifies.

But there is another sense in which Christians are said to be in Christ, that Mr. C. has entirely overlooked. St. Paul says, "For we are his workmanship, created *in Christ* Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them;" Eph. ii., 10. "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 are ye saved, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, *in Christ Jesus*;" 4—6. "Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new;" 2 Cor. v., 17. This new creation, this resurrection from moral death, constituting the new creature, implies something more than a change of state by baptism; the soul is renewed in the mind, will, and affections; the body new in its action, having been made the instrument of righteousness; the worship new, and the whole life new. Our Saviour said to his disciples, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me, ye can do nothing;" John xv., 4, 5. "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." To be in Christ, by baptism, is a federal union; but this is a spiritual and vital union, a union of faith and love.

IX. We shall now consider the main pillar of Mr. C.'s system, the language of St. Peter, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ;" ii., 38. Mr. C., in quoting the language of St. Peter, renders it, " Reform and be immersed for the remission of sins," or, " in order to the remission of sins ;" that is, be immersed in water for the remission of sins. Now, the literal rendering of this passage is thus : " Reform and be immersed *eis, into* the remission of sins." The same mode of expression is also adopted by both St. Mark and St. Luke, in describing the doctrine and preaching of the Baptist. " John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance *eis, into* the remission of sins." " And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance *eis, into* the remission of sins." These three passages are all the instances in which the remission of sins is spoken of, as being connected with baptism, in the whole New Testament ; and in every one of them the doctrine of immersion *into the remission of sins* is inculcated. Now, if " the Scripture style is most religiously accurate," concerning the use of the preposition *eis*, as Mr. C. affirms, why has he not been as *religiously* honest in his criticism on this passage, as he has been in his criticism on many other passages, where this preposition is used ? Why has he, for the last twenty years, preserved a total silence in relation to the use of this preposition in the passage in consideration ? Why has he not informed the community that the preposition, here employed, is *eis*, and should be rendered *into*, instead of *for*, or *in order to* ? The fact is, this rendering is unfavorable to the construction he puts upon the passage ; and this accounts for the silence he has maintained respecting the original.

Now, if believers are immersed in water *into* the remission of sins, this must signify *the design, the purport, the end* of baptism, and especially with reference to the administrator ; for it is he who declares this remission by administering the institution of baptism. It becomes necessary, in order to understand this subject, to inquire into the meaning of the phrase, the remission of sins, and to ascertain what is implied by it. " Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose soever sins ye *aphete, remit*, they *aphientai, are forgiven* unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained ;" John xx., 21—23. St. Peter uses the word *aphesin* in Acts, which our Saviour employed in this commission, as recorded by St. John, and undoubtedly refers to the exercise of this authority to remit sins, which he conferred upon the apostles in this commission ; this, then, is a remission of sins declared by the apostles in the administration of immersion, and not to the forgiveness of sins bestowed by God, in consideration of any submission to the institution of baptism.

" It is somewhat remarkable," says Mr. Taylor, in his edition of Calmet, " that the term *pardon* of sin does not occur in the New Testament ; but we read of *remission* and *forgiveness*. Certainly

these words, with the ideas they represent, are allied; yet there seems to be some distinction preserved between them. When the observation is made, 'This man, who takes upon him to forgive sins, blasphemeth: who can forgive sins, but God?' it should seem as if our Lord had said, 'Thy sins are remitted;' but that term would not have justified the inference made. When John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and when our Lord gave power to his apostles, 'Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted;' we cannot suppose that either of these parties invaded an acknowledged prerogative of God. If the remission of sins by the apostles was declaratory—if John the Baptist was the prophet of the Highest, to give the knowledge of salvation to his people, by the remission of their sins—if, in consequence of the confession of sins made previous to baptism by John, that prophet remitted sins by baptism. (that is, declared them to be remitted.)—if Peter advised the Jews to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; then we must admit that the exercise of this power, by men, was by no means identical with the forgiveness of sins, which appertains to God only. Under the law, there was no remission of sins, without shedding of blood; that is, until the proper sacrifices were offered, the priest could not pronounce the transgressor free from the consequences of his transgressions: under the gospel no blood was shed by John, or by the apostles. But the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for many, for the confession of sins; and remission of sins was preached in his name.

"The term *aphesis*, rendered *remission*, signifies to announce liberty to the captive, (Luke iv., 18.) to release the obligation of a debt, as in the sabbatical year; Deut. xv., 3. The term *aphiemi*, rendered *forgive*, is, with the greatest propriety, addressed to God: 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:' and the power of forgiving: 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,' assumed by our Lord, was greatly superior to that of announcing remission, conferred on the apostles, and could be becoming only in a personage infinitely above them in dignity and power."

Some light may be thrown on this subject by referring to the language of our Saviour to his apostles, as recorded by St. Matthew: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven;" xvi., 19. The same authority which is here promised to Peter, was afterwards conferred upon all the apostles: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;" xviii., 18. *Binding* and *loosing* were terms in frequent use among the Jews, and signified *bidding* and *forbidding*, *granting* and *refusing*, declaring *lawful* and *unlawful*. "To this, therefore," says Dr. Lightfoot, "do these words amount: when the time was come wherein the Mosaical law, as to some part of it,



was to be abolished, and left off, and as to another part of it, was to be continued and to last forever, he granted *Peter*, here, and to the rest of the apostles, afterwards, a power to *abolish* or *confirm* what they thought good, and as they thought good; being taught this, and led by the Holy Spirit, as if he should say, Whatsoever ye shall *bind* in the law of *MOSES*, that is forbid, it shall be *forbidden*, the divine authority confirming it; and whatsoever ye shall *loose*, that is, *permit*, or shall teach, that is, *permitted* and *lawful*, and shall be *lawful* and *permitted*. Hence they *bound*, that is, *forbade*, circumcision to the believers; eating things offered to idols, of things strangled, and of blood for a time, to the *Gentiles*; and that which they *bound on earth*, was *confirmed in heaven*. They *loosed*, that is, allowed purification to *Paul*, and to *four other brethren*, for the shunning of scandal; Acts xxi., 24: and in a word, by these words of *Christ* it was committed to them, the Holy Spirit directing that they should make decrees concerning religion, as to the use or the rejection of *Mosaic* rites and judgment, and that either for a time, or for ever.

“Let the words be applied by the way of a paraphrase to the matter that was transacted at present with Peter: ‘I am about to build a *Gentile* church,’ saith *Christ*, ‘and to thee, O Peter, do I give the *keys* of the kingdom of heaven, that thou mayest *first open the doors of faith to them*; but if thou askest by what rule that church is to be governed, when the *Mosaic* rule may seem so improper for it, thou shalt be so guided by the Holy Spirit, that whatsoever of the law of *Moses* thou shalt *forbid* them, shall be *forbidden*; whatsoever thou *grantest* them, shall be *granted*, and that under a sanction made in heaven.’ Hence, in that instant, when he should use his *keys*, that is, when he was now ready to open the gate of the gospel to the *Gentiles*, (Acts x.) he was taught from heaven that the consorting of the *Jew* with the *Gentile*, which before had been *bound*, was now *loosed*; and the eating of any creature convenient for food, was now *loosed*, which before had been *bound*; and he, in like manner, *looseth* both of these.”

These passages in St. Matthew refer to *things lawful or unlawful* in religion, to be determined by the apostles; and also to *persons obstinate*, or not *obstinate*, to be *punished*, or *not to be punished by them*; but the passage in St. John refers to *doctrine* which the apostles were eminently qualified both to declare and teach. The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, through faith in Christ, was clearly and fully taught by the apostles; and they were authorized to declare the remission of sins by the institution of baptism. This subject may be further illustrated by reference to Levit. xiii., 3, 33—where we read the direction given to the priest concerning the law of leprosy: “And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh; and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy; and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce

him unclean. But if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not, it is a burning bile; and the priest shall pronounce him clean." Shall pronounce him unclean, *vetimme otho*, literally, *shall pollute him*; that is, in the Hebrew idiom, shall *declare him polluted*. The priest shall pronounce him clean, *ve-titharo ha-cohen*, the priest *shall cleanse him*; that is, declare the man clean or unclean, according to signs well known and infallible. The apostles *bound* or *loosed*, declared to be *fit* or *unfit* for church-fellowship, according to unequivocal evidence of *innocence* or *guilt*. In the former case, the priest declared the person fit or unfit for civil society; in the latter, the apostles declared the persons against whom the suspicion of guilt was laid, *fit* or *unfit* for continued association with the church of God. The office was the same in both instances, a declaration of the truth, not from any power of *cleansing* or *polluting*, or of *binding* or of *loosing*; but by the knowledge they gained from the infallible signs and evidences produced on the respective cases. And so the authority to *remit* or *retain* sins, which was conferred upon the apostles, was *declaratory*, according to the evidences presented in the case, as is agreed by the whole Protestant community. This declaration of the remission of sins was made by immersion, and hence believers are said to be *immersed into the remission of sins*; for it was by baptism, the apostles publicly declared, that the persons they immersed were proper and suitable subjects to be introduced into the church of God; and by the same immersion, these persons made a public profession of the Christian religion. And this is what I understand by *immersion into the remission of sins*. Now, this presupposes that all persons were thoroughly examined, and gave satisfactory evidence of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, before they were admitted to the institution of baptism; for it would be presumption in the apostles to declare the remission of sins by immersion, in cases where they had no evidence of the true faith in Christ; and that such an examination did actually take place, is evident from the question proposed by Philip, and the answer given by the eunuch.

X. Once more—we shall now proceed to consider Mr. C.'s views of regeneration. He affirms, that regeneration and immersion "are two Bible names for the same act, contemplated in two different points of view." After having remarked that the term *regeneration* occurs but twice in the common version, (Matt. xix., 28; Titus iii., 5.) he proceeds to say, "that no writer of any note, critic, or expositor, supposes that *regeneration* in Matt. xix., applies to what is, in theology, called the *new birth*, or *regeneration* of the soul. Regeneration in this passage denotes a state—a new state of things."

The original word *palingenesia*, which is rendered in the common version *regeneration*, is derived from *palin*, *again*, *genesis*, *a being born*, *a birth*, and signifies *a being born again*, *a new birth*,

*regeneration, renovation*; but never signifies immersion in the whole Bible. Mr. C., himself, admits that it does not signify immersion, as used by St. Matthew; he has, consequently, given up one of the only two passages where the word is used in the New Testament as against him. The passage in Matthew reads thus: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of glory," &c. Mr. Parkhurst says, "That if the word *regeneration*, be construed as in our translation, with the preceding clause, it denotes that *spiritual renovation* which began to take place on the preaching of John the Baptist, (see Matt. xi., 12—14; Luke xvi., 16,) and was carried on till the end of our Lord's personal ministry on earth; but if those words be connected, as the following context seem to require, with the subsequent clause, they may then be most easily and naturally referred to that great and more signal renovation, which commenced after the resurrection and the ascension of the Redeemer to the throne of his glory, at the right hand of God, and which was demonstratively exhibited by the unparalleled effusion of the Holy Spirit, on his disciples; when God had exalted that Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, to be a Prince and a Saviour, making him both Lord and Christ; Acts v., 30—35; ii., 32—36; and seating his apostles on twelve thrones to judge; that is, rule under him the twelve tribes of Israel, namely, the whole Christian church."

Dr. Scott says, "If we join the expression, 'in the regeneration,' to the preceding clause, it may mean the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, disposing them to obey his call."

Dr. Lightfoot places the comma before regeneration, and connects it with the subsequent clause of the verse, and applies it to that *moral regeneration* which was effected by the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, and throughout their dispersion, in the apostolic age, after the coronation of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Whitby connects regeneration with the subsequent clause of the verse, and applies it to the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. He says, "It is observable, that the delivery of the *Jews* from their former captivities and miseries, is always represented as a *zoopoi-esis*, a *giving of life*, and *resurrection* to the *Jews*. Seeing, then, their return from their captivity is in the style of the *prophets*, usually represented as a *palingenesia*, or *reviving, a new life*, why may not the time of their most glorious conversion and collection from all the corners of the earth be, by our *Saviour*, here represented under that known metaphor?"

Cruden says, speaking of this verse: "Ye which have followed me in the *regeneration*; that is, ye, my apostles, who have been my attendants and assistants while I have been, by my doctrine, reforming the world—while I have been *regenerating* my church, and putting it into a new state."

Dr. Guise's paraphrase on the word *regeneration*, as contained in this passage, runs thus: "Jesus said unto them, I assuredly tell you, That as ye, my apostles, have gone through the work of regeneration yourselves, and have attended me to subserve the designs of my kingdom, which I am setting up for the reformation and recovery of others, so ye shall bear a part in the honor and blessedness hereafter to be revealed: when I, the Messiah, shall be enthroned in glory at the Father's right hand, ye, immediately thereupon, shall be endowed with power from on high, and shall preach my gospel with authority, and with mighty signs and wonders to confirm it."

Schleusner interprets *regeneration*, in this place, to signify "A renovation of the minds and characters of the Jews and Gentiles, by means of the gospel." And this is the sense in which the translators of the common version understood the word in this place.

So, it appears that "some writers of note, critics, and expositors," have supposed that *regeneration*, in this passage, applies to what is, in theology, called the *new birth*, or regeneration of the soul; while not one author of note, critic, or expositor, including Mr. C. himself, even supposes that it here refers to immersion.

The second place where the word *regeneration* is used in the New Testament, is in Titus iii., 5. The passage reads thus: "God has saved us by the *washing of regeneration*, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Mr. C. says: "Here it is conceded, by the most learned Pedobaptists and Baptists, that it refers to immersion. Though I have been led to this conclusion from my views of the Christian religion, yet I neither hold it myself, nor justify it to others, on this account. I choose rather to establish it by other testimonies, than by those who agree with me in the import of this institution. Among these I shall place Dr. James Macknight, formerly prolocutor or moderator of the Presbyterian church of Scotland, and translator of the Apostolic Epistles. One of his notes upon Titus iii., 5, is in the following words:—'Through the bath of regeneration.' 'Through *baptism*, called the bath of regeneration, not because any change in the nature of the baptized person is produced by baptism, but because it is an emblem of the purification of the soul from sin.' He then quotes in proof: 'Arise, and be immersed, and wash thee from thy sins;' Acts xxii., 16. He supports this view, also, from Ephesians v., 26, and John iii., 5. 'The bath of regeneration' is, then, according to this learned Pedobaptist, Christian immersion. Parkhurst, in his *Lexicon*, upon the word *loutron*, connects this same *phrase*, the washing or bath of regeneration, with Ephesians v., 26 and John iii., 5, as alluding to immersion. So say all the critics, one by one, as far as I know. Even Matthew Henry, the good and venerable Presbyterian commentator, concedes this point also."

It will be seen that Mr. C. here names three of his critics, whom he says concedes this point, and then claims all the rest as far as

he knows; he, however, does not condescend to inform us as to the extent of his knowledge on this subject. After having thus claimed all the critics, one by one, he then goes on to claim the argument, even his opponents themselves being judges; and thus it seems, at least in his own estimation, he closes up the controversy. He says: "Our opponents themselves being judges, we have gained this point." But does Mr. C. give a true representation of the state of the case? We think not. Mr. C. himself, has given direct testimony against the whole of this argument. Speaking of the deplorable state of the Jewish nation, he says: "Such were the circumcised ones, those who had *lawfully* obtained the seal of circumcision; and such was the whole nation, with the exception of a very small remnant, that were *regenerated* and brought into the Christian church.—*Strictures appended to Debate on Baptism*: p. 232. He here uses the word *regeneration* in the common theological sense, and not as signifying immersion. And again, he says: "Baptism is compared to the regenerating influences and operations of the Spirit of God; hence we read of the *washing of regeneration*, and of the *baptism of the Holy Spirit*. Immersion in water, is an emblem of the regenerating operation of the Spirit. The application of water to the whole person of the subject, and the consequent *putting off of the filth of the flesh*, is an emblem of the operation of the Spirit upon the whole soul of man; affecting the understanding, will, and affections, and the consequent *putting off of the sins of the flesh*, or the old man with his deeds. This, immersion beautifully exhibits;" p. 203.

The matter of criticism, in reference to this passage, relates principally to the original word *loutron*, which, in the common version, is rendered *washing*, but which Mr. C. contends should be rendered *laver*, affirming that it does not mean the *element* of water, but the *vessel* which contained it. But,

In the first place, the translators of the common version understood the word *loutron*, as here used, to mean the *element* of water, and not a *vessel*, and have, accordingly, rendered it *washing*. It is *water* that *washes*, and not the *vessel* which contains it. There is no propriety or consistency in saying a *vessel washes*! The translators of the common version were as learned men and as able critics as were to be found in Europe, when the version was made; and here are more than forty critics against Mr. C., to begin with.

In the second place, the authors of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, uniformly use another word, *louter*, to signify *laver*; Ex. xxx., 18, 28; xxxi., 9. When the seventy use the word *loutron*, which St. Paul employs in this passage, they do not apply it to a *vessel* containing water, but to the *water itself*, in which sheep were washed; Cant. iv., 2: vi., 6. Here are seventy more critics, the authors of the Septuagint version, to be added; and these are all witnesses of the first class, because they are not only learned, but are, also, disinterested.

In the third place, we introduce Josephus, a man held in high estimation for learning and integrity, by the whole literary world. He uses *loutron* for a *bath*; that is, for the fluid itself, in which one bathes. Speaking of *hot* and *cold* springs of water, near the castle of Macherus, which, being mixed, says he, makes a very agreeable *loutron, bath*.

In the fourth place, we shall call upon the Apostle Paul, himself, to give testimony in the case. He uses the same word in Ephesians v., 26, for a large quantity of water, in which an adult person was *washed, or bathed*. "That he might sanctify and cleanse the church *to loutro*, by the washing of water, by the word." We *wash, or bathe, in water*, and not in a *laver*; the disciples were immersed in water, and not in a *laver*. The writers of the New Testament never make mention of any *laver*, which was used in the administration of baptism; but uniformly refer us to the places where the candidates were immersed. I do not suppose, however, that the apostle, in this passage, makes any allusion to baptism. I understand him, with Elsner, Wolfius, Welstein, and many other eminent critics, to refer to the custom, common both to the Jews and Gentiles, of the nuptial washings of a bride, before she was presented to her husband. The true sense of these words, as I understand them, is given in the following paraphrase: "That he might take away the power and pollution of sin from all the members of his church, and infuse a principle of holiness into them, and so consecrate them to God, by the sanctification of his Spirit, as having purged them from the guilt of sin, by his atoning blood, which effects of his blood and Spirit are signified by the cleansing quality of water; and he, in the greatness of his love, communicates these benefits by means of the gospel preached unto them, and received and applied by faith in Christ."

In the fifth place, let us hear the testimony of Parkhurst, on the subject. It is true that he defines *loutron* to mean a *laver, a vessel to wash in*; but, at the same time, admits that Josephus, the seventy in the Septuagint, and St. Paul, all use the word to signify the fluid itself, and not the vessel which contains it. When he says, therefore, that *loutron* means *a vessel to wash in*, he refers to the use of the word in profane authors, and not to the use of the word in the Holy Scriptures; for he admits that the word in the Bible means the element of water.

In the sixth place, Macknight, Doddridge, and the great majority of critics, commentators, and divines, understand *loutron*, as used in the Scriptures, to signify the *element of water itself*, and not *a vessel to wash in*; as Mr. C. himself very well knows.

Having ascertained the meaning of the word *loutron*, we shall now come to ascertain the meaning of *regeneration*, as connected with it. It seems to me, that when Mr. C. makes regeneration here to signify immersion, he makes this passage contradict his own theory. His doctrine is, that we are saved from the guilt, pollu-

tion, and dominion of sin, by the obedience of faith, by an act of faith; which *obedience* and *act* of faith, he styles immersion. Now, St. Paul says, "He saved us not by works of righteousness, which we have done, according to his own mercy." By "works of righteousness," we are to understand the obedience of faith, as well as works of law; and St. Paul's doctrine is, that we are saved by neither, but by the mercy of God. Mr. C.'s theory, according to his exposition of this passage, is, that we are saved by the righteous act of immersion, and, consequently, saved by works of righteousness; or, in other words, by the obedience of faith, which signifies the same thing; and, therefore, he flatly contradicts the doctrine of the Apostle Paul.

Mr. C. has produced Dr. Macknight as a witness to prove that *regeneration* means *immersion*; but has he given in the whole of the doctor's testimony? I think not. Dr. Macknight was a member of the church of Scotland, which never adopted the doctrine, that regeneration and immersion were two words used to express the same idea, contemplated in different points of light. To sustain this statement, I will produce the testimony of Dr. Dick, late Professor of Systematic Divinity in the Theological Seminary of the United Associate Church. Speaking on this subject, he says: "Baptism is only a sign of the communication of spiritual blessings; and we entertain no doubt, that, as the sign is not always accompanied with the thing signified, so the thing signified is often enjoyed without the sign. We do not, with Papists, and too many Protestants, and particularly with some half-popish divines of the Church of England, hold the strange and unscriptural opinion, which is too much countenanced by the language of their liturgy, that baptism is regeneration. We maintain that, as many of the Jews were uncircumcised in heart, so many children of Christians are unbaptized in heart; and we see melancholy and irresistible proof of the fact, in their subsequent conduct. We are convinced that there is a baptism of the Spirit, distinct from the baptism of water; that the former does not always accompany the latter; and that God gives the Spirit to whom he pleases, without limiting the gift to the use of the sign;" vol. ii., p. 385.

And with the sentiment here expressed, Dr. Macknight agrees. He was a believer in the doctrine of regeneration, in the theological sense of the word. In his note on 2 Cor. v., 17, he says: "The alteration in the minds and manners of men, by the faith of the gospel, was so great, that it might be called *regeneration*; and the person, so regenerated, might be considered a *new creature*." He also believed in a two-fold baptism: a baptism in water, which was an outward sign of an inward baptism in the Holy Spirit. In his note on 1 Pet. iii., 21, he says: "Here a two-fold baptism is spoken of: the one consisting in 'the putting away the filth of the flesh,' by washing; the other, 'in the answer of a good conscience.'" Now, in the passage under consideration, he says, that "*baptism* is

called ‘the bath of regeneration,’ because it is an emblem of the purification of the soul from sin.” And again: “In the term *regeneration*, when joined with baptism, there is an allusion to the phraseology of the Jewish doctors, who, when they admitted a proselyte into the church by baptism, always spoke of him as *one born again*. Nevertheless, the real change in the nature of a believer, which entitles him to be called *a son of God*, is not effected by baptism, but by ‘the renewing of the Holy Ghost,’ mentioned in the next clause.” Here he expressly contradicts the theory of Mr. C.; for he maintains that this change of state is effected by immersion, which entitles the baptized to be called *a son of God*, without any renewal of the Holy Ghost. Now, it seems to me plain and evident, as Dr. Macknight considers baptism to be the outward sign of ‘the inward purification of the soul from sin,’ in all those cases, at least, where there is no such purification of the soul from sin, he would not say that baptism was *regeneration*, or that the baptism of such persons entitles them to be called *sons of God*.

Dr. Scott says, that regeneration here signifies the “new birth of the Spirit,” of which “baptism was the sacramental sign, and nothing more.” Dr. Clark says, “baptism changes nothing; the grace signified by it, cleanses and purifies. They who think *baptism* to be *regeneration*, neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God; therefore, they do greatly err.” The translators of the common version, Dr. Doddridge, and the great body of evangelical divines, critics, and commentators, all consider *regeneration* here to mean, cleansing the soul from the pollution of sin.

After many years reflection on this subject, I have come to the conclusion that the apostle does not allude at all in this verse to baptism, but merely affirms, in conformity to the figurative language of the Old Testament, that the grace of God, in regeneration, purifies the soul, as water cleanses the body, and that the Holy Spirit, at the same time, communicates a new life to the believer. *Regeneration* and the *new birth*, we understand to be terms of the same import, in the language of the Bible, and to signify “a prevailing disposition of the soul to universal holiness, produced and cheered by the influences of the spirit of God upon our hearts, operating in a manner suitable to the constitution of our nature, as rational and accountable creatures.”

That baptism is not regeneration, is evident from the following considerations:

1. Immersion is an external rite, which is performed by dipping the body in water; regeneration is an internal work, which is wrought upon the heart. That regeneration is an internal change, wrought upon the heart by the power of God, is evident from many plain passages of scripture. Agreeable to this Sentiment, God says, “A new heart will I give them, and a new spirit will I put within them; and I will take away the heart of stone, and will give them a heart of flesh.” And when the apostles had exhorted the Ephe-



sians to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lust," he adds, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness." This same subject is farther illustrated in his exhortation to the Romans: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God." Again he asserts, that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And in the second chapter of this epistle, he opposes the internal spirit of Christianity to an external rite, declaring the utter insufficiency of the latter, and the absolute necessity of the former. "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward, in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the latter, whose praise is not of men but of God." These passages, with many others which might be quoted, if necessary, fully refute the notion that any *external* rite is *regeneration*.

2. Immersion is not regeneration, because the former is administered by man, while the latter is the work of God. Of the many instances of baptism, as recorded in the New Testament, no mention is ever made of any one being baptized of God, or by God, but uniformly by man. On the contrary, when the Scriptures speak of regeneration, they never represent it as being effected by the power of man, but uniformly ascribe it to the energy of God. The apostle, in his letter to the Ephesians, compares the power of divine grace, which had changed their hearts, to the mighty power which was exerted on the body of Christ when he was raised from the dead; this change is, therefore, called a *resurrection*, as well as regeneration. Hence, says the apostle again, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins." The same sentiment is expressed in the following passages: "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us together in Christ." "According to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again." "Of his own will begat he us;" Hence the Psalmist prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Sometimes regeneration is termed "a new creation," which must doubtless be the work of God; as St. Paul speaks, "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*," or "a new creation," as the original may be rendered. The same sentiment is elsewhere expressed by "taking away the heart of stone, and giving a heart of flesh." These passages plainly teach that God is the author of regeneration, and not man. And since regeneration is uniformly ascribed to God, and baptism is

uniformly administered by man, it is evident that immersion is not regeneration.

3. It is affirmed by John, "That whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God;" that is, because he partakes of a divine nature by means of his new birth. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." It is by this word that we are made partakers of the divine nature. By "committing sin," we are to understand living *habitually* in sin; that is, living under the influences of the carnal mind, the dominion of passion and appetite. The unregenerate, on the other hand, are characterized as living "in sin," as "walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The apostles again says, "He that committeth sin, is of the devil; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

Now, nothing can be more evident than that this outward change of conduct is the effect of an inward change of mind, and not the bare submission to an external rite. A man may be immersed, or sprinkled, or submit to any other external rite; but if his prevailing temper is bad, if he is a dishonest man at heart, he will remain the same sinful and disobedient creature he was before. Immerse a hypocrite, and he will be a hypocrite still. Water will not wash away hypocrisy. Simon Magus was immersed, but he was not regenerated. From hence it is evident, that immersion does not change the moral character of man, does not implant holiness in the soul; therefore, it cannot be regeneration.

4. It is further asserted by the apostle, that all "who are born of God overcame the world." And again, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Persons who are born of God, are enabled to conquer the pleasures and allurements of this world: faith realizes and apprehends the invisibilities of eternity, so that the most splendid things of time appear of little value, when compared with the "pearl of great price." Moses, when he might have commanded the splendors, honors, and pleasures of the Egyptian court, renounced them all, and chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." In accordance with the same sentiment, the Apostle Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." In times of persecution and distress, the primitive Christians "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance." They suffered the loss of property, and were exposed to shame and reproach, and "counted as the filth and offscourings of all things;" for the sake of Jesus Christ; but they were made more than conquerors through him that loved them. The unregenerate,

on the other hand, are described as "loving this present evil world," and as being "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." "If any man love the world," says John, "the love of the Father is not in him." "The love of money," says the apostle, "is the root of all evil;" because riches afford the facilities to gratify passion and appetite. Mammon is the god the unregenerated serve.

What is here said of those who are "born of God," cannot be said of persons which have been merely immersed in water. Baptism can produce no such change in a man's views and desires, as is here ascribed to those who are "born of God;" hence it is evident that regeneration is something more and greater, than to be immersed in water.

5. The regenerate, in the Scripture, are represented as living under the dominion of *love*. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." The Christian institution is the wisdom and power of God, in exciting and promoting this principle of love in the heart of man; and it is the possession and exercise of this principle, which constitutes the Christian character. "The end of the commandment is *love* out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and from faith unfeigned." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." It is this principle which gives birth and being to all our pleasure and delight in the service of God. It renders the yoke of Christ easy, and makes his burden light. It is the fountain from whence springs all our spiritual joy. "This love of God," says the apostle, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." But the unregenerate are described as being "alienated from the life of God," and as "enemies to God by wicked works:" as "hating God, and hating one another." They are represented as being "in the flesh," under the dominion of fleshy appetites; and as living under the influence of the "carnal mind, which is enmity against God; is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be."

Thus it appears, that the regenerate are distinguished from the unregenerate, not merely by having submitted to an external rite, for in "Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*; but by the prevailing temper and disposition of the heart, as exhibited in the fruits of righteousness." "By their fruit," said our Lord, "ye shall know them." "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles."

We shall now pass to make a few observations on the arguments which are brought forward by the advocates of baptismal regeneration, in support of their views of the subject. They usually plead the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus. John iii., 5: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of *the water and the spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It is evident, by the questions of Nicodemus, that he did not understand him as referring to baptism. And our Lord himself, although in this verse he joins *water* and *spirit* together, yet he does not in

contrasting it with natural generation: he says, "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." By the terms *flesh* and *spirit*, he appears to mean the original principles, which are produced by these different sorts of birth. And again: what he says of the manner in which this change is effected, the regenerate are distinguished solely by the words, *born of the Spirit*. It is, then, the most reasonable to conclude, that our Lord intended to convey but one idea by these terms, as expressed in other parts of the conversation; that is, the grace of God purifies the soul, as water cleanses the body. In like manner it was predicted of Christ: "He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and in fire;" that is, the Spirit of God shall operate on your souls like fire, consuming the dross of corruption in you natures. The above interpretation is further confirmed by the opinion of Kimchi, who, in his commentary, observes, that to be born of the *water* and the *Spirit*, are two words which express the same thing, and signify the grace of the Spirit of God. This interpretation is also confirmed by the Vulgate and Ethiopic versions, which read, *the Holy Spirit*, instead of the *water* and the *Spirit*. Besides, to interpret the phrase, *born of water*, to signify regeneration, is to contradict the whole scope of the New Testament; for if any thing is capable of proof, we have shown that immersion and regeneration are two very different things.

But, admitting that the phrase *to be born of water*, means immersion, yet this is no proof that the phrase means *regeneration*, or *to be born again*, or *to be born of God*, or *to be born of the Spirit*, or *to be born from above*. The phrase *to be born of water*, is used but once in the New Testament; and then, in conversation with a single individual, and in connexion with the birth of the Spirit. And, although our Lord in this single passage joins *water* and *Spirit* together, yet he does not, in contrasting it with natural generation, mention water at all; but opposes, simply, the *Spirit* to the *flesh*, as the original principles of these different sorts of birth. What he, also, says respecting the manner in which this change is effected, the regenerate are distinguished solely by the words, *born of the Spirit*.

In this highly interesting discourse with Nicodemus, Jesus Christ teaches three highly important and solemn truths, which lie at the very foundation of the Christian religion; and without which, Christianity sinks into an inefficient system of ethics, and loses all its characteristic energy and efficacy.

1. *The natural man is altogether unfit for the fellowship and enjoyment of his God.* This is clearly implied in the language of Christ to Nicodemus—*You must be born again*. If all men were fit for the enjoyments of the kingdom of God, this language would be wholly inapplicable and unmeaning. But the solemn truths, that all have sinned—that the natural man receives not the things of God—that the carnal mind is enmity to him—and that no man

comes to Christ except the Father draw him—rivet the doctrine of *human depravity* and alienation from God, by wicked works, in the minds of all who have studied in the schools of experience, or been taught the rudiments of Christianity, as they are laid down in the word of God.

2. *A spiritual change must be wrought in the human soul, by which the carnal mind is subdued, and the affections and desires assimilated to the will of the Deity.* This is the great lesson Jesus taught Nicodemus, and of which he, though a teacher of Israel, was so ignorant. Unbelievers, in every age, affect to be very ignorant of a superintending Providence, and everything that seems to them mysterious in religion; and are ready to exclaim, in the very words of Nicodemus—How can these things be? But the Bible speaks an unequivocal language on this momentous subject; and, from this conversation of Christ with Nicodemus, as well as from many other parts of the Holy Scriptures, we learn, that every man must have *two births*; one from earth, the other from heaven: without the *first*, he cannot see or enter into this world; without the *last*, he shall never behold, nor enjoy the glories and blessings of Christ's kingdom on earth, nor be prepared to enter into the joys of heaven, and partake of the fellowship of the saints in light. Nicodemus, and the Jews generally, had some notion of the *second birth*; but, like many Christians, they put acts of proselytism in its stead, and fancied that it consisted in professions and ceremonies; but our Lord would lay the axe to the root of this barren tree, and by the repetition of verily, verily, which a Jew regarded as equal to a solemn oath, he assures Nicodemus and all mankind, that except a man be born of the Spirit, as well as of water, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. When John came baptizing in water, he gave the Jews the plainest intimations that they should look for the cleansing operations of the grace and Spirit of God upon their hearts, of which, water was a significant emblem. He, whose heart has never been cleansed from the pollution of sin, has neither right nor title to the kingdom of heaven. Nor can all the births of earth, fit a soul for heaven. Like will produce its like. As are the earthly, such will be the sons of earthy. What is born of flesh, is flesh; therefore, we must be born of the Spirit, in order to be spiritual; and born *anoothen, from above*, in order to ascend above earth to heaven.

3. *None can know or understand this celestial change, but by its effects, and the influence it exerts on the feelings and character of its subjects.* Our Lord illustrates by similitude this important declaration: The wind, which is air in motion, cannot be seen, nor its rise, progress, and fall, distinctly traced; but we can hear its sound, perceive its breezes, and have full assurance of its existence, from its effects and operations, though this assurance depends entirely on our arguments, *a posteriori*; just as we prove the existence of God from the things he has made. Just so it is with the

*second birth.* The great agent is invisible. His manner of operation is beyond our discovery; but the reality of his operation is known by the effects produced on the disposition and life of the regenerate. Hence, the unbeliever doubts of all he hears, because he depends on the testimony of others. No wonder that the unregenerate should turn Deists, and live Atheists in the world—because his earthly, dead soul is insensible to all the movements of the celestial world. Our blessed master expressly declares, that unless a man be *born again*, or *from above*, he cannot see or discern the kingdom of God; and the Apostle Paul assigns the reason: because it is *spiritually discerned*; 1 Cor. ii., 14. So far, therefore, is the unregenerate man from entering, or enjoying the kingdom of God, that it has not come within his view. He can never have even a Pisgah's prospect of the land of promise, till God kindle the hallowed fire on the altar of his heart; and then, and not till then, will the incense of praise ascend from a grateful soul to a pardoning God.

Now, Mr. C. entirely rejects this new birth of the Spirit, on the ground of a metaphysical abstraction. He says, "All must admit that no person can be born again, of that which he receives. For as no person is born naturally—so no person can be born again, or born metaphorically—of that which he receives. It destroys the idea, the figure, the allusion, and everything else, which authorizes the application of those words to any change, which takes place in man, to suppose that the subject of the new birth, or regeneration, is born again of something which he has received. This single remark shows the impropriety, the inaccuracy of thought; or perhaps, the want of thought, which the popular notions of regeneration sanction and sanctify." That the believer is *born of the Spirit*, and *receives the Spirit*, are both unequivocally declared by the word of God. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and certainly, no man ever possessed the Spirit of Christ without receiving it. Mr. C. may then settle this metaphysical question with the writers of the New Testament. When a man becomes wise above what is written, any further argument is useless.

XI. *Finally*, Mr. C. affirms that a change of heart is merely the *result of a change of views*. He says: "A change of heart is the result of a change of views, and whatever can accomplish a change of views may accomplish a change of heart or feeling; but a change of state always calls for something more." But this change of heart is by no means such a change of heart as the Scriptures teach and inculcate, when a sinner is truly converted to God. Mr. C.'s change of heart does not even imply a change of character, or include the idea of moral purity; it is merely the result of a change of views: so, in fact, every time a man's views are changed, his heart is changed. Now, since it frequently happens that men imbibe error, renounce the truth and embrace error, it follows that this change of heart, of which Mr. C. speaks, as it is the result of a change of views, must occur as often as a man's

views are changed, whether for good or for bad. In order to understand what the Scriptures mean by a change of heart, it will be necessary to consider the moral condition of the unregenerate.

This is a question of great importance, for our views on this subject will materially affect our whole theological system. If our sentiments on this question be erroneous, it will be difficult to arrange any correct theological system of views on other important points of doctrine, to harmonize with such erroneous sentiments. But if our opinions on this subject be correct, then it will be the more easy to perceive and arrange a system of doctrine in harmony with the Bible. And, certainly, every man who is set apart to be a teacher to the ignorant, and a guide to the blind, should himself be thoroughly instructed into the great truths of the Christian system, and should be fully established on all the great theological questions of the day; for, if the leaders of the people are found wavering and fluctuating in their course, it can hardly be expected that the flocks of their charge will be firm and stable.

1. The heart of the unregenerate man is surrendered to the wrong master; he is uniformly represented in the Sacred Oracles as *the servant of sin*. "By one man," says St. Paul, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" Rom. v., 12. The dominion of sin is universal, both as it relates to the powers of the mind, and the family of Adam: the Scriptures have concluded all under sin, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may become guilty before God. This is the clear and unequivocal doctrine of the Bible. "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 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 they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know, 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: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" Rom. iii., 9—23. No language can be more clear, decisive, and explicit, than this. It states, in the most clear and convincing manner, that sin, as a disease, has spread its ravages throughout the human family; for we are not to consider this language as merely descriptive of a corrupt age, or a vitiated state of society, but as a general disposition of all unregenerate men. Our Lord has substantially stated the same doctrine. He says, that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adul-

teries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within, and defile the man;" Mark vii., 21, 22. And this agrees with St. Paul's experience, as recorded by himself, before his conversion. He says: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would do, I do not; but the evil which I would not do, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me:" Rom. vii., 18—20. What reason, conscience, and revelation, pronounce good, he did not practice; and his experience is applicable to all mankind; for men of all grades, ranks, and conditions of society, are under the influence of the same corrupt propensities as was St. Paul. It is the absence of the love of God, and the dominion of evil propensities, which constitute the depravity of the human heart; and this depravity is as universal as the human family.

2. But the truth of this doctrine is, also, established by the *testimony of God's servants in every age, and among all nations*. Moses informs us, that soon after the human family began to multiply, the earth was filled with violence; all flesh had corrupted its way. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually;" Gen. vi., 5. And after the deluge, the same appalling statement was again made: God declared that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;" viii., 21. Job, also, declares, that man is abominable and filthy, and "drinketh iniquity like water." This statement is corroborated by the testimony of David and Solomon: "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none doeth good, no, not one." "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child." "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead;" Ps. xiv., 3; Prov. xxii., 15; Eccl. ix., 3. The prophets of the Most High assert and maintain the same doctrine. "All we," says Isaiah, "like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away;" Isa. liii., 6; lxiv., 6. The prophet Jeremiah declares, that "the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it!" Jer. xvii., 1, 9. The statement of the apostles respecting this doctrine, is in perfect harmony with the sentiments of their predecessors. The Apostle Paul asserted, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So they that are in the flesh cannot please God;"



Rom. viii., 7, 8. The Apostle James declares that the wisdom of this world "is earthly, sensual, and devilish." And, finally, St. John assures us that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." The testimony that these writers have borne to the wickedness and corruption of the human heart, is in accordance with the uniform doctrine of the Bible. On this doctrine rests the whole scheme of redemption; for the most striking feature of the Christian system is its remedial character. If mankind are not essentially corrupt, they need not to be regenerated; if they are not lost, they need not to be saved. This doctrine, then, is interwoven into the whole Christian system, and forms one of the leading and essential doctrines of the gospel.

3. As a further confirmation of the truth of this doctrine, we appeal to the *universal experience of all good men*. Job says, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;" and David, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Isaiah exclaims, "Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." The Apostle Paul, in his letter to Titus, observes, "For we ourselves, also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." And speaking of himself, and the Christians at Ephesus, he says: "We were by nature children of wrath, even as others." The New Testament writers, furthermore, teach us that the primitive Christians were reformed characters. The apostle, in his letter to the Corinthians, after declaring that "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;" he then adds, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." "For the time past of our life may suffice us," says Peter, "to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries; wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you; who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." In this passage the apostle plainly declares, that the primitive Christians, before they were converted, lived under the dominion of sin; and that, by conversion to Christianity, they were transformed in heart and life, and so became new creatures. Origen speaks of the same general corruption and wickedness among mankind, and of the salvation of Christ from it. "We come to him," says he, "covetous, he makes us liberal; unjust and extortioners, and he makes us equitable; lascivious, and he makes us chaste; violent and passionate, and he makes us meek; impious and profane, and he makes us religious." It is evident, then, in the opinion of all these writers, that the heart of an irreligious and unregenerate man

is placed upon sinful objects, and full of impure and unholy desires. This was certainly their own experience, and the experience of the primitive Christians, who composed the first Christian churches; and this testimony agrees with the experience of modern Christians of the religious denominations.

4. This doctrine is furthermore confirmed by *observation*. Jews, Pagans, and nominal Christians, are a living commentary on the truth of this doctrine. Mankind in a savage state, among all nations, and in every period of history, have been treacherous, fierce, cruel, and relentless, living under the dominion of passion and appetite, and rebelling against the great principles of moral rectitude. Among the most rude and barbarous of the savage tribes, cannibalism has prevailed from the remotest antiquity to the present period; and human lives have been sacrificed to the caprice of a tyrannical sovereign. And if we advert to the actual state of Hindostan and of China, which countries have been highly celebrated for their progress in the useful arts, we shall find that they are equally immoral in private life. The universal characteristics of these nations are, habitual disregard of truth, pride, tyranny, theft, falsehood, deceit, conjugal infidelity, filial disobedience, ingratitude, a litigious spirit, perjury, cruelty, private murder, the destruction of illegitimate children, and want of tenderness and compassion to the poor, the sick, the aged, and the dying. The description which the apostle gave of the Jews when Christianity was founded, remains true of them to this day. "They profess," says he, "that they know God, but in works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." The Jews among all nations in modern times, have been notorious for lying, cheating, and defrauding. And although the standard of public morals in Christian countries, is more highly elevated, yet all these countries abound with crime. The general defection of public morals among the irreligious portion of the community, both in Europe and America, is notorious. Pride and luxury, generally prevail among the rich; and intemperance and profanity, among the poor. How many live as though they had never to die? and when thoughts of God and religion obtrude on their unwilling minds, every measure which a corrupt heart, under a satanic influence can advise, is adopted to drown reflection, and to bury religious thoughts. See the miser—the voluptuary—the debauchee—the drunkard; what is their life but a practical corroboration of the awful truths we have been considering.

5. The essential and radical corruption of human nature, is a truth to which the ancient heathen *moralists, philosophers, and poets, have borne the most ample testimony*. Thus, Pythagoras termed it, the "Fatal companion, the noxious strife that lurks within us, and which was born along with us;" Sopater calls it, "The sin that is born with mankind;" Plato, "Natural wickedness;" Aristotle, "The natural repugnance of man's nature to reason;"

and all the Greek and Roman philosophers, especially the Stoics and the Platonists, complain of the depraved and degenerate condition of mankind, of their propensity to everything that is evil, and of their aversion to everything that is good. Thus, Cicero lamented, that "Mankind are brought into life by nature as a step-mother, with a naked, frail, and infirm body, and with a soul prone to divers lusts." Seneca, one of the best of the Roman philosophers, observes: "We are born in such a condition, that we are not subject to fewer disorders of mind than body; that all vices are in all men, though they do not break out in every one; and that to confess them is the beginning of our cure." And Hierocles called this universal disposition to sin, "The domestic evil of mankind." Even some of the sprightliest poets bear their testimony to the same fact. Propertius could say, "Every body has a vice to which he is inclined by nature." Horace declared, that "No man is born free from vices," and that, "He is the best man who is oppressed with the least;" that "Mankind rushes into wickedness, and always desire what is forbidden;" that "Youth has the softness of wax to receive vicious impressions, and the hardness of rock to resist virtuous admonitions;" and, in short, that "We are mad enough to attack heaven itself," and that "our repeated crimes do not suffer the God of heaven to lay aside his wrathful thunderbolts." And Juvenal has furnished a striking corroboration to the statement of Paul of Tarsus, concerning the "carnal mind," when he says, that "Nature, unchangeably fixed, runs back to wickedness," as bodies to their centre.

There is, also, reason to suppose that the ancient Celtic Druids expressly taught the defection of the human soul from a state of original rectitude. The invariable belief of the Brahmins, in Hindostan, is, that man is a fallen creature; and it is well known that a similar opinion was inculcated by the classical mythologists, and especially by Hesiod, in their descriptions of the gradual corruption of the human race, during the period subsequent to the golden age. Catullus represents the unhallowed period, when justice was put to flight, and brothers imbrued their hands in fraternal blood, while incest and sacrilege alienated the mind of God from man; and Tacitus marks out the progress of depravity, from a period free from offence and punishment, to a flagitious and abandoned wickedness, devoid even of fear. Thus providence seems to have drawn the evidence of the guilt of men from their own confessions, and to have preserved their testimony for the conviction of subsequent times. From hence it appears evident, that the heart of man is under a corrupt influence, and devoted to a wrong object, agreeable to the doctrine of the Sacred Oracles.

If the foregoing views be correct, that change of heart which the Scriptures require, and which the sinner must experience, in order to be prepared for the service and for the enjoyment of God, is a much greater change than that change of heart spoken of by

Mr. C., which he admits to be greatly inferior to a change of *state*, which change of *state* does not even imply, in his own estimation, a change of *character*. By the heart, as the word is used in the Bible, we are to understand the soul, with all its powers, including the understanding, conscience, will, affections, and memory. When God, then, says, *My son, give me thine heart*, he calls upon each and every individual to dedicate himself unreservedly to him—not merely to render to him a few outward and formal services, but fervently to embrace his doctrine, to follow his injunctions with the warmest affection, and to reduce them to practice without delay. The heart is what God requires. He claims the understanding, that he may pour upon it the light of truth—the conscience, that he may purge it from dead works—the will, that it may be brought into subjection to the divine mind—the affections, that they may be purified and exalted, and set on things above—the desires, that they may be concentrated in himself—the memory, that it may become the depository of divine and useful knowledge. In one word. God demands the whole soul, that we may know, love, serve, and enjoy him for ever.

Hence, God says: “A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them;” Ezek. xxxvi., 26, 27. “And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart;” Jer. xxiv., 7. “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;” Deut. xxx., 6. “I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them; 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;” Jer. xxxii., 39, 40. In conformity to the doctrine taught in these passages, the Psalmist prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;” li., 10. Hence the expressions, *a pure heart, an upright heart, a clean heart, a sincere heart*, are employed in the Scripture, to denote a true Christian; while, on the other hand, *an evil heart, a gross heart, a stony heart, a wicked heart, a corrupt heart, a polluted heart, a depraved heart, an estranged heart*, are used to designate a wicked and irreligious man. The terms, then, *to change the heart, to cleanse the heart, to purify the heart*, are employed in the Bible to denote that moral and religious change, which is wrought in a sinner, when he is truly converted to God.

Having considered the arguments which Mr. C. has derived from the Scriptures to sustain his theory, and having shown that they

are fallacious and unsustained by the true interpretation of the Living Oracles, we do not propose, at this time, having already extended these remarks to much greater length than was anticipated in the commencement, to prosecute the subject any further; being fully persuaded that the true doctrine of the gospel is clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures; and that no system of religion ought to be embraced and received as of divine origin, which cannot be sustained by the word of God. If Mr. C.'s theory of religion be essentially anti-scriptural, as we have abundantly shown it to be, then no pretended evidence derived from the Christian Fathers, or from the creeds of fallible and erring men, can possibly make it true. It is a sentiment universally embraced by the whole Protestant community, that the Bible contains everything necessary to the faith and practice of a Christian; and that all systems of religion, which are not derived from the Holy Scriptures, ought to be rejected as false and dangerous.

In the conclusion of my remarks on this subject, I most earnestly and sincerely recommend this article to the serious and candid perusal of my brethren in the ministry, especially in the western states, who may have fully or partially embraced the sentiments we have been canvassing, and, as we think, have fully refuted. The introduction of this new doctrine among our brethren in the west, has been the occasion of many evils, both to the ministry and to the churches, and has not been productive, to my knowledge, of any good. This doctrine is the grave-digger of experimental religion and practical piety; and, unless it be repudiated and abandoned, will certainly blast, and wither, and destroy, the vitality both of the churches and the ministry. I must say, I feel deeply interested on this subject, because it is one of vast importance to the souls of men, involving, as it does, the vital principles of the Christian religion. With these reflections, I commit this article to the press, leaving the effects which it is destined to produce, to the operations of that superintending Providence, which extends to all events.

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## ARTICLE IX.

### *Reply to the Question, "Shall we Receive Them?"*

I HAVE read, with deep regret, an article in the Christian Herald for December the 15th, from the pen of Br. Russel, one of the Editors of that Journal, entitled "Shall we receive them?" This article is understood to be called forth by my "Strictures on Elder Hawley's pamphlet," and, therefore, a reply from my pen has been earnestly solicited. I am aware that this is a subject in which I

am no more interested than my brethren in the ministry generally, but having engaged in the controversy, they naturally expect me to sustain the views which I have advanced, so far as those views may accord with the Holy Scriptures. It is desirable that the ministers of the same denomination should proclaim the same general sentiments, and especially on the subject of church building, which intimately affects the operations of the whole body; for, if different practices obtain in different churches, it will be the means of necessarily interrupting the harmony, both of the churches and ministers. If one church admit members who are unbaptized, she will naturally expect that these unbaptized members will be received by letter, or otherwise, by all the sister churches of the same body, and who profess to walk by the same rule; and should they be rejected, it would be the occasion of great grief and sorrow, both to the rejected brother, and to the church who gave him the letter of recommendation.

The article under consideration is one of a most extraordinary character, to proceed from the pen of a minister of the gospel, who professes to be a believer in Christian baptism. There is a vein of false and deceptive reasoning running through the whole of it. The argument is sustained by illogical deductions, by unjust and improper applications of Scripture, and by inconclusive reasoning. It will be the object of this communication to make all this clear, evident, and plain.

The Christian connexion profess to take the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, and Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Master in the whole sum of their religion. Whatever, therefore, is clearly taught in the Scriptures on the subject of baptism, and the mode of receiving members into the churches, we, as a people, are bound to observe and obey. The church is a voluntary society in this sense, that no person is compelled by force to enter into it, and he only is a genuine member who has joined it from conviction and choice; but there is this important difference between it and other voluntary societies: the members have no right to settle the terms of their union, or to change the mode of receiving members, or the institutions of the gospel, but must implicitly submit to its original constitution. It is the duty of the church to submit to the authority of Christ; and this is not performed unless his word be received as the only rule of faith and practice, and everything which is done in religion be exactly conformable to his commands. In the world, his law may be disregarded and violated, but it should be held sacred in the church. No minister, church, or council, has any authority to change, alter, or abrogate one of the institutions of the gospel, to prescribe new modes of reception into the church, or to make any new articles of faith; neither can they increase or diminish the sum of our moral obligations. Whatever has been clearly enjoined upon the disciples of Christ in the New Testament as a rule of duty, still possess a bind-

ing force, and they are still under the most solemn obligations to observe this rule. The doctrine, the precepts, and the institutions of the Christian religion, are unalterably fixed, and must necessarily remain the same till the dispensation itself closes. The rule of faith and of practice, as laid down in the Holy Scriptures, is equally binding upon all the disciples of Christ, whatever may have been their previous habits, education, or modes of thinking. And this rule of faith and practice is a uniform rule in all ages, and among all classes and conditions of disciples—that is, this rule is always of equal length; it is not six inches long in one man's hand, two feet in another's, and a ten foot pole in the hand of a third. In this statement, I understand the Christian connexion to be agreed.

Now, I would ask, what is the law of baptism as laid down in the New Testament, as a rule of duty? This is the only proper and legitimate question under consideration. And I have already stated in my "Strictures on Elder Hawley's pamphlet," that Christian baptism was the immersion of a true disciple of Christ in water, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that, by this baptism, a disciple makes a public profession of faith in the Christian religion; by which, also, he is initiated into the church of God. These positions have been illustrated and defended in my "Strictures," and I shall now content myself by merely stating the rule of duty, the law of baptism, as laid down in the New Testament, and refer to my former communication for the proof of the same. Now, Br. Russel has neither denied, refuted, or even controverted the position I assumed, so far as the law of baptism is concerned. The sum of his argument, then, goes to show that the church and her ministers may safely dispense with the institutions of heaven and the laws of God, whenever a weak-minded disciple, or one who has been badly educated, may desire it. And I can understand him in no other light, when he declares he would do it "without a moment's hesitation." The true question, between Br. Russel and myself, appears to be this: Shall we receive members into our churches in accordance with the divine rule, or in opposition to the divine rule? I maintain, that they should be received in accordance with the divine rule, and that we have no authority to alter, change, or dispense with the rule, or to receive any one contrary to it; while he affirms the rule may be safely dispensed with, and persons received as members into the church in opposition to it; and he gives at length his reasons in justification of his proposed course. We shall now proceed to consider the reasons he offers in justification of the course he proposes. He says,—

I. "We should receive them, (in opposition to the divine rule,) because the Lord has received them. They are disciples of Jesus. Their sins are forgiven—their names are written in heaven. This we believe. The evidence of their acceptance with God, is satis-

factory. They are children of God, and heirs of glory. How can we, how *dare* we reject from the church of God any man—any woman, who is a Christian—a member of the household of God? But does God ever receive any one in a state of rebellion and disobedience to his own laws? Does God ever receive an impenitent and disobedient universalist, while remaining such, notwithstanding he may be honest and sincere in his belief? Certainly not. He receives none but truly sincere and believing penitents; sinners must come to him in his appointed way, and in the use of his appointed means, and in that penitent and believing frame of mind which he requires, to find acceptance and forgiveness at his hands. And to contend that God receives sinners in any other way, is anything but Christianity. Does not the New Testament declare, again and again, that the Jews did not attain salvation, because they sought it by the deeds of the law? and that the Gentiles did attain salvation, because they sought it by the hearing of faith? God never deviates from his own covenant engagements. And he never requires his ministers, whom he has sent to publish and execute his laws, to violate them to accommodate some prejudiced or weak-minded disciple; and if Br. Russel imagines that God has given him authority to violate his laws, or to change or to nullify his institutions, he has sadly mistaken his calling. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you." God complained of his ancient covenant people, saying, "Even from the days of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine *ordinances*, and have not kept them." I would here ask Br. Russel, how he "dare," as a minister of the gospel, who has been sent to teach and enforce the divine rule in all things, violate this same rule at will and pleasure? To pretend, in justification of his conduct, that heaven violates its own laws in the salvation of souls, is an assumption too bold and impudent to be admissible. And, surely, because God saves souls in accordance with the divine will, this cannot be urged as a reason why we should violate the same will.

But Br. Russel says, "Christ received us before we were baptized; he received us without any reference to our views of baptism." He certainly did: but, in the name of common sense, what has this to do with the subject under consideration? In the great commission, he directed his ministers to *convert the nations*, and then to initiate the converts into the church by *baptism*. A man must be first converted, before he is even a proper subject of baptism and church membership. Baptism does not enter into the process of conversion in any sense of the word whatever. A man must be first converted, first disciplined, first accepted of God, before he is required to be baptized, and before the minister of the gospel is authorized to administer baptism to him. Conversion is the first step in discipleship. After a man is made a disciple by conversion, the next step is, to initiate him into the church by bap-



tism ; but this step he declines to take. Multitudes go as far as this, and here they stop ; offering all possible reasons for their neglect of duty. But if they refuse to follow on in the path of obedience, they do it at their own peril, and, if properly instructed, they can attach blame to no one but to themselves. What can the minister do, when his instructions are rejected ? What can the church do, when the disciple refuses to come within her pale ? Shall the church and the ministers unite to cast aside the laws of heaven, to make way for this disciple to advance in the path of disobedience ; and having begun to infringe the divine law, shall they go on to break down the whole fabric of the Christian institution, to make way for every ignorant, fanatical, and misguided disciple, to advance on in the neglect of one commandment, and in the violation of another ? Having received such in violation of the divine rule, how can a church expect, that after such a reception, they will walk in conformity to this rule ? Or how can a church enforce wholesome discipline in cases of future aberrations ? These are serious matters, and require careful consideration.

II. " We should receive such persons to our churches, (in opposition to the divine rule,) because we are *commanded to*." Well, this is a pretty bold assertion ; let us examine its validity. But upon what Scripture testimony is the assertion based ? Here it is : " Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us ;" that is, Christ received us in walking contrary to his requirements ; therefore, we should receive one another contrary to the divine rule. Here is the passage adduced by Br. Russel to prove his position, and the commentary that justifies his argument. It requires merely to be stated, to be rejected. Again, says he, " He that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations ;" that is, let the institutions of the gospel and the order of the churches be changed, altered, varied, and omitted, to suit the notions and opinions of all the weak, the ignorant, and the misguided disciples, who may desire to become members of your churches ; and then, when they become members, alter, change, modify, fix, unfix, and refix, everything to suit their narrow minds and prejudiced views, so that there can be no " doubtful disputations" with them. According to this view of the subject, the action of God's ministers, and the order of the church, are to be regulated by the weak faith of the weak-minded disciples, instead of being regulated by the divine rule. And are our ministers and churches prepared to receive such a doctrine as this ? I think not. But what seems still more remarkable, is the use Br. Russel makes of Acts xi., 17. Referring to this passage, he says : " Peter tells us, to reject those whom God has received, is to withstand God." But, unfortunately for the argument of Br. Russel, these very persons to whom Peter refers, were, by his direction, initiated into the church by baptism. " Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? and he commanded

them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus;" x., 47, 48. Br. Russel seems to be so hard pushed for Scripture authority to justify his position, that he is compelled to quote one passage of Scripture which absolutely condemns the course he is attempting to justify. And, will the reader believe me, this is all the Scripture authority he has adduced, to prove God has *commanded us* to receive members into our churches *contrary to his own prescribed rule*. And these Scripture testimonies prove the position he has assumed, just as much as they prove the world will be destroyed in 1843, and not a whit more.

III. "Such Christians should be received, (in opposition to the divine rule,) because *their error is not fundamental*." Now, Br. Russel, if this argument be a good one, we had better go to work immediately and revise Christianity, as we do old and antiquated laws, and tell the people what is *essential* for them to believe and to do, in order that they may be saved, and what they may safely reject and leave undone, as *non-essential*, and still retain the favor of God. At all events, we can bring this present controversy to a close in a trice—just declare that all church organizations are among the *non-essentials* of Christianity, and the work is done at once; for then all modes of reception into the church will be equally valueless. I should like to see Br. Russel go to work and parcel out the commandments, the institutions, the precepts, the principles, the laws, the doctrine, the promises, and whatever else belongs to the Christian system, and mark and label every part and parcel of it, and assign to each its relative importance; so that we may clearly understand what he would denominate the *fundamentals* of Christianity. If I am not greatly mistaken, his *fundamental* Christianity would be a very ragged and ghastly skeleton. Now, I bless God, that all of his word is equally precious to me; I want none of this cutting, and carving, and separating, and labelling, the different parts and parcels of Christianity, for myself. I desire to know the whole will of my heavenly Master concerning myself, and to do my whole duty; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, this is the sincere desire of every true and devout Christian. Besides, what authority has any minister of the gospel to denominate any part of his great commission the *non-essentials* of Christianity, and thus teach the followers of Christ that they may safely omit that part, and then go on to justify them in living in the open and palpable neglect of the divine will? Is this being faithful to that trust which the great Head of the church has reposed in those whom he has commissioned to preach his gospel? If one minister denominate one part of Christianity *non-essential*, and a second another part, and a third another part, and a fourth another part, and so on; and then for all to teach that the *non-essentials* may be safely dispensed with: who does not perceive that, in this way, the whole of Christianity may be entirely cast away, under the fictitious denomination of *non-essentials*? Let me here

say, that in Christianity there are no *non-essentials*: every commandment, institution, and precept of the gospel, is *essential* to Christianity, and should be fully observed; for Christ has laid upon his disciples no unnecessary injunctions. Besides, the Christian connexion never agreed to take the *fundamentals* of Christianity as the rule of faith and practice; they agreed to take the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the rule of faith and practice. This rule, which Br. Russel now proposes, is one of his own manufacture, to suit this especial case; and if this be admissible, every minister in the connexion may go on manufacturing rules, at will and pleasure, to suit all possible cases, as they arise, throughout the whole body.

IV. "Such Christians should not be rejected, (for refusing to comply with the divine rule,) because, *to do so, would be a radical departure from the first principles of the connexion.*" What are the first principles of the connexion? They are these: "The Bible is our only creed, and Jesus the only acknowledged Head and Lawgiver to his church." Our creed, then, is written, and the great Head and Lawgiver of the church has prescribed to her a rule of conduct which she has no right to violate. All that she or her minister can do, is to observe the rule, and see that others, under her jurisdiction, never violate it by her consent. The true import of the rule is not now a question; this has already been stated and settled, to which Br. Russel has given his consent. Why, then, may not the church require its observance? Indeed, the church has no discretion in the case allowed her. If she be composed of honest and sincere Christians, they must walk by the same rule, and mind the same things; and she must take care and see that there is no violation of the divine laws, by her consent and approbation. Nearly all which Br. Russel has said, under this head, is the mere echo of our most bitter enemies and persecutors. He has fallen into their strain of reasoning, and done little more than to repeat their words. Our churches are, indeed, in a most melancholy state, if they have no authority from the word of God to exercise the wholesome discipline of the gospel, and to enforce an observance of the laws of God, by the application of a Christian remedy, in cases of moral obliquity. And I would here ask, are the members of a church, for doing this, to be called "sectarian," to be branded with "dishonesty," and to be called upon to renounce the "Christian name?" Strange language! But more of this hereafter.

V. "We cannot consistently reject acknowledged Christians, on account of a difference on baptism, *because* such persons have been, and still are, received among us as good brethren. When the first Christian church was organized in Lyndon, Vermont, baptism was not a test of membership." This church, to which Br. Russel refers, was organized in 1801, so far as it ever had any scriptural organization. We have an account of it in the life of Elder Jones,

by his son, in the following words: "From the first, he announced his determination to stand alone, and acknowledge the authority of no church, or set of men. He and about a dozen others, laymen, and residents of Lyndon, covenanted together, in church form, and called themselves Christians; rejecting all party and sectional names, and leaving each other free to cherish such speculative views of theology as the Scriptures might plainly seem to them to teach. This was, probably, the first free Christian church ever established in New England;" p. 49. At this time, Elder Jones was not an ordained minister of the gospel; he received ordination on the last day of November, 1802. This organization was informal, having been done wholly by laymen, and without the sanction of a minister of the gospel, who alone is authorized to plant churches; and I am not a little surprised, that Br. Russel should have referred to this church as an example of gospel order. Upon the same authority, he may entirely do away the Christian ministry, and sustain the doctrine of lay-organization of all churches.

But what was the opinion of Elder Jones, respecting the meaning of the divine rule, on this subject? It is the following: "The second thing that I took into view, was the manner in which Baptists organized churches, which they declared to be apostolical. The manner of organizing Baptist churches was then, and is now, I believe, as follows, viz: 1. They must find a certain number of believers in Christ. 2. They must be baptized, burying them in the water, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus far they agree with the New Testament;" p. 28. And again: "To *baptism* and *regeneration*, as they were then and are still held, by the denomination in which he was brought up, (viz: the *Baptists*,) he ever held with most pertinacious attachment. With all his toleration, he could never speak charitably of "*sprinkling*;" and he could never allow that a man had any reason to believe himself to be a *Christian*, unless he was "*converted*" according to his peculiar views of conversion;" p. 36. We have here clearly laid down, the unqualified assent of Elder Jones to the truth of the doctrine, for which we have contended in our "*Strictures on Elder Hawley's pamphlet*;" a doctrine which he embraced in early life, and which he maintained till the day of his death.

But Br. Russel says, "When the churches were first organized in the south and west, they were believers in sprinkling, and continued to practice it, until convinced of a *more excellent way*." Very well; what of that? St. Paul says: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." In the infancy of our society, many of our ministers did not fully understand the Scriptures, on every point of doctrine and church discipline, which they adopted as the rule of faith and practice, by which to regulate all things; but as fast as they came to a clear sight and a full understanding of this divine rule, they reduced it to practice.

And this was especially their course on the subject of baptism. At first, they practised sprinkling for baptism; but as soon as they ascertained that this practice was not in accordance with the doctrine of the Bible, it was laid aside *for a more excellent way*. And, from that time to the present period, believer's baptism has been universally practised in the western states in the Christian connexion. But Br. Russel contends that, because our brethren in the west, in the infancy of the church, started with a wrong practice, but have since been set right by subsequent inquiries, therefore, this wrong practice should be continued in all our churches, notwithstanding we may all be fully satisfied, that our practice is wholly unsustained by the word of God; and yet, at the same time, we are to maintain that the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice, when we are continually setting at defiance this very rule. This, to me, I must confess, is strange logic, and I am not prepared to give to it my assent. Br. Russel also says, "The Christian churches in North Carolina, and a part of Virginia, *now* believe in and practise *infant sprinkling* for baptism." If this be the fact, they need "to be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly;" but it can be no argument for us, who know better, to adopt their unscriptural practices.

Thus, I have freely answered all the arguments which Br. Russel has advanced, to justify a violation of that divine rule, by which we profess to regulate both our faith and our practice. I shall now proceed to consider one other question, to which, as a last resort, multitudes flee, to justify the church in unscriptural practices. It is the right of private judgment. And this seems to be the fortress which Br. Russel holds in reserve, and to which he intends to flee, in case he should be hard pressed.

The true question, properly stated, is this: Are the rules and the order of the church to be regulated by the private judgment of her individual members, or by the collective wisdom and understanding of the body? To this question, I answer: The rules and order of the church are to be regulated by the collective wisdom and understanding of the body, and not by the private judgment of her individual members. Here is a very important distinction—a distinction fraught with the most fearful consequences to the prosperity and happiness of all our churches, and even to their very existence. A mistake here is fatal, and has been the means of plunging many of our churches into anarchy and confusion, and finally of blotting out their very existence.

All churches must have some general plan, some general order, and some general regulations, expressed or implied, written or unwritten, by which the body is to be regulated in her movements; and no church can prosper, for any length of time, without such general regulations. This springs up out of the necessity of the case, just as civil government springs up out of the frame and constitution of man. Men cannot live in a social state without civil

government; and civil government cannot be established and administered by the exercise of the private judgment of the individual members of the community. It must be done by the collective wisdom and judgment of the body. When the reins of government are assumed by private individuals, then factions, and tumults, and disorders, prevail, and the community is plunged into all the horrors of civil war. And when turbulent spirits break through the wholesome regulations and discipline of the church, then disorder and confusion, as a necessary consequence, follow; and, unless this state of things can be arrested, it will end in the destruction of the body.

I say, the order of the church is to be regulated by the collective wisdom and understanding of the body. The judgment of the body is to be exercised as to the true meaning of the divine rule, by which all things are to be regulated; and, in all those cases where the rule is clear and evident, the church is bound to adopt such rules for the regulation of her conduct, in obedience to the command of her great Head, as he has prescribed. But in all those matters, which are left to the collective wisdom of the body, she has wider scope, and may exercise her best judgment in the case; but she has no authority to alter, change, or suspend, any of the rules and regulations, prescribed for the government of her conduct, by her only Lawgiver. That the power to regulate the affairs of the church, and to administer her discipline, is vested in the collective wisdom of the body, is a doctrine now admitted by the ministers of the Christian connexion, with very few exceptions. Elder Jones, speaking on this subject, says: "The great Head of the church has ordained that there shall be elders in every church; neither can any church prosper long at a time, without a pastor or elder. For lack of this, our early churches suffered much, nor was it possible for us to take proper care of our churches. This caused many to go over to the Baptists and Methodists, that they might thereby enjoy the blessing of a constant ministry. Many wandered from the fold into the world, for the want of being well taken care of; so upon the whole, on this ground, we have been very great losers. It was a favorite doctrine in all our early churches, that there were gifts in the church, such as prayer and exhortation, which ought to be improved in public meetings, as well as those of preaching. This doctrine I now firmly believe. But in those early days, I am constrained to say, that, in the injudicious use of this privilege, great evil was done; for it is certain that many, who had not gifts to speak, either to the edification of saints, or the conviction of sinners, were the most forward to occupy the time; and such became a great burthen to the church, and gave the enemy great occasion to blaspheme. If any attempt was made to correct such an evil, the cry was immediately made, 'You want to take away our liberties; you want to bring us into bondage; you want to be popular; you want to be a lord over God's heritage,' &c. The

question will now arise, how shall this evil be remedied, in such a manner as not to stop the exercise of these valuable gifts? Answer: Let the *church* judge of these gifts, as they do of preaching gifts, and also approve the same. If a brother says, 'God has called me to preach,' the church does not approve or hear such a brother, unless they can discover preaching gifts in him. In the same manner, the church judges impartially of *all gifts*. I do not believe that *every man, woman, and child*, who are converted, have gifts to speak in public meetings. Circumstances have often occurred like the following: The sermon has been delivered in a most solemn, spiritual, and judicious manner. Saints have been made happy, and sinners have been most solemnly impressed. But a weak brother or sister arises, merely because they feel happy, and want to express it. Yet they can say nothing to edification, and the good impressions are often injured. But it is said, such an one has as good right as any other, and he ought to speak, to clear his own mind. But let us remember, that the true object of speaking is not to *edify ourselves*, but to *edify others*. I have never questioned the piety and good intentions of such brethren; but to me there is a deep importance to be attached to the charge, that every thing should be done decently and in order. St. Paul says, that though many things are perfectly lawful, they are not expedient.

"I do not speak with *authority* on this point. I have no disposition to shackle any man's mind, or to deprive him of his testimony. But it does seem to me, that there is a fitness in all things pertaining to the church of Christ; and I would add my dying to my living testimony, against a practice, which, I have no doubt, has caused many a schism among brethren, broken up churches, and hindered the work of God. I know that many of my brethren sympathize with me in this; although I am aware that many others think, that what I have recommended would be inconsistent with the freedom we possess.

"To such let me say, there is a heaven wide difference between liberty to do what is right and proper and seemly, and liberty to do what is wrong and unseemly. One is *freedom*, the other *license*. Wholesome restraint is perfectly consonant with true freedom; indeed, there can be no *true freedom* without it, for liberty without restraint is anarchy. No man has freedom to infringe the freedom of any other man. Now, if an injudicious brother or sister, in the full enjoyment of what he or she calls liberty, usurps the time and freedom of others, then he or she, is bound to submit to such restraints as the majority demand, in order to *their* enjoyment of liberty and peace. And, if they have not discretion enough to know when they are misusing their liberty, where is the impropriety that the church, through its elders, should subject them to such restraints as the peace, enjoyment, and freedom of the body require?"

Here the principle for which we contend is fully recognized:

that the church, by her collective wisdom and understanding of the divine rule, is to regulate all her internal affairs, and that her affairs are not to be regulated by the private judgment of her individual members; for this will be ever varying and fluctuating, and instead of regulating, will be the means of introducing disorder and confusion into the body.

This is also evidently the true doctrine of the Bible, for the power of discipline is certainly lodged in the collective wisdom and judgment of the church, in both the larger and restricted sense of this term. The church has authority to adopt such rules and regulations, in conformity to the divine will, as are necessary to secure all the great objects of church organizations. She chooses her own officers, elects her own pastor, and adopts such regulations as will enable her to maintain permanently the public worship of God. She preserves order and decorum in all her meetings of worship, of discipline, and of business. She examines and decides upon the qualifications of all who are admitted to her communion, and then judges of their orderly or disorderly walk. She administers instruction, warning, admonition, reproof, and excommunication, as the several cases of her members may demand. This is the natural right of the churches. As it belongs to her to admit members, she ought to have the right, in case individuals prove unworthy, to exclude them. And this right of the church is expressly recognized in the New Testament. To the aggrieved brother, Christ says: "Tell it to *the church*; and if he neglect to hear *the church*, let him be unto them as a heathen man and a publican;" a form of expression which clearly implies that it belongs to *the church* to hear and judge of offences, and to admonish, counsel, and advise; and if all proper means fail to reclaim the offender, as the last resort, to exclude him from the church. St. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, says: "*Purge out* the old leaven;" and again, "*Put away from among yourselves* that wicked person;" 1 Cor. v., 7, 13. He exhorts the brethren at Rome to "*mark* those which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them;" and at Thessalonica, to "*withdraw* themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." Besides, nearly all of the epistles are addressed to the churches in their collective capacity, and they are filled with instructions and directions to the body how to proceed in extraordinary and difficult cases of discipline; how to detect impostors and false pretenders; and how to preserve the church in purity of doctrine, of worship, and of holy living. From these, and other considerations which might be urged, it is evident that the power of discipline is vested in the churches, and that on them rests the solemn responsibility of maintaining it.

But Br. Russel says: "When we are ready to adopt a sectarian test of fellowship—a *test* by which acknowledged Christians are excluded from the privileges of the church, that moment we are bound, in common honesty, to write out our creed, that it may



be read and known of all men—yea, more; that moment we step off the platform of common Christianity, erect a sectarian platform for ourselves, we are bound, as honest men, to relinquish the name *Christian*—a name common to all Christians—and take a sectarian name." What does Br. Russel mean by a sectarian *test*? I have said nothing about a sectarian *test*; my whole argument has been to prove a Bible *test*, a Scriptural *test*, such a *test* as the great head of the church has ordained and established, and placed in the hands of every gospel church; and requires that a constant use should be made of it in the exercise of her discipline. Is she not required to make use of it in the examination into the qualifications of those who apply for membership? Or is she to receive, indiscriminately, anything and everything that offers? Is she not to make use of it in the administration of the institution of baptism and the reception of members? Or, is baptism to be administered in any form, in every form, or in no form; and individuals thrust into the church anyhow and anyhow, sideways or backwards, just as their crude notions and strange fancies may suggest? Is she not to make use of this *test* in the exercise of her discipline? Or is she to *abandon her discipline* altogether, and leave her members to be guided as piety, passion, appetite, or interest may suggest? Is every divine institution, every Scriptural doctrine, every evangelical precept, and every wholesome regulation in the church, to be thrust aside under the false and fictitious name of "a sectarian *test*?" Are the whole Christian connexion to turn pale, renounce the laws of heaven, violate the institutions of the gospel, shrink back from a sense of duty, and be thrown into disorder and confusion, merely because some misguided individual, under a mistaken notion, cries out "sectarian *test*?" Shall we make use of our liberty, because we have taken the Bible as our rule of faith and practice, to wink at sin, to connive at error, and to justify the plainest violations of the law of heaven? I say, the Bible clothes the church with authority to execute the laws of heaven, so far as her jurisdiction extends, and she is held responsible for the exercise of this authority; and, if she do not discharge her whole duty, she must incur the displeasure of him who holds the stars in his right hand, and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks. The church is said to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," but if she abandon her Scriptural *test*, she must become the pillar and ground of error, be carried about by every wind of doctrine, and become as unstable as water.

Let us now consider the other view of the subject, and trace the necessary consequences of a church having no permanent rules and regulations, but committing the guidance of her affairs to the ever varying, changing, and conflicting opinions of the private judgment of her individual members. She is to have no *test* by which the qualifications for membership are to be determined, but every man is to be the judge of his own qualifications; and if

he is righteous in his own eyes, then he is to be admitted a member of the church. She is to have no mode of initiation into the body, but one man is to creep into the window, another is to crawl into the door, a third is to climb up some other way, and a fourth must be let down through the roof, just as their strange fancies may dictate. And, should these apertures not be sufficiently wide to accommodate all who may desire to enter, the whole front of the temple must be removed for their accommodation, just as we remove the end of the ship-house, when the ship is launched. The church is to have no order of service, no rule of discipline, but every member is to do as seems good in his own eyes. Now who does not perceive, that under such a state of things, no church can prosper for any great length of time. Schisms, and divisions, and fierce contentions, will spring up in the body, and the church having no rule by which to adjust them, but the private judgment of the contending parties themselves; the warfare will go on till one party or the other are subdued, or the whole fall in the conflict together. Among the many instances of this kind, I will merely refer to one as an example: "About this time, there crept into the church, controversies about the freedom of church members. A few troublesome persons had attached themselves to the church, who were continually fomenting discord. 'They professed,' says Elder Jones, in his Journal, 'to be governed by the *Spirit*, and a most *perverse* spirit it was.' It was unfortunate for the church, that the 'spirit,' whatever it was, was not *laid* early; for it increased in power, until in 1821, it divided the church into two parties, both of which have since been dissolved and disappeared."—*Memoir of Elder Jones*, p. 81. This is the practical result of unscriptural doctrine.

In the early history of our society, we had the practical proof of this doctrine, in the whirlwinds, tornadoes, hurricanes, and devastations which it spread through the body. There was a class of ignorant pretenders in the churches, wilful, headstrong, and confident; always changing and always right; wiser in their own estimation than seven men who can render a reason; ever imposing their dictation upon others, and never willing to submit to any wholesome restraint themselves; cutting, thrusting, and spearing everybody and everything that stood in their way; thus they went on exciting the fury of some, and the contempt of others, creating uproar and confusion wherever they went, and leaving behind them a scene of disorder and desolation, that years of the most prudent labors could not rectify. These men were for pulling every lynch-pin out of the gospel car, and then driving ahead with the fury of Jehu. There, Zion was like a city broken down and without walls, into which every snake, and toad, and reptile, could crawl at will and pleasure. The persons introduced into the church by them were, for the most part, the disaffected of the religious sects—the odd, the singular, and the self-willed. When

they had despoiled one church, they went to spread havoc in another, till at length they acquired the general name of *disorganizers*. In one case it was found necessary to exclude a minister of this class, with all his adherents. But at length, the church saw the necessity of sternly setting their faces against them, and in process of time, their influence became greatly curtailed; and, as the churches introduced order and good regulations, they began to rise in character and influence, and increase in numbers, in piety, and in strength. And our churches have not the least idea of falling back into this state of anarchy and confusion, from which they have been, in some good measure, extricated, and from which, I trust, they will in a few years be fully redeemed.

I maintain, then, that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the rule of the faith and the practice of the church, and that the church in her collective wisdom and understanding, is to be the judge of the true meaning of the divine rule, and is to regulate all things properly under her jurisdiction and direction in accordance with this rule, and from which she has no authority to deviate; and if she does, she does it at her peril. Now, to admit that, as ministers of the gospel, we are directed by the great Head of the church, to initiate converts into this very church by baptism, then, to maintain that the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice, and then go on to prove that this rule should be violated whenever a weak-minded disciple may desire, and if the church does not do it, to call her sectarian, and declare she has introduced "a sectarian test," and she is bound in common honesty to renounce her *Christian* name, is, to me, the height of folly and the consummation of absurdity. To grant to us that we have "the truth on the subject of baptism," as Br. Russel does, and then press us with arguments to show that this precious *truth* should be cast down to the ground, and, at the same time, attempt to persuade us that we are walking *in the truth*, and obeying the divine rule; surely he must think that we are not a little wanting in common understanding.

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## ARTICLE X. 3

*An Address delivered in the Christian Chapel, Fall River, April 7th, 1836, at the Reception of Eighty-five Members into the First Christian Church.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS: You have this day made a public profession of the Christian religion, before many witnesses, by baptism; and you are now to be received as members of a Christian church. An event so solemn, and so deeply interesting, but seldom occurs;

and with you will, probably, never occur again, in the short scene of this transitory life. I shall, therefore, embrace the present opportunity, to make a few remarks, which, I humbly hope and trust, will prove beneficial to you, in establishing your minds in the true faith of the gospel, and in directing your feet in the true way of eternal life.

In order to become firm and stable Christians, it will be necessary for you to become settled in your religious opinions. *A double minded man*, says an inspired apostle, *is unstable in all his ways*. Having no settled opinions of his own, he will be ever fluctuating in his religious belief, and *will be carried about by every wind of doctrine*. It is not, however, always easy to apprehend the truth, even when we seek for it *as for hid treasures*. Passion, prejudice, and the force of education, frequently stand in the way of the sincere inquirer, and serve to darken the understanding, and pervert the judgment. In searching for the truth, we should, therefore, endeavor, in the first place, as far as we are capable, to divest ourselves of all those passions and prejudices, which would serve to distort the form and features of truth, or give a false coloring to error. In this state of mind, we should come directly to the word of God, the fountain of truth. Sermons, commentaries, and confessions of faith, may be used as helps; but they are not to be received as the standards of truth, or to be placed in competition with the word of God. *To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*. We should also remember, that all the truths of Christianity are expressed in the language of the Bible; therefore, no sentiment, no doctrine, should be either inculcated or received as a Christian sentiment, or a Christian doctrine, but what may be expressed in the language which the Holy Spirit useth. If you follow these directions, you will, doubtless, be led to perceive and to embrace the true doctrine of the gospel. It is included, as apprehended by your pastor, in the following summary. I believe,

1. That the Holy Scriptures, including the books of the Old and New Testaments, contain a full revelation of the will of God concerning man, and are alone sufficient for everything relating to the faith and practice of a Christian; and were given by the inspiration of God.

2. That the Holy Scriptures are addressed to the reason of man and may be understood, and that every individual possesses the unalienable right of reading them: and of exercising his own judgment with regard to their true import and meaning.

3. That there is but one living and true God, the Father, Almighty, who is unoriginated, infinite, and eternal: the Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and that this God is one spiritual intelligence, one infinite mind, ever the same and never varying.

4. That this one God is the moral Governor of the world, the

absolute source of all the blessings of nature, providence, and grace ; in whose infinite wisdom, goodness, and benevolence, have originated all the moral dispensations to man.

5. That man is a free agent, never being impelled by any necessitating influence either to do good or evil, but has it continually in his power to choose the life or death set before him ; on which ground he is an accountable being, and answerable for all his actions ; and on this ground alone he is the proper subject of rewards and punishments.

6. That all men, in every age, country, and condition of society, sin and come short of the glory of God.

7. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world ; that there is salvation in no other name, and that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.

8. That Jesus Christ, in pursuance of the glorious plan of salvation, and for the benefit of all mankind, without distinction, submitted to the painful and ignominious death of the cross ; by which death the new covenant was sealed, ratified, and confirmed ; so that, henceforth, his blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, and the gospel is the new covenant in his blood ; and that, on the third day after his crucifixion, he was raised from the dead, by the power of God.

9. That the pardon of sin is communicated through the mediation of Jesus Christ, through his sufferings and death ; and is received by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

10. That God freely forgives sin, on the ground of his own rich mercy, and not on account of any merit or worthiness in the creature ; so that we are justified freely by his grace.

11. That the Holy Spirit is the power and energy of God—that holy influence of God, by whose agency, in the use of means, the wicked are regenerated, sanctified, and converted to a holy and virtuous life ; and that the saints, by the same Spirit, in the use of means, are comforted, strengthened, and led in the path of duty.

12. That the souls of all truly penitent believers may be cleansed from all the defilements of sin, and be brought into a state of holiness and purity with God, and, by continued obedience, live in a justified state before him.

13. That the whole period of human life is a state of probation, in every part of which a sinner may repent and turn to God, and also in every part of which a believer may relapse into sin, and fall from the grace of God ; and that this possibility of rising, and liability to falling, are essential to a state of trial or probation.

14. That all the promises and threatenings of the gospel are conditional, as they regard man with reference to his well-being, here and hereafter ; and that on this ground alone, the sacred writings can be consistently interpreted, or rightly understood.

15. That Jesus Christ has ordained two institutions, which are to be perpetually observed, baptism and the Lord's supper: baptism is to be administered on a profession of faith in the Christian religion, by which the candidate engages to renounce his sins and walk in newness of life; the Lord's supper is to be frequently observed by all true believers, in commemoration of his sufferings and death, by which death the new covenant was confirmed.

16. That there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

17. That there will be a day of judgment, after which, all will be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body.

This summary, it is believed, contains all the essential principles of Christianity, which properly come under the *rule of faith*. In these principles, we should, therefore, be fixed and decided. If we consult the opinions of those around us, we shall be continually wavering in our judgment, and fluctuating in our practice. It is not from the vain conjectures of men that we are to form our sentiments, but from the testimony of God. Let them speak as they will respecting these things, our judgment must not be in the least altered, unless they will undertake to convince us from the Holy Scriptures. The word of God is the only standard of true doctrine, and to this we must adhere, though the whole world should oppose us. Truth is the same, whether its advocates are few or many; and when we have ascertained and embraced it, we should suffer no considerations to invalidate its force, or obstruct its influence.

Permit me, then, to urge upon you the importance of being true to your principles, and of maintaining them by a well-regulated life and conversation; for he who is not true to his principles, is not true to his God, nor to his own soul.

We should, also, have correct views on religious experience; for the service which God requires of us is not a mere bodily service, but the service of the heart, and the entire devotion of the soul. *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* By Christian experience, we mean that religious knowledge which is acquired by any exercises, enjoyments, or sufferings, either of body or of mind. Nothing, however, is more common than to despise what is termed religious experience. Infidels sneer, the cold-hearted condemn, and the ungodly ridicule it. Being unacquainted with it *themselves*, they suppose it all the work of imagination, or the heat of enthusiasm, in *others*. But it seems not a little remarkable, that while the term is admitted when applied to those parts of science which are founded on sensible trial, it should be rejected when applied to religion. Why should not experimental divinity be equally as reasonable as experimental philosophy? Indeed, we must be at a loss to know what real religion is, without experience; for, however excellent it may be as a theory, we know it is nothing except it engage the affections, and regu-

late the conduct. To become, then, experimental Christians, we must not only be made acquainted with the theory of religion, but enjoy its power; subduing our corruptions, animating our affections, and regulating our actions. Hence, in the language of Scripture, experience is *tasting, eating, and drinking*. *O, taste and see the Lord is good*. A person who has tasted of aliment, has some experimental knowledge of its qualities. So he who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, cannot be ignorant of Christian experience.

If we examine the character of man in his lost state, as described in the word of God, and the nature of that holy religion by which he is saved, it must appear evident to every reflecting mind, that no person can become a Christian, and remain ignorant of religious experience. The Scriptures fully testify that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All unregenerate men are described as being in a state of moral degradation and depravity, under the influence of irregular desires and corrupt appetites. They are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, and are his enemies by wicked works. The moral energies of the soul are paralyzed; and, therefore, the wicked are said to be without strength. This is that lost and perishing condition, in which the Scriptures represent the world of unregenerate men. Christianity proposes a remedy for this sinful and perishing world, and is, therefore, suited to its character and condition. Jesus Christ is to be regarded as sustaining a higher relation to us than a moral Teacher; he is a *Saviour*, he is a *Redeemer*. A work of grace must be wrought *in us*. The fountain of iniquity and corruption of sin is *in us*. Salvation is a deliverance from the *power and dominion* of sin. Hence the Scriptures testify that *God has wrought all our work in us*. *Christ in you, the hope of glory*. *He effectually worketh in them that believe*. *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*. *Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistles of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart*.

Christianity proposes to reform a wicked and sinful world; and, therefore, all its divine precepts are aimed directly at the heart. It never goes about to change the exterior of man. To merely external duties, it is a stranger. It forms the lives of men no otherwise than by forming their dispositions. It never addresses itself to their vanity, caprice, selfishness, or any other corrupt propensity. On the contrary, it declares open war against *every* evil disposition of the human heart. It tolerates none. Of the most odious vices, such as disobedience to parents, dishonesty, injustice, and murder, it speaks with abhorrence. It says they ought not to be named among Christians. But this is not all. It descends into the heart; it puts forth its hand, and plucks out every root of bitterness, which, springing up, would pollute the soul, and defile the life. Many principles, which the world approves, and on many

occasions considers to be harmless—as pride, envy, revenge, ambition, the eager pursuit of wealth, fondness for pleasure, contempt for others, and a disposition to filthy jesting—the gospel condemns, in every form and degree. It forbids the indulgence of them in thought; it prohibits the adultery of the eye, and the murder of the heart; and commands the desire to be strangled in its birth. Neither the hands, the tongue, the head, nor the heart, must be guilty of one iniquity. However the world may applaud the heroic ambition of one, the love of glory in another, the successful pursuits of affluence in a third—the high-minded pride, the glowing patriotism which would compel the world to bow the neck, the steady pursuit of revenge for injuries received, and a sovereign contempt for the ignoble vulgar—Christianity condemns them all, and enjoins the disciples of Christ to crucify them without delay. Not one is to be spared, though dear as a right eye for pleasure, or necessary as a right hand for defence or labor. The gospel enjoins upon men what is just and right, and what is necessary to their well-being, regardless of the opinions of their fellow-men, or of their temporal interests. If a man would comply with its precepts, he must be a Christian in reality, and not merely by profession. It is the heart that is required; and all the different forms of prescribed worship and obedience, are but so many varied expressions or modifications of it. If this divine energy, this holy influence of the gospel, has touched the heart, purified the conscience, and regulated the life of an individual, he must have acquired some knowledge by experience; he cannot be ignorant of the power of Christianity, in the salvation of the soul.

Christianity excites new dispositions in the heart of a regenerated man, by making him a partaker of the divine nature. All the affections of the heart are directed in a new channel. *Old things pass away, and all things become new. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto him. The Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God. He truly possesses a peace that passeth all understanding. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He also has the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, by the grace of God, he has had his conversation in the world. And as he progresses onward in the path of the just, the shining light shines more and more to the perfect day.*

It is the peculiar glory of the Christian religion, that it inspires in the heart of a believer, that temper and disposition suited to every rank and station in life. Is the Christian favored with temporal blessings? He is instructed how to enjoy them aright, and to distribute to the necessities of those who are in want. Are his circumstances contracted? It preserves him from a spirit of repining. *He has learned in whatever state he is, therewith to be content. He knows both how to be abased, and how to abound; every-*



where, and in all things, he is instructed, both to be full and to be hungry—both to abound and to suffer need. Nor does Christianity only produce contentment, but it gives to its possessors a certain dignity and authority, which the greatest can never attain without it. The terrors of men may make us afraid, and extort an outward reverence; but nothing commands the hearts and affections of men, like real piety and true godliness. *Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.* A strict and conscientious discharge of the duties of the Christian religion conciliates the esteem and love of mankind, and establishes a fair reputation and an unblemished character. While the real Christian fears God, and obeys the laws of his country, he is honest in his dealings, frugal in his expenses, and industrious in the proper calling of his life, and aims to *adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things.* Real Christians, whatever be their station in life, have a peculiar enjoyment in the possession of temporal goods, while the ungodly find emptiness in all their possessions: for the mind, rendered holy and happy by the excellent principles that govern it, mixes its own sweetness with whatever good is received, and imparts an extraordinary relish to it; while the unholy tempers and dispositions of those who are not in a Christian state of mind, must, by their very nature, prevent such persons from enjoying what they possess.

But the happy effects of Christian experience are not confined to prosperity; it qualifies the mind to face the storms and to meet the adversities of life. The experience of every day proves that man is born to trouble; and religion will not prevent the Christian from being made to feel what it is to share in the common lot of mankind. But what support will Christianity afford him, when the cup of affliction is put into his hand? Supports to which mere men of the world are utter strangers. These are, for the most part, miserable in their afflictions. If they be kept from complaining, it is the summit of their attainments; while the Christian is enabled to *glory even in tribulation*, and cordially to approve all the dispensations of God towards him. Animated by a sense of the divine presence and approbation, and fully persuaded of an overruling providence, he adopts the expressive language of the prophet:—*although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in their vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* This is a joy with which a stranger intermeddled not—a joy inspired by the influence of Christianity over the heart and the affections—a joy *unspeakable and full of glory.* What trouble, indeed, can overwhelm, what fear can discompose, that man whose mind is stayed on God, and whose hope the Lord is? What earthly power can make such a man unhappy? Will you take away his riches? His treasure is

in heaven. Will you banish him from home? His country is above. Will you bind him in chains? His conscience, his spirit, his affections, are all free. Will you destroy his body? His body shall be raised incorruptable at the last day, and his spirit will immediately return to God, who gave it. Heaven itself is but an emblem of his happiness. As heaven is enlightened by the rising sun, his soul is illuminated by the sun of righteousness, which rises without setting in his heart. As heaven is intrinsically bright and beautiful, though clouds obscure, and midnight darkness surround it, he is peaceful, happy, and serene in the midst of trials and afflictions. As heaven is exalted above the storms and tempest of this lower atmosphere, he is elevated above the distractions of this troublesome world. He is a Christian; his conversation is in heaven; his life is hid with Christ, in God.

It is admitted that such a Christian has sorrow; but his sorrow is sweeter than the joy of the world. Every trial, every affliction, draws him nearer to his God. In the tumults of life, in the secrecy of his chamber, in the silence of midnight, he has a resource of which the world is ignorant. He pours forth his fears, his apprehensions, his troubles, into the bosom of his Maker. Suffering thus becomes a fountain of delight; for it is felt to be a source of spiritual improvement. Thus it is, that all things work together, not only for good, but also for enjoyment, to them that love God. Thus it is, that if they sow in tears, they reap in joy. Far different from this is the joy of the wicked. His joy is a malignant passion, excited by the temporary success of some of his devices. *Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom; but the triumph of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment; God is not in all their thoughts. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? What profit should we have, if we should pray unto him?*

But it is in the prospects of *futurity*, especially, that the happy effects of Christianity upon the human heart are peculiarly felt and displayed. The hour of death must, unavoidably, come to every individual of the human family. In that awful moment, when the soul is floating upon the confines of the two worlds, suffering the agony of bodily torture; when friends and relatives are expressing, by their agonizing looks, what they are afraid to utter; when medicines and pains are racking the debilitated frame; when the cold chills of death are felt passing all through the system; how glorious are the Christian's views of the eternal world. The time has arrived when the upright judge comes to strike off the chains of mortality, to free him from that earth where he has so long been a stranger and a captive, and to deliver him from all the sorrows, trials, and tribulations of this transitory life. He comes to conduct him, in peace and safety, through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and to introduce him into the kingdom of light and glory

above. What blessed tidings of joy and immortality to this righteous soul! What a blessed prospect! With what peace, what confidence, what thanksgivings, does he accept it! He rises like Simeon of old, his dying eyes to heaven, and beholding the approach of the Lord, exclaims: *Break, O my God! when thou pleasest, these remains of mortality, these feeble ties which still keep me here; I wait in peace and hope, the effects of thine eternal promises.* From the promise of his Creator he learns that his *body*, sown here *in corruption, weakness, and dishonor, shall be raised*, beyond the grave, *in incorruption, power, and glory*, with so many attributes of *spirit*, as to be denominated by him who made it, *a spiritual body*. Ever young, active, and undecaying, it shall be re-united to the immortal mind, purified from every stain and every error. This perfect man shall be admitted, with an open and *abundant* entrance; into the heaven of heavens, the peculiar residence of the Infinite Majesty, and the chosen seat of infinite dominion. In this noblest of all habitations, the mansion of everlasting joy, he shall be united with an innumerable multitude of companions like himself, sanctified, immortal, and happy. Enrolled among the noblest and best of beings in the universe, *a child, a priest, a king*, in the house of his heavenly Father, his endless and only destination will be, to know, love, serve, and enjoy God; to interchange the best affections and the best offices with his glorious companions, and to advance in wisdom, virtue, and happiness, for ever and ever. Cheered and animated by these promises, the Christian endures hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, through all the labors and toils of life; and when the messenger of death comes to relieve him from the present scene of suffering affliction, in the sweet composure of triumphant faith, he adopts the elevated strains of the poet:—

“Ye golden lamps of heaven! farewell, with all your feeble light,  
Farewell, thou ever-changing moon, pale empress of the night!  
And thou, refulgent orb of day, in brighter flames arrayed,  
My soul, which springs beyond thy sphere, no more demands thy aid.  
Ye stars are but the shining dust of my divine abode,  
The pavement of those heavenly courts, where I shall reign with God.”

This is no ideal picture. Hopes and consolations like these, have, in every age of Christianity, supported the minds of millions of believers, in the humble and retired walks of life, as well as in exalted stations. But these hopes and consolations are only acquired by religious experience. A heart ignorant of Christian experience knows nothing of communion with God, or of the hope and joy inspired by the gospel. If the heart has never been touched by the power of truth—if the soul has never been warmed by a celestial fire, nor the conscience purified from the dross of sin, a profession of religion is but an empty show; *we are as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

From the foregoing remarks, we are led to the conclusion, that

all true Christians are experimental Christians. There are in this, as in former ages of the gospel, false disciples, mere nominal Christians, who have a form of godliness, but are destitute of that power which purifies the heart, regulates the life, and overcomes the world. Such persons, however, are not regarded as the devout worshippers of God, or the true followers of Jesus Christ, and we are, accordingly, commanded to turn away from them. *He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

Finally, the proper use of correct sentiments, and a right state of feeling in the heart, are to regulate our conduct. When, therefore, we are convinced that there is a God who has a right to all the love of our hearts, and to all the service of our lives, we should then enter into his service by a regular and uniform course of obedience to all of his requirements. Jesus Christ came into the world *that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Hence his disciples are styled in the Scriptures, *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that they might show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.* The power of Christianity is exerted, not only in changing the heart, and plucking up the roots of bitterness which pollute the soul, but also in forming the character to piety and virtue. The first converts to Christianity were reformed characters. This is affirmed by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. *What fruit, says he, had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of these things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* This same apostle, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, also asserts that some of them were reclaimed from sin by the gospel: *Be ye not deceived; neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor idolators, nor effeminate persons, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.* Peter, in the following passage, alludes to the reformation wrought among the Jewish converts in Pontus, Galatia, and in other places:—*The time past of your lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lust, and excess of wines, reveling, banqueting, and abominable idolatries, wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot.*

Origen, who flourished about A. D. 246, speaking of the efficacy of the gospel in forming the character of a wicked man to piety and virtue, remarks: "Give me a man who is choleric, abusive in his language, headstrong and unruly; with a very few words—the words of God—I will render him as gentle as a lamb. Give me a

greedy, covetous, parsimonious man; and I will presently return him to you a generous creature, freely bestowing his money by handful. Give me a cruel and blood-thirsty man; instantly his ferocity shall be transformed into truly a mild and merciful disposition. Give me an unjust man, a foolish man, a sinful man; and on a sudden he shall become honest, and wise, and virtuous. So great is the efficacy of divine wisdom, that when once admitted into the human heart, it expels folly, the parent of all vices; and, in accomplishing this great end, there is no occasion of any great expense, no absolute need of books, or deep or long study or meditation. The benefit is conferred gratuitously, easily, and expeditiously; provided the ears and heart thirst after wisdom." And such, indeed, were the effects of Christianity, as displayed in the conversion of the first Christians, in the early ages of the gospel. "Inquire," says Origen again, "into the lives of some of us; compare our former and present mode of life; and you will find in what impurities and impieties men were involved, before they embraced our doctrines. But since they embraced them, how just, grave, moderate, and constant, are they become: yea, some are so inflamed with the love of purity and goodness, as to abstain from lawful enjoyments. The church abounds with such men, wherever the doctrines of Christianity prevail; men who have been converted from the sink of vice, to the practice of virtue and a life of temperance, conformable to the dictates of right reason."

That the practice of good works, and a holy and religious life, is the principal end proposed by the gospel, and the principal character of the Christian, is clearly stated in the Scriptures. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God be careful to maintain good works. The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world.* The same apostle elsewhere, distinguishing true from false professors, says: *For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things; but our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus. We are his workmanship,* says the same apostle, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* The sixth chapter of Romans asserts, in the most unequivocal language, that the true end of the doctrine of grace is to sanctify men. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by*

*the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* The apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians, having strongly defended that gospel liberty which Jesus Christ has acquired, by his blood, for us, prevents an abuse which might be made of it, by adding: *Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh. Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other. Now the works of the flesh are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I also have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.* Our Lord enforces the same doctrine, in these divine and admirable words: *Let your light so shine before men, that, seeing your good works, they may glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

It is the uniform testimony of the gospel, that the principal end of Christ's coming upon the earth, was to destroy sin. Is it, indeed, likely, that Jesus Christ would have quitted his mansion of glory, and descended to this earth, to acquire an impunity for criminals, leaving them immersed in sensuality and sin? Is it reasonable that he will hold communion with people in rebellion and profaneness? Is it possible for him, the *holy*, the *immaculate* Jesus, to join his spirit to our flesh, his purity to our profanity, his holiness to our iniquities? This would be saying, that he came to unite things the most opposite, and which are naturally and essentially incompatible. One of the most embittered enemies of the gospel reproached the primitive Christians, that their Jesus came into the world to make the most horrible and dreadful societies: "For," said he, "he calls sinners, and not the righteous; so that the body he came to assemble, is a body of profligates, separated from good people, amongst whom they were before mixed. He has rejected all the good, and collected all the bad in the world." What a false and cruel accusation. Origen replied to this charge, in the following appropriate and pungent language: "True," said he, "our Jesus came to call sinners; but it was to *repentance*: he assembled the wicked; but it was to convert them into new men, or rather, it was to change them into angels. We come to him covetous, he makes us liberal; unjust and extortioners, and he makes us equitable; lascivious, and he makes us chaste; violent and passionate, and he makes us meek; impious and profane, and he makes us religious." This is the true effect of communion with Jesus Christ: it transforms the heart into his image; and this transformation is so essential to the Christian character, that, if it does not appear

in the life and conversation of a man, we are under the necessity of concluding that he is not in communion with the Saviour.

The Scriptures also teach us, that holiness, purity, and virtue, are inseparable from communion with God, to which communion with Jesus Christ leads us. As he came into the world in the quality of a Mediator, he called men to himself only to unite them to God. Hence he said: *I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.* And again he says: *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them, also, which shall believe on me through their word, that they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us.* But can a holy God hold communion with persons immersed in sin, and maintaining open rebellion against his government? *Thou art not a God,* says the prophet, *that hast pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee; the foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all the works of iniquity.*

It is evident, then, that the Christian religion, which brings us into communion with God, brings us, also, at the same time, into true holiness, without which, communion with God is not attainable. Is it, indeed, conceivable, that while we remain immersed in sensuality and sin, we can be the temples of the Holy Spirit? Can a Spirit, ineffably holy and pure, dwell in a man, who is a slave to the world, and to his vile affections? Can God possess the heart and the affections, and leave the affections enslaved to vice? It is with the Holy Spirit as with fire, which cannot exist without heat; or as the sun, which cannot be above the horizon without giving light. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh,* says our Saviour, *and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* In accordance with these sentiments, the apostle tells the Romans: *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit.* It is impossible, then, to be a true Christian, or to hold communion with Christ, unless we partake of his Spirit. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ,* says St. Paul, *he is none of his. Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

From the foregoing observations, it clearly follows, that holiness and virtue are inseparable companions, and are the true and proper effects of the gospel; and are, also, infallible marks of a sound convert.

As virtue is a necessary concomitant of the Christian character, so the gospel furnishes the strongest possible motives to obedience. These motives are almost all comprehended in Jesus Christ, and in the economy of the grace and mercy of God. They are such as must affect every soul, that is not entirely dead in sin; for that God, after all our rebellions and all our crimes, should yet be reconciled to us—that he should give his Son, that he should give him to be flesh and blood like us, that he should give him to be our head, our brother, and our example, that he should give him to die for us—to

die the most bloody, the most ignominious, and the most cruel death that could be conceived—is not this love and mercy, worthy of eternal praise? And what horrible ingratitude must it be, if, after all this, we should be yet capable of wilfully sinning against a God so good, and of counting *the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*.

It appears, then, from all that has been said, that the true test of Christian character is obedience. *Ye are my friends*, said our Lord, *if ye do whatsoever I command you. The good man from the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; therefore, by their fruit ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, neither can a bad tree bring forth good fruit.* This is the test by which the quality of our faith and experience must be determined. We are to prove our faith and experience evangelical, by our works. If the grace of faith and experience has been wrought in our hearts, by the power of truth, we shall bring forth, in our daily walk and conversation, the fruits of righteousness. We shall live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present evil world; and shall shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. "*Giving all diligence*, we shall add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. These things being in us and abounding, they make us that we shall be neither barren nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," are the meditation of our hearts, and the fruit of our lives.

A person who is destitute of either faith, experience, or practice, cannot be a Christian. They operate simultaneously, and, like the colors of the rainbow, mix and blend in the formation of the Christian character, and can never be separated from it. They exist in some degree, in all Christians. Whosoever, therefore, possesses an evangelical faith, a genuine experience, and manifests his love to his Redeemer, by keeping his commandments, is a Christian. Such are the graces which form the Christian character, and such are the characters owned and blessed of God as the true followers of Jesus Christ. *God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.*

In the conclusion of my remarks, permit me, brethren, to urge upon you the importance of giving a practical illustration of the Christian character, by the exercise of piety towards God, and universal benevolence and good will towards man. Remember you have made a great profession, and that the vows of God are upon you. Adorn this profession, by a well-ordered life and a godly



conversation. Avoid every kind and every species of immorality, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering; forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Let your conversation be only as becometh the gospel of Christ, and adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, in all things. Remember you are the salt of the earth—the light of the world—the city set on a hill; it therefore becomes you to walk worthy of God, who has called you to his kingdom and glory. May you never seek to wrong or injure any man, in his person, his property, or his reputation; but endeavor to render to all their just dues. Lie not one to another, but speak every man truth to his neighbor, and provide things honest in the sight of all men. In your intercourse with mankind, avoid all injustice and violence, all fraud and falsehood, in your words and dealings. Be not angry with your brother without a cause: speak evil of no man; and neither raise evil reports yourselves against your neighbors, nor spread them abroad when raised by others. Never pass rash judgments upon others, lest yourselves should be judged by God. On the contrary, put the best construction upon their words, which the case will bear. You should also remember, that no seeming acts of piety and devotion, or diligence in the ritual observances of religion, will compensate for the wrongs or injuries done to your neighbors; nor will they be accepted by God, without making reparation, as far as may be in your power, for those injuries and wrongs.

Rest not satisfied with the observance of a merely negative morality; but do good to all men as far as you have ability and opportunity. Assist them in their necessities and distresses, sympathize with them in their afflictions and sorrows, as well as rejoice in their prosperity; be ready to distribute to their necessities out of your worldly substance; endeavor to convert them from the error of their way, and reprove them, when guilty of faults, in the spirit of kindness; and, finally, do all you can to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare. If you have suffered injuries from others, exercise a forgiving temper towards them, and not give way to the bitterness of revenge. Never render evil for evil, but render good for evil, and thus you shall heap coals of fire on the heads of your enemies, and soften the asperity of their hearts. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust.

Remember that your conversation or citizenship is in heaven, and that you are only strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and that you must, therefore, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the peace, the purity, and dignity of the soul. Recollect that you are

only sojourners here, and have no continuing city, but are seeking one to come ; seek not, therefore, your rest in this world, nor be too solicitous about the things of it, but may you always keep your heavenly country in view, and make it your greatest concern to arrive safely there. Cherish the graces of humility, meekness, temperance, and purity ; and persevere in a uniform and constant observance of all the filial, parental, social, and civil duties of our holy religion, animated by the cheering prospect that your light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for you a far more exceeding and eternal wait of glory, while you look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; because the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are eternal.

Permit me, my friends, before I close my remarks, to address myself to another class of my hearers—to that part of this assembly who as yet have never entered into the service of God. I have time now left, having extended this address to great length, only to make a single remark. Fellow-sinner, you are already aware that it has been a time of great interest on the subject of religion in this village, for several months past. A great multitude, many of whom are your intimate acquaintances, have become obedient to the faith. They are now providing themselves with bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not away. Remember that you must die as well as they, and it is only by becoming a sincere Christian, that you can be prepared for that solemn event. Those who live and die in sin can never see God, but must be banished from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. O think of that solemn hour, when the sinner will be surprised by the unexpected approach of death—little did he expect, and ill is he prepared for this solemn event—its approach fills him with horror. Overwhelmed by this sudden appearance of death, the sinner finds himself totally unprepared for that separation which is now inevitable. Every tie that is now broken asunder, becomes a wound which rankles in his heart ; every separation becomes a new death to his mind. He is now torn from the riches, which he has accumulated by toil and labor, and to which his heart is still glued—from the pomp, splendor, and magnificence of the world which surround him, and for the enjoyment of which he has a keen relish—from all the honors of life, which have been lavished upon him with a profuse and liberal hand, and which are still his boast and his glory—from his relations and friends, whom he sees surrounding his bed, and whose tears and lamentations wring his heart, and make him cruelly feel the anguish of losing them forever—from his body, for whose gratification he had always lived, and with which, by favoring all its passions, he had contracted such lively and intimate ties. He feels his habitation of clay to be crumbling to dust ; he feels the approach of death in every one of his senses ; he is no longer

bound to life, but by a carcass which moulders away, by the cruel agonies which his disease makes him feel, by the excess of his love for it, and which becomes more lively in proportion as he advances towards the moment of separation. Finally, he is torn from the world, where are all his riches, his splendors, his honors, his desires, his pleasures, his friends, and his hopes. His body quits them, but his heart is placed upon them; the world dies to him, but he lives to the world. Everything is annihilated around him; he stretches out his hand to grasp the objects that environ him, but, alas, he seizes nothing but fleeting shades, which again escape from his hand.

It is now an awful moment with the expiring sinner. His eyes seek some resting-place, some object of comfort, and they find everywhere only the dreary images of death; while the thoughts of futurity convulse him with horror and despair. That futurity, that region of darkness, which he now approaches alone, accompanied only by his conscience; that futurity, that unknown land, from which no mortal has ever returned, where he knows not whom he may find, nor what awaits him; that futurity, that fathomless abyss, in which his mind is lost and bewildered, and into which he must now plunge; that futurity, that tomb, that abode of horror, where he must now take his place among the ashes of his ancestors; that futurity, that incomprehensible eternity, the slightest glance of which he cannot support; that futurity, in fine, that dreadful period of judgment in which, before the wrath God, he must now appear all polluted with sin, all stained with crimes.

It is now, that the expiring sinner, no longer finding in the remembrance of the past, but regrets that overwhelm him; in the present, only images which afflict him; in the thoughts of futurity, only horrors which appal him; no longer knowing to whom he can have recourse; neither to created beings, who now leave him; nor to the world, which vanishes from his sight; nor to men, who cannot save him from death; nor to the just God, whom he looks upon as a declared enemy, and from whom he has no indulgence to expect; feels a thousand horrors occupy his thoughts; he torments and agitates himself in order to fly from the death which now seizes him, or at least to fly from himself. From his expiring eyes issues a certain dark and gloomy expression, which exhibits the fury of his soul; in his anguish he utters words which are rendered unintelligible by his sobs, and to which the bystanders know not whether repentance or despair gives birth. He is seized with convulsions, which they are ignorant whether to ascribe to the actual dissolution of the body, or to the soul which feels the approach of its judge. He sighs deeply; and they know not whether the remembrance of his past crimes, or despair at quitting life, forces from him such groans of anguish. At last, in the midst of these melancholy exertions, his eyes fix, his features change, his countenance becomes disfigured, his livid lips convulsively sepa-

rate, his whole frame quivers; and by this last effort, his unfortunate soul tears itself reluctantly from that body of clay, falls into the hands of its God, and finds itself alone at the foot of the awful tribunal, there to be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

But the spirit of prophecy has foretold a more terrible day of the divine displeasure, than that which we have described—a day when the wrath of God shall burn to the lowest hell—a day when he will rain upon the wicked fire, and snares, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest—a day that is emphatically styled THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH. It shall be ushered in with the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of the archangel—the signal shall be heard by the sleeping millions, who shall come forth from their dusty beds—the sea shall cast up its dead, and roll on the majestic wave its living forms to the shore—the living shall be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye—and all shall be caught up into the regions of the air—the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works thereof burnt up. In the midst of these august scenes, fear and dismay will seize the ungodly; in their frantic rage they shall gnaw their tongues for pain, and shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the presence of God, and to shield them from the wrath of the Lamb—but rocks and mountains shall flee away, and deny their friendly protection. The Judge shall descend in awful grandeur to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel. He shall proclaim, as when seven thunders utter their voices, bring hither these mine enemies, that would not that I should rule over them, and slay them before me. And, O my God, will the unconverted, who hear me this day, be among the number? will they appear before this awful tribunal naked and unprepared to meet their Judge? will they be exposed in that awful period, to that devouring wrath which will consume their souls?

My friends, we have consecrated this solemn fast to avert this impending storm, which ere long will burst upon the guilty heads of the wicked. And how many of our parents, and our children, and our companions, and our associates, are among the number of the wicked, and exposed to the fiery indignation of the Almighty? and can we bear the thought of their going on in sin, and finally laying down in sorrow? Will that awful sound fall upon our ears, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? Shall these eyes behold the flaming sword of divine justice unsheathed against those bound to us by the strongest ties of nature? Shall we see them, all pale and ghastly, sinking down into the shades of darkness, to rise no more? O come, fellow sinner, and unite with us to-day, in rending the heart, in weeping over the perishing condition of man, and in calling upon God to avert this impending storm of divine wrath! O God, save the

ungodly from the power and dominion of sin ; save them from the corroding cares of the world ; save them from the snares of the devil ; save them from the pleasures of sense ; save them from the fear of death and the horror of hell ; O save them from the storm of vengeance in THE GREAT DAY OF WRATH !

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## ARTICLE XI.

### *On the Doctrine of Divine Influence.*

By the term divine influence, I mean the agency of God operating upon the souls of men, by which they are illuminated, disciplined, and improved ; all that support which God affords in temptation, trial, and sorrow ; all that spiritual aid which he imparts to man, for the moral and religious improvement of his character here in this world, and by which he is prepared for a higher state of being in the world which is to come. In the discussion of this subject, I propose to show, that God not only grants to men the outward dispensations of his word to be the ordinary means of their conversion and sanctification, but, also, the inward operations of his Holy Spirit.

I. And, in the first place, we observe, that it is highly *reasonable that such an influence should be imparted*. God has created man, and placed him here in this lower world in a state of trial ; and what is more reasonable than to suppose, that he should hold an intimate intercourse with the souls he has called into being ? There is nothing absurd, irrational, or difficult in the supposition. God has given to man all his powers and capacities, and is intimately acquainted with all the laws by which his mind is governed, with all the springs which excite him to action, and with all the avenues which lead to the heart. By elevating or depressing his spirits, he can present new views to the mind ; by an impression upon the brain, he can excite a new train of thought and reflection ; and by touching the springs of action in the heart of a man, he can add intensity to the slightest emotions that affect him. Thus God, in a thousand ways, can give to men clearer ideas, quicker apprehensions, and more extended views of divine truth. He, indeed, when no miracle is wrought, can lead man to any result—can interpose, and influence, and guide him *to will* and *to do*, of his good pleasure, by the agency of those laws which govern the human mind. Thus we see, in the very constitution of man, that God has made provision for the exercise of his *moral* providence, by which he is to be disciplined and improved, and, finally, prepared for a higher state of happiness and felicity. We, therefore, consider the doc-

trine of divine influence in accordance with every principle of reason, and a denial of it as most irrational and absurd.

Again, it is obvious that the presence and agency of God with the human mind may be inferred from all his perfections; since it is irrational to suppose that these perfections would exhaust themselves on inferior objects, and leave untouched that *Spirit of man*, for the use and development of which, all things else were made. For instance, we ascribe to God *spirituality*. But can we conceive of an *inactive* Spirit? And if it be admitted that this Infinite Spirit is active, that it pervades, as the life-giving principle, all creation; that it is the first cause, the continuing power, and the last and of all material things; can we believe that it avoids or neglects the soul of man, which is the brightest image of it? Again, we ascribe to God, *Omnipresence* and *Omnipotence*. We maintain, that God is present in every part of space by an all-pervading, all-controlling energy; that he is above us, around us, and beneath us; and shall we make an exception of the human soul, and affirm that this energy, which is everywhere else, never touches the human heart, never impresses the mind of man?

Once more, the doctrine of a *divine influence* rests upon the same foundation as the doctrine of a *particular providence*; indeed, it is a branch of the same doctrine. They must stand or fall together. They rest upon the same evidence, and are proved by the same arguments. By a *particular providence*, we mean, that care which God extends to every part of creation, to the smallest as well as to the greatest events, to all the parts as well as to the whole of creation, and is as complete in a grain of sand as in a world, and is as regular in the actions of an individual as in the conduct of a nation. Indeed, neither the natural, nor the moral government of God, can be carried on in any other way. The results to which nations are guided, depends upon the conduct of the individuals which compose them. We are not to suppose, that the energy of God is exhausted upon nations and communities, and that individuals are left untouched by it; for the energy of God is infinite. That Infinite Being who guides the sun in his course, who marshals the host of heaven, who gives motion to the planetary system, and life and being to the ten thousand forms which inhabit the earth, also watches over the good man in his cottage; kindles devout aspirations in his heart, and accepts the homage, the praise, the adoration, he offers to his Maker. How delightful to look upon a world of human beings, all under the care and government of God—a God whose infinite energy *turns the hearts of men, as the rivers of water are turned*, restraining the wrath of one, and kindling the devotion of another; guiding this man to one conclusion, and that man to another; bringing order out of confusion and good out of evil; and thus performing all his will and all his pleasure; and yet no miracle is wrought, no man's free agency is invaded. That this doctrine is true, is evident from the fulfil-

ment of prophecy. Some of the prophecies were foretold several thousand years before they were accomplished; and their fulfilment depended upon the actions of millions and millions of human beings, and thousands and thousands of contingencies beyond the control of man. These prophecies were fulfilled in the course of human events, as all other events occur. We are, therefore, led to the conclusion, that the providence of God is carried forward by the exercise of an all-pervading energy, and that nothing occurs under the whole heaven, only by the direction or permission of the Supreme Ruler of the universe.

But this doctrine is fully established by the Holy Scriptures. It was affirmed by Christ himself, that the Comforter, by which we understand the Spirit of God, should *reprove the world of sin*. It is by the law that we have the knowledge of sin. By the law we understand the written word, that was engraven upon the tables of stone, and given to man as a rule of life, every deviation from which is a moral offence. This law extends not only to outward actions, but to every inordinate desire. The Spirit, in reproofing the world of sin, reveals to the mind the spirituality of the law, by which sin is made to abound; or, in other words, by this act of the Spirit, the understanding is enabled to see our sins in a clearer and stronger light. By this act of the Spirit, also, we discover the strength and vehemence of our sinful passions and appetites. This is what St. Paul meant, when he said, *Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*. Thus, by the operation of the Spirit, we see, in a strong and clear light, the corruption of the human heart, the number and aggravation of our offences; and are led to regard sin as exceedingly sinful. The Spirit, then, in reproofing world of sin, gives to the mind a more deep and vivid impression of these great truths, than it could possibly have, if no such energy had been imparted by God. It is under the influence of this conviction, the soul cries out: *Wo is me! I am undone: behold, I am vile; I repent and abhor myself in dust and ashes*. Under these impressions, the Spirit becomes *broken and contrite*, and such a spirit *God will not despise*.

Our Lord, in conversation with Nicodemus, affirmed, "*Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*." The phrase, *born of the Spirit*, can mean nothing less than a special, though not a miraculous effect; produced by an influence proceeding from God, as its cause, and operating through the religion of his Son, as the means. That saving change which wrought in the mind, when a man is brought from sin to holiness, and passes from death to life, here denoted by the phrase, *born of God*, is always ascribed to the Spirit as the efficient cause. The apostle, speaking of this, says: *And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*. The washing, sanctification, and justification here spoken of, is ascribed to

the agency of the *Spirit*. Again, the apostle says: *We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.* And again, *He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God; who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* By this saving change, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit, the man is made a partaker of a *divine nature*, and is altogether a *new creature*.

If the Holy Spirit is not the agent in producing and carrying on the new life, why is he styled a *life-giving Spirit*? Seeing all vital operations issue from a Spirit acting in us, why are we said to *live in the Spirit*, and to *walk in the Spirit*, and to be *led by the Spirit*? For, as in natural and moral actions, we cannot be said to live or walk, without an inward principle of life and motion, or to be led or guided in those actions by the light of reason: So neither can we properly be said to live and walk in the Spirit, or to be guided by him if he imparts no inward light to guide us in the way of piety, no inward motions to excite us to walk in them, no inward strength or vital efficacy for the performance of them. And were it otherwise, why are all those inward habits and dispositions which adorn the soul, and make it *meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light*, styled the *fruits*, not of the preaching of the word, or of our own considerations, but of the *Holy Spirit*? For how are they his fruits, if they are not produced by him?

Christians are said to be *the habitation of God through the Spirit*; and he is further to operate in us effectually for all the ends and purposes of our salvation, producing in us all *the fruits of goodness, and righteousness, and truth*. His motions may not unfitly be compared with the operation of the soul in the human body. Without the soul, the body cannot perform any vital function whatever: but when that spiritual inhabitant is present with, and discharges its proper offices, we show, by the various exercises of our mind and body, that it really dwells in us. Now, the spirit of God performs in the soul an office somewhat analogous to this. The soul, by itself, has respect only to things visible and temporal; but when filled by the spirit of God, it occupies itself about things invisible and eternal. And precisely as the body needs the presence and operation of the soul for the discharge of the offices in relation to this world, so does the soul need the influences of the Holy Spirit for the discharge of its duties in reference to the world to come. This exactly corresponds with what St. Paul says: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*." And again he says, "When *Christ, who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Hence, true religion, as said an eminent minister of the gospel, *is the life of God in the soul*.

Hence, God is said to *put his fear and his law in our hearts, and his Spirit within us, to create in us a clean heart, and to renew in us a right spirit, to give us a new heart, to circumcise and convert the heart*. By this language we are to understand, that God by



his Spirit creates and excites emotions or ideas in us, which dispose us to fear him, and, by proper attention to these influences, convert the heart, and purify the soul from the defilements of sin : and these metaphors imply that by these influences he gives us inward illuminations, by attending to which we may discern *the wondrous things of his law*. God having thus put his Spirit within us, we are said to be *strengthened with might through the Spirit in the inward man to do his will*, and to be enabled, *through the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the flesh* ; and his Spirit is said to *help our infirmities, to purify our heart, to become a Spirit of sanctification, the Comforter, the Spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind*. Now, seeing consolation arises only from the inward testimony of the conscience ; seeing sanctification in the renewing of the inward man, has the soul for its subject ; seeing the heart is purified by an inward change and temper, which renders it averse from sin, and sets the affections, desires, and inclinations against it ; seeing the deeds of the flesh are only mortified by such a renovation of the mind as makes us to perceive the pernicious effects and dreadful consequences of living still according to our fleshly appetites, and so creates in us a dread and hatred of them, a resolution to forsake them, and ardent desire to be freed from them, a sincere endeavor to resist the motions of the flesh, and a watchfulness that we do not for the future yield obedience to it in its corrupt appetites ; all of which imply that a renovation is wrought in us by the Spirit, that the Spirit witnesses *with our spirit that we are the sons of God*, and that the operations of the Spirit are displayed by an energy exerted upon the mind, the affections, and the will.

Now, to apply all these passages to the extraordinary and miraculous displays of the Holy Spirit, and to maintain that these effects have ceased since the extraordinary operations of the Spirit have been withdrawn, is to affirm that no man is now quickened, sanctified, comforted, or even enabled to purify his heart, or to mortify the deeds of the flesh, to live or walk in the Spirit ; and, consequently, no man can now become a son of God, united to Jesus Christ, or have any of the fruits of the Spirit wrought within him. And since all who were regenerated are said to be *born of the Spirit*, if by this new birth of the Spirit we are to understand his extraordinary operations, then no man is now regenerated or born again, as these extraordinary operations have ceased : why, then, do we still administer the institution of baptism, and especially into the name of the Holy Ghost ? For baptism is but the outward sign of an inward fact ; but if no inward fact now occurs, then why not dispense with the outward sign ?

If there are no ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit at the present time, upon the hearts and consciences of men, it seems impossible, according to this hypothesis, to explain how, or to what end the Holy Spirit is so often said to  *dwell, or to abide within us* : how we are *made the temples of God through the Holy Ghost*

which is given unto us, or united to Christ by the Spirit, or to what end the Holy Ghost thus dwells or takes up his abode in us. where he excites no emotions, produces no fruits, and imparts no inward life, light, or strength. And yet this abode of the Spirit with us is represented in the Scriptures, not only as the highest privilege, but as the inestimable advantage of all Christians. By this promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Christ encourages his disciples to demonstrate their love to him by keeping his commandments; then, says he, *the Father will love them, and we will come and take up our abode with them.* By this, says the apostle, *God becomes our God, and we are his people; he our Father, and we his sons and daughters.* And from our union by this spirit to our head Christ Jesus, such an *inward working* is said to be diffused through every part of his mystical body as causeth *the whole body to increase, and edify itself in love.* Now, what explanation can be given to these passages, without maintaining some inward operation of the Holy Spirit, as the consequence of this spiritual union with Christ Jesus, and this inward habitation of the Holy Spirit in us? Indeed, of what advantage is all this class of promises, *I will put my Spirit in you, or pour him upon you,* if we receive no influx, no gracious influences, from him thus put into our hearts? What is it for the Holy Spirit *to depart,* or to be *taken* from us? Or what can be the dreadful misery and wo, denounced upon us when God withdraws his Holy Spirit? For if he did nothing in us whilst he continued to be with us, what can we lose by his departure? Or why did David so importunately beg God that he *would not take his Holy Spirit from him.*

To maintain that there are no ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit abiding with the church, since his extraordinary influences have ceased, is not only to contradict the tenor of the Scriptures, which declare that all Christ's living members are thus united by the Spirit to their Head, and that *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him, he is none of his;* he cannot be a son of God, for *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;* he has no right to call God Father, for *ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father;* he has no interest in the adoption and inheritance of sons, *and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;* but it also enervates the efficacy of the promises of Christ, and diminished the consolation of Christians of all succeeding ages under their sufferings for the sake of Christ; in fact, it is an attempt to nullify the peculiar excellency of the gospel dispensation, as distinguished from the Mosaic economy; the one being styled by the apostle *the ministration of the letter* only, while he calls the other *the ministration of the Spirit.* Now, if the gospel dispensation was *the ministration of the Spirit,* merely while it was attended by its miraculous efficacy, when this efficacy was withdrawn, then it ceased to be the

*ministration of the Spirit*, becoming merely the *ministration of the letter*, whence its glory and excellency departed.

Besides, a denial of the doctrine of divine influence upon the hearts of men, destroys the energy of prayer in general, and the efficacy of prayer for the Holy Spirit in particular; and thus disposes us to neglect the duty of prayer altogether. If, indeed, we should occasionally offer up prayer to God, it can be but cold and formal, altogether destitute of that faith and fervor which constitute the very soul of prayer, and which render it acceptable to God. For who can reconcile a denial of this doctrine with those expressions, in which holy men of God so often begged him to *incline their hearts unto him*, as this cannot be done without some operations upon their hearts; that *he would draw them, that they might run after him*; that *he would open their eyes, and give them understanding to discern his law*; that *he would lead them in the right way, in the way everlasting, and guide them by his eye*. For if God, by his Spirit, exerts no influence upon neither the heart nor the soul of man, how does he incline or draw him? If none upon the understanding, how does he enlighten or instruct him? If this is done merely by the word which is read, preached, and pondered in the heart, we may as well apply ourselves to that work without prayer as with it, unless we pray for some new external revelations, or for some motives not contained in the Holy Scriptures.

A denial of the doctrine of divine influence, furthermore, seems to render it both fruitless and absurd to pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, or even to expect any aid from him. Hence, such directions and promises as the following: *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. For if evil parents give good gifts to their children, how much more will your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*—must be of no use to us. The aid offered in these passages is the assistance of the Holy Spirit; but if no such assistance is afforded us, why should we pray for it?

To confine this passage to the apostolic age, is highly unreasonable, for it was delivered in the sermon on the mount, which was certainly spoken *in the audience of the multitude*. The language is also too general for a special application; *for every one that asketh, receiveth*. Besides, those spiritual influences and ordinary effects for which the Holy Spirit was given, are as necessary and as useful for Christians now, as they were in the apostolic age. The Holy Spirit was then given to strengthen the servants of Christ *in the inward man to do his will*, to comfort them in tribulations, to support them under fiery trials, and to preserve them from the subtleties of Satan, and from the temptations of this wicked world; and Christians stand in the same need of his assistance

now for all these gracious ends, and, therefore, they have the same reason to expect his co-operations for all these purposes. Christians may perform the condition of this promise now, as well as in the apostolic age; they may be as sincerely desirous to obey the holy will of God, and with true fervency and importunity, may beg the Holy Spirit to this end; and if they may as acceptably perform these duties to which this promise is annexed, why have they not the same confident grounds to expect the fulfilment of the blessing promised from the God of truth! The relation of a Father, which God sustains to believers in Christ, is the true ground of encouragement here given to expect the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and this endearing relation God still sustains to all Christians, for *he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever*; and there remains, and ever will remain, the same benignity in God, the same good will and readiness in him to give his Holy Spirit now to his children for all needful purposes, as in the apostolic age. If, then, in like manner, believers ask, they have equal reason to expect the fulfilment of this gracious promise in the bestowment of the Holy Spirit in all his ordinary influences.

II. Having shown that the doctrine of divine influence is a doctrine of the New Testament, we shall now proceed to explain how the *fruits of the Spirit*, commonly called *graces*, are wrought in us by the Spirit of God.

1. The manner in which the Holy Spirit acts upon the minds and hearts of men, in preparing the soul for the production of these *graces*, must be in conformity to those laws of mind, with which God has endowed free, moral, and intelligent beings. Now, light presented to the understanding, is that which makes a man perceive and know; consequently, nothing more is necessary to induce a man to *come to the knowledge of the truth, and understanding what the will of the Lord is*, and so to become *wise unto salvation*. Hence, the apostle prays, that the *Phillipians might abound more and more in knowledge, and in all wisdom, en pace aithesei, in all perception, that so they may approve the things that are most excellent*. He also speaks to the Romans, thus: *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, eis to dokimazein, that ye may discern and approve what is according to the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*; and again, to the Ephesians: *Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Walk as children of the light, approving what is acceptable to the Lord*. That which the understanding approves, appears good to the soul, and, consequently, inclines and disposes the will to choose it as such; but, whatever the understanding presents to the will as evil, the will rejects; whence, all that God requires of us is, *to refuse the evil, and choose the good*. Now, to say that evidence proposed, apprehended, and considered, is insufficient to dispose the understanding to approve; as the greatest good proposed, the greatest evil threatened, when equally believed and properly considered, is

not sufficient to engage the will to choose that good, and to refuse that evil, is, in other words, to maintain, that which alone does move the will to choose or to refuse, is insufficient to move it either to choose or refuse; that which alone is requisite to make me understand and approve, is insufficient for this purpose. Now, this being a contradiction in itself, must, of necessity, be false.

But it will be said that there is an aversion in the mind of man to the truths proposed to us in the gospel; now, admitting this to be true, this aversion can only make us indisposed to attend to them; it cannot hinder our conviction when we apprehend them and attend to them. Hence, for the removal of this aversion, the apostle merely prays, *that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling*; adding, *that where the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ Jesus was revealed, if after this their gospel was hid from any, it was only so, because the God of this world had blinded the conceptions of their minds, that the light of the gospel might not shine into them.* Hence, this aversion in the mind of man against the good we are to choose, can only indispose us to believe, and to approve it as our greatest good; and a proneness to the evil which we should decline, can only render it the more difficult for us to believe it is the worst of evils. But, notwithstanding this difficulty, what we really conceive to be our greatest good will still be chosen; and what we apprehend to be the worst of evils, will, while we remain under this conviction, be rejected. In order, therefore, to accomplish these ends, it is merely necessary that the Holy Spirit should so illuminate our understandings, that we may perceive the truth as it is in Jesus; and that the blessings of the gospel should be so proposed to us, that we may perceive them to be our greatest good; and the miseries it threatens, so that we may be convinced they are the worst of evils, in order to enable us to choose the one and reject the other. It should be remembered, that the act of choosing or refusing, must be the act, not of God, but of man; but the light by which we are convinced, and the motives which engage us to choose the good and to refuse the evil, certainly come from God.

In order to make this subject still more plain, if possible, it may be illustrated by a familiar instance, taken from an every-day occurrence. When one man speaks to another, in words plain and intelligible, if he pays proper attention to what is said, he must understand him; for by that very impression the words make upon his brain, he immediately perceives his meaning. And cannot the divine impression upon the brain, when God speaks inwardly to man, do the same thing? Again, if a man address me in the language of an exhortation, and desire me to perform some act, presenting, at the same time, proper motives by the way of encouragement, the promise of some good that I shall receive by complying with his exhortation; or, on the other hand, should he raise

his warning voice against some evil design, which he knew I contemplated, and clearly point out to me the fatal consequences which would ensue, if I prosecuted my evil design; would he not pursue the method used by all the world, in dealing one man with another? And do not mankind pursue this method with the hope and expectation of success? And is it not a great disparagement to the word of God, to think that his persuasions, admonitions, exhortations, promises, and threatenings, shall all be insufficient to prevail with us to turn from our sinful courses, when all men use these methods towards their children, servants, friends, or relations, in the hope of success by the use of these means? If the person they address be slow of understanding, do they not hope to overcome this difficulty by the clearness of their discourse, and by reiterating the same thing by such a diversity of language as he is best capable of understanding? If he be averse from doing that which is desired, do they not hope to overcome that aversion by repeated exhortations and vigorous impressions of those encouragements they tender to prevail upon him to comply with their desire? If he be strongly inclined to pursue that course, which they vehemently exhort him to renounce, do they not endeavor to turn the bent and current of his inclinations, by the like repeated exhortations and lively representations of the evils which will certainly befall him if he continue to prosecute his mad designs? All men are, therefore, of this opinion in their practice, that dealing with men by convincing reason, and by motives and persuasions, is dealing with them according to the laws of mind; and is not God himself of the same opinion? Has he not revealed his will for the very purpose that we may know it? Has he not directed his letters and epistles to us, that, by reading them, we may understand them, and *know the things which belong to our peace*? Did not our Saviour utter all his discourses to the same end? On what other principle did he so often inquire, *Why is it that you do not understand my speech? How is it that you do not understand?* Why did he preface them with this instruction, *Hear and understand?* Does not God call upon us *to consider our ways*, and to lay to heart his sayings and his dispensations? Does he not prescribe this as the remedy for preventing his judgments, when he says, *O consider this, ye that forget God! O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end!* Does he not represent this as the source of all the wickedness and idolatry of his own people, that *they would not consider in their hearts?* Does he not make conversion the effect of this consideration, when he says, *Because he considereth and turneth away from all the transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live?* Indeed, does he not represent this as a just ground of hope, that even the most stubborn sinners may be reformed, when he says to the prophet, *Remove by day in their sight; it may be that they will consider, though they be a rebellious people!* Does not the apostle pray that the Colossians *may be filled with the knowledge*

of his will in all wisdom, that so they might walk worthy of the Lord in all well pleasing, being fruitful to every good work? That the Philippians might discern and approve the things that are most excellent, that they might be sincere, and without offence, being filled with all the fruits of righteousness? Must not, then, this knowledge and approbation of his will be a means of rendering us fruitful in all works of righteousness? Does not God require his people to choose life, pronouncing a blessing on them that choose the things that please him, and threatening destruction to them that would not choose the fear of the Lord, but choose the things in which he delighted not? Now, does he do anything more to prevail with them who do not choose to fear the Lord, do not the things that please him, to engage them to fear him, and to please him, but teach them his ways, and persuade them to walk in them? Is it not then certain, that in the intercourse carried on by God with his rational creatures, he deals with them as men who might, by the motives and persuasions which he presents to their minds, be induced to choose to fear him, and to do the things which are well pleasing in his sight; or to refrain from sin and transgression, when he warns them of their dangerous and evil consequences; and not that he threatens to destroy them for doing those things which they could not help, and which they had not sufficient means to avoid; or for not doing what was impossible for them to do? Is it not on this very ground, that he exhorts them to be willing and obedient, promising to all who become so, the blessing of a free and full pardon? Does not the Lord Jesus resolve the destruction of the Jewish nation into this very principle, *You will not come unto me that you may have life?* declaring this to be the reason why they were not gathered, because *he often would have gathered them, but they would not be gathered*; because, being so graciously invited to the marriage-feast, *they would not come*. Now, what did he do to engage them to come to him, to gather them, to prevail upon them to come to the marriage-feast, but show them the way of life, exhort and invite them to come to the feast? In the intercourse which God carried on with these persons, he must either have furnished them with the means, which he knew to be sufficient for these ends, and that these means might have prevailed upon them to be willing, or else he was resolved on their exclusion from the marriage-feast, and their not tasting his supper, for not doing what they could not do, and for condemning them for not coming, when they could not come, because *the Father did not draw them, or give them to Christ*; and for not being gathered, when indeed he would not, whatever he said to the contrary, do that for them without which they could not be gathered. Again, does he not earnestly exhort and persuade men to repent, and turn from the evil of their ways? Does he not say, *O that my people would have hearkened to me, that Israel would have walked in my ways! O that they were wise, that they would understand this! O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean!*

*when shall it once be? O that thou hadst known in thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!* In these exhortations and persuasions, God either acts with men suitable to their endowments, exhorting them to do, and earnestly desiring they had done, what they might have done, though they did not; or he called upon them to repent for not doing what they could never do, for not avoiding what they could not have avoided, and even to repent that he had not done this irresistibly for them, and seriously wished that they themselves had done what, if it ever had been done, must have been done by himself; and, therefore, was not done, because he would not irresistibly work this saving change in them.

*Finally*, does not God encourage men to repent and believe, to be willing and obedient, by the great and precious promises of the gospel? Has he not declared that all who do not believe shall be damned? Has he not said, *He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all that obey not the gospel!* And do not all these fully persuade us, that God, in his intercourse with men, acts as one who supposes that men may hearken to his persuasions, and comply with his exhortations to believe and obey the gospel?—may be prevailed upon by his promises to engage in the performance of their duty, and terrified from their disobedience by the considerations of the judgments threatened? On what other principle can it be said, that God *has given to us these great and precious promises, that by them we may be made partakers of the divine nature?* Or why are we exhorted, *having these promises, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God!* Or why does the apostle say, *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men!* If it be said, that it is necessary, in order to produce a saving change in man, that there should be some physical and irresistible operations on the part of God, working in man, and producing this saving change; why is the want of this new birth, and this spiritual regeneration, so often imputed to their want of consideration, and their not laying to heart the things proposed to them?—to their not *inclining their mind to wisdom, and not applying their hearts to understanding*; and their not *framing their doings to turn unto the Lord!* If it be said, this should be done because they had grace and strength sufficient in their first parents so to do; I answer, admitting that this vain imagination be true, that we have what in fact we never had, or could possibly have, because it was lost long before we had an existence—indeed, what Adam himself never had, because then we must have had power to repent after his fall, and on this supposition we must have it still; for what power to repent he had after his fall, we still have. I say, admitting that this vain and groundless supposition be true, what is it to the import of all the exhortations, persuasions, and motives, contained in the gospel, which are all directed to fallen man?—and so, if God be serious in them, declare his great unwillingness that fallen man should perish, and his strong and ardent



desire that he should be saved; and if he speaks in them suitable to the capacities and faculties of fallen man, plainly suppose him still endowed with a capacity, by these assistances and motives, to understand his duty, and to choose the good and refuse the evil.

2. The Holy Spirit, however, does not propose to the understanding any truths, or to the will any motives or inducements, which are not contained in the Holy Scriptures; for if the word of God be a perspicuous and perfect rule, able to make us wise unto salvation, and furnished for every good work, certainly the Holy Spirit may, by suggesting the truths contained in it, and bringing them to our remembrance, and opening our understanding to perceive their true meaning, sufficiently remove the darkness that is in our minds; if the word of God be *a light shining in darkness, all errors to be corrected, all vices to be reprov'd, are made manifest by the light*; then it must be sufficient to illuminate our understandings, and direct our feet into the way of truth. The motives contained in the living Oracles, to induce us to turn from the ways of sin and transgression, which, in the present life, are conducive of wretchedness and misery, and will subject us, in the life to come, to eternal condemnation, must be sufficient to turn us from the evil of our ways, or else the highest motives that can be offered to the mind of man, must be insufficient to this end; all other motives to deter us from any action, as destructive and ruinous to us, being as nothing in comparison to that which is contained in these words of our Judge: *Depart from me into everlasting fire.* All evils to be dreaded or suffered from the hand of man, are light in comparison to those we have reasons to fear from him who is *able to destroy both soul and body in hell-fire.* So, on the other hand, the promise of everlasting felicity, recorded in the same Scriptures, as the result of our faith and obedience to the gospel, must be sufficient to engage us in a hearty and sincere endeavor to yield that obedience to the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, or no inducements can be sufficient to this end; seeing that, in this motive, are contained all other possible motives, for these two sentences, *the enjoyment of God, and everlasting happiness,* contains more than kingdoms, thrones, and treasures; joy, pleasures, honors, and all the good things of this life; and, therefore, contain a higher motive to engage us in the performance of our duty, than all the motives in the united strength of worldly greatness, honors, and pleasures. Hence, the Holy Spirit, by making deep, vivid, and lively impressions on our minds, of the advantages and rewards promised to our renunciation of sin and obedience of the gospel, and of the dreadful evils to the disobedient, and bringing these things frequently to our remembrance, which is called, in the language of Scripture, *putting his laws into our minds, and writing them upon our hearts,* must do what is sufficient to work in us a saving change and the obedience of faith, so essentially requisite to our everlasting happiness. For, what reason can be given why the spirit of wisdom, having *enlightened the eyes*

of our understanding to know what is the hope of our calling, and the glorious riches of the inheritance of the saints, and presenting these things continually to our minds, should not more effectually move our wills to obey God, than any temporal considerations to yield obedience to the laws of man ! It is certain Satan can only tempt us, by suggesting some temporal allurements and advantages, or some temporal losses and calamities ; since, then, the Scriptures assure us. *This is our victory over the world ; even our faith, our expectation of things hoped for, our evidence of things not seen ;* these objects of our faith, which are contained in the Scriptures, being frequently presented and impressed upon our minds by the Holy Spirit, must be sufficient to baffle all the desigus of sin, Satan, and the world. And this is confirmed by the experience of all mankind ; for, since the apprehension of good or evil is the sole motive by which we are induced to undertake or to decline any action, the greater the good or evil may be, the stronger the motive must become, and the more powerful will be the influence exerted upon the mind. It is upon this very principle that many will, in the world, forego their present ease and pleasure, encounter difficulties, brave dangers, and endure the most toilsome labors, in the expectation of some temporal advantages, even when doubts and uncertainty attend all their efforts. It is upon this same principle that men sow and plant, trade and traffic, in hope of an increase. And should not the hope of everlasting happiness, and the dread of endless misery, more powerfully engage us to obey the precepts of the gospel, and resist all the temptations which flesh and blood suggest against them ?

But, since the promised blessings and the threatened miseries of another world are things invisible, and are only discerned by the eye of faith, and, consequently, being moral and spiritual motives, can only operate upon us when they are present to our minds by actual consideration and reflection ; and since they are not present when the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh, are affecting us by sensual objects ; it is, therefore, necessary that, at all times when they are not thus present with us, and, consequently, cannot operate upon us, the Holy Spirit should either, by presenting to us from the Scriptures those divine truths with which our understandings have not been sufficiently enlightened, instruct and guide us, or else, by impressing on our spirits those motives and inducements to resist these temptations, and to perform those duties which are required at our hands, and thus render us all that assistance which our weakness and infirmities require.

III. We proceed, in the third place, to show in what this inward operation of the Holy Spirit consists. It consists, as I understand the teaching of the Scriptures, in the three following things : *First*, In presenting divine truths more clearly to our understanding, that we may have a fuller evidence, stronger conviction, and firmer assurance of them, which, in the Bible, is styled *the illumination of the mind*. *Secondly*, In bringing these truths to our remembrance,

so that they may be present with us when it is requisite to enable us to resist temptations, and to encourage us in the performance of our duty. *Thirdly*, In the communication of a new moral power to the soul, even the Spirit of holiness, by means of which we are made conformable to the divine image, and are prepared for the service and for the enjoyment of God, both here and hereafter. And upon the supposition that God deals with us in these things suitable to the nature of our faculties; that is, on our understanding, by presenting the light to it; on our wills, by presenting motives to choose the good and refuse the evil; and on our souls, by the communication of a moral power, by which we are strengthened with all might in the inward man to do his will; these inward operations of the Holy Spirit, together with the written word, must be sufficient for all the ends and purposes of the Christian dispensation.

I am aware, that there are many who maintain that the Holy Spirit, instead of operating in us in conformity to these laws of mind, with which our Maker has endowed us, operates upon us irresistibly, and that the sinner is wholly passive in the act of conversion. In order to understand this matter, it will be necessary briefly to state it. In the first place, it will be granted, that the action of the Holy Spirit, in raising an idea in my mind by making an impression upon my brain, is properly physical. In the second place, that in these actions I am purely passive; that is, I myself do nothing formally to produce these ideas, but the Holy Spirit, without my co-operations, produces them in me. And, in the third place, these operations must be irresistible in their production, because they are immediately produced in me without my knowledge, and without my will, and so without the exercise of those faculties by which I am enabled to act. But here, I add, it is neither praiseworthy nor rewardable in me, that I have such ideas raised in my mind, because they were altogether involuntary on my part; but if, after they are raised by the Holy Spirit in my mind, I attend to them, and improve them for the ends and purposes for which they were raised, then my course of conduct becomes praiseworthy and rewardable. This subject may be illustrated by the following example: It is generally admitted, that Satan can work upon the brain, so as to raise up in the mind unholy and impure thoughts; but in such cases, it is held that these thoughts will not be imputed to us as sins, unless we are pleased with them, and form the purpose of reducing them to practice; because, in the raising of these thoughts, we were entirely passive, and, consequently, free from guilt. When these thoughts are raised, it is our duty, when we first perceive them in our minds, to suppress them, and if we do this, it is all that God requires of us; but if, on the other hand, we give place to them, and dwell upon them with any degree of pleasure and delight, even if we do not reduce them to practice, then they become criminal. So, when the Holy Spirit raises up ideas in our minds, we cannot be rewardable for possessing them till we manifest delight in them, and form the

resolution to reduce them to practice, because these thoughts were not raised by any co-operation on our part, we being entirely passive in their production, and, consequently, can be entitled to no reward for possessing them. No emotions of the mind, no thoughts of the understanding, and no actions of the life, are considered as praiseworthy or blameable, moral or immoral, virtuous or vicious, only such as proceed from the energy of our own wills; whatever is involuntary, possess no moral quality. But God, having given to men reason and discretion, when he raises in their minds holy thoughts, requires that proper attention should be paid to them as soon as they are perceived, and he will not hold him guiltless who neglects them; for it is in this way that he illuminates the mind, guides and directs the will, inclines and disposes us to embrace the truth, and to walk in the way of life and peace. As our attendance and consent, therefore, to the suggestions of the evil Spirit, being free and voluntary and what might have been avoided, becomes criminal in the sight of God; so our attendance and compliance with the motions and ideas of the Holy Spirit, being free and voluntary acts, become also praiseworthy and acceptable in his sight.

It may be proper here to add, that these ideas, being thus raised up in us by God alone, and the power of attending and consenting to them being also entirely derived from him, as well as all the motives and inducements to attend to them and to comply with them, whether derived from external revelation or from those inward operations of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the same source, all the good effects resulting from these operations are properly to be ascribed to God; and all the praise and glory of them are due to him alone, because both the principle of action, and the inducement thus to act, are derived solely from him.

These views may be further illustrated by the conversion of St. Paul. When Saul was engaged in a persecuting mission against the disciples of Christ, as he was proceeding on his journey he is confounded by a *light shining round about him brighter than the sun*; by this he is *struck down to the earth*, and hears a voice from heaven, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Now, in all this, he was purely passive, and the action done upon him was physical and irresistible; and, therefore, this action being wholly Christ's, and not his own, there could be nothing in it, on his part, praiseworthy, or acceptable to God, or rendering him a better man. But, then, when he inquires of the blessed Jesus, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* when he prays earnestly for the forgiveness of sins; when he dedicates himself to the service of God by baptism; when, having told what greivous things he must suffer for the name of Jesus notwithstanding *was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but went and preached up that faith which he had formerly opposed*; these actions, being deliberate and free, proceeding from his reflections on the heavenly vision, and the conviction it had wrought in his mind, must be praiseworthy and acceptable in the sight of God;

and his conversion, being the result of what our Lord wrought upon him, he very justly ascribed the whole glory of it to the grace and favor of our Lord manifested towards him. Here, then, is a perfect harmony existing between the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of Saul, and the co-operation of his will.

And that such is the doctrine of the gospel, is evident from the following passages. St. Paul says, speaking of the grace of God given to the Corinthians of Macedonia—"they were *according to their power*, yea, and *above their power, authairetoi, of themselves willing* to contribute to the necessities of the saints;" that is, the contribution was an act of their own free wills, proceeding from their choice; but the grace and favor of God given to them was the spring and motive of it. Again, "*Thanks be to God, too didonti, to him that gave this care in the heart of Titus, for he accepted the exhortation, and being more forward, authairetos exelthe*, he went to you of *his own accord*;" that is, the exhortation was from St. Paul; that which gave the weight and vigor to it, and rendered them more forward in it, was the grace and favor of God to him; the reflection on both made this journey the matter of his own choice, and so he became *willing of his own accord*. And again, St. Paul says, "*Wherefore, beloved, not only as in my presence*, when you had me to be your monitor, *but much more now in my absence*; which God, by the workings and inward teachings of his Spirit, supplies, *work out your salvation with fear and trembling*; for it is God that worketh in you, *both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*;" that is, sometimes by outward, and sometimes by inward means; for if beyond these inward suggestions and persuasions, some irresistible operations be required on the part of God, which makes it necessary for us both to will and to do, why are we commanded *to work out our salvation*? for can we act when we are truly passive? Or can that be any reason why we ourselves should work, because another will do the very thing required without our co-operation? Indeed, is it not rather an evident reason why we should neither will nor work at all, since both will be certainly and irresistibly performed without us? Why, then, are we said *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, for can there be any cause of *fear and trembling*, lest salvation should not be wrought out, which God works in us irresistibly? Surely, if God works in us irresistibly both to will and to do, there can be no possibility of miscarrying, and so no just grounds *for fear and trembling*. Finally, why are the Philippians exhorted to do this, much more in St. Paul's absence than in his presence, if, when he was present, God wrought in them irresistibly to will and to do, and could do no more in his absence? It is, therefore, evident from these considerations, that God works in us both to will and to do, by giving us our wills and faculties, and then stirring them up to put forth their own acts, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.



# SERIES OF DISCOURSES.

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## DISCOURSE I.

*On the Book of the Lord.*

“Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord, and read.”—*Isaiah xxxiv.*, 16.

THE words which we have selected for our present meditation and improvement, occur nearly at the close of one of the most awful and sublime chapters that the language of man ever uttered, or the pen of inspiration ever wrote—a chapter in which Jehovah is represented as clothing himself in the garment of vengeance, and coming out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their wickedness—a chapter in which we not only see the indignation of God displayed against sinners, so as utterly to destroy them, but where the very land that nourished them in their transgressions, is made a standing monument of divine vengeance. Can anything in the whole compass of human language be more alarming, appalling, and awful, than the following denunciations: *The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl shall also rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with his mate.* It is not now necessary to say when these

prophecies were fulfilled, or to what particular country they referred: what we propose to consider, at the present time, is, the advice given in the text—*Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord, and read.*

I. In the discussion of this subject, we shall, in the first place, notice the object to which our attention is directed—*The Book of the Lord.* This phrase, in its original import, means the prophetic writings; but, since the canon of Scripture has been filled up, we may understand by *the Book of the Lord*, the whole Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments.

1. These are called *the Book of the Lord*, because they were *inspired by him.* All Scripture, says the apostle, *is given by the inspiration of God.* The truth of this declaration is confirmed by their *wonderful preservation.* The miraculous preservation of the Sacred Oracles is a strong instance of God's providential care, a constant sanction of the truth and excellency of the doctrines and precepts contained in them, continued by him, without interruption, in all ages of the church. Whence comes it, that while the histories of mighty empires and populous kingdoms are lost in the waste of time, the very names of their founders, conquerors, and legislators, are consigned, with their bodies, to the silence and oblivion of the grave? Whence comes it, that the history of a mean and insignificant people, and the settlement of God's church, should, from its very beginning, which is coeval with the world itself, to this very day remain full and complete? Whence comes it, that nothing is left of the innumerable volumes of philosophy and polite literature, in the preservation of which the admiration and care of all mankind seemed to conspire; and that the Scriptures, in spite of all opposition, come down to our time entire and genuine? During the captivity, the Urim and Thummim, the ark itself, and every glory of the Jewish worship, were lost; during the profanation of Antiochus, whosoever was found with the book of the law, was put to death, and every copy that could be found, burned with fire. The same impious artifice was put in practice by several Roman emperors, during the persecutions of the Christians; especially by Dioclesian, who triumphed in his supposed success against them. After the most barbarous havoc of them, he issued an edict commanding them, on pain of death, under the most cruel forms, to deliver up their Bibles. Though many complied with this most sanguinary edict, the greater part disregarded it; and notwithstanding these and numberless other calamities, the Sacred Scriptures have survived, pure and uncorrupted, to the present day. It is scarcely necessary to mention that more than Egyptian darkness which overwhelmed religion for several centuries, during which any falsification was secure, especially in the Old Testament, the Hebrew language being entirely unknown to all but the Jews, and yet they have, in spite of their prejudices, preserved with scrupulous care even those passages which most confirm the Chris-



tian religion—the providence of God having been graciously pleased to make their blindness a standing monument of the truth of the Scriptures, and their obstinacy an instrument to maintain and promote his doctrine and kingdom. To this may be added, the present low state of many churches, and the total annihilation of others, of which nothing now remains but the Scriptures translated for their use; happy in this respect, that their particular misfortune is of different languages, preserved under so many untoward circumstances, and differing from each other in no essential point, are a wonderful proof of their authenticity, authority, and divinity. All the designs of the enemies of the Scriptures, whether ancient or modern, have been baffled. The Bible still exists, and is triumphant; and, doubtless, will exist as long as there is a church in the world—till the end of time, and the consummation of all things.

The divinity of the Sacred Oracles is also confirmed *by the exact fulfilment of the prophecies with which they abound*. These prophecies were delivered through a long succession of ages, by persons who lived at different and distinct times; they are so numerous, so particular, both with respect to nations and individuals, so opposite, and apparently so irreconcilable, that no human wisdom could have devised them, no human power could accomplish them. Many of the predictions which are recorded in the Old Testament, foretold unexpected changes in the distribution of earthly power. And whether they announced the fall of flourishing cities, or the ruin of mighty empires, the event has minutely corresponded with the prediction. To mention a few instances: Egypt is *a base kingdom, the basest of kingdoms*, and still tributary and subject to strangers; Tyre, all voyagers and travellers concur in stating, is *become like the top of a rock, a place for fishers to spread their nets upon*; Babylon is *made a desolation forever, a possession for the bittern, and pools of water*; Nineveh is so completely destroyed, that its site is not and cannot be known. But the great object of the prophecies in the Old Testament is, the redemption of mankind. This was announced to the world by the Spirit of prophecy, soon after the transgression of our first parents. And, as the time of its accomplishment drew near, the predictions concerning it gradually became so clear, that almost every circumstance in the life and character of the most extraordinary personage that ever appeared among men, was distinctly foretold. The connexion of the predictions belonging to the Messiah, with those which are confined to the Jews, give additional force to the argument from prophecy; affording a strong proof of the intimate union which subsists between the two dispensations of Moses and Jesus Christ, and equally precluding the artful pretensions of human imposture, and the daring opposition of human power. The plan of prophecy was so widely constituted, that the passions and prejudices of the Jews, instead of frustrating, fulfilled it, and rendered the person whom they rejected, the suffering and crucified Saviour who had been

promised. It is worthy of remark, that the most of these predictions were delivered nearly, and some of them more than three thousand years ago. Any one of them is sufficient to indicate a knowledge of future events, more than human; but the collective force of all taken together is such, that nothing more can be necessary to prove the interposition of Omniscience, than the establishment of their authenticity; and this, even at so remote a period as the present, is placed beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The stupendous and indisputable miracles recorded in the Scriptures, *are a further confirmation of their divinity.* These most illustrious attestations carry with them the most clear and convincing proof of a divine interposition. It cannot reasonably be supposed that the Almighty ever would give, or permit these attestations to be given to a falsehood. The miracles were instantaneously and publicly wrought in the presence of great multitudes, both friendly and hostile to the persons by whom they were performed; they were sensible, and easy to be observed. Memorials of these miracles were instituted at the time they were performed, which continue to be observed to the present day. The bitterest enemies of the Christian religion, who witnessed these miracles, could neither gainsay nor deny their reality, though they vainly attempted to evade them.

Once more, the divine authority of the Scriptures *is confirmed by the grand and elevated subjects on which they treat.* It is from the Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, that we are informed, from authority, of the perfections of God—of the creation of the world—of the immortality of the soul—of a general resurrection from the dead—of a future judgment—of a state of eternal happiness to the good—and of everlasting misery to the bad. It is in *the book of the Lord*, that we are made acquainted with the transgression of our first parents—their expulsion from the garden of Eden—and the corruption and misery which this sad event brought upon their posterity. But, to our inexpressible comfort, we are further told in this divine Book, that God is full of mercy, compassion, and goodness—that he is not extreme to mark what is done amiss—that he willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. In pity, therefore, to mankind, he was pleased to send his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to teach us a most holy, pure, and benevolent religion—to reform us, both by precept and example; and, finally, to die for our sins, and rise again for our justification. By him, and his evangelists and apostles, we are assured, that if we sincerely repent of our sins, and firmly believe in him and his gospel, we shall, through his death and righteousness, have all our sins blotted out—shall be justified in the sight of God—shall have the assistance of the Holy Spirit for our future conduct—and, if we persevere to the end, in a uniform course of obedience to all the laws of Christ, we shall, through his grace and mercy, be rewarded with everlasting glory in the life to come.

Finally, the divine authority of the Scriptures is confirmed by the excellency of the moral precepts they contain ; and by the moral influence of their doctrines in the salvation of mankind. They embrace all that was really excellent in the ethics of heathen sages, and in the dictates of natural religion ; and re-enact them with greater clearness, force, and authority. The scattered fragments of moral truth, which original revelation, or the responsible nature of man, or the labor and study of philosophers, have dispersed over the world, are found to be comprehended in the Christian code. Truth, justice, fortitude, integrity, faithfulness, chastity, benevolence, friendship, obedience to parents, love of our country, and whatever else is praiseworthy, have all their place ; only cleared of base admixtures, directed to their proper ends, and clothed with necessary authority for swaying the conscience. Christianity is admirably adapted to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind, the cause of virtue and righteousness in the world ; and to prepare men, by a life of faith and holy obedience upon the earth, for the eternal enjoyment of God in heaven. " Other books may afford us much entertainment and instruction, may improve our understandings, may calm our passions, may exalt our sentiments, may even improve our hearts ; but they have not, they cannot have, that authority in what they affirm, in what they require, in what they promise and threaten, which the Scriptures have ; there is a peculiar weight and energy in them, which is not to be found in any other writings : their denunciations are more awful, their convictions stronger, their consolations more powerful, their counsels more authentic, their warnings more alarming, their expostulations more penetrating. There are passages in them, throughout so sublime, so pathetic, full of such energy and force upon the heart and conscience, yet without the least appearance of labor and study for that purpose ; indeed, the design of the whole is so noble, so well suited to the sad condition of human kind ; the morals have in them such purity and dignity ; the doctrines, so many of them above reason, yet so perfectly reconcilable with it ; the expression is so majestic, yet familiarized with such easy simplicity, that the more we read and study these writings, with pious dispositions and judicious attention, the more we shall see and feel of the hand of God in them. But, that which stamps upon them the highest value, that which renders them, strictly speaking, inestimable, and distinguishes them from all other books in the world, is this, that they, and they only, contain the words of eternal life. In this respect, every other book, even the noblest compositions of man, must fail ; they cannot give us that which we most want ; and what is of infinitely more importance to us, than all other things put together--eternal life. This, we must look for nowhere but in the Scriptures." Thus, they are clearly and fully demonstrated to be the *Book of the Lord*.

2. The Scriptures are called the *Book of the Lord*, because they abound with the most correct and sublime descriptions of his nature

*and perfections.* One of the ancients, said, "the Bible is the history of God." It is here we learn that God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. It is here we learn that *in the beginning he created the heavens and the earth.* He said, *let there be light, and there was light.* He laid the foundations of the earth—he bound up the water in the thick clouds—he gave the sea a decree, that it should not pass its bounds—he set a compass upon the great deep—he stretched out the north over the empty place, and hung the earth upon nothing. He made the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of the air, and every living creature that moveth upon the earth, or in the waters. And last, he created man in his own image, after his own likeness; and gave him dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. He gives us the rain in due season, and sends grass into our fields—he shuts up the heavens that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit. The whole Pentateuch is a history of God's providential dispensations; his love and care for his faithful servants, and his constant superintendence over them; and ascribes all events, as well natural as miraculous, to God's providence. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, called upon the Lord, and he heard them—and he was with them in all places whither they went. The history of Joseph sets before us a beautiful and instructive example of God's providential designs, brought about by natural causes. *The Lord is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath. He will not justify the wicked, and by no means clear the guilty: but he is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Heaven is his throne, and earth his footstool. I am a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off. Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? Saith the Lord: Do I not fill heaven and earth. His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.* The Scriptures describe the incomprehensible majesty of God, as softened by benevolence, which is liberal and unwearied, in diffusing good throughout the universe: *his tender mercies are over all his works,* embracing at once the interests of our bodies and our souls; and while he bestows in abundance the blessings and consolations of the present life, he has provided for us perfect and exalted felicity in the life to come. Of all the views of God which are recorded in the Sacred Oracles, none are so calculated to endear him to us, to inspire our hearts with confidence, as this short but interesting description, of which the scheme of redemption affords a sublime illustration—*God is love.* In fine, the Scriptures record the terrible acts of his justice—the grand displays of his mercy—his inviolable faithfulness, immaculate purity, and immutable goodness. There is scarcely a question which a serious mind may be disposed to urge, relative to the divine Being, that cannot be solved by *the Book of the Lord.*

3. The Scriptures are denominated *the Book of the Lord*, because he has sanctified them, and has set his broad seal to their truth and divinity. He has declared by the mouth of the prophet, *As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that thing which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I shall send it.* The Apostle Paul declares, that *the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; and that it effectually worketh in them that believe.* We have many striking examples in the illustration of this declaration. What divine energy has been displayed by the power of a preached gospel? What wonderful success attended the administration of the word in the first ages of the Christian religion? Before the second century was completed, the gospel was propagated through the Roman empire, which then comprised almost all the known world. It prevailed without the assistance of any temporal power. "Destitute of all temporal advantages, protected by no authority, assisted by no art, nor recommended by the reputation of its author, nor enforced by eloquence in its advocates, the word of God grew mightily and prevailed. We behold twelve men, poor, artless, and uneducated, triumphing over the fiercest and most determined opposition; over the tyranny of the magistrate, and the subtleties of the philosopher; over the prejudices of the Gentile, and the bigotry of the Jew." And, notwithstanding the truths of Christianity are repugnant to every bad passion of the human heart, and require from those who profess it the most exalted piety, together with the strictest possible regard to every civil, moral, and relative duty, as well as the purest and most diffusive benevolence—still Christianity has continued to spread in every part of the known world, and to pour its bright effulgence upon the dark corners of the earth, to cheer the desolate habitation of man. Wherever the earth has been blessed with the light of the gospel, the effects of its divine power have been visible in softening the asperities of the human heart; in transforming it into the image of Christ, and in forming the character to piety and virtue. It has cheered the desolate path of man, by pouring upon it the light of immortality, and elevating his affections and hopes to a heavenly country. In the wonderful displays of its divine operation, how many blinded eyes it has opened—how many hard hearts it has softened—how many inveterate prejudices it has subdued—how many wanderers it has reclaimed—how many penitents it has cheered—and how many mortals it has *made wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

4. The Scriptures are called *the Book of the Lord*, because they lead all to him who follow their directions. They find us out in a state of alienation and estrangement from God; with a heart full of

vile affection and worldly lusts—with an appetite hungering and thirsting after the vanities and pleasures of this present evil world—they teach us the way of access to God by Jesus Christ—they mark the steps by which the prodigal returns to his heavenly Father—they encourage him by promises, and urge him by threatenings—and their most obvious tendency and designs are, to lead us to the rock that is higher than ourselves. There is no book in the world that is so well adapted to raise our minds, refine our judgments, spiritualize our affections, and advance our hearts to the imitation of God, as the Bible. It may, therefore, with the greatest propriety, be significantly and emphatically styled, *the Book of the Lord*.

II. Having considered the reasons for calling the Scriptures *the Book of the Lord*, we shall now proceed to inquire into the purposes for which we are to *seek out of the Book of the Lord, and read*. We should read the Sacred Oracles to gain *instruction*. The Bible is a book of knowledge. All the streams of divine and sacred truth, which for ages have been flowing in every possible direction through all the Christian world, fertilizing the waste and desolate places of the earth, have taken their rise from this source. The Oracles of God are the living fountain, which, from the beginning of time, has been sending forth the pure stream of divine and saving knowledge. All who have approached this fountain for themselves, and partaken of this water of life, have ever found it to be invigorating and refreshing. And, do any thirst for divine and saving knowledge? here she spreads her ample store,—

“’Tis revelation satisfies all doubts,  
And solves all mysteries except its own,  
And so illuminates the path of life,  
That fools discover it, and stray no more.”

The Christian, with the Bible in his hand, resembles a man standing on the summit of a mountain, “where ether pure surrounds him, and Elysian prospects rise.” The dark clouds that hung over the past, are all dispersed; and he views the birth of time, the formation of the globe, the creation of man, the origin of evil, and the long train of miracles, prophecies, and wonders, with which the Old Testament abounds. Nor is he less favored in looking through the bright vista of future years. He beholds the accomplishment of all the prophecies, and the fulfilment of all the divine purposes. Then shall the mystery of God be finished—then shall the earth be dissolved, and everlasting close up the scene,—

“Thick clouds of darkness shall arise on day,  
In sudden night, all earth’s dominions lay;  
Impetuous winds the scatter’d forest rend,  
Eternal mountains, like their cedars, bend.  
The vallies yawn, the troubled ocean roar,  
And break the bondage of his wonted shore;  
From inmost heaven incessant thunders roll,  
And the strong echo bound from pole to pole.”

1. In the *book of the Lord* there is not only a profound treasure of the most useful and excellent knowledge, but the holy and heavenly truths which the Oracles of God contain are also delivered in the most majestic strain of oratory, and with all the ornaments of the most exalted rhetoric. Words are nowhere arranged in a more comprehensive and attractive order, nor do the triumphs of sacred eloquence shine in any author with greater splendor, or flow with an evener stream. How wonderful and surprising are the descriptions which Job gives us of the divine power and providence! In how many fine and poetic strains are the songs of Moses and Deborah composed; and with how much beauty of style, as well as elevated strains of devotion, is the book of the Psalms replenished! How lofty and intricate are some of the prophets—how pathetic and terrible are others—and some, again, how mild and gentle! What refined wisdom, what deep experience, what admirable observations of human policy, are scattered through the writings of Solomon—what noble characters, and lively images of things, are dispersed in those instructive pages! How inimitable is the passion of grief set forth in the lamentations of Jeremiah. “One would think that every letter was wrote with a tear, every word was the sad accent of a broken heart; that the penman was a man compacted of sorrows, and disciplined to mourning; that he never breathed but in sighs, nor spoke but in groans.” How awful and dreadful is the account which Moses gives of the publication of the law. God descended in fire and smoke, and the people were not only filled with fear, but the hill shook, and the mountain did exceedingly quake and tremble. Nothing can give us a more clear and just idea of Omnipotent power, than the expression of Moses, when God says, *Let there be light, and there was light. He spake the word, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

2. We should read the Book of the Lord *to gain examples, after which to model our lives.* The Bible is a book of models; here we see not only the theory of religion, but we behold it embodied and enlivened in living examples. The precepts of the gospel describe what men ought to be, but in the living characters we see what they were; and there is not a single virtue that can adorn human nature, there is not a single grace that can embellish the human heart, but what has been exemplified in some of the living characters, recorded in *the Book of the Lord*—such as faith in Abraham, meekness in Moses, wisdom in Solomon, patience in Job, zeal in Peter, and perseverance in Paul. But, in the life of Jesus Christ are embodied and exemplified all the graces and all the virtues of the Christian religion, without one single defect to stain his unspotted purity. He is a model of perfection. What sweetness, purity, simplicity, and dignity in his manners; what an effecting gracefulness in his delivery; what sublimity in his maxims; what profound wisdom in his discourses; what presence of

mind in his replies; how great the command over his passions; how submissive to the divine will under suffering affliction. Where is the man, where the philosopher, where the sage, who could so live, and so die, without weakness and ostentation? Never man spake like this man; never man lived like this man; and never man died like this man. Jesus Christ is, therefore, the best model for imitation, whether living or dying, which has ever been set before mankind. Let us set this example of purity, of perfection, of generosity, of meekness, of patient submission, and of expansive benevolence, continually before our eyes; and let it be our constant and continued effort to maintain it, as far as the weakness and imperfection of our nature will admit. Let not our struggles be faint and few to come up to this divine original, but let them be untiring and unceasing. Let us look up to God for divine aid in these holy and arduous efforts, for he has promised that his grace shall be sufficient for us.

3. We should read the Book of the Lord *to gain excitements to animate us in our Christian course.* The Bible is a book of motives. All its precepts are enjoined by proper authority, and enforced by the most powerful sanctions. In this respect, the religious and moral precepts of the gospel have an infinite advantage; for they are not to be regarded as the mere counsels and dictates of philosophers and moralists, who can only advise, and endeavor to persuade, but who have no proper authority over mankind; nor as the injunctions of human legislators, armed with civil authority, who make no pretensions to judge men's dispositions, and who have nothing further in view than the external order and welfare of society. But they are urged upon us as the commands of God himself, the sovereign Lord of the universe, who knows our most secret thoughts, and to whom we must give an account, not only for our outward actions, but also for the inward dispositions and affections of the heart. The motives to duty, which are presented by the Bible, are drawn from a consideration of the reasonableness of the duty—from the example of Christ—from the sanctions of duty, which the civil relations among men have received from God—from the regard which Christians owe to their holy profession—from the acceptableness of true repentance and the promise of pardon—from the divine assistance offered to support us in the practice of duty—from our relation to heaven while upon earth—from the rewards and punishments proclaimed in the gospel. Some of these motives, when, like the colors of the rainbow, they are blended together, become peculiarly engaging and attracting; while others, like columns of fire and smoke, fill the mind with the most alarming apprehensions, and deter us from the commission of sin. O, what powerful motives does the Book of the Lord display, addressed to the understanding, to the conscience, and to the heart! May we feel their divine energy, their holy influence; and



thus be excited to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on eternal life.

4. We should read the Book of the Lord *to gain encouragement and support under all the afflictions of life, and to excite us to alacrity, diligence, and perseverance, in the cause of God.* The Bible is a book of promises—they cluster on every page. The promises of God are full of consolation. They are divine in their origin, suitable in their nature, abundant in their number, clear in their expression, and certain in their accomplishment. They suit every case, meet every emergency, redress every grievance, scatter every doubt, and heal every wound. They prove an antidote to despair, a motive to patience, a call to prayer, a spur to perseverance. They are pure in their source, satisfying in their nature, and perpetual in their duration. From the Sacred Oracles, we learn that a divine providence superintends all events, and that a divine power is exerted to support and sustain the sincere Christian under suffering virtue. *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.* From the Bible, we learn that the *Lord God is a sun*, to enlighten us in the way, and a *shield*, to protect us against the enemies of our salvation. He will give *grace*, to carry us on *from strength to strength*, and *glory*, to crown us when we appear *before him in Zion*; he will *withhold* nothing that is *good* and profitable for us in the course of our journey, and will himself be our reward when we come to the end of it. The true believer, cheered and animated by these promises, endures hardness as the good soldier of Jesus Christ, through all the labors and toils of this present scene of suffering and afflictions; and when the messenger of death comes to relieve him from the troubles and sorrows of life, in the sweet composure of triumphant faith, he adopts the elevated strains of the poet:—

“Ye golden lamps of heaven! farewell, with all your feeble light,  
Farewell, thou ever-changing moon, pale empress of the night!  
And thou, refulgent orb of day, in brighter flames arrayed,  
My soul, which springs beyond thy sphere, no more demands thy aid;  
Ye stars are but the shining dust of my divine abode,  
The pavement of those heavenly courts, where I shall reign with God.”

III. Having considered the purposes for which we are to seek out of the Book of the Lord, and read, we shall now pass briefly to notice *the manner in which this is to be done.*

1. We should do it with *deep seriousness and holy awe resting upon our minds.* The very thought that we are about to consult the Oracles of eternal truth, which came from God, and serve to describe his nature and perfections, and to make known his will concerning man, should repress every feeling of levity, and every dis-

position opposed to true godliness. Were the Son of God to revisit the earth in a human form, and were we again to consult him on the great business of salvation, who can doubt but what we should do it with great seriousness? In like manner we should now consult the Sacred Oracles, which contain the knowledge of God, and the revelation of his will to the human family. The Bible is a serious book, and was written by holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. It treats of serious subjects—subjects that involve the eternal and everlasting interests of man; it should, therefore, be perused by a mind filled with a holy and devout awe. “I can speak from experience,” says the celebrated Erasmus, “that there is little benefit to be derived from the Scriptures, if they be read cursorily or carelessly; but if a man exercise himself therein, constantly and conscientiously, he will find such an efficacy in them as is not to be found in any other book whatever.”

2. We should read the Book of the Lord, with all the *attention we are capable of exercising*. Without attention, all books are alike, and equally insignificant; for he who adverts not to the sense of what he reads, will never gain instruction from books; the wisest discourses signify no more to him, than the most exquisite music does to a man perfectly deaf. The letters and syllables of the Bible, are no more sacred than those of any other book; it is the sense and meaning that is divinely inspired; and he who only considers the former, might as well entertain himself with a romance. *Search the Scriptures*, said our Saviour. The word which he employed is very expressive. “It is a metaphor,” says St. Chrysostom, “taken from those who dig deep, and search for metals in the bowels of the earth. They *look* for the *bed* where the metal lies, and break every clod, and sift and examine the whole, in order to discover the ore.” *The Book of the Lord* has a rich vein of heavenly wisdom running through it, whose merchandise is better than silver; but the treasure lies deep, and superficial observers never see it. While we read, let us search narrowly, till the true force and meaning of every sentence be known and understood. Confer place with place; the scope of one place with that of another; things going before with things coming after; compare word with word, and letter with letter, till the whole is thoroughly examined and comprehended.

3. We should read the Book of the Lord *frequently*. Mankind are prone to forget God and his holy commandments. Surrounded as we are with the objects of time and sense, which imperceptibly steal our sensibilities and captivate our affections; we need to have our memories quickened, and our attention roused to the concerns of the spiritual and eternal world. For this purpose we should frequently consult the Sacred Oracles, as well as to acquire a knowledge of their meaning. If we cannot spare hours to devote to this purpose, let us snatch moments; and if we cannot peruse many chapters, let us read single verses, and treasure them

up in our memories. *Thy word*, says David, *have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee*. Let our memories be sacred repositories for the word of God, so shall our feet abide in the path of rectitude, and our affections be placed on things above.

4. We should read the Book of the Lord with *earnest and devout prayer for divine illumination*. *Holy men of old, spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*; we need the same spirit to guide our understanding into its true meaning, and to impress upon our hearts its divine energy. The natural man may apprehend the literal and grammatical sense of the word, but its power and energy—that insinuating, persuasive force, whereby it works upon the heart of a true believer, is peculiar to the Spirit; and, therefore, *without his aids*, the Scriptures, while they lie open before our eyes, may still be a *book that is sealed*, and be as ineffective as if the characters were illegible. *Turn thou, at my reproof*, says God, *and I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you*. The royal Psalmist was penetrated with the belief of this doctrine, when he prayed: *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*. It is then certain, that persons of piety, who are anxiously desirous of knowing the divine will, and of understanding the Sacred Oracles of truth, are aided by the Spirit of God in searching out the true meaning of the Scriptures, especially of those parts which refer to the faith and practice of a Christian. We should, then, not trust too much to our own understandings, but pray to God for divine illumination, that we may be enabled to see clearly, and feel forcibly, what is that *good, acceptable, and perfect will of God*.

5. Finally, we should read the Book of the Lord with a sincere desire to *know*, that we may *do* the will of God. This disposition of mind, is indispensable to a right understanding of the word of God. If we give loose to the indulgence of irregularity and passion; if we lead a life which obviously makes it for our interest to misunderstand the Christian system, these passions, prejudices, and interests, will serve as films and mists, to distort every object presented to the view, and make it impossible to discern the form and features of truth. Unbelief and error, usually spring up from the darkness and corruption of sin. The truth of this statement is clearly and forcibly illustrated, in the rejection of our Saviour by the Jews. Their understandings were so effectually blinded by a dark and dense cloud of sinful prejudices, that they did not *know the Lord of Glory*. Hence our Saviour said to this wicked and rebellious people: *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*. A disposition to rebel against God and his government, is very unfavorable for the reception of divine truth; and they who dwell under the shadow of this unholy and impure temper of mind, will be harassed with doubts and fears, and deluded into the images of sin and error. *But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty,*

*and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in the deed.* The chief object for which God has revealed his will to us is, that we may do it. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong to us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.* The Oracles of God were given to us for the purpose of directing us what to do, and of encouraging us in doing it; they having been written for our learning, that we, through *patience and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope.* The practical reading which we here recommend is of such a nature, that the most illiterate person may prosecute it with advantage, for the application of Scripture which it enjoins is connected with salvation; and, consequently, if the unlearned were incapable of making such application to themselves, it would be in vain for them to peruse the sacred writings. The simplest practical application of the word of God will, unquestionably, prove highly beneficial; provided that it be conducted with a due regard to those moral qualifications which have already been stated and enforced, as necessary to the right understanding of the Scriptures.

1. If the Scriptures are indeed the Book of the Lord; if they are a revelation of the will of God concerning man; if they are able, through faith that is in Christ Jesus, to make us wise unto salvation, *what sin and folly to neglect them?* Notwithstanding the Scriptures are *the wells of salvation, from whence we are privileged to draw water with joy,* yet there are multitudes who pay but little attention to them. They prefer any book of science and amusement to the Bible; and, if they ever read it, it is merely in a formal and cursory way. This is the height of madness and folly! What man, in his senses, when navigating his ship among rocks and quicksands, neglects to consult his chart? Yet, as if there were no dangers in sailing over the rough sea of life, or no evils to be incurred by negligence, the multitude are quite indifferent about that book, which alone can conduct us safely to a better world. How vitiated must be the taste of that man who prefers a novel or a newspaper to the inspired volume! Who can be anxious about the things of *time and sense,* and be indifferent to that which is more valuable than *gold,* and more sweet than *honey!* Ah, think what durable riches, what heavenly delights, you lose! Go and *search the Scriptures* with serious and devout attention, and God will open your understandings to understand them, and will work effectually by them to your salvation. They are the rod of God's strength, and the sword of the Spirit; and if you read them in humanity and faith, you shall find them *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and they shall discover to you the very thoughts and intents of the heart.* If you will not sit thus at the feet of Jesus and learn of him, it is in vain for you to hope for salvation; but if you will come to him, you need not be

discouraged at your weakness or ignorance ; for he says, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*

2. If the Scriptures are thus valuable and important, *how necessary it is that we should be well acquainted with them.* The word of God denounces vengeance against many characters that are innocent among men ; nor will our ignorance of these threatenings avert or delay the execution of them. Let us, then, study the Sacred Oracles with an express reference to ourselves, that we may know what God says in them respecting us. We may, perhaps, find many passages which, when applied to our hearts, will give us just occasion to mourn, as did the pious monarch Josiah. *Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humblest thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me, I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.* Better were it far to know the full extent of our guilt, and thereby be stimulated to repentance, than through ignorance of our state to continue impenitent, till the wrath of God shall come upon us to the uttermost, and we be forever deprived of the means of grace.

*Finally,* permit me, in the conclusion of my remarks on this subject, to urge upon you, not only the importance of reading the book of the Lord, *but of dedicating yourselves entirely to his service.* *Come unto me,* says our Saviour, *all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* By his own gracious voice, Jesus Christ called you while on earth. By the voice of his ambassadors he continues to call, and he now calls you by mine. Come to this Saviour of sinners, and he shall give you rest—rest from the hard servitude of sin, and appetite, and guilty fear. *That yoke is heavy, that burden is intolerable ; his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.* But come in sincerity—dare not come in hypocrisy and dissimulation. Think not it will avail you anything in the last day, to have called yourselves Christians, to have been born and educated under the gospel light, to have lived in the external communion of the church on earth—if, all the while, your hearts have holden no communion with its head in heaven. If instructed in Christianity, and professing to believe its doctrines, you lead the lives of unbelievers, it will avail you nothing in the next, to have enjoyed in this world, like the Jews of old, advantages which you despised and neglected—to have had the custody of a holy doctrine which never touched your heart—of a pure commandment, by the light of which you never walked. To those who disgrace the doctrine of their Saviour by the scandal of their lives, it will be of no avail to have vainly called him *Lord, Lord.* None but *the pure in heart shall see God.*

None but those *who do his commandments shall enter in through the gates into the city, and eat of the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God.*

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## DISCOURSE II.

### *On the Christian Name.*

“The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.”—*Acts xi., 26.*

NAMES are words given to persons and things, and express, by the common consent of mankind, certain ideas, by which these persons and things are known and designated. In modern times, names are little more than arbitrary distinctions; but among the orientalist, the appellations given as names are always significant. And in this sense all the names given to God in the Old Testament are to be understood. Hence, a knowledge of his name imports, not merely a knowledge of the different names by which he is known, but a knowledge of his essential perfections. According to this view of the subject, God was pleased to reveal himself in express terms, declarative of all his glorious perfections. *The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.* Before God proclaimed his name to Moses, he placed him in a cleft of the rock, in Horeb. This rock was an eminent type of Christ; and doubtless the whole transaction was intended to show, that in Christ alone he could be so viewed by fallen man. According to this view of the subject, *the name*, that is, the perfections of the Lord, *become a strong tower to the righteous, into which they run and are safe.* Hence, says the Psalmist, *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.*

The names which have been given to Jesus Christ are, also, appropriate and significant. It is, therefore, said, that *God has given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* The name to which the apostle here refers, as having been given to Christ, and which he declared to be above every other name, is doubtless the name of *Jesus*. No other being, in heaven or in earth, can possess this name, as it is possessed by the Saviour and Redeemer of the

world; for there is no other name *given* among men whereby we can be saved; and no other could redeem us to God but HE. Hence, it was announced before his birth, by the angel Gabriel, that *his name should be called Jesus, for he should save the people from their sins*. The qualifications of the Saviour of the world were so extraordinary, the redeeming acts so stupendous, and the result of all so glorious, both to God and man, that it is impossible to conceive a higher name or title, to be given to any being, than that of JESUS, or *Saviour of the world*.

As God has revealed his perfections to man, under the most significant and appropriate titles, and as the work and office, which have been assigned to Jesus Christ under the gospel age, have been designated by the appellations given to him, so, in like manner, the Christian character and perfections have been designated by the name given to the true followers of Jesus Christ. *The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch*. And although mere names are but empty sounds, yet it will not be denied by any, that there are names of honor and significancy, and when attended by the things signified, become of great and sacred importance. Such is the name of *Christian*, given to the primitive disciples at Antioch—a name more than eighteen hundred years old. In discussing the subject before us, we propose to consider the original import of this sacred name, and shall endeavor, as far as may be practicable, to bring both the name and the thing signified into common use.

I. We learn from the Scriptures, that at first the followers of Christ were designated by different names. Among themselves, they were most usually denominated *brethren*, from their mutual love, and their relation to God and to each other. They were styled *believers*, from their reception of Jesus as the true Messiah. They were called *disciples*, from learning their religion of Christ, as their Teacher. They were also called *saints*, from their separation from the world, and from their holiness and purity of heart. Their enemies styled them *Nazarenes*: thus Tertullian accused Paul of being *a ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes*. Of similar import to this was the appellation of *Gallileans*, and the term *aireses*, or sect; meaning, by that, a body of men who had embraced a religion of their own, in opposition to that established by law. And this appellation of *Gallileans* was continued to be employed by the enemies of the Christian religion, as a term of reproach, as late as the time of Julian, who reigned about the middle of the fourth century, and used it incessantly in his invectives against the followers of Christ.

But, after the lapse of some time from the promulgation of Christianity, the followers of Christ were designated by a new name—they were styled *Christians*. *The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch*. Antioch was a famous city, built on the river Orontes, and the capital of Syria, where the kings of Syria, the successors of Alexander the Great, usually resided. The gospel

was first preached in this city by certain men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who had fled from the persecution which commenced at Jerusalem, on the death of Stephen. These men, when they first came to the city, addressed themselves to the Greeks, the pagan inhabitants of the place, preaching the Lord Jesus. This is the first instance we meet with in the Sacred Writings, of the gospel being preached to the heathen. Though the apostles and evangelists had received from their Lord a commission to preach the gospel to every creature, it was some time before they fully comprehended its import, or attempted, in its full extent, to execute it. Until this time, they who were dispersed from Jerusalem, into various parts, preached the gospel to the Jews only. The introduction of the gospel into Antioch was, therefore, distinguished by the remarkable circumstance of its being the first instance in which the apostles' commission was executed to the full extent, and the treasures of divine grace were freely proposed to the acceptance of the Gentiles.

The humble and faithful labors of these persecuted men, were singularly blessed in this idolatrous city, for *the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.* When tidings of these things came to the ears of the church at Jerusalem, they immediately *sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch, who, when he came and saw the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.* Not satisfied with contributing his own exertions to the formation of the work, he called in superior aid; he went to *Tarsus, to seek Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.* Thus this church, in addition to other extraordinary circumstances, had the honor of being one of the first scenes in which the great apostle of the Gentiles labored. It was here he began to scatter those celestial sparks, which soon after kindled a general conflagration in the world. *And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people.* Great and continued prosperity attended this church, till the number of its communicants, as we are informed by Chrysostom, swelled to a hundred thousand. It was during the residence of St. Paul in this city, that this extraordinary name was given to the disciples.

II. It is evident, from many considerations, that the name of *Christian* was given to the disciples by *divine authority.* It has, indeed, been supposed by some, that this name was given to the disciples by their enemies. But it does not look at all probable that an appellation so inoffensive, and even so honorable, originated with their enemies; they would have invented one that was more opprobrious. There is not the least intimation, either in sacred or profane history, that this name was ever used as a term of reproach; and had it ever been so used, it is unreasonable to suppose it could have escaped the notice of all historians. It has been supposed by



others, that it was first assumed by the disciples themselves. But we can scarcely suppose that they would have ventured to take a step so important as that of assuming an appellation by which the church was to be distinguished in all ages, without divine direction; especially at a time when the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were so common, and in a church where prophets abounded. *For there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and with Saul.* It is not to be supposed that they would assume a new appellation without recourse to the prophets for that direction; or that, supposing it to have no other than a human origin, it would have been so soon and so universally adopted by every part of the Christian church.

This opinion is fully confirmed from the use of the word here employed, and which is not used in any other instance in the New Testament, to the giving a name by human authority. In its genuine import, it signifies an *oracular nomination*, or a *declaration from God*. Thus Dr. Doddridge translates it: *And the disciples were by divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch*. He adds, "I think with Dr. Benson, that the word *chrematisai*, which is rendered *were called*, implies that it was done by *divine direction*, and have translated accordingly." In this sense the original word is uniformly used in the New Testament. *And being WARNED OF GOD in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their country another way. But when he had heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding being WARNED OF GOD in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee. And it WAS REVEALED into him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ. And they said, Cornelius the centurion WAS WARNED OF GOD by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses WAS ADMONISHED OF GOD when he was about to make the tabernacle. By faith, Noah, BEING WARNED OF GOD of things not seen, as yet, moved by fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.* The evangelists employ the same word in the original which is used in these several verses, but differently rendered; in all of which, however, it signifies *oracular nomination*. The Sacred Oracles, then, may be considered as giving a universal testimony in favor of this import of the word, and as fully sanctioning the doctrine we have stated.

The celebrated Dr. Clark, in his commentary on this text, says: "The word *chrematisai*, which we translate *were called*, signifies in the New Testament, to *appoint, warn, or nominate by divine direction*. If, therefore, the name was given by *divine appointment*, it is most likely that Saul and Barnabas were directed to give it; and that, therefore, the name Christian was from God." The Dr. further

remarks: "A Christian, therefore, is the highest character which any human being can bear upon earth; and to receive it from God, as those appear to have done, how glorious the title."

III. In this view of the subject, we see a remarkable accomplishment of a prophecy of Isaiah: *The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* And again, *The Lord shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.* Doubtless, this is the same name that Christ promised to give to them who overcome. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a NEW NAME written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. He that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and I will write upon him my NEW NAME.* It is evident that Isaiah and John have reference to the same name. Isaiah says, that the Lord shall call his servants by a *new name*; John, that Christ will write upon them who overcome his *new name*; and we are informed by Luke, that the disciples were called *Christians by divine appointment.* From the united testimony of these inspired witnesses, it is evident that this *new name* was that of *Christian*, and that it was given by the direction of God.

IV. Names, as they are calculated to give *just or false representations* of the nature of things, are of the first importance; so that the affixing one to discriminate the followers of Christ in every age, seems not to be unworthy of divine appointment. This name is significant. The proper import of this name is a follower of Christ—it denotes one who, from a mature deliberation and an unbiased judgment, cordially embraces the religion of Christ, receives his doctrine, believes his promises, and makes it his chief and constant care to regulate his life according to the precepts and example of our common Lord. The Christian and man of the world are the most opposite characters; for it is the chief part of our Saviour's design, and the great scope of his religion, to redeem us from this present evil world. A Christian possesses the mind and spirit of Christ, and imitates his example. He has attained such a practical knowledge of Christ, as enables him to walk even as he walked. The rules by which he lives are the words of Christ—his example is the model after which he copies—the happiness to which he aspires is that of forever being with the Lord, *for in his presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures forever more.*

Multitudes assume the name of Christian, to whom it is, in strict propriety, wholly inapplicable. Educated in a country where Christianity is the received religion, they acquiesce in its truth. But to whatever distinguishes the real Christian—his faith, his hope, his charity, his love—to whatever relates to a spiritual union with Christ—faith in his Messiahship, delight in his person, or an animating hope of his appearance to recompense the just, they remain total and contented strangers. They have never participated in these

things, neither are they dissatisfied at the consciousness of not possessing them. They feel no scruple of associating the name of Christ with many of the vices, and with all the spirit of the world. This assumption of the name of Christ, while we are destitute of his spirit, and without aspiring to the least resemblance of his character, has done inconceivable injury to the interests of religion. It is this that emboldens the scoffer, encourages the infidel, the profligate, and the votaries of Paganism. It is this that seals the eyes of the impenitent in every nation in deeper and more deathlike slumber:—*The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.* The time is at hand when the Lord Jesus will vindicate that name, which wicked men have disgraced. It had been better for them not to have named the name of Christ, than, having named it, not to depart from iniquity. For they have now added deceit and hypocrisy to guilt; therefore, the greater will be their condemnation, when God shall render a righteous retribution to moral conduct.

V. It may be considered a *patronymic name*, pointing out Christ as the Father and Founder of the Christian system. It has been usual in the schools of philosophy, from the earliest periods, to give to the partisans the name of the founder. Thus the Pythagorians were so styled from Pythagoras, the Platonists from Plato, the Aristotelians from Aristotle, and the Sadduceans from Zadoc. The propriety of the followers of Christ taking their name from him, was still more obvious and striking. The respective leaders we have mentioned, merely communicated their opinions to their disciples, and after they departed this life, had no further control or influence over them. But with the disciples of Christ, it is far otherwise; he is now as much as ever their living head; he lives in them, and they live by him. To them he still retains the same relation as the natural head to the body; giving life and energy to all its several parts. The union that subsists between Christ and his followers, is not a civil but a vital—not a temporary, but a perpetual and eternal union. By a sacred and a mysterious influence, he imparts his very spirit and image to his followers; and by a continued supply of his grace and mercy, this spirit and image are preserved in the midst of abounding wickedness and depravity; and it is surely fit they should receive their name from him, from whom they have derived spirit and temper.

We profess to acknowledge Christ as our *only Master*, both in doctrine and practice; therefore, we receive his name and reject all others. We think that they pay an extravagant, and even an idolatrous compliment, to his subordinate officers and ministers, who take their denomination from them. We highly esteem those eminent reformers who have distinguished themselves in restoring the church to the purity and faith of the gospel *for their work's sake*, and for the eminent services they have rendered Christianity. We feel grateful to them for the errors which they have detected

and exposed, and cheerfully renounce them. We also hail with pleasure and delight the truth which they have elicited, and gladly embrace it. Indeed, we endeavor to avail ourselves of the labors of all, and profit by them. It should also be recollected that the most eminent reformers are but men, and even men *subject to like passions as we are*—they are under the same liability to be swerved by passion, prejudice, or interest—to be misguided by the spirit of the age in which they live, or the circumstances by which they are surrounded—to be controlled by the force of education, or by particular modes of thinking which they have adopted. The sources of error are innumerable, and he who claims infallibility merely possesses a false confidence in his own powers; a confidence which he assumes for the purpose of elevating himself among his fellows, and gaining an ascendancy over the minds of the confiding. We should be slow in yielding to the spiritual claims which any man may set up over his brethren, with whatever apparent sincerity and confidence they may be urged; for all men are fallible, and, therefore, liable to err. We are under no obligations to embrace the errors, or copy the sins of any man. Jesus Christ himself claims our implicit faith and obedience, and has directed us to *call no man Master*. No man can take the crown from the head of Jesus, and place it upon the head of another, without giving offence to him; for in so doing he must renounce his allegiance to Christ, and surrender himself up to the dictation of man.

VI. It is a name of *appropriation*, signifying that we are the property of Christ, and his peculiar people. We are not our own, we are bought with a price—we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and, therefore, belong to him as servants to a master. We should acknowledge his name, cherish his Spirit, submit to his authority, and live to his glory. *Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*. We are not the servants of men; we are not to make their will and pleasure the standard of our faith and conduct; it is, therefore, highly improper to be called by their names. Jesus Christ is clothed with authority to exercise dominion over our faith and practice in all religious matters; and we are to be subject to him, and to him only, in all the concerns of that spiritual life which he has imparted to our souls. *God has set his King upon his holy hill in Zion, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and of things in earth, and of things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*. As the willing and obedient subjects of this King of kings, and Lord of lords, we are to receive his name and acknowledge his authority; and we cannot do this in its full extent while we prefer the name of another, and are guided by his counsel and direction. Christ and his church are often designated in the Sacred Oracles by the endearing appellation of husband and wife; and there is much pro-

propriety in a woman's being called by the name of her husband, *seeing that they are no more twain but one flesh*. Would it not be a matter of jealousy if a woman should refuse to be called by the name of her husband, or wish to be known by the name of any other man, especially if the person whose name she preferred should be a base character? What would any man think of his wife, should she choose to carry the name of one of his servants in her *forehead*, that is, *publicly*, by which she might be known, and the name of her husband in her *hand*, that is, *privately*? Would he not suppose her to be insane? or concluded that she loved another man more than himself? He would, undoubtedly, consider himself robbed of his due honor, as her head and husband. *Now God is a jealous God, and his glory he will not give to another*. Let those members of his family who choose to be called by so many different names, which the mouth of the Lord has not named, and who even glory in their names, make the application; *it is easy and natural*.

VII. As the members of this family are the peculiar property of Christ, so they all have been *baptized into his name*. A party spirit, in the apostolic age, was excited in the Corinthian church. Some of the Corinthians were not satisfied to be merely called Christians, but began to assume the names of the apostles. Some wished to be called after the name of Paul, others after Apollos, and others after Cephas. Had the apostles encouraged this spirit, how soon the Corinthian church would have been divided into sects and parties; and that leader who was the most popular, would have had the greatest number of followers; and might have triumphed over the others, branded them with heresy, and excommunicated them from the church. But the noble soul of the great apostle of the Gentiles, abhorred the idea; he endeavored to nip the poisonous weed in the bud, by telling them they were carnal, and urged these pungent questions: *Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? Who then is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?* If they had been baptized into the name of Paul, they would have had grounds for saying they were of Paul, as bearing his name. They would have been Paulites, and so of the other apostles. But as they had been all baptized into Christ, they should all be called Christians. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*. The argument of the apostle to do away sectarian names, may be urged with the same force and propriety now, as in the days of his flesh; for all believers are still baptized into the name of Christ, and, therefore, under the most solemn obligations to assume it. As they have not been baptized into the name of any man, consequently, they are not under any obligation to be called after the names of men. As all believers, therefore, have been baptized into the name of Christ, they should

be known and designated as his disciples; they should be called *Christians*.

VIII. The name Christian, was given to the disciples of Christ to bury all *party distinctions*, and to unite his followers in *one body*. All other names are *divergent*, and calculated to divide and scatter the flock of Christ. Thus, the name of Jew was odious to the Gentiles, and the name of Gentile was odious to the Jews. The name of Christian swallowed up both in one common and agreeable appellation. He who has taken down the *partition wall* between Jew and Gentile, has also taken away party names, and united all his followers in his own name as a common denomination: *For now*, says the apostle, *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. And ye are all one in Christ Jesus*. According to the declaration of the prophet Zechariah—*The Lord shall be king over all the earth, and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one*. The most powerful obstacles to union among the followers of Christ are here removed, and the strongest motives are presented to unite and bind them together. And as party names only serve to divide and separate the disciples of Christ, whoever introduces them, or uses them after they are introduced, must be guilty of a great moral offence; for he lays a stumbling-block in the way of God's people.

IX. It was for bearing the name of *Christian*, that the primitive disciples were reproached and persecuted in the early ages of the gospel. *Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed*. It is well known that the edicts of the persecuting emperors of Rome were passed and enforced against those who bore the name of Christians. Hence, in those times of persecution, the only question asked of such as were arraigned at the tribunal of the magistrate was, "Are you a Christian?" To answer this question in the affirmative, was regarded as a sufficient cause to justify proceeding to the utmost extremities. And in the midst of the sharpest torments, the martyrs found relief and refreshment in repeating, at each pause of the agony, "I am a Christian." Such persons received the high commendation of the Lord Jesus in his address to the persecuted churches: *For my name's sake thou hast labored, and hast not fainted. Thou holdest fast my name. Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*. The primitive disciples seem to have adhered to the *name* of Christ with the same tenacity they did to his religion, and to have regarded a renunciation of his *name* the same as abandoning his religion. They, therefore, held it fast, and their enemies were unable, either by the terrors of persecution or the frowns of death, to drive them from their purpose. They remained faithful to Christ and to his cause, and urged their way onward in the midst of difficulties the most severe and com-

plicated ; and nothing could damp their ardor, or quench the fire of love that burnt in their souls. And would to God, my brethren, that we were animated by the same spirit, and felt the same strong and ardent attachment to Christ and to his name.

X. Finally, this is the name by which the disciples of Christ are to be known in all the succeeding ages of the gospel. Hence, this name was given to the *disciples* by divine appointment. This fact itself is a sufficient reason to prefer the name of *Christian* to that of *disciple*. To reject the name *Christian* for that of *disciple*, as some have done, is to travel backward. To call such persons reformers, is a great misnomer, for their course is marked with manifest absurdity. Soon after this name was given to the disciples, it began to prevail to the exclusion of every other name. *Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* When Peter wrote his first epistle, it seemed to have been in familiar use : *If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed ; but let him glorify God in this behalf.* And finally, the Scriptures declare that this is the name by which the whole family of Christ is to be designated : *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth are named.* As Christ is the head of the body, and disseminates life and light through all the members, so they all should be known and designated by his name.

But should it be asked, What harm is there in calling ourselves by unscriptural names ? Mere names are innocent things ; and as we are divided in sentiment, why not know each other apart by different names ?

It should be remembered, that anti-Christian names are generally associated with anti-Christian doctrine and practice. No doctrine, which cannot be clearly and fully expressed in the language of Scripture, ought to be received as a Christian doctrine. No principles ought to be sanctioned, that necessarily depend upon unscriptural names. If we acknowledge the necessity of retaining these names, it would be well to inquire into the grounds upon which we justify our conduct. In the present divided state of Christians, it will, I suppose, be acknowledged by all, that there is error somewhere, both in doctrine and practice. They who can express their sentiments and practice in the language of Scripture, are the most likely to be the nearest to the truth. When persons change their names, they have some design in doing it. When the Church of Rome added the names *holy* and *catholic* to the word *church*, making the name *holy catholic church*, as she termed her communion, she evidently intended to make an obvious distinction between those churches that submitted to her usurpations, and all other churches of Christ ; and her practice was strictly associated with this fulsome adulation. So, when the Protestants added names to the word *church*, such as *Presbyterian*, *Episcopalians*, *Calvinistical*, they evidently intended to set up a standard not authorized by the New Testament. These churches are established upon such principles,

that a Christian is not eligible to become a member ; that is, he must not be a Christian *only*, he must be a sectarian. It is not enough for him to subscribe to the *text* of God, but he must give his assent to the exposition of fallible men, and thereby acknowledge a spiritual tribunal—a tribunal, perhaps, more liable to give a false interpretation than himself. It is to justify these principles, that high-toned sectarians plead for unscriptural names ; and we reject the names because we have renounced the principles ; and, having renounced the principles, we find it unnecessary to retain the names. Neither would they find it necessary to retain unscriptural names, if they acknowledged and acted upon the great principles of the Protestant reformation, the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment.

Jesus Christ has broken down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and united his followers in one body ; *there is but one fold, and one shepherd*. One name is sufficient to describe one body. These churches, which are built upon such principles that the greater part of Christians are not eligible to become members, cannot be *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*. All Christian churches ought to be established upon the broad basis of gospel principles, open for the reception of all who have been received by Christ, their head. And when these principles shall be universally embraced by the disciples of Christ, and they learn of him as their *only Master*, the name Christian will supplant all sectarian names.

1. We shall conclude our remarks on this subject by urging you to become Christians in reality and in truth. To become a Christian merely by name, without the reality, instead of being a benefit to you, will augment your guilt and aggravate your doom ; but the possession of genuine Christianity will add unspeakably to your happiness here and hereafter—*it has the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come*. To be a partaker of Christ, is to be at peace with God—to have peace of mind and joy in the Holy Spirit—to possess a beneficial interest in all things, and an assured hope of life everlasting. Jesus Christ came into the world that you might have life, and more than life—He came to give you rest for your souls, to afford you strong consolations under the afflictions and sorrows of this world, support in the solemn and trying hour of death, and an entrance, when your mortal career is ended, into the glory to be revealed. He is ready to vanquish all your spiritual foes, to cleanse you from all your impurities, purge you from all your guilt, and make you *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*. While the bare profession of Christianity will bestow neither pleasure nor profit, the possession of it will be replete with both. It will deliver you from a multitude of snares, against which there is no other relief ; emancipate you from all your slavish passions and degrading appetites, and invest you with the glorious *liberty of the sons of God*. Be assured, however lightly you may



esteem religion now, that the time is not far distant when, to be a true Christian, to belong to Christ, and to be in union with him, will be felt to be a greater happiness than to be master of the world. Every other honor will fade—every other enjoyment will be exhausted—every other distinction will pass away—every other glory will vanish—while the crown of righteousness, which Christ will give to his sincere followers, will shine with undecayed brightness in the ceaseless ages of eternity.

My young friends, be persuaded to embrace Christianity in the morning of life. It will add unspeakable charms to the graces of youth—temper its vivacity with wisdom—tincture its passions with innocence—and form your character for a happy, useful, and honorable life. It will be an ornament to youth, a safe directory in the active pursuits of life, a staff and consolation amidst the decays and infirmities of age. To see you set out in the ways of piety, to behold you renouncing the vanities of life, will afford the highest satisfaction to the church of God, the most exalted pleasure to your religious parents, who watch every movement of your mind with anxious solicitude, ready to rejoice over you with transport whenever they behold in you true signs of piety.

2. We cannot but look back with regret to that period when the followers of Christ were known by no other name than that of *Christian*. Happy period; when, instead of being rent into a thousand parts, and split up into innumerable divisions, the church of Christ was *one fold and one shepherd*. The seamless coat of the Redeemer was one entire piece from top to bottom. The world was divided into two grand parties—Christians and Pagans. This happy state, we have no doubt, will occur again. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.* In consequence of a more copious communication of the spirit, some of our difference of opinion will be removed, and the shepherds *will see eye to eye*; and others of them will be lost in the indulgence of Christian charity, in the noble oblivion of love.

## DISCOURSE III.

*Sermon to Young Men.*

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”  
—*Ecc. xi.*, 9.

WE live in a world where we are surrounded by temptations and snares, to which all are exposed, especially the young and inexperienced. These temptations and snares throw enchantments around themselves, and fill the young mind with delusive hopes and vain expectations. When the passions are once excited, they plead eloquently for gratification, and hurry on the inexperienced in the path of ruin. And in the same proportion as they are indulged, our evil propensities are strengthened; and as our propensities to evil are strengthened, they become the more clamorous when we resist their inclinations. No man ever perceived these truths more clearly, or felt them more forcibly, than did Solomon. He well understood the delicate situation of young people, with all its lights and shades, and manifested in his writings a constant regard for their welfare; and this is one evidence of his wisdom, for youth is the proper age of instruction and discipline. He, therefore, gives them line upon line, and precept upon precept. Sometimes he soothes, and sometimes he rebukes; sometimes he beseeches them with paternal tenderness, and sometimes he persuades them as knowing the terrors of the Lord; and saves them with fear, pulling them out of the fire; and this he does in the words of our text: *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.* In speaking from these words, we propose to explain them—to enforce the caution they suggest—and to conclude with some reflections.

And may Almighty God make this discourse as a solemn trumpet, to arouse the young men who hear me this evening, from the slumbers of spiritual death, that they may become alive to God, and serve him with their bodies and spirits, which are his.

I. We are, in the first place, *to explain the words.* We are not to understand these words in a literal or rigid sense, as though we are forbidden the enjoyment of the bounties of providence and the blessings of life. The religion of Christ is far from forbidding a cheerful use of the blessings of life, for, without such a use of them, they are given to the possessor in vain. Every thing that God has made, is good in itself, and when sanctified by the word of God and prayer, may be used with thanksgiving. All things are given us richly to enjoy; and this fully agrees with the senti-

ments of Solomon, as expressed in the different parts of his writings : *There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of the Lord. I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. Behold that which I have seen, it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy all the good of his labor that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God has given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor: this is the gift of God.* Such are the sentiments that were entertained by Solomon; and such are the pleasures that he regarded not only as innocent, but even as expedient. And far be it from us to recommend a gloomy and melancholy religion. Instead of dissuading you from a life of true pleasure, we are desirous of directing you in the way of it.

These words are intended as an awful and lively caution to young persons, to be upon their guard against the indulgence in those gratifications, whereby the conscience may be wounded and God dishonored. They are spoken *ironically*: that is, the words are to be understood in an opposite sense from their literal import. This method of expression is adopted for the purpose of giving words a sharper point and a keener edge. This style of writing is not uncommon in the Sacred Oracles. It was used by Elijah, the prophet, in his address to the priests of Baal: *And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.* And so these words forbid what they seem to allow upon a literal construction, and are as if he had said: "Thou poor thoughtless creature, who, in this giddy intoxication of thy youth, art so madly bent upon sensual pleasure, take thy fill of it, and withhold not thy heart from any joy. Follow all the most impetuous appetites of thy nature, and wantonly bound over every restraint of reason and piety, trample on all the admonitions of thy teachers, shake off the fetters of a strict education, and burst the bonds of religion, like the threads of flax when they are touched by the flame. But think not, O sinner! that thou shalt always carry it off with such haughty triumph; know, as thou hast thy day, God will also have his: a day of strict account, and of ample recompense. Know thou, for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment. Dearly shalt thou then pay for every present indulgence, and every sweet morsel shall then be turned bitter, and be as the gall of asps within thee."

This, I say, appears to be the evident meaning of the words; for I am sure they are generally used in a bad sense, and signify an indulgence to the irregularities of appetite and passion, in the neglect of reason and Scripture. Thus, the Israelites are charged

to wear fringes on their garments, that they may remember the commandments of the Lord and do them; *and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes.* To judge after the sight of the eye and hearing of the ear, was a proverbial saying to express corrupt judgment. Hence, it was said of Christ, by the Prophet Isaiah: *And he shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.* Solomon was well acquainted with the writings of Moses, who says: *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.* And the connexion requires the interpretation we have given them.

I would further observe, that the judgment to which Solomon here refers, must undoubtedly be that of a future state; since he has expressly said, that here all things come alike to all. And of this judgment he solemnly warns the young sinner, as a most powerful antidote against the baits of sensuality; as an awful thought, which might fix the most roving eye, and be the means of reducing the most ungovernable heart to the discipline of wisdom and piety. We pass,

II. To enforce the admonition by *such considerations as are expressly suggested in the text, or may naturally grow out of it.* And permit me to beg your most serious attention, while I may offer a few things for your consideration.

1. *Think of the corruption and depravity of your own hearts,* to deter you from walking in the way of them. The heart of man is described by that God, who alone perfectly knows it, as being *deceitful and desperately wicked.* And again, inspiration declares, *God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually.* We are degenerate plants of a strange vine, whose fruit are the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah. *What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?* When our hearts were pure, they were the palace of God; but they have become the cage of every unclean bird. If you have never known the plague of your own hearts, it is because you are ignorant of them. Consider for a moment what has passed there; how many evil thoughts you have indulged, how many irregular passions you have gratified, and how many unhallowed tempers, like a mighty tempest, have driven you into the greatest absurdities. How you have abused the means of grace, and despised the riches of the goodness, forbearance, and long suffering of God. Consider how many times you have resisted the strivings of God's Holy Spirit, and rejected the counsels and admonitions of his word. Consider how many vows you have made and broken; and, in spite of all the checks of conscience, have rushed forward into new scenes of debauchery and wickedness. And must these treacherous hearts still be trusted; and will you go on in the way

of them, when they have already led you into so much sin, when they have already plunged you into so much distress? If you continue still to follow the dictates of your own corrupt hearts, they will plunge you deeper and deeper into the abyss of wo, and lead you further and further into the shades of darkness and night. May God arrest you in your course of madness and folly, rend in sunder the veil of sin that obscures the moral vision of your souls, disclose in full view the fountain of iniquity within you, and dispose you all to seek his face and favor with full purpose of heart.

2. *Think of how many delusive charms are daily offering themselves to your eyes*, that you may not walk heedlessly in sight of them. Remember, O young man, that you are walking in the midst of snares, and that your situation is highly dangerous. The most mortal poisons are sometimes mixed with the sweetest dainties, and the most dangerous enemies of our souls frequently accost us in the fairest forms. The fruit of which our first parents tasted, presented a pleasing appearance to the eye; but, however engaging and attractive, it was filled with the poison of death. By walking in the sight of their eyes, they were led to transgress the divine commandment, and brought death upon themselves and all their posterity. It is sometimes the case, that young people desire to witness scenes in which they would shudder to be engaged. This is always a dangerous experiment, and is not unfrequently productive of the worst consequences. By beholding, we are transformed into the same image, and finally led to the repetition of the same scenes.

“Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

Seriously consider how many, within the compass of your own knowledge, have been ruined by the blandishment of the senses. And perhaps some of these individuals, in other respects, were persons of no contemptible character; and had they, like David, made a covenant with their eyes, they might have escaped the fatal ruin which finally overtook them. Do not walk in the sight of your eyes, lest you be like the bird, which, struck by some gay and promising appearances, hastens to the snare, not knowing that it is for its life. But turn off thine eyes from beholding vanity, and by faith look into the eternal world, and it will secure you from the power of temptation. Behold and copy the bright example of Jesus Christ, and it will lead you to the paradise of God.

3. Let me remind you, that *the eternal God is the inspector of all your conduct*. This is strongly implied, although it is not expressed in the text. The Scriptures teach us that, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*. They not only run to and fro through the whole earth, but they are in every place

at the same time. How terrible are the words of Elihu! *His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.* He not merely observes the ways of man, by which is commonly meant his outward deportment, but he looks immediately into the heart, and sees the inward frame and tendency of the soul; *for all things are open and naked to the eyes of him with whom we have to do, even the thoughts and intents of the heart.* *Man looketh on the outward appearance,* said Samuel, *but the Lord looketh on the heart.* He needs no one to give him information respecting the conduct of man; he looks directly on the heart, out of which are the issues of life. *Nay, Hell and destruction are before the Lord, how much more the hearts of the children of men.*

A firm belief in the truth of this doctrine cannot fail of producing a happy influence upon the young mind; it will be a powerful antidote against the seductions of sin, and a strong inducement to the practice of virtue. If the presence of a fellow mortal imposes upon us a restraint, surely he, who realizes the presence of the Judge of all the earth, must feel himself under a much greater restraint. Let us not forget that the eyes of Jehovah are constantly upon us; that he sees our hearts, and is well acquainted with all our thoughts. That, at the present moment, even while I am addressing you, he is a witness of all that is transpiring, and ponders the thoughts and actions of every individual with all the attending circumstances. O! young man, what improvement will you make of this evening's exercise? What advantages will you reap from the instruction afforded to you this night? Remember, that God sees and knows all things.

4. Think how *certain the judgment of God is, and your own personal appearance before him.* This doctrine is clearly and plainly taught in the New Testament. *We must all,* says the apostle, *stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.* It was a doctrine of the Jewish revelation. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.* And even it was taught by the wisest heathens.

Mark the expression, *For all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* Will bring thee, O young man, whomsoever thou art, that hearest me this night; to thee is the word of this salvation sent, God will bring thee into judgment. His trumpet will sound, his tribunal will set; thou wilt be summoned, and thou must obey. There will be no possibility of escaping or eluding the solemnities of that day; the hand of Jehovah will be strong, and he will bring thee before his judgment. Bear witness, O young man, and let thy conscience record it to-night, that I warn thee to be prepared for the solemnities of that day. As a watchman of God, I must receive the words at his mouth, and give warning to the people; and knowing the terrors of the Lord, endeavor to persuade men to

be reconciled to him. *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*

When this day will arrive, and by what means the dissolution of the world will be effected, are only known to him who *sees the end from the beginning*. But that the day of his wrath will surely come, and that the earth, with the works thereof, will be burnt up, are the solemn and unequivocal declarations of Scripture. It is the opinion of great and good men, that the earth will be dissolved by the operation of second causes; that it will either come in contact with some fiery comet, "rushing lawless through the void," which by the power of gravitation will be attracted to it, or burnt up by the operation of its own combustibles, which are concealed in its own bowels. In either case, the scene must be awful and terrible, beyond the power of language to describe. Should this frightful event transpire during the present age, how many in this assembly will be unprepared to meet it? How many of the young men, who hear me this night, would be found in their guilt and transgressions? But should not this event take place for ages of ages to come, it is no less certain, and it is no less sure, that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ! O then, young man, I beseech you to-night, by the mercies of the living God, by the solemnities of that great day, by the value of an immortal soul, to pause and consider, to repent and turn to God, that you may be prepared to meet the Judge of all the earth, at his coming; for remember he will bring thee into judgment.

5. This judgment *will be strict and awful*. *For all these things God will bring thee into judgment*; which naturally implies that it will be particular and final. Every particular act of our whole lives will be reviewed—every work and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil, shall be brought into judgment. You sometimes conceal your irregularities from your parents and masters, or others to whom you are accountable—you disguise them in such an artful manner, or form such excuses for them, as may impose upon man, and you value yourselves on the dexterity with which you do it; but be not deceived: God cannot be thus mocked. Every secret thing, and every hidden thought, shall be exposed to view, in the day when God shall judge the world—when he shall search the hearts and try the reins of men. He will marshal them in dreadful array, as a host of enemies armed for your destruction. Have you ever seen a criminal arraigned at the bar of justice? How he is confounded when the force of evidence bears him down, and the sagacity of the judge detects the idle and foolish pleas with which he flattered himself before the trial, and imagined that he should easily come off with impunity. Then did you see a striking emblem of yourself, a lively representation of your case, when you shall stand condemned before the bar of divine justice. Nor will God forget this present admonition, though you

may think light of these solemn truths now; but when they are realized, it will be hard to endure them.

It will be your final doom, and your eternal state will be unalterably fixed by it. After the decision of the great day, the filthy will be filthy still, and the unjust will be unjust still; and the righteous shall be righteous still, and the holy shall be holy still. Ah! how dreadful to be doomed to the shades of darkness and despair forever! Who can endure the thought?

Read over the sentence, as recorded, from the lips of him by whom it is to be pronounced: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Here the miserable sinner must dwell, forever separated from the presence of the Lord and the society of the blessed—forever banished from the hopes of happiness and the delights of felicity; here to drag out a miserable existence in devouring flames—here to be the companion of robbers, and murderers, and blasphemers, and Satan himself, with his legion of angels.

Alas! my heart is pained within me, and my bowels yearn over you. Methinks I see all the haughtiness of your spirit broken—see you pale and trembling on the brink of ruin, on the margin of that pit from whence there is no deliverance, and into which the flaming sword of divine justice is driving you. And must this be your fearful doom, your final end? Must the shades of darkness cover you forever, and the horrors of despair prey upon your soul forever and ever! *O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the salvation of perishing sinners!* It only remains that we conclude our discourse,

III. *With some plain inferences from the text.* And,

1. The young sinner has surely a great deal of reason to be thankful, *that he has not already been brought into judgment.* You have, indeed, the greatest reason to say, it is of the Lord's mercies that you are not consumed—that you are still in the land of the living—that you still enjoy a day of probation, and the means of grace. Some of you have been brought to the gates of death, to the very verge of the eternal world. Had the fatal blow been struck, had you been summoned before the judgment-seat of Christ, polluted in your own blood, and defiled by your own guilt, in what a deplorable state your souls must have been! Instead of enjoying the high and exalted privileges with which you are now blessed, instead of sitting under the droppings of the divine sanctuary, you would be now lifting up your fruitless cries in hopeless despair. But, blessed be God, you are still living, and favored with the means of grace. You are now receiving line upon line, and precept upon precept—here much and there much. The hope of the gospel is now set before you, and you are invited to embrace it. Jesus Christ, in all his bleeding beauty, is held up before you, manifesting that love which many waters could not quench, nor many



floods drown. O young man, look yonder, and see your Saviour stretched upon the cross! See the summit of Calvary dyed in his blood! See all nature convulsed in agony, at the tragic scene! And shall you alone, for whom the Saviour died, remain unmoved? Shall the summit of Calvary be dyed in vain? Does the cross of Christ find no attractions in you? Are the groans, and agonies, and tears of a dying Saviour, all nothing to you? Better for that man, who despises and rejects the Redeemer, had the day that gave him birth been blotted out—had the earth, before this period, opened its mouth and swallowed him up. Where much is given, much is required. We hope better things of you, and things accompanying salvation. After so long a time as to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. The Lord is still waiting, that he may be gracious. He rises from his throne, and stretches out the golden sceptre to the youth who hear me to-night, that the penitent may touch it and live. Who will accept of pardon to-night, upon the terms of the gospel? The Saviour has sent forth his invitation to all, and declared that he who cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out. Venture near him, penitent soul, and you shall find peace and pardon in his name, and be made to rejoice in the riches of his grace.

2. We may further infer, from what we have been hearing, that *the gospel of the blessed Jesus gives us very great advantages for reclaiming young persons from the snares of sensuality and ruin.* The text abundantly intimates the importance of these considerations, which are drawn from the final judgment. The certainty and impartiality of this judgment, and the solemnities attending it, are clearly revealed in the Scriptures. It is certain that nothing can be more directly calculated to move the springs of action in the breast of man, than this important, this all engrossing subject. No scenes so grand, so august, so imposing, can ever transpire before the eyes of man, as those of the day of judgment. The revolution of nations, and the fate of kingdoms dwindle into insignificance, when compared to the awful decisions of this day. Many considerations conspire to increase its solemnities, and augment its grandeur. It shall be ushered in with the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of the archangel. The signal shall be heard by the millions that sleep in death—charnel-houses shall rattle, tombs burst, and graves be opened—the very dust on which we tread shall be crawling into life and motion—the sea shall cast up its dead, and roll on the majestic wave its living forms to the shore—the living shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and all shall be caught up into the regions of the air—nature shall break her ponderous chains, and the laws which have preserved the world in order, and beauty, and regularity, will be dissolved—the succession of day and night shall cease—the sun shall be darkened, and the moon turned to blood—the stars of heaven shall fall from their places, and rush lawless through the mighty void—the crash of

worlds, like the peals of seven-fold thunder, shall follow in quick succession—the magazines of God, which are concealed in the bowels of the earth, shall take fire—this mighty globe shall become one living volcano, and the columns of smoke, and rivers of burning lava, shall be poured forth from a thousand craters—the earth, and the works thereof, shall be burned up—the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll. In the midst of these august scenes, an assembled world shall be waiting in awful suspense their final sentence. What death-like silence pervades the countless multitude! What anxieties fill every bosom! Lo, the Judge descends in glory and majesty! He is clothed in fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel—the grand dividing line is drawn, by separating the righteous from the wicked—he proclaims, as when seven thunders alter their voices, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*—the wicked shrink from his presence, with the awful sentence, depart, depart, depart, sounding louder and louder in their ears. And shall this be the fearful doom of any who hear me to-night? Shall this awful sentence be pronounced against any of the youth who set under my ministry? Remember, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. O, young man, prepare to meet thy Judge, while it is an accepted time, and a day of salvation.

3. We may further infer, that *serious thoughts of death must be very useful to young persons, since judgment is so nearly connected with it.* It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this comes the judgment. But, for the most part, youth conclude that death is removed at so great a distance from them, that they do not feel the necessity of being prepared for it. This, however, is a mistaken idea. It should be remembered that but a small proportion of the human family ever arrive to manhood. Many die in the prime and vigor of life. Let us for a moment cast our eyes back upon the scenes of former years. Where are many, with whom we in the morning of life took sweet counsel? where are some, who were our former associates and companions, who gave life to the gay circle, and imparted pleasure to their friends? Did youth protect them from the ravages of death? Did it arm them to meet the king of terrors? No! the fatal blow was struck, and all their strength vanished; all their beauty faded at the touch of death. On what principles, then, do you promise yourselves long life? On what assurances is the great work of repentance and preparation for death delayed? Are any so foolish as to rest their hopes of eternity on the airy dreams of vain expectation—on the delusive hopes of youthful presumption? My young friends, with these awful and alarming prospects before you, how can you banish the subject of death from your minds? How can you give sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids, till you have devoted yourselves unreservedly to God? till you have entered into a covenant

with the Almighty to serve him with your bodies and spirits, which are his? May these reflections sink deep into the hearts of all the youth who hear me to-night, and be the means of directing your feet into the way of light, life, and peace.

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#### DISCOURSE IV.

##### *On the Nature, Introduction, and Progress of Christian Perfection in the Heart and Life of a Believer.*

“That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.”—John iii., 6.

THE nature of Christian perfection, although clearly and fully taught in the Bible, is not very well understood, and but seldom inculcated. Even those who have written upon the subject, appear to have but confused and indefinite ideas respecting it; their minds are full of confusion, and they have expressed themselves in a vague and indefinite manner, and too often darkened counsel by multiplying words without knowledge. We propose, in the discussion of this subject, to consider the nature, the introduction, and the progress of Christian perfection in the heart and life of a believer.

I. In describing the nature of Christian perfection, in order to prevent misapprehension, it will be necessary, in the first place, to state what is *not meant by Christian perfection*.

1. The perfection required is *not a perfection of knowledge*, even to the extent of our limited powers. It does, however, imply a degree of knowledge; for a state of entire ignorance is incompatible with the exercise of Christian graces, or the discharge of Christian duties. We must have a knowledge of God in order to love him, and we must possess a knowledge of his will in order to obey him. There are many things we can never know or understand, arising from our limited capacities. This is called, by moralists, an *invincible ignorance*, in which the will does not participate. But there is a wilful and obstinate ignorance which is highly criminal, an ignorance arising from prejudice and neglect. No man is obliged to learn and know everything which is capable of being known, for this is utterly impossible; yet all persons are under some obligations to improve their own understanding; otherwise, it would be like a barren desert, or a forest overgrown with weeds and brambles. Universal ignorance, and infinite error will overspread the mind which is utterly neglected, and lies without any cultivation. Christian perfection, then, implies a degree of knowledge, but does not consist in a perfection of knowledge, or of knowing all that can possibly be known. It consists more in a right use of knowledge, than in a possession of knowledge, abstractly considered.

2. It does not consist in *eminent native powers of the mind, or of the soul*. The natural attributes which every man possesses are the gift of God, and possess no moral quality. Men greatly differ in the strength and weakness of these attributes, but the most giant intellect possess no more holiness than the most slender intellect. All the native strength we possess, whether of mind or of body, are entirely the gift of the Creator. Some men possess powerful intellects, capacious minds, and are capable of taking a wide and comprehensive view of almost any subject; and, at the same time, possess weak and slender bodies. On the other hand, other men possess feeble powers of mind, and strong and athletic bodies. But Christian perfection does not consist in the height or shortness of our stature, in the strength or weakness of our muscles, or in the force or imbecility of our minds. We have no control over these native powers; they do not come under the direction of the will, and, consequently, possess no moral quality. We are praiseworthy or blameable as to the use we make of these powers, and not with reference to their possession.

3. Christian perfection does not imply *an exemption from infirmities*. Absolute perfection belongs to God alone. He possesses every natural and moral perfection in an infinite degree, and is, therefore, exempt from every infirmity. But all the powers of man, in both body and mind, are created and finite, and, therefore, defective. Everything which God has created is limited and dependent, and, therefore, defective; and, consequently, attended with many infirmities. Man possesses limited powers of mind, and, consequently, he must necessarily be fallible—he is fallible in his judgment, in his knowledge, and in his practice. He has infirmities both of body and mind, and will necessarily exhibit many defects in conversation and behavior. Some are very beautiful in person, and others are very ugly; some are very pleasing in their manners, and others are very disagreeable; some are very engaging in conversation, and others are very repulsive. Numerous infirmities will necessarily attend men of limited powers and capacities; and these infirmities will be greater in some than in others, even where there is no moral turpitude. But we are not to suppose that every infirmity is a sin. Men may err with the purest intentions—they may err from the want of information—they may err through attachment, or misplaced confidence. The exercise of the best intentions and the purest love, may lead men into extravagancies and difficulties, and may be the occasion of much pain and sorrow, where there is neither guilt nor crime. Christian perfection, then, is not a freedom from infirmities. Infirmities necessarily arise from our limited powers and faculties, and will necessarily attend us while our powers and faculties remain limited. A freedom from infirmities belongs alone to the Supreme Being, because he alone possesses every absolute perfection.

4. Christian perfection does not consist in a *freedom from temp-*

*tation.* While we remain in the world, we shall be obnoxious to temptation. We are placed in a state of trial for the wisest and the best of purposes; and while we have animal bodies and fleshly appetites, temptations will arise thick and fast on every hand. We shall be attacked by temptations without, and temptations within; and they will thoroughly prove and try the strength of our attachment to virtuous principles. But the mind may be sorely tried with fleshly appetites, and not sin. The Apostle James says: *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away with his own lust and enticed.* Sin does not consist in being tempted, but in yielding to temptations. A person may be tempted by Satan, or by the world, as well as by fleshly appetites, and yet commit no sin. All sin consists in the voluntary surrender of ourselves to evil concupiscence. If temptation is sin, then our Lord must have been a very great sinner, for *he was in all points tempted like as we are*; but the apostle declares him to have been *without sin*. It is, then, no sin to be tempted, provided we resist the temptation and maintain our Christian integrity.

5. Christian perfection does not imply a *freedom from the Christian warfare*. Our spiritual enemies are numerous and powerful, and will remain so while we continue in the body. He who imagines otherwise, will find himself miserably disappointed. This life is the school of discipline, where we are trained to holiness and purity; and we must not only wage war against the world, the flesh, and the devil, but we must maintain the conflict against them with unabated ardor, and unyielding hostility. In this warfare, all our Christian graces will be called into active exercise; and in this school of discipline will become greatly improved and strengthened. Armed with the panoply of heaven, and fighting under the Captain of our salvation, it is certain that we shall vanquish our spiritual foes; but we should remember they still live. They have been repelled, but not exterminated. In due time they will renew the assault, and although repulsed a thousand times, yet they will continue to harass us as long as we remain in the world. There is no safety in laying down our arms, or sleeping upon our post. We must maintain our watch, and be continually armed for the conflict, as long as life remains. There is no other safety or security for us, as long as we are within the reach of the enemies' arrows.

6. Christian perfection does not consist in *ecstasies and raptures*. We admit that true piety is warm and ardent, and is attended with a high state of devotional feeling. If we love God supremely, the spirit of love will overcome and subdue every opposite emotion, and will diffuse itself throughout the whole heart. And when this is the state of the mind, the heart will be warm with love, and a glow of generous and benevolent feeling will swallow up every other emotion of the soul; and this state of feeling will be constant and abiding. Not a few persons, however, have mistaken rhapsodies and ecstasies for the spirit of devotion, and have vainly ima-

gined, because they have been strongly excited, and continually excited, that they are, therefore, wholly sanctified. It should be remembered that excitement depends very much upon the state of the nerves; that some persons are much more excitable than others; and that the nerves of all persons are more excitable when enfeebled by disease, than in the enjoyment of good health. A high state of excitement, instead of being an evidence of full sanctification, is sometimes the result of weakness, either of body or mind, and is more a defect than a virtue. Too much excitement on one subject frequently disqualifies persons for the proper and regular discharge of important duties. True piety, instead of spending all its force on emotions, and passing off in ecstasies and rhapsodies, in shouts and praises, will lead its possessor to obey God in all things, and discharge every social and relative duty. It is a mistaken notion of Christian perfection, to suppose that it disqualifies a man to live on earth, and merely fits and prepares him to serve God in heaven. So far from this supposition being correct, true holiness qualifies a man to discharge all the relative and social duties of life more uniformly and faithfully. When every power of the soul is brought under the great principles of justice and equity, of truth and righteousness, the mind will be freed from a sinful prejudice and bias; and, consequently, every social and relative duty will be more easily, readily, and cheerfully performed.

7. Christian perfection does not convert men *into ascetics, and drive them into cloisters and monasteries*. Some have placed the essence of religion in a pensive and melancholy state of mind, which leads to seclusion and retirement. This kind of religion was very popular in the days of Origen, and continues to remain so still in the Romish church. But this is altogether a mistaken view of Christian purity, and has been perverted to the most vicious practices. Man was made a social being, and Christianity is a social religion. It does not call men out of the active pursuits of life, and drive them into seclusion and retirement; but calls them to holiness and virtue, and qualifies them for the right and full performance of those duties which are necessary for all Christians, and common to all states of life. When our Lord was in the world, he freely mingled with all classes and conditions of men, and did good to all, as opportunity presented. And he has styled Christians *the salt of the earth, the city set upon a hill, the light of the world*; and has commanded them to *let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works*; but how can this be done when their religion drives them into retirement? Instead of letting their light shine, they will put it under a bushel, and thus deprive the world of the benefit which they might derive from their pious examples and Christian efforts to benefit society. Christian perfection consists in the possession of those holy tempers, and in the performance of all the duties of life which Christianity requires. And if this be perfection, who can exceed it? And yet, what state

or circumstances of life, can allow any people to fall short of it? Let us remember, that Christian perfection is of a practical, as well as of a devotional character; and that it equally requires the regular discharge of social duties, as well as of devotional exercises.

8. The perfection required in the Scriptures is not that infinite moral perfection which *belongs alone to God*. God is infinite in all his perfections, and, consequently, infallible; but the attributes of man are finite, and, consequently, he is, and must necessarily remain fallible; he is wholly incapable of either the attainment or exercise of infinite perfection. Holiness, justice, and truth, essentially belong to God, and can never be separated from him. The Scriptures uniformly declare that these infinite perfections are unattainable by man, and that he is vile when contrasted with the infinitely holy and pure God. All created intelligences, angels as well as men, are destitute of the infinite perfections of God. All the writers against Christian perfections have assumed, as the true standard by which we are to be tried, the infinite moral perfections of God, and then have gone on to declare that no such perfection is attainable. But this is not the question at issue; for such a perfection no man contends, and the Scriptures nowhere demand it of us.

II. Having shown what is not Christian perfection, we proceed, in the second place, *to define and explain it*. There are many terms employed by the sacred writers, which either imply or express this doctrine. In the illustration of the doctrine, we shall not confine ourselves to a single expression, but consider the various terms which are employed by the inspired writers to express and enforce the doctrine. It is variously termed *perfection, sanctification, holiness, purity, (uprightness, integrity, sincerity,) love, and righteousness*.

1. Perfection, as the word is used in the Scriptures, signifies that *state or quality of a thing, in which it is free from defect or redundancy*. It is very properly applied to weights and measures. God said to the Jews, *Thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have*. A weight, which is neither too light nor too heavy, is a perfect weight; and a measure, which is neither too long nor too short, is a perfect measure. According to the Mosaic law, both the *priest* and the *offering* must be *perfect*, in order that the sacrifice might be acceptable to God; if there was a defect or blemish in either, the sacrifice was not acceptable. According to this law, a man in the enjoyment of good health, well formed, and entire in all his parts, was a *perfect man*; and so a lamb free from blemish was a *perfect lamb*. Moral perfection is also enjoined in the Old and New Testaments. *Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect*. The perfection here enjoined refers both to the inward dispositions of the heart, and to the outward acts of the life. When the heart and the life are brought into an entire conformity of the divine law, the holy will of God, the man, in the language of the Bible, is perfect. According to this

view of the subject, Noah is said to be a *just man, and perfect in his generations*, and to have *walked with God*. Job is also said to be a *perfect and upright man; one that feareth God, and escheweth evil*. And to the same import is the language of James: *Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*. By Christian perfection we mean, then, that the virtues proper to the new creature, which renewed souls already possess, are complete, both in principle and practice.

2. Perfect sanctification is an *entire separation from sin, and an entire dedication of the whole person to God*. And this is required of all the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul prayed that the Thessalonians might be wholly sanctified to God. His language is comprehensive, and very expressive. He says, *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole person, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The apostle here prays that man, who is a compound being, be wholly sanctified to God, in all his parts, powers, and faculties, and preserved blameless, till the coming of Christ. The language of the apostle can mean nothing less than an entire separation from sin, and a full consecration of the whole person to God, of how many parts soever it may be composed. To the same import is the language of the apostle in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians: he says, *Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. By cleansing ourselves *from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit*, we are certainly to understand a full and entire renunciation of all kinds and degrees of sin; and by perfecting *holiness in the fear of the Lord*, the cultivation of every Christian grace, and the practice of every Christian virtue. Every power of the spirit, soul, and body, are to be wholly consecrated to God, and employed in his service. This is the perfection of sanctification.

3. Perfection in holiness consists in an *entire conformity to the divine will, both as it regards the dispositions of the mind, and the obedience of our lives*. Holiness implies the absence of all evil desires and intentions, and the presence of sincerity and uprightness. It implies not only a freedom from sinful lusts and passions, but comprehends all those pious and virtuous dispositions which constitute a religious and moral character. Holiness is not only attainable in this life, but is absolutely enjoined by the apostle as a necessary qualification for heaven. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. The state of bliss we call heaven, will not be capable of affecting those minds which are not qualified for it; we must in this world gain a relish of truth and virtue, if we would be able to taste that knowledge and perfection which are to make us happy in the next. The seeds of those spiritual joys and raptures, which are to rise up and flourish in the soul to all eternity, must be planted in her during this her



present state of probation. Heaven is not to be looked upon only as a reward, but as the natural effect of a religious life; a life wholly devoted and consecrated to God; and such a life is perfection in holiness.

4. Perfection in purity implies an *entire freedom from all hypocrisy, and consists in what the Scriptures call godly simplicity*. Purity is the opposite of subtlety and duplicity; it denotes a freedom from base and selfish ends in the whole of our transactions with God and man. Genuine Christianity lays aside, not only all malice, but all guile and hypocrisy. It is not enough to be pure in words and in outward deportment, for all this may consist with inward wickedness. True religion has its seat in the heart, whence are the issues of life. God requires *truth in the inward parts* as indispensably necessary to the right performance of acceptable worship. Strange as it may seem, the duties of religion itself may be performed from very unworthy motives. Pride, ostentation, self-righteousness, self-complacency, may lie at the foundation of those very services by which we pretend to honor God, and may render them not only worthless, but hateful in his sight. Our conduct, also, towards man may, to all outward appearance, be very fair and honorable, and yet be full of dissimulation and craft. It is no uncommon thing, as all who are conversant with the world know, to see men, under the guise of friendship, aiming only at the advancement of their own interest. Such duplicity is offensive to God, and hateful to a true Christian. He that is an *Israelite in deed, is without guilt*; he both worships God, and serves men with *godly simplicity*. Purity of heart, in this sense, is beautifully exemplified in the Apostle Paul, whose ministrations had no other object than to advance the glory of God in the salvation of men. "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ." This integrity is worthy of our highest imitation, and we should all do well earnestly to seek for it, and reduce it to practice in our every action, both with reference to God and man. We shall, then, like the apostle, be able to appeal both to God and man for the purity of our intentions, and the simplicity of our minds.

5. Perfection in love consists in the *absence of slavish fear, and in the dedication of the whole heart to God*. True love to God is that disposition which lies at the foundation of all holiness and virtue, and this love is made perfect when we love God supremely; that is, when we love him *with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength; and our neighbor as ourselves*. And both the law and the gospel require this, and

the exercise of this love is certainly attainable. It is but the exertion of those faculties and powers which God has given to us, in the very direction for which they were given. And in this there is neither a natural nor moral impossibility. The exercise of this love implies the entire absence of all selfishness, and the perpetual presence and all-pervading influence of this pure and holy affection. It also implies a constant readiness, and a cheerful willingness to do or to suffer whatever God in his providence may require. On this account, *love* is said to be *the fulfilling of the law*. This love will bring under its dominion every susceptibility of the mind, every emotion of the heart, and every member of the body. It will expel from the soul all slavish and tormenting fear, for perfect love casteth out fear. If we are governed by the principle of love, whether *we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we shall do all to the glory of God*. To glorify him in our bodies and spirits, will be our first, our highest aim. We shall see God in all things, think of him at all times, and acknowledge him in all our ways. And such a character is *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*.

6. Finally, perfection in righteousness consists *in a constant and uniform obedience to the divine law, a ready and cheerful obedience to the whole will of God*. It is an exact conformity of our hearts and lives to the law of God, without the least imperfection. It implies the inward principles of uprightness and integrity, as well as the outward performance of practical duties. In the exercise of perfect obedience, there must be no reserves, no limitations, no exceptions; we must stop short of nothing God has commanded. He who obeys God perfectly, will no more *allow himself* in secret sins, whether of omission or commission, than he will commit the greatest enormities. Like David, he says: *I esteem thy commandments concerning all things to be right; therefore I hate every false way*—that is, I love the ways of duty, so that I would walk in them even if there were no reward; and I hate the ways of sin, so that I would shun them, though I were sure never to incur punishment. Perfect obedience admits of no fraud, no over-reaching, no deception, no injustice, no evasions; no equivocations in intention, word, or deed. It requires us at all times, and under all circumstances, to preserve a spirit of rectitude in feeling, in thought, in word, and deed; not by force or constraint, not for fear of the loss of reputation, or the reproach of civil society, or the peril of human laws; but to render a ready and cheerful obedience, prompted by the fear and love of God shed abroad in the heart. Such is the perfection of righteousness inculcated in the Bible, and attainable by every sincere and devoted Christian.

III. We proceed to show, in the third place, that the spirit of Christian perfection is communicated to a believer *in the process of regeneration*. *That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*. There are many terms employed by the sacred writers to represent that spiritual and saving change which is wrought in the heart of man,

by which he becomes a true disciple of Christ, and is prepared not only for the enjoyment of the presence of God here, but for his glory hereafter. This language, however, has been differently understood, and differently interpreted. Some have supposed that, by this change, nothing more is meant than the introduction of new light into the understanding, and an outward reformation of manners, corresponding to the new ideas which have been acquired. But, in opposition to this sentiment, we suppose this change includes the introduction of a new moral principle into the heart, the germ of purity and holiness; that, in this change, there is imparted to the believer a new life, a new spirit, even the spirit of holiness, as well as new perceptions. We shall now proceed to illustrate and enforce this doctrine.

1. That which the Holy Spirit imparts in regeneration, corresponds with its *own nature*. It has been contended by some, that in regeneration, no new principle of life and rectitude is imparted to the soul, but that it consists in a voluntary change and reformation of life, and that it is properly the work of man; that the true agency of the Spirit, in the work of regeneration, is merely to communicate light to the understanding, and present motives to the will, by which the sinner is inclined and disposed to reform and lead a new life; and this change of purpose and conduct are what they understand by regeneration, or the new birth. These are the views embraced by Pelagius, and advocated and acted upon by Mr. Finney, during the whole period of his revival operations. He (Mr. Finney) maintains distinctly and fully, in his published sermon on this subject, that the new heart which God requires, is created by the sinner in himself, by the strength of his own native powers, influenced by the motives of the gospel presented to the mind by the Holy Spirit; and goes on to give sinners directions how to accomplish this great and glorious work. According to this view of regeneration, the converted man has no principle or power of holiness but what every sinner possesses. The only difference between the two is this: the regenerate man exercises his native moral powers in the service of God, and the wicked man permits these powers to lie dormant, or rather employs them in the service of sin and Satan. According to this doctrine, a converted man has all the moral weaknesses and infirmities of a wicked man, and a wicked man has all the powers of holiness and purity of a regenerate man; for regeneration, as they understand it, does not imply any new life, or new spirit, or new moral power, but merely a change of purpose and conduct.

In opposition to these views, we maintain that regeneration implies the introduction of a new moral power into the heart. It consists in a change of the moral state of the soul, a renovation of all its faculties. It constitutes the sinner a new creature; not in respect of his essence, but of his inclinations, views, and habits. It is the introduction of a new and powerful principle into the soul,

under the influence of which its natural faculties are exerted in a different manner from that in which they were formerly employed; and in this sense *old things pass away, and all things become new*. Having received a new life, the life of God in the soul, its thoughts become new, the objects of its choice are new, its aims and motives are new; and by the introduction of this new moral power, and by this internal revolution, the external deportment becomes affected. The infusion of divine grace into the heart, like the ingrafting of a tree, alters the quality of the soul; so that, instead of sour and crabbed fruits which it formerly produced, it now yields fruit of the most excellent kind, acceptable to God and to man. The instrument of this change is the word of truth, and the agent is the Holy Spirit; that Spirit of God by which the world was made and reduced to order.

This view of regeneration is confirmed by the language of the text: *That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*. The plant will ever be of the nature of the seed that produced it—like will beget its like. The kingdom of God is spiritual and holy, and that which is born of the Spirit, resembles the Spirit; for as he, who is beget, so is he who is begotten of him. Hence, a true believer is said to be made a partaker of the *divine nature*, which consists in *righteousness and true holiness*. And when he is made a partaker of *this nature* he is then regenerated, and a new moral power is introduced into the soul.

When regeneration is termed a change from darkness to light, we are not to understand merely the introduction of new views into the understanding, regardless of any change in the dispositions of the soul. We may acquire knowledge by the mere exercise of intellect, in which there is neither good nor evil. It is true, that the process of regeneration is always commenced by the illumination of the understanding; but the terms, *light* and *knowledge*, as frequently used in the Scriptures, are not to be understood in a literal, but in a figurative sense. As *spiritual darkness* is not a mere defect of the understanding, so *spiritual light* is not the mere supplying such a defect. Each of these terms conveys a compound idea: the one of ignorance and aversion, and the other of knowledge and love. Hence, the former is described as *the blindness of the heart*, and the latter as *understanding with the heart*. The human mind is so constituted, that there is a kind of action and re-action of the understanding and the affections upon each other. We are affected with things not only by our judgment concerning them, but we judge of many things as we are affected towards them. Every one is sensible how easy it is to believe that to be true which corresponds with our desires and inclinations. It is on this principle that the decisions of the judgment are influenced by the temper of the heart, so far as they are virtuous or vicious. Of this kind is spiritual blindness. Men do not like to retain God in their knowledge. They desire not the knowledge of his ways. Hence, ig-

norance, in this figurative or compound sense of the term, is threatened with the most fearful judgments. The Psalmist prayed that God would pour out his wrath upon the heathen who *knew* him not. And the apostle declares, that Christ will come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that *know* not God. Of this kind, also, is spiritual light. *God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* When our Saviour gave Paul a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he sent him *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* This is that spiritual knowledge which is connected with eternal life, of which the natural man is destitute. Had the Jews possessed this knowledge, they would not have crucified the Lord of life and glory. The ignorance and corruption of the Jews were their great sin, and from these arose their great aversion to God and religion. Thus our Lord told them, *Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father.* And it is so with many among us at the present time; they have long sat under the preaching of the gospel, and been the subjects of keen conviction; but their aversion to God and holiness has kept pace with their knowledge, and they are now as far from righteousness as ever. Mere knowledge, in itself, is neither good nor evil, though it is essential to both good and evil; that is, it is essential to moral agency. If knowledge were obliterated from the mind, man would cease to be an accountable being. In every condition of existence, therefore, whether pure or depraved, he retains this in some degree; and will retain it forever, whatever may be his final state. From hence, we conclude that the Holy Spirit in regeneration, not only illuminates the understanding, but produces in the heart the spirit of holiness, which we have termed the introduction of a new moral power into the soul.

2. We remark, in the second place, that which the Holy Spirit produces in regeneration, corresponds with the nature of *divine truth.* Now, the nature of divine truth is such, that mere light in the understanding is not sufficient to receive it. Hence the apostle says, addressing the church at Rome, *Ye have obeyed from the heart that mould of doctrine into which ye have been cast.* The gospel is represented as a mould into which the heart, when it was softened like wax under the preaching of the word, was cast, and whence it received the impression of its excellence. This mould contains the image of God, which consists in righteousness and true holiness: and when the heart is melted and cast into it, it receives the impression of every line and mark which the gospel mould contains. Hence, Christians are represented as having the *truth dwelling in them*, their hearts being a kind of counterpart to the gospel. When the heart of a believer receives the impression of this mould, he becomes a *new creature* and a *new man*; he then obeys the truth from the heart. He loves the truth, and finds the yoke of Christ to

be easy, and his burden light. Hence, Christians are, with great propriety, exhorted to *put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness—and which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.*

That mere light in the understanding is not sufficient to receive the truth with the love of it, will appear evident by considering the nature of those truths which the gospel contains. If they were objects of speculation, mere light in the understanding would be sufficient to receive them; but they are of a *pure and holy nature*, and, therefore, require a correspondent disposition of heart to fully enter into them. The sweetness of honey might as well be known by the sight of the eye, as the real glory of the gospel by the mere exercise of the intellectual faculty. Why is it that the *natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, but because they are spiritually discerned?* A man who has no natural taste for poetry or music, does not perceive the beauty of either; so he who has no spiritual delight in the gospel, does not perceive its glory. In order to understand spiritual things, we must be animated with the spirit of holiness; and so to understand and love the truth as it is in Jesus, we must receive the impression of that truth upon the heart.

3. We remark, in the third place, that which the Holy Spirit communicates in regeneration, corresponds with the nature of the *divine requirements*. And what is this? Is it mere knowledge? Certainly not; it is a *heart to love God*. The language of the divine requirements is as follows: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked—make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your hearts.* The language of the promises is perfectly correspondent with all this, as they relate to the nature of what is bestowed in regeneration. *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.* This is what the law of God requires; and when these promises are fulfilled in the believer, there must be conveyed to him a new moral power, of which he was before destitute; and this moral power cannot consist in the mere conception of new ideas, or merely in any new determinations of the will; but must consist in a change of the moral state of the soul, by the infusion of a holy disposition into the heart, and by which all the powers and faculties of the mind receive a new direction.

4. That which the Holy Spirit, in the fourth place, communicates in regeneration, being the great remedy in our moral nature,

must correspond with the *nature of our malady*. And what is our malady? Is it simple ignorance? Certainly not. What then? It is the sinful bias of the heart; and, therefore, such must be our remedy. That regeneration is the remedy of our moral nature, and not the implantation of principles which were never possessed by man in his purest state, is evident from the corresponding language of the Bible—it is expressed by the terms *washing* and *renewing*; *the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost*; which convey the ideas of restoring us to purity, and recovering us to a right mind. Regeneration implies degeneracy and estrangement from God. The nature of that which is produced, therefore, by the one, must correspond with that which we had lost, and be the opposite of that which we possessed in the other. Now that which we had lost, was *the love of God and of our neighbor*. Our depravity and degeneracy consists in the absence of love; for the absence of love is enmity. Hence it is said, *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*. Now, in regeneration, this enmity of the heart is slain, and the heart is filled with divine love; and *love is the fulfilling of the law*. Love, therefore, comprehends the whole of duty; consequently, the absence of love comprehends the whole of depravity. Should it be said, *the understanding is darkened*, it is granted; but this is owing to the evil temper of the heart. *Being darkened in the understanding, they are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them, and through the hardness of their hearts*. There is no sin in being ignorant, any further than that ignorance is voluntary, or owing to some evil bias of the mind. And this is the case with wicked men, as it respects their not understanding the gospel. *Why do you not understand my speech?* said our Lord to the Jews. The answer is, *Because ye cannot hear my word*. His words did not suit the temper of their hearts; therefore, they could not understand them. Prejudice darkened their understandings, and blinded their eyes. And this prejudice arose from a sinful bias of the heart, which animated them in their opposition to Christ. Here, then, lies our moral malady; and, if the remedy correspond with it, it must consist in being renewed in the *spirit* and *temper* of our minds, and not merely in having the intellectual faculty enlightened.

To represent men as merely wanting light, is indeed acknowledging their weakness, but denying their depravity. To say of a man who hates his fellow-man, *He does not know him—if he knew him, he would love him*; is to acknowledge that the enmity towards the injured person is owing to mere mistake, and not to any contrariety of temper or conduct. The best of characters might thus be at variance, and continue their opposition for years. If this be the case between God and man, the latter is not so depraved a creature as we have supposed. The carnal mind is not *enmity*

against God, but merely against an evil being, which, in his ignorance, he has taken God to be. If sin originates in simple ignorance, then the removal of this ignorance is sufficient to render us holy, and it necessarily follows that there is no such thing as moral evil in the universe; for all sin is merely an error of judgment, arising from the want of proper information. So far as our actions are the result of involuntary ignorance, they must be free from moral turpitude, and, consequently, cannot be criminal. All criminality consists in some voluntary exercise of the will; but where there is no voluntary exercise of the will, there can be no criminality. These consequences are serious, and fatal to the doctrine that regeneration merely consists in the illumination of the understanding, and a reformation of life.

In the conclusion, therefore, upon this head of our discourse, we repeat that regeneration, as we understand it, consists in the introduction of a new moral power into the soul, even the spirit of holiness, by which the whole inward man is renovated in all the powers and faculties of the mind, and the whole person; spirit, soul, and body, sanctified for the service of God, and the performance of good works.

IV. We pass, in the fourth place, to consider *the progressive character of holiness*. The change wrought in the souls of men by regenerating grace, is the foundation of all their subsequent attainments in religion. In regeneration, the germ of holiness is implanted in the soul; and when this germ is properly cultivated, under the warning influences of the Holy Spirit, and the refreshing dews of heaven, the stem rises, the buds and flowers form, the leaves and blossoms open, the fruit is concocted and brought to maturity; when the soul, like a shock of corn fully ripe, is gathered to God. The new creature which is brought forth in the act of regeneration, is but an infant; yet it possesses all the powers and properties of a man in Christ Jesus; and by proper care, and suitable exercise and nourishment, will arrive, in due time, to the stature of a perfect man. Indeed, the Scriptures uniformly represent holiness as progressive. Not, however, progressive in kind, but in degree. The nature of holiness is the same in all Christians, whatever may be their attainments. Some Christians have doubtless made greater attainments in holiness than others, but the nature of holiness is the same in all. Holiness, to be perfect, must be progressive, if the powers of the subject of it are progressive. He is perfect in holiness, whose love, at each successive moment, corresponds with the extent of his powers. *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* I am aware that some have denied the progressive character of holiness; but this, if they understand what they say, seems to intimate that they are strangers to it.

1. In considering the progressive character of holiness, we remark that every duty, rightly performed, *prepares the heart for the*



*discharge of other duties.* It was a remark of the great and good Mr. Whitefield, and no man could have made the remark with more propriety than he, "That the more a man does for God, the more he may." Gracious dispositions are improved and strengthened by exercise. The chariot in full motion, surmounts hills of difficulty with much less effort than at the first outset. The truth of this observation is most sensibly felt in the exercise of self-denial, and in the influence of private and public duties. Every act of self-denial for Christ's sake, is a victory over temptation; and every such victory affords additional strength for a future onset. And as often as these victories are achieved, the soul is continually gaining new moral power, and resists the attacks of the adversary with increased energy and vigor. Thus, also, the spiritual and retired exercises of the closet prepare the mind for those of the family, and both have a tendency to fit us for those of the house of God. And when our devotional exercises are discharged uniformly and regularly, it will be the means of preserving and increasing the flame of devotion in the soul. It has been said, with great propriety, that a little religion will make a man miserable, but much will make him happy. It is by following the Lord fully, like Caleb and Joshua, that we enter into the gospel rest, and are prepared for every good word and work.

2. Every degree of holiness tends to an increase of spiritual knowledge, which, in return, *produces more holiness.* It has been a question much disputed, whether holiness leads to the knowledge of the truth, or the knowledge of the truth to holiness; but both are true. *He that doeth God's will, shall know of his doctrine*; and, *beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.* The influence of each upon the other, is as capital and interest in trade. Capital is a stimulus to interest, and interest increases the capital. The influence which humility has, for instance, upon a discovery of the mind of God in his word, and upon the increase of true religion in the soul, is beyond all calculation. *God will guide the meek in judgment; the meek will he teach his way. He giveth more grace to the humble.*

3. Holy acts tend to form and strengthen holy habits, which *constitute the highest degree of holiness.* In one sense, every person who possesses true religion has formed a holy habit. With him religion is not an occasional, but an habitual pursuit; he makes it the great and the chief end of his life. But the term is more properly applied to those fixed purposes and dispositions of the soul, which are the result of repeated exercises. God has so constituted the mind, that a number of acts of the same kind, whether good or evil, shall give to it a strong and permanent bias. By these unchangeable laws of mind, righteousness is rewarded, and sin is punished. Every exercise of repentance goes to form an habitual tenderness of conscience, and an abhorrence of that which is evil;

and every exercise of faith tends to a *life of faith* on him who loved us, and gave himself for us. The more we read the holy Scriptures, the more we shall imbibe their spirit, and be formed after their model. It is thus the word of Christ dwells in us richly, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. And here it is worthy of notice, that the general strain of the apostolic exhortation is directed to *habitual* religion; a religion seated in the affections, and regulating, at all times and under all circumstances, the whole conduct of the man. *Simplicity in giving, diligence in ruling, cheerfulness in showing mercy, love without dissimulation, abhorrence of evil, cleaving to that which is good, being kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality*—are all expressive, not of one or two particular acts, but a life of devotedness to God, and kindness to men. All the pious acts of a Christian are represented, by the apostle, as being joined together, and as supporting and sustaining each other; and all as flowing from the habit of piety in the soul. Hence, we are exhorted to *add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.* When these graces are continually exercised, they minister the one to the other, and fortify the soul against every encroachment of sin. And to whatever acts we are exhorted by the apostle, they are considered as so many steps in a race, each of which served to strengthen our piety, and contribute to the certainty of our success in gaining the prize.

4. Holy habits are friendly to a *life of communion with God*, by which the soul becomes more and more prepared for *the inheritance of the saints in light.* *He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* The union which has been formed between the believer and God, becomes permanent, and the intercourse uninterrupted. The mind is continually stayed upon God, and kept in *perfect peace.* When true piety is wrought into a habit, then *the peace of a believer becomes as a river, and his righteousness as the waves of the sea.* This is the state of mind in which *mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace embrace each other*—here *the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.* We have a beautiful illustration of this state of mind in the prophet Habakkuk, in which he gives us a most glowing description of his confidence in God, and of his resignation to the allotments of divine providence: *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my*

*salvation.* The same state of mind was attained by the Apostle Paul; he declares that he had arrived not only to a state of entire contentment, but gloried in tribulation, and even took pleasure in infirmities, in stripes, and in imprisonments, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Here is a state of confirmed habits of piety, and of uninterrupted peace of mind, arising from constant communion with God. This is the consummation of human happiness, and perfection of earthly bliss; a state of entire consecration to God. And this, my brethren, is that state of complete sanctification, of holy obedience, and of constant blessedness, after which we should be continually pressing.

(1.) In the conclusion of our remarks, permit me to urge upon you, in the first place, the vast importance of *a right beginning in religion.* If we start wrong in the outset, the faster we run the wider we shall stray, and we shall find it the more difficult to obtain the right path. If we mistake conviction for conversion, and an outward reformation of manners for an inward change of heart, we shall still remain under the power and corruption of sin, and shall be wholly unable to attain Christian perfection. But if we enter in at the door of the sheep-fold, we shall go in and out, and find pasture. The reason why so many are not progressive in religion, is for the want of it; they have never been united to Christ by faith and love, and by a spiritual insertion into him, as the branch is united to the vine; and, consequently, they possess no vitality. Having no connexion with Christ, the true vine, they bring forth no fruit, and, as dead branches, are taken away. Having no oil in their vessel, the lamp soon expires—having no root in themselves, they wither away and die, under the scorching rays of a burning sun. It is, then, of the first importance, that a true work of grace be wrought in our heart, and that on this subject we not only entertain correct views, but that we also experience the sanctifying and renewing influences of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts; and are thus fitted and prepared for the service of God, and for the enjoyment of his presence here and hereafter.

(2.) Consider, in the second place, the importance of performing *every act of duty with an eye to the glory of God.* This is strictly enjoined in the Scriptures. We are directed by the apostle, *whether we eat, or whether we drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God.* We should set the Lord continually before our eyes, and, at all times, and under all circumstances, so live and so act as will be well pleasing in his sight. This course of conduct will tell in the divine life. It is the means of accumulating a store of heavenly wealth, and of preparing us for the employments and enjoyments in another and better world.

(3.) *Finally,* permit me to urge upon you the importance of *progression in Christian holiness.* We have a beautiful illustration of the nature and importance of this doctrine, in a vision recorded in the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel. He measured a thousand

cubits, the waters were to the ancles ; a thousand cubits more, the waters were to the knees ; a thousand cubits more, the waters were to the loins ; a thousand cubits more, they became a river that could not be forded. The waters were risen, and they were waters to swim in. Now, if Ezekiel had not passed through all these distances of a thousand cubits each—had he remained stationary at the margin of the river, then the waters had not risen. But as he advanced forward, the depth of the waters gradually increased, till he found water to swim in. And so, my brethren, if we would increase in knowledge and holiness, we must not remain stationary, but pass on to the higher grades of experience. We must improve the graces of religion which we have already attained ; for it would be useless for God to bestow additional grace, while that remains dormant which he has already communicated.

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## DISCOURSE V.

### *On the Entire Sanctification of the Whole Person to God.*

“The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole person, the spirit and the soul, and the body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 Thess. v. 23.

SOME have doubted, and others maintained, that perfection in holiness was attainable in this life. One cause of this diversity of sentiment arises from understanding the terms used in different senses ; under such circumstances, the controversy becomes a war of ideas, and not merely a war of words ; for all must admit, who believe the Bible, that the doctrine of Christian perfection, in some sense, is true, because it is a doctrine which the Holy Spirit has seen fit to express in this very language. And this doctrine was enjoined and inculcated both by Jesus Christ and his apostles. It forms one of the most distinguished features of the doctrine of the gospel, and is interwoven into all its precepts and promises. It is clearly and fully expressed in the language of the text : *And may the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole person, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The apostle here prays, in the language of Dr. Scott, that the “very God of peace would sanctify Christians wholly, and in respect to their entire nature, as consisting of a rational and immortal soul, an animal life, with its various sensitive appetites, and a material body ; that every sense, member, organ, and faculty, might be completely purified, and devoted to the service of God ; and that thus they might

be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ." And such is the doctrine in which we believe, and which we inculcate. And having, in a former discourse, more fully explained it, and having also shown how the spirit of holiness is introduced into the heart, we shall now proceed more fully to illustrate and enforce the doctrine from the provisions, requirements, and promises of the gospel.

I. We proceed, then, in the first place, to show that God has made provisions in the gospel for the entire sanctification of his people.

1. That the gospel contains provisions for the entire sanctification of the people of God, is evident from its numerous declarations, that *this was the end proposed in the humiliation, sufferings, and death of Christ*. Jesus Christ submitted to the painful, shameful, and ignominious death of the cross, that he might be the means of removing both the guilt and pollution of sin. To this the inspired writers bear witness with one consent. *He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. He gave himself for us that he might sanctify and cleanse us with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present us to himself holy and without blemish. And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness.* These, and other passages of the same class, declare in the plainest language, that provisions are made in the gospel, not only for our *justification*, but also for our entire *sanctification*; and that one of the express objects of the humiliation of Christ, was to make this provision. The gospel clearly teaches that Christ had direct reference to our *entire sanctification* in all that he has done and suffered for us. Hence, the love of Christ in laying down his life for us, is proposed as a motive to influence our love and animate our obedience; and we are accordingly exhorted to *consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds.*

2. As a farther confirmation of this doctrine, we observe that *this is the end proposed in our regeneration*. Under the gospel dispensation, provisions are made for the regeneration of the human heart—the renovation of all the powers and faculties of the soul, by which a new direction is given those powers and faculties, in order that we may be wholly and entirely consecrated to God. That our entire sanctification to God is the end proposed in our regeneration, is fully confirmed by the uniform testimony of the inspired writers. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;*

*old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* This new creation is wrought in the soul, in order that the old life of sin might cease, and a new life of holy obedience be commenced; and such are the natural and legitimate effects of this saving change. *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments, and do them.* Whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. The language here used is explicit, and very strong and decisive. It fully and expressly asserts that the effects of this saving change result in an entire and uniform submission to God; in a consecration of the whole person, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, to his service. The entire consecration of the soul to God is certainly implied in the doctrine of regeneration; for how can it be said that a soul is regenerated while it remains immersed in sin? and to what purpose is the doctrine inculcated, if sin is still to reign in our mortal bodies? It is certainly declared in the Bible that the design of regeneration is, that, *being dead to sin, we might live unto righteousness.*

3. The truth of this doctrine is also confirmed from the fact, that *the Holy Spirit is imparted to believers for the very purpose of perfecting them in holiness.* The Scriptures declare, speaking of believers, that *God will put his Spirit within them, and that it shall dwell in them, and cause them to walk in his statutes and do them.* The Spirit of God is imparted to his people, that it may become to them *a teacher, a sanctifier, and a comforter.* By the communication of the Holy Spirit, the soul is filled with light, and holiness, and love; and by the operation of these heavenly principles, the mind is kept in *perfect peace.*

(1.) The Holy Spirit dwelling in a believer becomes to him *a Teacher.* The young convert knows but little beyond *the first principles of the Oracles of God.* He is, to a great extent, ignorant of *the deceitfulness of sin, the devices of Satan, and the wiles of the Devil,* whereby that subtle adversary beguiles us from the simplicity that is in Christ. Now, to remedy all these defects, the Holy Spirit is imparted as an inward monitor, who will fully fortify the soul against every attack of the adversary. He will gradually open things to us as we are able to bear them, and with increased knowledge he will give us *senses proportionably exercised to discern good and evil,* and this will *lead us on to perfection.* On this subject, the inspired writers have spoken with great clearness and precision; they declare that this powerful agency of the Holy Spirit is extended to every part of divine truth, and to the whole range

of Christian experience. St. John says, *Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* And he also declares that this celestial Teacher *shall guide us into all truth.* The testimony of the prophet likewise accords with these declarations: *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his goings forth are prepared as the morning.* And to the same import is the declaration of Solomon: *The path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* If there is any doubt still remaining on this subject, it must be dissipated by the following declaration: *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* God, then, has made provisions, under the gospel dispensation, for the perfection of his people in knowledge. It is the privilege of every true disciple of Christ, to know and understand his whole duty; and this is all the knowledge which is absolutely necessary for him to possess, in order to be perfected in holiness.

(2.) The Holy Spirit is also given to us to dwell in us as a *sanctifier.* Indeed, all the light and knowledge which he imparts to us as a *Teacher,* is in order to his work as a *Sanctifier.* Does he *reveal Christ in us,* so as to give us brighter views of his person, and a more comprehensive knowledge of his work and offices, it is that *we, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Does he further enable us to *comprehend the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know,* with progressive clearness and certainty, the love of Christ which passeth knowledge? it is that we may be thereby, *filled with all the fulness of God.* With increasing knowledge, he gives an increase of spiritual perception; and with that perception, a spiritual appetite; and with that appetite, a spiritual attainment; and this continues to advance, till *the soul with all its powers is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* Being filled with the Spirit, *he lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit;* and goes from grace to grace, and from victory to victory, *growing up into Christ in all things, till he arrive at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Animated with these holy influences, his heart will be more and more weaned from earthly things, and with more and more intensity be fixed on things above, till he is altogether *changed into the image of his God, in righteousness and true holiness.* This advance to maturity will be more and more visible to all around him; he will possess more solidity, more uniformity, more consistency. His principles will be more and more commended to all his associates, by their efficacy to *beautify the soul, and to adorn the life.* In a word, he will be renewed in *the Spirit of his mind,* and will become *an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men;* an epistle not written by any human hand, but by the Spirit of the living God.

He will be in himself, truly and fully, what the Scriptures emphatically call *a man of God*.

(3.) The result of all this is, that *in* and *by* the whole of this work, the Holy Spirit performs the office of a *Comforter*. Under this character, *The world knew him not, neither can receive him; but believers do know him, for he dwelleth with them, and shall be in them* throughout the whole of their earthly pilgrimage. It was the communication of the Holy Spirit as a *Comforter* on the day of Pentecost, which enabled the whole multitude of believers, who had just before been filled with terror, to *eat their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, blessing and praising God*. But through the whole course of their future life he carries on this work, revealing Christ more and more clearly to them, and applying the promises with sweet assurance to their souls. Hence, the word so applied is said to *work by the power of the Spirit of God*, and to *come to men, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*; and the Holy Ghost himself is called *the Holy Spirit of promise*, because in this way he makes use of the promises for their good. Thus he performs the office of a *Comforter* towards the people of God. He gives them *near access to God in prayer*; and in their supplications *helps their infirmities, and makes intercession for them, and in them according to the will of God*. He is in them a Spirit of adoption, enabling them to go to God with confidence, crying, *Abba, Father*; and *shedding abroad God's love in their hearts, he witnesses with their spirits that they are the children of God*. By these means he establishes them in Christ, and *seals them unto the day of redemption, and is within them an earnest of their heavenly inheritance*. And *in proportion as any believer's afflictions abound, the Holy Ghost will make his consolations to abound with still greater and more transcendent efficacy*. The believer is made a subject of that kingdom which does not *consist in externals of any kind, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

Thus the believer has dwelling in him, not merely the spirit of holiness, but the Holy Spirit himself, *filling him with all the fulness of God*. Under his enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences, is it not our privilege to know and do the whole of our duty? Here God has made the richest provisions to dispel our darkness, to sanctify our corruptions, and to subdue our fears, for the very purpose that we may serve him in sincerity and truth. In order to repel this argument, some have affirmed that these blessings were peculiar to the apostolic age, and are not to be expected by us. What, then, is the meaning of that interrogation, which St. Paul addresses to the whole Corinthian church: *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth within you? And, again Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates*. Hence it is evident, that this is a truth, of which we must not only have the



actual experience, but a consciousness, also, that it is realized in us ; and the man who questions it as a matter of Christian experience, has yet to learn the very first principles of the Christian faith ; for this is the promise which was originally made to Abraham for himself and all his believing posterity, whether of the Jewish or the Gentile world, even *the promise of the Spirit through faith*. Besides, the word of God has immutably declared, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. We can no more be Christians now without *the spirit of Christ*, than in the days of the apostles. If we, then, reject the doctrine of divine influence, we must also reject every degree of holiness ; for on the truth of this doctrine rests the very foundation of holiness—the introduction of the spirit of holiness into the heart. But, if we believe in the doctrine of divine influence, even the residence of the spirit of God in the soul, why may we not, under its powerful and efficacious influences, become spiritual—wholly resigned and conformed to the divine will ?

II. As a further proof of the doctrine under consideration, we urge, in the second place, *the requirements of the gospel*. These may be considered under three distinct heads, each of which furnishes an argument in favor of the doctrine under consideration.

1. The gospel requires *a renunciation of sin, and the suppression of every sinful thought, passion, and appetite*. We are exhorted by the apostle to *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. The language of the apostle is very broad, and includes the renunciation of sin of every character and description, whether of the flesh or the spirit. The apostle here seems to contemplate man as consisting of two parts, flesh and spirit ; and as sin resides in both, he represents it as defiling both. It is, therefore, distinguished into fleshly and spiritual filthiness ; the former assimilates us to the beasts, and the latter to that great enemy of God and man, the devil. Hence, our Lord said to the unbelieving Jews, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*. By *the filthiness of the flesh*, we understand all those sins which take their rise from fleshly appetites, and are acted by the body ; as uncleanness, intemperance, sloth, and the like. By *the filthiness of the spirit*, we understand those sins which are more independent of the body, and have their proper and legitimate residence in the mind ; as pride, envy, malice, wrath, revenge ; discontent, covetousness, deceit ; impenitence, unbelief, and numberless other evils. From all these we are to be cleansed. If one be retained, it will defile and utterly destroy the soul ; for God has said, *If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy*. We are required by the gospel to restrain both *the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of the mind*, as being hateful to God, and inconsistent with our high and holy calling. And in order successfully to resist sin, we must nip the poisonous weed in the bud—we must *check its desires*. A weight that may be easily

stopped when beginning to roll, will prove irresistible when it is running down a steep declivity. If we, then, would not be overwhelmed by sin, we must resist evil in its first risings; for no one can tell how far he will go, when he begins to fall. We are, therefore, commanded *to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts*. This is to be done without any reservation, for *if we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us*.

2. We are also required by the gospel to render to God *a perfect and uniform obedience*. An unreserved obedience to the revealed will of God, in whatever form it is delivered, is the Scriptural test of faith and love. It was enjoined upon the apostles to instruct the disciples into the whole mind of Christ: *Teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you*. The obedience which the gospel requires, has been very justly and properly divided into *positive* and *moral*. The first relates to the institutions of the gospel, which are to be kept as they have been delivered to us, without any modification. Hence, the apostle says, *Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remembered me in all things, and kept the ordinances as I delivered them unto you*. The latter arises from the relations in which we stand to God, and to one another. The great principles of moral obligations are perpetual, and know no other variety than that which arises from varying conditions and relations. These obligations, arising from a sense of right and wrong, seem to be implanted in the minds of men in general. And to this the apostle seems to refer when he says, *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*. It is the design of moral obligations to preserve order in the universe; and hence, they are enstamped upon our very existence, and come into operation as soon as we are able to distinguish between right and wrong. The moral law is, therefore, said to be *holy, just, and good* in every respect; and is by no means made void by the gospel, nor is one of its requirements lessened in any degree. To this law we are required to render an unreserved obedience in all the relations of life in which we may be placed. This was the rule laid down by the apostle, and observed by the primitive Christians, and to which every believer should be conformed: *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living*.

3. *Finally*, the gospel requires that, in the performance of this obedience, we should be animated with *love to God and to man*. God does not merely regard the external conduct of man; he looks at the heart, and requires truth in the inward parts. The gospel condemns all selfishness, and requires Christians to act from

higher and from more ennobling principles. It requires sincerity, integrity, and uprightness in all our objects, pursuits, and aims.

All its precepts are aimed directly at the heart. It regulates the lives of men, by inspiring them with right tempers and dispositions. It never addresses itself to their vanity, caprice, selfishness, or to any other corrupt propensity. It utterly discards and rejects every act of outward obedience flowing from one of these vicious and selfish principles. While the heart remains impure and unholy, all its fruits are regarded by God as evil. It is only the good man, from the good treasure of his heart, that bringeth forth good things. If we, then, would perform that obedience which the gospel requires, our hearts must be animated by supreme love to God, and universal benevolence to men.

Such are the requirements of Christianity. And this is the sum of Christian perfection: *Be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect.* Christianity cannot require less; for, should it require less, it must give license to sin, and be the means of defeating the very end for which Christ came into the world. He came into the world to *destroy the works of the devil*; but how can these works be destroyed, if the gospel allow Christians to live in sin? If the gospel does not require perfect holiness, then God must have discharged believers from their moral obligations; and what is this, but a universal license to sin? If God approbates one sin, on the same principle, he may approbate every sin. But God can no more approbate sin in others, than he can deny his moral perfections in himself. It is on the ground of the divine rectitude, that Christians are commanded to *be holy and to be perfect.*

Some, who admit of the perfection of the gospel rule, deny the ability of man to come up to that standard. But if Christians are unable to walk by the rule, it cannot be adapted to their state and condition, and this reflects great discredit upon the author of it; for, surely, he must be an unwise legislator, who enacts laws which the people are incapable of obeying. But man certainly has the natural ability to perfectly obey God. He requires but the exercise of those powers which he has bestowed upon us. He does not require any man to exercise the powers he has given to another. The moral law requires nothing but the right use of the powers every man possesses; and surely here is no absurdity, no impossibility. Others, who admit that man possesses the natural powers to be perfect, deny that he possesses the moral power. But I ask, to what purpose does God put a *new spirit* and a *new heart into a man*, if he is still to remain destitute of moral power to obey his commandments? To what purpose does God put his Spirit into our hearts, if, after all, we have no moral power to resist the motions of the flesh, and to *walk in the Spirit*? To what purpose do we *receive grace for grace*, if, after all, that grace is insufficient to enable us to resist that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good? If sin is still to reign in us, how can it be said that we are

*saved from sin?* It was declared of Christ, that his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall *save his people from their sins*, and that *his blood cleanses from all sin*. Now, I ask, what can these declarations mean, if, after all, the believer is still destitute of moral power to conform to the divine requirements? It is admitted, on all hands, that man possessed this power in a state of innocence. Now, if he possessed this power in a state of innocence, it is not reasonable to suppose that he possesses it in a state of regeneration? If, in regeneration, man is washed from the pollution of sin, and renewed in the spirit of his mind—if the Holy Spirit dwell in believers as a life-giving Spirit—then the believer must be in the possession of a moral power to obey God in all things.

III. But we proceed, in the third place, to show that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, *from the nature of the promises*. Perfection in holiness, is expressly promised in the new covenant, which God has made with his people: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them into their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* The same blessings are promised by God in the prophecy of Ezekiel: *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them.* The covenant which God has made with his people, he will faithfully perform; for he has said, *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips.*

The promises of God, which are given to believers, are very great and precious, and apply to every state and condition in life. Indeed, God has said his grace is sufficient for us, and his strength shall be perfected in our weakness. *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; walk, and not faint.* God has promised that the faithful and devoted Christian shall be *like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth, shall prosper. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.* To the same effect are the declarations of

Jesus Christ and his apostles : *Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The promises of God are full of efficacy, and are designed to have a purifying and transforming effect upon the hearts of believers. To this subject, the sacred writers make frequent allusion : *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* It is by the promises, that the great work of sanctification is to be carried on and perfected. And for the accomplishment of this blessed work, they are especially adapted.

1. For, in the first place, they present to the mind *the most powerful motives to action.* Who can contemplate the promises as recorded in the Sacred Oracles, and not feel his obligations to Almighty God so great as to outweigh every other consideration under the whole heaven? Does not God promise to *dwell and walk in us* as in his temple? Does he not engage to *be our God*, as much as if there were no other creature in the universe besides ourselves that had any interest in him? Does he not declare that he will both *receive us*, and act towards us, as the most indulgent father towards his beloved *sons and daughters*? And is not all this promised to us freely, even to all who will separate themselves from an ungodly world, and seek his face? Who, then, can contemplate these promises, and not inquire, *What shall I render to the Lord for all these benefits?* Who can have such a hope in him, and not endeavor to *purify himself, even as God is pure*? It is thus that Paul felt his obligations to the Lord; and it is from the consideration of them, that he urges us to an unreserved devotedness of ourselves to God; assuring us, that the mercies conferred upon us render an entire consecration of ourselves to him *a reasonable service.*

2. But the promises, in the second place, excite us to action by the *way of encouragement.* Should any one merely contemplate the greatness of the work assigned him, he would sit down in despair. "How shall I hope so to cleanse myself from all sin, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God?" But, in the promises, he finds ample ground of confidence and joy. "What! has God freely given to me his only-begotten Son, and will he not with him freely give me all things?" If an earthly father would not refuse bread to a famishing child, will not my heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to me in the measure that I need his influences? To what purpose are all these promises which he has given me, if he will not work in me that measure of sanctification which is necessary to their

complete enjoyment? But I find holiness among the most distinguished of his promises. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions.* It was on the strength of the promises, that the apostle offered up that remarkable prayer for the church at Thessalonica: *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole person, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Encouraged by such promises, I will not fear, then, to engage in the great work of *cleansing myself*, especially since God has engaged to work in me both to *will* and to *do*. *And if he work, who shall let it?* My weakness, so far from being an obstacle to him, shall rather be an occasion for the *perfection of his strength*.

3. *Finally*, the promises excite us to obedience by *actual efficiency*. The promises, as contained in the word, effect nothing; it is only as dwelling in the heart, and relied upon in the soul, that they produce any saving operation. Then, they are of necessity applied by the Holy Spirit, who works in and by them, and who, on that very account, is called the *Holy Spirit of promise*. When applied to the soul by him, they possess a buoyancy by which the mind and the affections are elevated, and placed on high and heavenly things. By filling a capacious vessel with air of a lighter species, it will ascend by its own buoyancy, and soar above the clouds; how much more, then, shall we, when *filled with the Spirit*, and born upon the wings of promise, rise in our minds and affections to the highest heavens! We are aware, that this illustration is not to be pressed too far; neither is it to be discarded altogether as fanciful, since our blessed Lord has said, that *his Holy Spirit in us shall be within us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life*. Here, the heavenly tendency of the principle within us is clearly and fully asserted; and the word by which we are at first begotten to a heavenly life, is the same word of promise which brings the soul to its full maturity of Christian perfection. *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.* And this is that glorious word which contains all the great and precious promises God has made to man. And it was

the abundant indwelling of these promises in the apostle's soul that filled him with the love of Christ, and constrained him to live unto his God and Saviour, as became a disciple of Jesus, and caused his *conversation to be continually in heaven*. And in the same proportion as they are realized in our souls, will be the sanctifying effects produced by them.

The promises, then, not only give us the strongest assurances that perfection in holiness shall be realized by us, but they also exert a powerful tendency to produce this result upon the heart and mind of a believer. Let us, then, be encouraged to seek for it; for those who seek it in the use of proper means, shall not fail of success. You cannot reasonably expect to obtain the end, only in the use of the means which God has provided. Neither are you to rest satisfied in the use of the means, without obtaining the end for which they have been instituted. Ardently desire the full sanctification of your souls, and firmly believe its accomplishment; *for the word of promise will bring forth fruit in you, as it doth in all the world*. Treasure up in your minds all the exceeding great and precious promises which, in Christ Jesus, are yea and amen—dwell upon them—plead them before God in prayer—declare to him your affiance in them—expect their accomplishment—limit not the Holy One of Israel in anything—bear in mind that with him all things are possible. Verily, if you will thus believe, you shall see the glory of God. The power of sin shall be destroyed within you—Satan shall flee before you—all the principalities and powers of hell shall be bruised under your feet. In a word, Christ shall be formed in you, and *you shall be changed into his image from glory to glory by the Spirit of your God*. Animated by these, your consolations shall be rich, your progress rapid, your victories secure, your success certain; and, in due time, you shall possess the full substance of all the promises in the complete attainment of God's perfect image, and the everlasting fruition of his glory.

## DISCOURSE VI.

### *On the Increase of Faith.*

“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.”—Luke xvii, 5. :

OF all the graces which adorn the Christian's soul, faith is the most valuable and important, because it gives strength and stability to all the other graces. By faith we live, by faith we stand, and by faith we walk; we also suffer by faith, and in faith we die. Indeed, faith is the principal subject of disquisition and encomium, in the New Testament. It is so important in the Christian scheme

of redemption, as to be considered equivalent to Christianity itself. Hence, the apostle terms the Christian religion, with all its doctrines, precepts, and institutions, *the faith—the faith once delivered to the saints*. In the discussion of this subject, we propose to illustrate the nature, degrees, and importance of faith.

I. We are, then, in the first place, to illustrate the *nature of faith*. *Lord, increase our faith. Faith is the medium of knowledge, which we derive from testimony, and should be carefully distinguished from sense and reason.* Sense is the medium by which we obtain that knowledge, which strikes immediately upon the senses. Reason is the medium of that knowledge, which we derive by reflecting upon the testimony of our senses, and by comparing one part of this testimony with another, making deductions by a process of argument, more or less long and complicated. Whatever, then, is proposed to the senses, must be something visible, palpable, and present; and whatever is offered to the reason of man, must be within the comprehension of the human understanding. But the province of faith relates to objects that are invisible, spiritual, and incomprehensible. Reason cannot receive anything incomprehensible, but incomprehensibility forms no objection to faith, provided that the testimony which commands that assent be clear and credible. We are not, however, called upon to believe we know not what, or we know not why; no—faith is so much an act of reason as to require that we understand the simple meaning of the proposition we are to believe, and likewise the grounds of credibility upon which it challenges our assent.

1. Faith, then, is the medium of receiving those truths which God has communicated by his inspired servants, which we receive upon his authority, which are not objects of sense, and would not be discovered or comprehended by reason. Hence, it necessarily implies a revelation; and nothing which is not revealed in the word of God is, in the Scripture sense of the term, an object of faith.

2. *By the term faith, however, we are to understand something more than merely a bare assent to some particular doctrine; for there is not any particular doctrine to which the most abandoned sinner, or even the devils themselves, may not give their assent.* In this sense of the word, St. James says, *The devils believe and tremble.* The true faith of the gospel not merely credits the truth of divine revelation, but approbates it as excellent, and accepts it as suitable. Assent is an act of the understanding only; but true faith is a consent of the will also, with a full concurrence of our warmest affections. It is called, in one place, a *believing with the heart*; and in another, a *believing with the whole heart*. In short, faith is a new and living principle, by which we are enabled to rely upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for all the ends and purposes for which he came into the world—a principle which, at the same time that it takes us off from self-dependence, leads us to purify our hearts from the love and practice of all sin. To such faith as this



our Lord frequently annexed a promise of eternal salvation. In his discourse with Nicodemus, he says: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 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. He that BELIEVETH ON HIM is not condemned; but he that BELIEVETH NOT ON HIM is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.* And in the close of the same chapter, it is added: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Not that there is anything meritorious in this grace, more than in any other; but salvation is annexed to this rather than to any other, because this alone unites us to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have acceptance, and by whom we are saved.

3. *This faith is a spiritual perception in the mind, by which it realizes the attributes of God, the glories of the Redeemer, and the economy of redemption.* It is the only instrument of connexion with God—the only point of contact with the invisible state. Faith discerns God as everywhere present to succor and support his people, by his *providence* and *grace*. It beholds myriads of angels, also, waiting upon God, and flying at his command, to execute his will, and to minister to his people. The chariots of fire and horses of fire were not more visible to the eye of sense, when God withdrew from the face of Elisha's servant the veil that concealed them, than they were to his master by the eye of faith. If we could only conceive aright of Elisha's views at that moment, we should have a right idea of the power and office of faith, and of the high privilege that belongs to every believer. Faith is, also, in reality that principle, by which, and by which alone, we obtain all spiritual blessings. Certainly it is that by which we receive the *forgiveness of our sins*; for nothing but faith will unite us to Christ, or interest us in his salvation. It is by faith, likewise, that we must be *sanctified*; for we can only be renewed by the Holy Spirit; and it is only in the exercise of faith that we can receive the Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Finally*, it is by faith that we must obtain *that inheritance, which God has prepared for them that love him.*

4. *Faith is a seminal principle of holiness and virtue; the seed by which all other graces are produced by a sort of spiritual vegetation, and from which they derive sustenance and growth.* The unbeliever has respect to nothing but earthly things: he sees nothing, knows nothing, cares for nothing, but what is visible and temporal. His hopes, his fears, his joys, his sorrows, are altogether carnal. So it was once with the believer; but it is now so no longer. By faith, the realities of the external world are opened to his view; he sees heaven with all its glory, and hell with all its terrors. Earthly

vanities flee away; and hope and fear spring up spontaneously in the mind, and move him to action. Thus, by the exercise of faith the believer overcomes the world, dedicates himself to God, and consecrates all the powers of his mind, and all the members of his body, to the service of his Maker. By faith he lives, by faith he walks, and by faith he perseveres to the end of the Christian race. While his faith continues strong and vigorous, he never relaxes; but *forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forward to that which is before, he presses on towards the mark of the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* He gives all diligence to make *his calling and election sure*, by adding to *his faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.* Thus, faith is the spring of every religious action, and the seed of every Christian grace.

5. *To this faith, and to this alone, is the justification of our persons in the sight of God annexed.* This doctrine is affirmed by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, where he is discussing the subject. He asks, "What shall we then say, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without work, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Here the doctrine of justification by faith, without works of law, is fully asserted. Justification, or the pardon of sin, is annexed to faith, not because it is the seed of holiness or spring of virtuous action, but because it is the instrument by which we lay hold upon the mercy of God as revealed in the gospel, by which our sins are pardoned. It also appears, from this prayer, that faith is capable of increase. We proceed to observe, then,

II. That faith, even when sincere and genuine, *admits of degrees. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.* The principle of faith is implanted, that it may increase. It is intended that the inner man should grow stronger and stronger, for it is to survive the outer man; and when this is fallen into decay, to remain a receptacle of the divine grace forever. The tabernacle is to perish, but the graces which inhabit it are to subsist and flourish forever; and these graces are sustained by faith.

1. Faith admits of degrees, as *to its extent.* The subjects of faith may be increased; the number of those truths apprehended by

faith, may be augmented. The sincere believer may, at first, have a very limited and contracted view of the Christian scheme, which may, in the course of time, be greatly enlarged by the perception of new ideas. These ideas are received by faith, and incorporated into the mind. Although, strictly speaking, this may be considered an increase of knowledge, yet it gives to faith a wider scope, and furnishes new food for the soul. At first, the ideas of a believer are but few, and these perhaps confused; but as faith comprehends within its grasp the past, the present, and the future, new prospects rise, and new scenes open to the vision of faith. By it, he perceives that the universe had no existence, and that it was created out of nothing by the word of God. By it, he sees everything upheld and ordered by the hand that formed it, and not so much as a hair of our head falling to the ground without permission. By it, he foresees that all the human race which have lived in successive ages passed away, shall be recalled into existence at the last day, and be judged according to their works.

But faith more particularly views the great and mysterious work of redemption. It beholds the plan formed in the infinite wisdom, goodness, and benevolence of God; and in due season, with gradually increasing light, revealed to man. It sees the incarnation, the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent into the world to save the chief of sinners. It views the descent of the Holy Spirit in all his miraculous and new-creating powers, to attest the truth of Christianity, and to render it effectual for the salvation of a ruined world. It beholds this work still carried on in heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ, as our great high priest within the veil, and as the living and life-giving head of his church and people. And carrying its eye forward to future ages, it sees the Redeemer's kingdom fully established, and every subject of his empire seated with him upon his throne of glory. Thus, faith increases its sphere of action, and by the acquisition of new ideas, sees things in a clearer light, and the mind is led to embrace them with a firmer grasp.

2. Faith may also be increased in *the augmentation of its strength and intensity*, as well as in addition to its knowledge, or enlargement of its creed. The weakest faith, if truly sincere, will bring us to God with reverence and humility, and will make us urgent with him to bestow upon us his benefits. Nor shall we regard any trouble in seeking him, provided that we at last obtain the desired blessing; but if our *hope be deferred, it will make our heart sick*. We shall become impatient, if the pardon which we seek be not instantly sealed upon our consciences, or the victory we solicit be suspended for a time in dubious conflict. We shall be ready to dictate to God both the time and manner of his interference, and to limit his powers according to our own narrow apprehensions of them. But, by an increase of faith, we shall rest more simply on his declarations and promises. We shall not, like Zecha-

riah, want a sign to confirm them; or, like Rebecca, use sinful means of hastening their accomplishment. We shall be willing to let him work in his own way. Though we see not his word accomplished, nor know in what way it shall be fulfilled, yet we shall be satisfied and content to wait till he shall clear up to us what is dark and intricate. Thus, a strong and vigorous faith will perceive things clearly, and feel them forcibly; and hence it will be the means of expelling doubts, and of disposing the soul to possess itself in patience under delays, confiding in the power and faithfulness of him who has promised. The Christian who has arrived at the full assurance of faith, is not staggered at any of the promises of God, but gives him glory for his faithfulness and omnipotence.

3. One great employment of the apostles, in the discharge of their ministerial office, was to augment and strengthen this divine principle in the hearts of believers; more fully to confirm their belief in the truths they had received and acknowledged, and to *perfect that which was lacking in their faith*. And, indeed, this should still be one great object of the Christian ministry; for, where the faith of a church is languid, and her members full of doubts and fears, she will be powerless; all her efforts will be marked by weakness and imbecility. Hence, the importance of cultivating a strong and vigorous faith; a faith that will sustain the soul under the sharpest trials, and that will urge it through the most complicated difficulties. No great achievements ever have, or ever can be, accomplished by a feeble and slender faith. It should, however, be remembered, that the principle of faith will, of necessity, be always weaker than that of sight. The strongest conviction we can attain in this world of invisible realities and spiritual truths, will be far short of that we shall attain in the world of glory; but it is impossible to say, how near our faith may approach to vision—how near we may live to heaven. Genuine believers, who improve the means of grace, and are obedient to the manifestations of duty, are continually advancing to a more complete acquaintance and familiarity with the heavenly world; and none can say they have attained the most perfect and realizing degree of faith, which, even here, it is possible to enjoy.

4. The subjects of faith are of two kinds—existing objects and future promises; and in reference to *both these*, faith is capable of increase. The attributes of God, the glories of the Redeemer, and the economy of redemption, may all be rendered more habitually present, more visible and palpable to the mind. The happiness of a future state may also become so clearly revealed to our faith, that, though the hope of future good must necessarily be inferior to the possession, it shall far exceed and transcend the highest present enjoyments we can here possess. Thus, faith presents these objects to the mind, not only *as true*, but *as good*, *as desirable*, and *as promised*; and it so apprehends them, as to give them an *actual*

*subsistence in the soul.* These things, as far as they are good, and future, are the objects of hope ; and, therefore, as we might suppose, unpossessed. But, though future, they are made present by the exercise of faith ; and, though only hoped for, are actually enjoyed. This is a wonderful property of faith. Consolations, victories, triumphs, glory, though remote in ultimate experience, are by anticipation rendered present ; so that the first fruits, the pledge, the earnest, the foretaste, are in the actual possession ; and while the grapes of Eschol assure the soul of the final possession of its inheritance, the views of Pisgah transport it thither, and enable it to realize its most enlarged hopes and expectations. Such are the effect and influence of a strong and vigorous faith. How important, then, that our faith should be increased and enlarged. These considerations will lead us,

III. *To enforce the prayer of the text upon your minds, that you may be led to adopt it as your own.* And, in the prosecution of the subject, I shall derive my arguments from the advantages which an increase of faith will confer upon ourselves, and from the relation in which it stands to the divine glory.

1. The advantages of an increase of faith, as it respects ourselves, are two-fold ; effecting both our *happiness* and our *holiness*.

*First* : as effecting our *happiness*. It was one of the principal designs of Christianity to make men happy. The excellency of the Christian dispensation is displayed in the advantages which it connects incidentally with the prosecution of its ultimate end. The gospel is justly denominated good news ; it is glad tidings of great joy, and faith renders it glad tidings to us. Our enjoyments will have a constant relation to our faith ; the stronger our faith, the greater our happiness.

(1.) An increase of faith will deliver us from that *perplexity, which arises from an unsettled state of mind, with regard to the great truths of the Christian religion*. This is an affliction which embitters the life of many sincere Christians. Under a weak faith, the mind, at times, staggers at the truths and promises of divine revelation ; not that any Christian believer utterly denies them ; but their faith on these subjects is so weak and feeble, that it admits of many distressing doubts. And this is especially the case with some believers, in reference to their own acceptance with God. They are all their life-time, subject to bondage, through doubts and fears. The consolations of religion, with them, are both few and small. Instead of walking, they creep through life ; and instead of soaring up on the pinions of faith and love, they trace their way along through mist and darkness. Now, the best mode of rising above this affliction, is to cultivate the principles of vital religion in the heart. A stronger faith in the essentials of Christianity, will produce a settlement of mind, respecting abstruser and more difficult points, which disputation will never afford.

(2.) An increase of this divine principle will also *relieve us from*

*anxiety respecting our personal safety.* It is the nature of light, not only to manifest the existence of other things, but to manifest itself. At the dawn of day, while the light is extremely feeble, its very existence may appear questionable. The limit which divides light from darkness is so slight and indefinite, that we are in doubt whether to call it night or morning ; but the increasing power of the light evinces its genuine nature, and while it reveals other objects, removes all uncertainty respecting itself. So, a believer may be so full of doubts and fears, arising from the darkness of his mind, as to question his acceptance with God ; but an increase of faith will remove this darkness and disperse these doubts, and thus he will be enabled to judge of his true character and condition. Again, it may be very difficult to distinguish the grain of mustard-seed, while in the state of seed, or in the early stages of vegetation, from the other small seeds ; but when it grows up into a plant, puts forth its stems, and becomes the largest of herbs, all doubts respecting its nature is expelled. The faith of a Christian, in like manner, discovers its genuineness by its growth, and the increase of its power over the mind produces an increased conviction of its existence. Under its fostering influences the mind becomes established, those distracting doubts and fears removed, and the Christian goes forward to a possession of the full assurance of faith.

(3.) The more we see of God in Christ, *the more beauty we shall behold, and the more satisfaction enjoy.* All earthly glory is only the reflection, or rather it is only a shadow of the divine glory. If, then, the contemplation of earthly excellence fills us with admiration, how much more will that of heavenly excellence ? If the charms of a perishable world, and the faculties of moral creatures excite pleasurable sensations of wonder and delight, how much more will the glories of the celestial kingdom, and the attributes of the Most High ?

We are interested and pleased in exploring the progress of society, and the policy of princes ; but how much nobler is it to trace the designs of divine Providence, gradually unfolded, amidst the changes and revolutions of human affairs ! how much more delightful to watch the development of his scheme of mercy from the first disclosure, to the final consummation of his purposes ! What subject can be more interesting, what theme more transporting, than the character of the Son of God, who was with the Father before the foundation of the world, and whose delights were with the sons of men ; whose appearance in our likeness was obscurely announced for the consolation of our first parents, prefigured by a multitude of types and emblems, and gradually declared with increasing certainty and precision, by a succession of prophecies ! What more interesting than to contemplate his mysterious incarnation, his holy and beneficent life, to follow him in his humiliation, to behold the agonies of his crucifixion, and hail his entrance into

the kingdom of glory ! If light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to behold the material sun, how much more ravishing and extatic to trace the Son of righteousness, and to be absorbed in the contemplation of his splendors ! Who would exchange this for any earthly knowledge ? Who would not exclaim with the apostle, *Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* How justly might he cry out, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He not only believed in the sacrifice of Christ, but rejoiced and gloried in it, which is the fruit of faith. The Christian, whose faith is thus increased, dwells in a calm and holy light, in the midst of a heavenly illumination, which infuses joy and serenity into the soul. It discloses to him the invisible world, it reveals the wonders of futurity, it unveils the glory of God, and breaks down the bearer, by which his soul is prevented from rejoicing and blending itself with the infinite Spirit. It removes the impediments to his intercourse with the blessed, it transports him into the very presence of the Eternal. He is elevated to the privilege of walking within the precincts of heaven, and to hear the multitude of voices ascribing *Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Such are the transports which result from believing, and such are the joys which arise from faith. As no stream can rise higher than the fountain from which it springs, so our faith will be the measure of our joy.

*Secondly.* But an increase of faith will have the most desirable influence on our *sanctification.*

(1.) *It will diminish our sensibility to the pleasures of sin.* As far as our gratification is criminal, it will destroy it, and moderate it as far as it is innocent. The joys of earth will appear too feeble, transitory, and inconstant, too worldly and unsatisfactory, to engage the heart which has tasted the fruits of this precious faith. Every man has his favorite pleasure. We are sensitive creatures, led by the desire of enjoyment, and governed by the pleasure we prefer. God has consulted this part of our nature, in making our holiness conducive to our happiness, and rendering the delights of piety far superior to the pleasures of sin. The Christian who has enjoyed the favor of God, and tasted of his love, has a new appetite imparted, which controls every criminal desire, and makes him *hunger and thirst after righteousness,* his highest delight and chief joy. In such a man the power and dominion of sin is controlled, overcome, and subdued ; he has crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.

(2.) *Faith brings the strongest motives of holiness into contact with the mind.* It is so important to the growth of holiness, that it is represented as the seed from which every virtue and grace of the Christian life originates. Faith is the only eye that sees God, the only ear that hears his voice, and the only hand that lays hold

upon his promises. Let faith be turned into unbelief, and every Christian grace would faint, and languish, and die. But while faith remains strong and vigorous, all our other graces will be in a flourishing condition. This efficacy is *natural*, inasmuch as faith has a direct tendency to produce and strengthen the other graces; and it is *constituted*, inasmuch as faith unites us to Christ, from whom, as the branches from the root, we derive supplies of divine help and influence. It is faith that lays hold of our eternal inheritance, and renders us indifferent to the calamities and afflictions of life: thus it produces resignation. The believer takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing that he has in heaven a better, and an enduring substance. It works by love, kindling a fire in the breast which grows stronger and stronger, and purifies the heart from all its pollutions. It works by hope, giving steadfastness to the soul, and opposing a shield to all the assaults of the tempter. *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ? And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

(3.) *By faith, our eyes are kept fixed upon Jesus; we are brought near to the fountain of influence, and receive out of his fulness grace, according to that measure of grace which he has received of the Father for us.* Hence, St. Paul could say: *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* It was faith in Christ Jesus that expelled out of him a life of sin, and imparted to him a holy and spiritual life. It is the office of faith to sustain and nourish this divine life in the soul, by supplying it with necessary food. Hence, it is through faith that we receive the bread and water of life. The more lively and active a Christian's faith is, the more closely will he be brought in contact with Christ, who is his life; and the more abundant will be all his necessary supplies. How earnestly, then, should you, my brethren, endeavor to increase your faith.

2. By the increase of faith, *the glory of God is promoted.* It glorifies God, by sanctifying the character of his people: *Herein is your Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* Thus your light will be made to shine forth among men, so that others, seeing your good works, will glorify your Father which is in heaven. The perfections of God are revealed in the lives of his saints; and they show forth his virtues by a well-ordered life, and a godly conversation.

Faith glorifies God, by renouncing all self-dependence, and all hope from any other source than his mercy. It makes us rich, yet consciously poor; it realizes the veracity and faithfulness of the divine character; it confides in his unlimited power; it leans on him in the dark, trusts him in all worlds, and takes his word for eternal happiness. It looks forward, upon his promise, to the possession of joys, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart



conceived ; it unites itself to the vivifying principle, which lives eternally, and gives all things life—to that power which will, in due time, call into existence a wonderful scene of life, beauty, and glory, which the visible world cannot contain. It attaches itself to the footstool of the divine throne, and feels itself firm amidst the shakings and convulsions of the universe. From hence, it appears how highly necessary is an increase of faith. The desire of its increase is essential to true religion. If you feel no want of faith, no desire for an enlarged and confirmed persuasion of divine truth, you are utterly destitute of vital religion. If there are any of this description now present, let me entreat you to beware of danger. If there are any who are desirous of increasing their faith, permit me, in the conclusion of my remarks, to recommend to you the most effectual means of confirming your faith.

1. The first is *prayer*. Our text affords an encouraging example. The apostles were successful in their application ; their faith was increased. Although, at one time, it was wavering and feeble, yet it was strengthened from above ; they became the ministers of mercy to an afflicted and guilty world, and are now exalted to the regions of glory—to the very vision and presence of God. And our faith may be strengthened in the same way. The throne of grace is as accessible now, as it was in the days of the apostles ; and we are invited to come *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*. The Scriptures abound with promises and encouragements, and God is ready to impart the energies of the Holy Spirit, to increase your faith. *Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened*. *What man is there among you, whom if his son ask bread, will give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will give him a serpent ? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ?* One of the good things you desire, and greatly need, is an increase of faith. Approach God, then, with confidence, and pour out your souls before him. Plead with him, earnestly and fervently, for an increase of faith ; and I humbly trust you will soon find your faith to be springing forth with new life and vigor.

2. *Converse much with the objects of faith*. Mankind insensibly become assimilated to the persons with whom they associate, to the books they read, to the sentiments they hear, and to the manners they behold. If you desire an increase of faith, you should, therefore, study the Scriptures, and reflect upon the truths of religion. There is a holy infection, or, I would rather say, a sweet, a divine influence, in these contemplations, that will infuse life and vigor into the soul. That Christian is wanting to himself, who suffers a day to pass without searching the Scriptures, or who satisfies himself with a careless and hurried perusal of these Sacred Oracles.

It was a description of a saint, in days of old, which has never yet been cancelled.—God forbid it ever should be cancelled—that *His delight was in the law of his Lord ; that he meditated in the law of his God day and night.* The Scriptures are a receptacle of spiritual truth, an inventory of the riches of heaven, a divine register of the treasures of eternity. As a taste for literature is produced by studying the noblest works of human genius, so your moral taste will be purified, and your spiritual discernment improved, by the study of the Scriptures.

3. *Watch against all objects that would have a tendency to diminish your faith ; set a guard upon your senses ; shun everything that encourages the luxury, and increases the corruption of the heart.* There is nothing which obscures the atmosphere of faith so much as the sullen, dark, and polluting damps of a sensual mind ; even moderate and innocent gratifications have a tendency to diminish the influence of faith. To walk by sense, is directly opposed to walking by faith. Love not the world, seek not to be wealthy ; if riches increase, set not your affections upon them. Dread the consequences of sudden prosperity. Walk in this world as strangers and pilgrims, as sojourners, that have no continuing city ; this is not your rest—you cannot secure two worlds. Seek a better country, that is a heavenly country, a country out of sight. Be content to secure a building of God, when this earthly house of your tabernacle is dissolved ; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

4. *Wait upon God in the institutions he has appointed.* Never neglect the services of religion, nor the means of grace, but be diligent in attending upon both. In all the exercises of devotion, make it your constant object and aim to attain an increase of faith. In this way your doubts and fears will be removed, and your faith will become strong and invincible, and you will be enabled to triumph in God as did the saints of old. You will be enabled to adopt the expressive language of the prophet : *Although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord ; I will joy in the God of my salvation.* You will triumph in the celebrated strain of the apostle : *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth ; who is he that condemneth. It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## DISCOURSE VII.

*On the Existence of Divine Providence.*

“The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.”—Psalm xcviij, 1.

To reflecting men, the universe presents a scene of wonders. We find ourselves brought into the world without our knowledge, and without our agency. If we look around us, we behold the earth clothed with an infinite variety of herbs and fruits, subservient to our use, or administering to our delight. If we look above us, we behold the host of heaven waking in brightness and beauty; the sun ruling the day, the moon and the stars governing the night. If we cast our eyes over the face of the earth, we behold it peopled with animals of every form and size, all enjoying happiness suited to their several natures and capacities. If we attend to the course of nature, we behold, with wonder, the various revolutions of the year—the gradual return of the seasons—and the constant vicissitudes of day and night. While contemplating these objects, the human mind is led to the stupendous inquiry, who created the earth, swarming as it does with life? Who covered the face of it with verdure, and gave to nature her laws? Who governs this mighty universe, and carries forward the great designs of providence? For, surely, the universe is governed by regular laws, and the most significant marks of contrivance and design are displayed in every part of creation. Whilst thus we are employed, we behold in the heavens the glory of our Creator; we discover in the firmament the handiwork of Omnipotence; and we hear the voice that nature sends out to the ends of the earth, that all things are the workmanship of a Supreme and intelligent cause.

When we examine a watch, or any other piece of machinery, we instantly perceive marks of design. The arrangement of its parts, and the adaptation of its movements, to one result, show it to be a contrivance; nor do we ever imagine the faculty of contriving to be in the watch itself, but in a separate agent. If we turn from art to nature, we behold an endless number, and an infinite variety of contrivances; we see innumerable objects, replete with the most exquisite design. The human eye, for example, is formed with admirable skill, for the purpose of sight, the ear for the function of hearing. As in other productions of art, we never think of ascribing the power of contrivance to the machine itself; so we are certain the skill displayed in the human structure is not a property of man, since he is very imperfectly acquainted with his own formation. If there be any inseparable ideas between a contrivance and a contriver, and if it be evident, in regard to the human structure, the designing agent is not man himself, there

must undeniably be some separate invisible being, who is his former. This great Being is indicated by the appellation of Deity.

This reasoning admits of but one reply. Why, it will be said, may we not suppose that the world has always continued as it is; that is, that there has been a constant succession of finite beings, appearing and disappearing on the earth from all eternity? I answer, whatever is supposed to have occasioned this constant succession, exclusive of an intelligent cause, will never account for the undeniable marks of design, visible in all finite beings. Nor is the absurdity of supposing a contrivance, without a contriver, diminished by this imaginary succession; but rather increased, by being repeated at every step of the series.

Besides, an eternal succession of finite beings involves in it a contradiction; and is, therefore, absolutely impossible. As the supposition is made for the purpose of avoiding the idea of any one having existed from eternity, each of the beings, in the succession, must have begun in time; but the succession itself is eternal. We have, then, succession of beings infinitely earlier than any being in the succession; or, in other words, a series of beings running on, *ad infinitum*, before it reached any particular being, which is absurd.

From these considerations, it is evident there must be some eternal Being, or nothing could ever have existed; and since the beings we behold bear in their whole structure evident marks of wisdom and design, it is equally certain that he who formed them is a wise and intelligent agent.

Such are the proofs of the existence of that great and glorious Being, whom we denominated God; and it is not presumption to say, it is impossible to find another truth in the whole compass of morals, which, according to the strictest laws of reasoning, admits of such a clear and rigorous demonstration.

If it be admitted that the universe was created by an all-wise and intelligent Being, it must also be admitted that the universe is governed by the same Being. The same almighty power and infinite wisdom, which was exerted in the creation of the universe, must still be employed in superintending its operations, and in carrying forward the great designs of that creation. To illustrate and unfold this doctrine, will be the object of this, and the following lectures on this subject. *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.*

The superintendence and care which the Supreme Being exercises over creation, is usually denominated the providence of God. That there exists a Divine Providence, which superintends the affairs of this world and directs their course, has been generally admitted among the human race, in all countries, and in every period of history. Every altar that has been erected, every sacrifice and every prayer that has been offered up, afford a striking proof of this belief. So fully have men been persuaded of the

truth of this doctrine, and the sincerity of each other's faith in it, that in an appeal to the Divine Ruler of the world, by the solemnity of an oath, they have introduced it both into the most ordinary and the most important business of life. This universal conviction of men, of all ages and of all degrees of knowledge, from the most profound philosopher to the rudest barbarian, has, probably, been handed down by tradition from sire to son, and has never been totally effaced from any nation under heaven.

I. The truth of this doctrine is susceptible of the most complete proof *from the principles of science*, as well as from the testimony of revelation. If the world had a beginning, it must obviously have an end; and can be continued in existence, only, by the constant energy of that power by which it was first created. He, therefore, who acknowledges a creation and denies a Providence, involves himself in this palpable contradiction: That a system which, of itself, had not an original and momentary existence, may yet, of itself, have a perpetual existence; or that a being, which cannot, of itself, exist for a second of time, may yet, of itself, exist for a thousand years. The absurdity is obvious, and evident to the most uncultivated mind.

Should we, indeed, for a moment suppose, with certain theists, ancient and modern, that the *matter* of the universe is self-existent and eternal, and that the power of the Almighty was exerted, not in creating the substances, but in reducing the original matter from a state of chaos, into that beautiful order in which we see it arranged, the constant energy of Providence must still be admitted, as necessary to preserve the forms and continue the motions, which were originally impressed on the chaotic mass. It is a first principle in philosophy, that power cannot be exerted without a subject; and that nothing can act where it is not present. If, therefore, there be powers of attraction and repulsion, there must be a subject of these powers; and if matter, whether solid or fluid, be the subject, it cannot possibly attract, or repel, at a distance. Sir Isaac Newton calls the notion that matter possesses an innate power of attraction, or that it can act upon matter at a distance, and attract, and repel, by its own agency, "an absurdity into which, he thought, no one could possibly fall." From recent experiments, it appears extremely doubtful, whether any two atoms of the most solid body be in actual contact; and that they are not all in contact, is evident from the contraction and expansion which is produced by cold and heat upon these bodies. The truth of this doctrine is proved from many other experiments. Yet it requires a very considerable degree of force, to carry to a greater distance from each other the parts of a stone, or a bar of iron. By what power, then, are these parts kept contiguous? It cannot be by their own; because nothing can act where it is not present, and because our best philosophy has long taught us, that the atoms of matter are essentially inactive. Experiments, also, prove that it requires an external pressure of

eight hundred pounds' weight, on every square inch, to bring two solid bodies into apparent contact ; and, therefore, it follows, that they must be kept asunder by some foreign power. Every attempt to solve these phenomena, by the intervention of a subtle fluid, is vain ; for the question recurs, what keeps the parts of the fluid itself contiguous, and yet separated from each other ?

The cohesion, therefore, of the parts of nature, and that which is called their repulsive power, demonstrate, through the whole system, the immediate energy of something which is not matter, and by which every body, small and great, is preserved in its place. For, not to say that matter is utterly incapable of obeying any laws, in the proper sense of the word, the original laws of motion themselves cannot continue to take place, but by something superior to matter, continually exerting on it a certain force or power, according to such certain and determinate laws ; it is now evident, beyond a question, that the bodies of all plants and animals could not possibly have been formed by mere matter, according to any general laws of motion. And not only so, but that most universal principle of gravitation itself, the spring of almost all the great and regular inanimate motions in the world, answering not at all to the surfaces of bodies, but entirely to their solid contents, cannot possibly be the result of any motion originally impressed upon matter. For, though it is true that the most solid bodies, with which we are acquainted, are all very porous, and that, therefore, a subtle material fluid might penetrate, as some eminent philosophers have imagined, and operate upon them, with a force exerted internally ; still, it is self-evident that the greatest quantities of such a fluid could not enter into those bodies which are *least* porous, and where the greatest force of gravitation resides ; and, therefore, this motion must, of necessity, be caused by something which penetrates the very solid substances of all bodies, and continually puts forth in them a force or power entirely different from that by which matter acts upon matter. From hence, it necessarily follows, that the various motions, which are generally carried on throughout the universe, by which animals and vegetables grow and decay, and by which we have day and night, summer and winter, cannot be accounted for by any laws of mere mechanism ; but necessarily imply the constant agency of something, which is of itself distinct from matter. This moving power pervades the solar system, and is perpetually and actually exerting itself every moment, in every part of the corporeal universe. But the forms of bodies are preserved, and their natural motions carried on, for purposes obviously planned by wisdom. The power, therefore, which effects these things, whether it act mediately or immediately, must be combined with intelligence ; but power and intelligence, preserving the order of the universe, constitute all that is meant by a general Providence ; which is, therefore, as certainly administered, as the sun

daily rises and sets, or as bodies are kept solid by what is termed cohesion and repulsion.

As abstracted and metaphysical as this reasoning may appear, it has been admitted, not only by the best philosophers of Europe and America, but also by the philosophers of Greece, and by the Brahmins of Hindostan; who, as Sir William Jones informs us, "being unable to form a distinct idea of brute matter independent of mind, or to conceive that the work of supreme goodness was left a moment to itself, imagine that the Deity is ever present to his work, not in substance, but in spirit and energy." On this rational and sublime conception, they have, indeed, built numberless absurd superstitions; and what truth is there, on which the mind of man has not ingrafted marks of its own weakness? Few nations, however, have had philosophers equally subtle and penetrating with the ancient Greeks, and Brahmins of India; and, therefore, though all mankind have, in general, agreed in the belief of a superintending Providence, they have, in different ages and countries, admitted that truth upon different kinds of evidence, and formed very different notions concerning the mode in which the divine superintendence is exerted.

In the rude and unpolished state of societies, when individuals possessed little security and little leisure for the exertion of their rational powers, every important and significant appearance in the course of nature, became an object of wonder or terror. While men were in this state of ignorance, they did not see the universe as it is, a great collection of connected parts, all contributing to form one grand and beautiful system. Every phenomena of nature stands alone in their apprehension; they know it must have a cause, but what that cause is, they are ignorant. The appearances of nature are so complicated, and so various, it never occurs to them that it is possible for one being to govern the whole. Hence, arose the different systems of polytheism which have appeared in the world. Nature was divided into different regions, and a particular invisible power was assigned to each department; one conducted the flaming chariot of the sun, another wielded the terrible thunderbolt, and others were employed in diffusing plenty, and introducing the useful arts among men. Thus, although the various systems of polytheism, in general, taught the existence of but one Supreme Being, the Father of gods and men, yet they, at the same time, peopled not only the regions above, the air and the heavens, but they also filled the ocean, and the land, every grove, every river, every fountain, and every considerable town, with active but invisible natures. Thus, it appears that these various systems of polytheism are but different methods of accounting for Divine Providence, all of which are extremely similar. We have a very favorable specimen of them in the elegant mythology of Greece and Rome, which gave to every region of nature a guardian genius, and taught man

in the deep recesses of the forest, or in the windings of the majestic flood, to expect the presence of protecting and friendly powers.

Thus it appears that the doctrine of Divine Providence, in some form or other, has very generally prevailed among all nations, and in all ages. It, however, has had its opponents. The most ancient of these was Democritus and Leucippus. They denied the existence of a Deity—asserted that all things were mechanically necessary, and that thought and sense were only modifications of matter. This is Atheism in the strict and proper sense of the word, and the only form of it that has ever been consistently supported. Epicurus followed upon the same principles; but he rendered the system altogether absurd, by confessing the freedom of the human will; for if man is merely the modification of matter, he can be no more a free agent than a plant or a tree. He, however, to avoid the imputation of Atheism, asserted the existence of a God; but, at the same time, declared that he resided above the heavens, and did not interfere in human affairs. One of his maxims was, that “The blessed and immortal Being neither hath any employment himself, nor troubles himself with others.” Maximus Tyrus very justly observed, that this is rather a description of a Sardanapalus, than of a Deity. Sardanapalus was the last king of Assyria, and was one of the most iniquitous characters recorded in history. Some of the moralists of antiquity remarked, that they knew men among themselves possessed of active and generous minds, whose characters they valued more highly than that of Epicurus’ God.

Some of the ancients appear to have entertained the following strange notion: They acknowledged the existence of a Supreme, and of many inferior deities; but, at the same time, they supposed that there is a certain fate which rules over all, and is superior to the gods themselves. This fable was probably invented by the priests, and diligently inculcated upon the minds of the people, in order to excuse the impieties of their objects of worship. For who could be indignant at the immoralities of the gods, if it was believed that, in all their impious actions, they were the servants of blind necessity? The fact is, these men *did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so he gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; when their foolish heart was darkened, and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

The train of reasoning which has been adopted in the foregoing remarks, to prove the doctrine of Divine Providence, has been admitted by the great apostle of the Gentiles as correct. He declares, that *God made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in time past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* Though he gave the Gentiles no revelation of his will, yet he continued to govern them by his gracious Providence, doing them good in general, giving



them rain to fertilize their grounds, and fruitful seasons as the result; so that grass grew for the cattle, and corn for the use of man. These operations of nature were so regular and so uniform, as well as necessary to preserve the life of man and beast, they could not have been the result of accident or chance, but of an all-wise and superintending Providence. The heathens must have perceived that the rain descended from the clouds of heaven, and that their fruitful seasons depended so necessarily upon the sun, moon, and other celestial luminaries, as to demonstrate to them that the Maker of heaven and earth was the author of these good and perfect gifts, and that, consequently, He ought to be the object of their supreme worship and adoration. Thus, he is said not to have left himself without witness, for his providential dealings are the witnesses of his being, his wisdom, and his bounty; and thus, *The invisible things of God, even his eternal power and godhead, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made.*

II. Having established the doctrine of Divine Providence from the principles of science, we shall now proceed to confirm it *from the testimony of revelation.*

We are informed by the pen of inspiration, that in the beginning God created the *substance* of the heavens, and the *substance* of the earth. This substance are the materials out of which the heavens and the earth were successively formed. When this substance was produced by the energy of God, it was a mass of confusion and disorder. The elementary principles of which the universe is composed, was a vast body of matter, without order, arrangement, or distinction of parts; a vast system of indescribable confusion, and of nameless entities strangely mixed. This incoherent mass was called by the ancient Greek philosophers, *chaos*, and is beautifully expressed by one of their ancient poets:—

“ Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,  
And heaven’s high canopy that covers all,  
One was the face of nature; if a face,  
Rather a rude and indigested mass;  
A lifeless lump, unfashioned and unframed,  
Of jarring seeds, and justly Chaos named.”

When this congeries of elementary principles was brought together, God was pleased to spend six days, or six successive periods, in assimilating, assorting, and arranging the materials out of which he composed and built up, not only the earth, but the whole solar system, and established the laws by which it is governed. Or, to use the sublime and emphatic language of Scripture, *He laid the foundations of the earth; he bound up the water in the thick clouds; he gave the sea a decree that it should not pass its bounds; he set a compass upon the great deep; he stretched out the north over the empty place, and hung the earth upon nothing.*

The Scriptures not only teach us that God has created the uni-

verse, and established the beautiful order which reigns throughout the solar system, but they also declare that *all things are upheld by the word of his power, and that by him all things consist*. It is here asserted by the apostle, that the same Almighty Being who, at first, created the universe, in order to accomplish the purposes of the creation, exerts a constant energy in the preservation of its beautiful order; and as this energy is guided by intelligence, producing the most beneficial effects, it is regarded as a universally superintending Providence. In order to continue the effect, the producing cause must continue to exert its energy. The stream will not continue to flow from the fountain, if the fountain be dried up. All effects depend upon their causes; if the cause cease to act, the effect will also cease to exist. The revolutions of the heavenly bodies are carried on by the powers of attraction and repulsion. But what are those powers of attraction and repulsion? What are those centripetal and centrifugal forces, which are so strikingly evident in all the revolutions of the planets? Can this energy, whatever it may be, exist of itself? can these centripetal and centrifugal forces preserve themselves with unexpended energy? If so, they are not effects, they are absolute causes, and such causes as must be underived and independent, and consequently *eternal*; but no such causes can exist, because self-existence and independence belong only to the Supreme Being. All things, therefore, must exist by and through him. Every being, animate and inanimate, is entirely dependent upon him. He was the Creator of all beings, and he is the Preserver of all. And as it requires an exertion of the divine energy to produce them, so it requires an exertion of the same energy to preserve them. Every effect will increase or decrease, according to the increased or decreased action of the cause which produced it. And if the cause cease to act, though it may still remain, yet the effect will wholly cease to exist. Again, should the cause act disorderly, it will communicate disorder to the effect. If the effect continue to remain the same, as it always has been, then the cause evidently acts in the same way, and exerts the same degree of energy it uniformly has done: the direction is the same, and the force the same. Hence, we find that it requires the same force and direction to preserve the effect, as took place in the beginning, when the effect first became manifest. Therefore, we conclude that *all things are upheld by the word of his power, and that by him all things consist*.

The reasoning which has been adopted in the foregoing remarks, may be applied to all the works of creation; they continue to exist, because the same energy continues to act upon them; their order and harmony also remain the same, because the producing cause gives the same direction to each part, that it may accomplish the purposes for which the author of nature brought it into being.

God is not only the creator and preserver of inanimate nature, but also of animate nature. His providence extends to all the liv-

ing beings he has made, especially to man, who is the lord of this lower creation. *In him*, says the apostles, *we live and move, and have our being*. God is the fountain of life; it is his free and beneficent gift. It flows from him; he inspires the very breath of all animal beings, and endows them with the very principles by which, as means, those beings are preserved. He has adapted the lungs for respiration, and has given the air to inflate them. All motion, voluntary or involuntary, proceeds from him; and by his continued energy, the existence of every being is preserved. Every state of being has its proper attributes; and every kind of being, its peculiar advantages and privileges. Each, in proportion to the powers and perfections with which it is endowed, and the necessities of its state, share the solicitude and attention of its Maker. Man, who appears at the head of the creation, is distinguished by a variety of peculiar privileges. On him, the most affectionate regards of his God seem to be concentrated. The condescending goodness of the Supreme Being towards man, and his watchful providence over him, has filled reflecting minds with astonishment and gratitude. *What is man that thou shouldest magnify him, that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment. Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; the sheep, the oxen, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea.*

The providence of God is not limited to man, but extends to the whole creation. *God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle. I, behold I establish my covenant with you . . . and every living creature that is with you. The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* The providence of God extends even to the smallest objects. *A sparrow shall not fall on the ground without your Father; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

As God is the giver and preserver of life, so he, in his providence, has made the most ample provisions to support and sustain it. When we extend our thoughts through this vast universe, and consider the number and order of beings God has made, from the lowest to the highest link in the chain of the creation, we have a beautiful idea of Divine Providence, in supplying their numerous and multifarious wants. All nature is swarming with life; and this life, however diversified, is nourished by food suited to its nature, which is provided by the providence of God. *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth. He sendeth the springs into the vallies, to quench the thirst of every beast of the field. He watereth the hills from his chambers, and causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth. The young*

*lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. All creation waits upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season. What he gives them, they gather; he opens his hand, and they are filled with good. He hideth his face, they are troubled; he taketh away their breath, they die, and return to the dust.* Of these vast multitudes, by far the greater proportion of them secure only one meal at a time, which is capable of sustaining nature only for a few hours, and yet the wants of all are generally supplied. *Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn, and God feedeth them.* The providence of God is equally evident in providing food for man. God gives us as much food as can be reasonably desired, to promote the general happiness of the community. Such is the gracious provision made for man at all times, as fully to illustrate the economy and bounty of the Divine Being. He never gives less than necessary, nor more than is sufficient. His economy forbids men to waste, by giving them, in general, no profusion. His bounty forbids them to want by giving as much as is sufficient for all the necessary purposes of his creatures. By not giving too much, he prevents luxury and riot; by giving enough, he prevents discontent and misery. Thus, he does mankind good, by causing his rain to descend upon the just and the unjust, and his sun to rise upon the evil and the good.

But the providence of God more particularly regards man as a moral and accountable being. Mankind obtained very early notices of the divine superintendence, by special interpositions. In the history of the Old Testament, we have an account of the loss of paradise by sin; of the banishment of Cain, for the murder of his brother; of the translation of Enoch, as the reward of his righteousness; for the wickedness of the old world, and its destruction by the deluge, Noah and his family only excepted, who, by the eminence of his piety, found grace in the sight of God to become the father of the new world. When this new world revolted from God and sunk into idolatry, Abraham was called out to be the head of a mighty nation, which grew up and flourished, by a series of the most wonderful providences; governed by laws of God's own appointment, with promises of protection and blessing, so long as they should be obedient, and threatenings of punishment and destruction, if they turned away to serve other gods; which, in the event, were all punctually and fully verified. Here, we have a visible and standing evidence of a governing providence. The doctrine, then, is established upon higher authority than reason, and upon better evidence than the light of nature. God has revealed himself to men, as the governor of the world, the avenger of the wicked, and the protector of the good. It should, however, be remembered, that in administering the affairs of the universe, it is not the design of providence to render a righteous tribulation to moral conduct in this mutable state. This would have defeated

the plan of providence, and superseded the necessity of the day of judgment.

Although it is not the economy of Divine Providence to reward virtue and punish vice in this state of probation, yet God has frequently interposed to punish signal wickedness, and to reward illustrious virtue. Thus, in the early ages of the world, he often miraculously interposed, to show the nations that he observed their righteous or unrighteous deeds; that he had power to vindicate the honor of his laws, and to make examples, whenever it was necessary, for the correction and reformation of men. Miraculous interpositions were not intended to be permanent or perpetual, but the providence of God was not to cease. Accordingly, he has informed us that what, in the first ages of the world, he had done visibly and by miracles, he would do in the latter ages, by the invisible direction of natural causes. The twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, is replete with this sentiment. Thus, all the elements of nature are at his disposal, and become the instruments of the Almighty to execute his will. They are commissioned to favor the good with national prosperity, with domestic comforts, with safety from their enemies, with fruitful seasons, with a numerous offspring, and with an abundance of all blessings; on the other hand, to punish the wicked with national distress, with indigence, with slavery, with destructions and molestations of every kind; by war, by famine, and by all sorts of diseases. From all of which, it is evident that the most common and the most familiar events are under the direction of God, and are used by him as instruments, either for the good or for the hurt of men. Thus, while he is guiding the sun and the moon in their course through the heavens, while, in this inferior world, he is ruling among empires, *stilling the raging of the waters and the tumult of the people*, he is, at the same time, watching over the humble and good man, who, in the obscurity of his cottage, is serving and rendering him homage.

III. In confirmation of what the Scriptures teach on this subject, may be urged *the experience of all mankind*, which, in a greater or less degree, bears testimony in favor of the truth of the doctrine of a superintending providence. To illustrate and enforce this position, we need not have recourse to those sudden and unexpected vicissitudes which have sometimes astonished whole nations, and drawn their attention to the conspicuous hand of heaven. We need not appeal to the history of statesmen and warriors; of the ambitious and the enterprising. We shall confine our observation to those whose lives have been the most plain and simple, and who have had no desire to depart from the most ordinary train of conduct. In how many instances have we found that we are held in subjection to a higher power, on whom depends the accomplishment of our wishes and designs! Fondly we had projected some favorite plan, in the accomplishment of which, we anticipated great pleasure; we thought we had forecast, and had provided

for whatever might happen to intercept our plan; we had taken our measures with such vigilant prudence, that we seemed, to ourselves, perfectly guarded and secure on every side; but at length, some event came about, unforeseen by us and beyond our control, and which, although inconsiderable at first, yet turned the whole course of things into a new direction, and blasted all our hopes. At other times, our counsels and plans have succeeded; we then applauded our own wisdom, and sat down to feast upon the happiness we had anticipated; when, to our surprise, we found that happiness was not there, and that the decree of heaven had appointed it to be only vanity. We labored for prosperity, and obtained it not; it is sometimes made to drop unexpectedly upon us of its own accord. The happiness of man, depends upon secret springs, too nice and delicate to be adjusted by human art; it requires a favorable combination of external circumstances with the state of the mind. To accomplish, on every occasion, such a combination, is far beyond the power of man, but it is what God at all times can effect; as the whole series of external causes are arranged according to his pleasure, and the hearts of all men are in his hands, *to turn them wheresoever he will, as the rivers of water are turned.* From the imperfection of human knowledge to ascertain what is good for man, and from the defect of human power to bring about that good when known, arise all those disappointments which continually testify that the way of man is not in himself; that he is not the master of his own lot; that, though he may *devise*, it is God who *directs*; God, can make the smallest incident an effectual instrument of his providence for overturning the most labored plans of men.

Accident, and chance, and fortune, are words which we often hear mentioned, and much is ascribed to them in the life of man, but they are no other than names for the unknown operations of Divine Providence; for it is certain, that in the compass of the whole universe, nothing comes to pass causelessly or in vain. Every event has its own legitimate and determined direction. That chaos of human affairs and intrigues where we can see no light, that mass of disorder and confusion which they often present to our view, is all clearness and order in the sight of him who is governing and directing all things, and bringing forward every event in its due time and proper place. *The Lord sitteth on the flood. The Lord maketh the wrath of man to praise him, as he maketh the hail and the rain obey his words. He hath prepared his throne in the heavens; his kingdom ruleth over all. A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.*

Thus, we have demonstrated the truth of the doctrine of Divine Providence, from the principles of natural science, from the testimony of revelation, and from the history of man. The evidence is clear, conclusive, and convincing; and establishes the doctrine

beyond a reasonable doubt, or a successful contradiction. Let us embrace it with a firm and unyielding grasp; let it deeply penetrate into our hearts; and there let it live and flourish till the heart grows cold in death, and the immortal spirit wings itself away to the mansions of everlasting rest.

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## DISCOURSE VIII.

*On the mode in which Divine Providence is carried on.*

“The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.”—Psalm xcvi, 1.

HAVING, in a former discourse, established the doctrine of Divine Providence, we shall now proceed to illustrate the mode in which its operations are carried on.

1. The providence exerted by the author of nature over his works, is usually divided into two branches; a general, and a particular providence. By a general providence, we mean the management of the universe at large; by which the regularity, the beauty, and the order of nature are preserved, and by which animals and vegetables grow and decay. A particular providence chiefly regards intellectual, moral, and accountable beings, and extends to every individual of the human family. By this particular providence, not only nations rise and fall, but also individuals are exalted and abased, and all the hairs of our heads are numbered. The general and particular providence of God, however, are but parts of one great whole; they are links of the same chain. The general providence of God could not exist without his particular Providence; and his particular providence could not exist without his general providence. By the particular providence of God, his general providence is formed. He takes care of each individual, and, consequently, he takes care of the whole. On the particular providence of God the general providence is built, as a whole is made up of parts.

As it relates to a general providence, the world may be said to be governed, or, at least, cannot be said to fluctuate fortuitously, if there are general laws, or rules by which natural causes act; if the several phenomena in the universe succeed regularly, and in general, the condition of things is preserved, if there are rules observed in the production of herbs, plants, trees, and the like; if the several kinds of animals are furnished with faculties proper to determine their actions in the different stations they hold in the general economy of the world; and, lastly, if rational beings are taken care of in such a manner as will, at least, agree best with reason. By the providence of God, we ought to understand his

governing the world by such laws as these now mentioned: so, if there are such, there must be a Divine Providence.

As it regards *inanimate objects*, the case agrees precisely with the above supposition. The whole of that universe which we see around us, is one magnificent and well-regulated machine. The world we inhabit is a globe, which, conducted by an invisible power, flies with the rapidity of more than seventy-five thousand miles an hour, through an extent of space which sets at defiance every power of fancy to embody it into any distinct image. A large and flaming orb stands immovable in the heavens, around which this and other worlds, of different magnitudes, perform their perpetual revolutions. All these celestial luminaries, notwithstanding the immensity of the space they traverse, perform their revolutions with such admirable exactness, that we can calculate an eclipse, for years to come, without a moment's variation. The revolution of the earth round the sun, and upon its own axis, produce the expected return of day and night, and the regular diversity of the seasons. Upon these great operations, a multitude of other circumstances depend. Hence, for example, the vapors ascend from the ocean, meet above in clouds, and, after being condensed, descend in showers, to cover the earth with fertility and beauty. And these appearances are permanent and regular. During every age since men have been placed upon the earth, so far as our information extends, this astonishing machine has continued steadily to perform its complicated operations. Nothing is left to chance, or, to speak philosophically, to fluctuate fortuitously; but all are subject to regular laws, and uniformly obey those laws. The smallest bodies, as well as the largest, observe continually the same laws of attraction and repulsion. In the whole course of nature, all her apparent variations proceed only from different circumstances and combinations, acting all the while under her ancient laws. We ourselves can calculate the effects of the laws of gravitation and of motion. We can render them subservient to our purposes, with entire certainty of success, if we only adhere to the rules established by nature; that is to say, by Providence. The truth of this remark is fully confirmed in the operations of the tide, and the advantages which are derived from its ebbing and flowing.

As it regards *vegetables*, they also live and flourish, grow and decay, according to prescribed methods. Each sort is produced from its proper seed, has the same texture of fibres, is at all times nourished by the same kind of juices, digested and prepared by the same kind of vessels. Trees and shrubs receive annually their peculiar liveries, and bear their proper fruits; so regular are they in this last respect, that every species may be said to have its profession or trade appointed to it, by which it furnishes a certain portion of manufacture or of food, to supply the wants of animals. Being created for the purpose of consumption, all vegetables produce great quantities of seed, to supply the necessary waste. Here,



also, is a regulation by which the several orders are preserved, and the ends to which they have been appointed regularly accomplished. In the whole course of the vegetable kingdom, we see no fluctuations: *men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.* The vegetable kingdom, in all its operations, is governed by regular laws, which operate uniformly and stately, and are productive of the most beneficial results; which is conclusive evidence that these laws have been ordained, and are still under the direction of infinite wisdom.

With regard to *animals*, they are governed by general laws, as well as vegetables, in the structure of their form. In the sentient part of their constitution, they are also subject to rule. The lion is always fierce, the cat treacherous, the fox crafty, the sheep foolish, and the hare timid. Every species retains, from age to age, its appointed place and character in the great family of nature. All the various tribes are made and placed in such a manner, as to find proper means of support and defence. Beasts, birds, fishes, and insects, are all possessed of organs and faculties adapted to their respective circumstances, and opportunities of finding their proper food and prey.

*Man* is also subject to the ordinary laws which other material and animal substances obey, both with regard to the form of his structure, and the nature of his sentient powers, but is left more at liberty in the determinations of his actions. Yet, even here, things do not fluctuate at random. Individuals do indeed rise and perish, according to fixed laws, and nations themselves have only a temporary endurance; but the species advances, with a steady progress, to intellectual improvement. This progress is often interrupted; but it appears not to be the less sure at the long run, than even the mechanical laws which govern the material part of our constitution. Amidst the convulsion of states and the ruin of empires, the useful arts, when once invented, are never lost. These, in better times, render subsistence easy, and give leisure for reflection and study to a greater number of individuals. Tyre and Sidon have passed away, Athens itself has become a prey to barbarians, and the prosperity of ancient Egypt is departed, perhaps forever; but the ship, the plough, and the loom remain, and have been continually improving. Thus, every new convulsion of society does less mischief than the last; and it is hoped, by the assistance of printing, the most polished arts, and the most refined speculations, have now become immortal.

The world, then, is not left in a state of confusion; it is reduced to order, and methodized for ages to come, the several species of beings having their offices and provinces assigned them. Plants, animals, men, and nations, are in a state of continued changes; but successors are appointed to relieve them, and to carry forward the great scheme of providence.

2. Although the operations of what is termed a general provi-

dence may be ascertained and defined, yet it is more difficult to account for that providence which we call *particular*; for rational beings, and free agents are capable of doing good or evil, and deserving well or ill; and the safety or danger, that happiness or misery, of man, here, must depend upon many things that seem scarcely capable of being determined by Providence. Besides himself and his own conduct, he depends very much upon the conduct of other men, whose actions, as we naturally suppose, cannot, consistently with their free wills, be controlled for the advantage of another individual. The actions of numbers of men proceeding upon their private freedom, with different degrees of ability, as they cross and impede, or directly oppose each other, must produce very different effect upon men of different characters, and thus in a strange manner embarrass and entangle the general plan. And as to the course of nature, it may be very justly asked, is the force of gravitation to be suspended till a good man pass by an infirm building, or the towering fragment of a mountain? Add to this, that some circumstances appear absolutely irreconcilable. The wind which carries one into port, drives another back to sea; and the rains that are just sufficient upon the hills, may drown the inhabitants of the villages. In short, may we expect miracles? or can there be a particular providence, that foresees and provides for the several cases of individuals, without force frequently committed upon the laws of nature, and the freedom of intelligent agents?

In whatever way it is done, there is little doubt that something of this kind must necessarily take place. For, since the Deity is possessed of infinite knowledge, he must foresee and foreknow all possible events. To suppose otherwise, would lay a foundation of endless confusion. If God is ignorant of future events, he must be continually repenting of what he has done, and constantly changing his mind as to his future conduct; and thus be perpetually altering his measures, relinquishing his old designs, and forming new schemes and projections. For such of his purposes as belong to the state of his moral kingdom, must always be liable to be frustrated through want of penetration and foresight; and he must be unceasingly employed in regulating his system, as it becomes disordered by the unforeseen actions of his creatures. Upon these principles God, instead of being absolutely immutable and unchangeable, must necessarily be the subject of the greatest variety of changes of any being in the universe; for his plans are vastly more numerous, complicated, and comprehensive, than the plans of all other beings put together. If the great designs of providence can be overthrown by free agents, then the government of God is reduced to a state of confusion and uproar; and the Supreme Ruler of the universe, in this distracted state of his affairs, can do little else than mend broken links as well as he can, and rectify his disordered movements and disjointed frame in the best manner possible. Under such circumstances, the Deity must labor under great

disadvantages in the government of the world, over which he exercises a constant care. In many cases, it will be necessary to make provision for the accomplishment of some important event, upon which endless happy consequences to the human family may depend, the provisions for which may be overthrown when it is too late to repair the mischief; and thus the benevolence of the Deity may be frustrated, or even be converted into an instrument of harm. Many evils may arise, which, could he have foreseen, he might have wholly prevented, or even have overruled for good. Upon these principles, therefore, it is in the power of man, by his devices, purposes, and actions, to disappoint God, disconcert his plans, break through his measures, compel him continually to change his mind, subject him to vexation, and reduce his government to a state of anarchy and confusion. From these considerations we are led to the conclusion, as has already been proved, that as the Deity does direct the great and general progress of things in the world, so he must also manage those of less importance. Nations are composed of individuals. The progress of individuals is the progress of the nation, and the greatest events depend upon the history and the most trifling actions of private persons. The difficulty is, to conceive how the superintendence and management of all this can be brought about without destroying the freedom of the human will, and converting man into a mere machine. But, as the ways and thoughts of the Omnipotent Spirit, whose influence pervades, and rules, and animates nature, resemble not the limited operations of man, we can only form conjectures concerning the means by which his government is conducted.

(1.) In the first place, then, it is not impossible that the Deity should foresee the future actions of free and intelligent beings. Many of these actions depend upon the mechanism of the material world, which was formed by himself, and must be entirely known to him. Many men among ourselves possess much sagacity in discerning the future actions of others from attending to their known characters, and the circumstances in which they are placed. If superior natures do exist, and minds more perfect than the human, they must possess this penetration in a more eminent degree in proportion to the excellency of their intellectual powers. But if this discernment be in God proportionable to his nature, as in lower beings it is proportionable to theirs, it then becomes altogether unlimited, and the future actions of free agents are at once unlocked and exposed to his view. Add to this, that the author of nature is well acquainted with the creatures he had made; he knows the mechanism of our bodies, the nature and extent of our understandings, and all the circumstances by which we are surrounded. With all these advantages, it is not unreasonable to suppose him capable of discerning the line of conduct which every individual of the human family will pursue; and this even setting aside the infinity of his nature, to which a thousand years are as one day, and supposing

him to reason from probabilities in the same imperfect manner that we do.

But the nature of God is infinite; he must, therefore, necessarily know all things. For all things are not only present with him, but also entirely dependent upon him; and having received both their being itself and all their powers and faculties from him, it is evident that since he knows all things that are, and penetrates every part of their substance with his all-seeing eye, so he must know all possibilities of things that exist, and all possible effects that can hereafter exist. For, being alone self-existent, and having alone given to all things all the powers and faculties with which they are endued, it is evident that he must of necessity know perfectly what all and each of these powers and faculties, which are derived wholly from himself, can possibly produce. And seeing at one boundless view, or more properly in his own ideas, all the possible compositions and divisions, variations and changes, circumstances and dependencies of things, all their possible relations, one to another, and their dispositions or relations to certain and respective ends, he must, without possibility of error, know exactly what is best in every one of the numberless cases, or methods of disposing of things; and understanding perfectly how to order and direct the respective means to bring about what he knows to be in its kind, or on the whole, the wisest and the best in the end. This is what is meant by infinite wisdom, and unlimited knowledge; and such is the wisdom and knowledge of the Supreme Being, who is the Creator and preserver of all things.

The divine prescience, however, for which we contend, does not make effects certain, because they are foreseen, and thus destroy the freedom of the human will; but they are foreseen because they are to be; so that the certainty of the prescience is not the cause, but the consequence of the certainty of the event. The Roman republic has fallen; but our knowledge or ignorance of that event does not render it more or less true and certain. That it was to fall, was assuredly true before it happened as it is now; and had we known it beforehand, as many men of sense probably did, it would neither have fallen sooner or later on that account. This shows that the knowledge which an intelligent being has of a past or future event, need not have any influence upon the circumstances which produce that event.

Doubts, however, have been entertained by some great and good men, whether Omniscience itself can certainly foreknow the actions of free agents. It will be admitted, that we have no adequate notion *how* such actions can be certainly foreknown; but we are not, therefore, authorized to say that such knowledge is impossible, unless it can be clearly shown to imply a contradiction. They who suppose it implies a contradiction, must likewise suppose that where there is not a chain of necessary causes, there can be no certainty of future events; but this is evidently a mistake. For, let us sup-

pose that there is in man a power of beginning motion, and acting with entire freedom; and let us suppose, further, that the actions of such a man cannot possibly be foreknown—will there not yet be, in the nature of things, notwithstanding the supposition, the same certainty of event, in every one of the man's actions, as if they were ever so fatal and necessary? For instance: Suppose a man, by an internal principle of motion, and an absolute freedom of mind, to do some particular action *to-day*; and suppose it was not possible that this action should have been foreseen *yesterday*—was there not, nevertheless, the same certainty of event as if it had been foreseen, and absolutely necessary? That is, would it not have been as certain a truth *yesterday*, and from all eternity, that this action was, in event, *to be performed to-day*, notwithstanding the supposed freedom, as it is now a certain and infallible truth that it is performed? Mere certainty of event, therefore, does not imply necessity; and surely it implies no contradiction to suppose that every future event, which in the nature of things is now certain, may now be certainly known by that intelligence which is Omniscient. The manner how God can foreknow future events, without a chain of necessary causes, is indeed impossible for us to explain; yet it is possible for us to conceive some general idea of it, as has already been intimated. For, as a man who has no influence over another man's actions, can yet often perceive beforehand what that man will do; and a wiser and more experienced man, with still greater probability, will foresee what another, with whose disposition he is intimately acquainted, will in some circumstances do: and an angel, with still less degrees of error, may have a further prospect into men's future actions—so, it is highly reasonable to conceive that God, without influencing men's wills by his power, or subjecting them to a chain of necessary causes, cannot but have a knowledge of future free events, as much more certain than men or angels can possibly have, as the perfection of his nature is greater than that of theirs. The distinct manner how he foresees these things, we cannot, indeed, explain; neither can we explain the manner of numberless other things, of the reality of which, however, no man entertains a doubt. So long, therefore, as we perceive no contradiction in it, we must admit that God always knows the free actions of men, and all other beings endued with liberty; otherwise, he would know many things now of which he was once ignorant, and, consequently, his Omniscience would receive addition from events, which is inconsistent with the idea of infinity. In a Being incapable of change, knowledge has nothing to do with *before*, or *after*. To every purpose of knowledge and power, all things are to him equally present. He knows perfectly everything that is; and what to us is future, he knows in the very same way as he knows what to us is present.

This knowledge of God has, however, no influence upon either the freedom or the certainty of actions, for the plain reason, that it

is *knowledge*, and not *influence*; and actions may be certainly foreknown, without being rendered necessary by that knowledge. Simple knowledge is, in no sense, a cause of actions, nor can it be conceived to be causal, unconnected with exerted power; for mere knowledge, therefore, an action remains free or necessary, as the case may be. A necessitated action is not made voluntary by its being made foreknown; neither is a free action made a necessary one. Free actions foreknown will not, therefore, cease to be voluntary. But how stands the case as to their *certainty*? Precisely on the same ground. The certainty of a *necessary* action foreknown, does not result from the knowledge of the action, but from the operation of the necessitating cause; and, in like manner, the certainty of a free action does not result from the knowledge of it, which is no cause at all, but from the voluntary cause—that is, the determination of the will. It alters not the cause in the least, to say that the voluntary action might have been otherwise. Had it been otherwise, then the knowledge of it would have been otherwise; but as the will, which gives birth to the action, is not dependent upon the previous knowledge of God, but the knowledge of the action upon the foresight of the choice of the will, neither the will, nor the act, is controlled by the knowledge, and the action, though foreseen, is still free and voluntary. Hence, we conclude that man is a free and voluntary agent, and, therefore, accountable for all his actions; and, at the same time, that all the free actions of all intelligent beings, are foreknown by the Governor of the world. Such knowledge, indeed, is too wonderful for us, but is the knowledge of him *who understandeth the thoughts of man afar off*.

2. There is no impossibility, at least, that men, whose characters and actions are thus foreknown, may be introduced into the world in such times and places, as that their acts and behavior may not only coincide with the general plan of things, but may also answer many private cases. The celestial bodies are so placed that their jarring attractions make out a splendid system. Why, then, may there not be, in the divine mind, something like a projection of the future history of mankind, as well as of the motion of the heavenly bodies? And why should it not be thought possible for men, as well as for them, by some secret law, or rather by the management of an unseen power, to be brought into their places in such a manner as that, by the free use of their faculties, the conjunctions and oppositions of their interests and inclinations, the natural influences of their different degrees of talents, power, and wealth, they may conspire to make out the great scheme of human affairs? There is no absurdity in this supposition: it is not beyond the power of an almighty and perfect Being; and it is worthy of him. Let us take, from the Jewish history, an example of what may be supposed to occur daily. It was the intention of Divine Providence to place David, the son of Jesse, upon the throne of the Hebrews. The country was invaded by a foreign foe; the hostile armies meet,

and lie encamped upon opposite mountains. A man comes forth from the army of the invaders, as was extremely common in those times, and defies the Hebrew host to send forth a champion, to meet him in single combat. Terrified by the gigantic bulk and mighty force of Goliath, no man would risk the unequal conflict. David was too young to carry arms, but had been sent to the camp with provisions for his brothers, and heard the challenge. In defence of his flock, he had killed some beasts of prey, in the wilderness; and he was an excellent marksman with a sling. He thought it might be as easy to kill a man as a wild beast; at all events, he knew that a stone, well directed, would be no less fatal to a giant than to a dwarf. He, therefore, resolved to try his skill; and he tried it with success. Here, no man's free will was intercepted, and no miracle was accomplished; yet, by this train of circumstances, thus brought together, a foundation was laid for the future fortunes of the son of Jesse, for the greatness of his country, and for accomplishing the purposes of Providence.

Take, as another instance, the history of Haman. That wicked man had long meditated the destruction of Mordecai, the Jew, and, rather than not satiate his vengeance upon him, would involve the whole Jewish nation in utter destruction. He at last obtained a decree, sentencing the whole people to the sword; and the day was fixed for its execution. In this crisis of their fate, how was the chosen nation to be delivered? Was God visibly and miraculously to interpose, in favor of his own people? This he could have done; but he chose rather to act according to the train of secondary causes. He who giveth sleep to his beloved, withheld it from Ahasuerus, the monarch of Persia. In order to pass the night, he called for the records of his reign; there he found it written, that Mordecai had detected a conspiracy, formed against the life of the king, and that he had never been rewarded for it. By this single circumstance, a sudden reversion took place. Mordecai was advanced to honor and rewards; the villany of Haman was detected; the decree, fatal to the Jews, was revoked; and the whole nation was saved from instant destruction.

In like manner, in the history of Joseph, and other histories of the Old Testament, we see the most familiar events made instrumental in the hand of God, to effect the purposes of his providence.

There is, then, a particular Providence, which governs the affairs of the world. The power and wisdom of the Almighty is constantly exercised, in conducting the concerns of men. All things are full of God. In the regions of the air, in the bowels of the earth, and in the chambers of the sea, his power is felt. Every event in life is under his direction and control. Nothing is fortuitous, or accidental. He gives laws to the tempest, where to spend its force; directs the meteor, flying in the air, where to fall, and where to consume. Are the elemental and subterraneous fires bound up? He can let them loose. Are they broken loose? He

can collect them, as in the hollow of his hand. And all this he performs without unhinging the general system, and without any visible tokens to us, that he is in any way concerned, though he is in fact the effective agent. In like manner, we may comprehend, in some measure, how God may direct, not only the motions of the inanimate and passive part of creation, but also the determinations of free agents, to answer the purposes of his Providence. The hearts of men are in the hands of the Lord, as much as the rivers of water. This does not, in the least, destroy the freedom of human actions. Every one knows that the acts of free agents are determined by circumstances; and these circumstances are always in the hand of God. The dispositions and resolutions of men are apt to vary, according to the different turn of mind, or flow of spirits, or their different situations in life, as to health or sickness, strength or weakness, joy or sorrow; and, by the direction of these, God may raise up enemies, or create friends, stir up war, or make peace. This sentiment was maintained by Seneca. "I say not," says he, "that the lightning comes directly from the hand of Jove, but things are properly disposed for the execution of his will; for he acts not immediately, but by the intervention of means."

3. It is not impossible, that many things may be accomplished by secret influence upon the human mind, either by the Deity himself, or by the intervention of agents possessed of powers superior to those that belong to us. For instance, should the case require that a peculiar man be delivered from some threatening ruin, or from some misfortune which would certainly befall him, if he should go the way at such a time as he intended: upon this occasion some new reasons may be presented to the mind, why he should not go *at all*, or not *then*, or not by that *road*; or he may forget to go, or he may be delayed till the conveyance is gone. Or, if he is to be delivered from some dangerous *enemy*, either some new turn given to his thoughts may divert him from going where the enemy will be, or the enemy may be diverted, after the same manner, from coming where he shall be; or his resentment may be gratified, or some proper methods of defence may be suggested to the person in danger. After the same manner, advantages and successes may be conferred on the deserving; as, on the other hand, men, by the way of punishment for their crimes, may incur mischief and calamities. Such things as these may be; for, since the motions and actions of men, which depend upon their wills, do also depend upon their judgments, (as these again do upon the present appearances of things in their minds,) if a new prospect can by any means be produced, the lights by which things are seen altered, new forces and directions impressed upon the spirits, passions exalted or abated, the power of judging enlivened or debilitated, or the attention taken off, without any suspension or alteration of the laws of nature—then, without that, new volitions, designs, measures, or cessation of thinking, may also be produced; and thus many things prevented that otherwise



would *be*, and many brought about that would *not*. That there may possibly be such inspirations of new thoughts and counsels, may perhaps appear further evident from this, that we frequently find thoughts arising in our minds, into which we are led by no discourse, nothing we read, no clue of reasoning; but they surprise and come upon us from we know not what quarter. If they proceed from the mobility of spirits, straggling out of order, and fortuitous affections of the brain, or were they of the nature of dreams, why are they not as wild, incoherent, and extravagant, as they are? Is it not much more reasonable to imagine that they come by the order and direction of an all-seeing and all-gracious God, who continually watches over us, and disposes of everything in and about us, for the good of ourselves and others? And this notion is agreeable to the opinions of the best and wisest men, in all ages. That such was the general opinion of the Greeks, in the days of Homer, is plain from the poet's constantly introducing his deities into the narrative of his poems, and telling us that Minerva, or some other god, altered the minds of his heroes. "By this," says Plutarch, "the poet did not mean to make God *destroy* the will of man, but only move him to will; nor does he miraculously produce the appetites themselves in men, but only causes such imaginations as are capable of exciting them." If, then, the human mind be susceptible of such *insinuations* and *impressions*, as it seems to be, which frequently effect them, by ways and means unknown to us, and give them an inclination towards this or that object; how many things may be accomplished by these means, without *fixing* or *re-fixing* the laws of nature, any more than they are *unfixed* when one man alters the opinion of another, by throwing in his way a book proper for that purpose.

All these effects may be produced either by the immediate interposition of God himself, or by that of beings *invisible*, and in nature superior to us, who act as the ministers of his Providence. We can hardly doubt that there are such beings, as it is in the highest degree improbable that such imperfect creatures as men, are at the top of the scale of created intelligence. And since we ourselves, by the use of our limited powers, do often alter the course of things within our sphere, from what they would be if left to the ordinary laws of motion and gravitation, without being said to alter those laws, why may not superior beings do the same, as instruments of Divine Providence? This idea of the intervention of superior natures is beautifully illustrated by Thompson in the following passage:—

"These are the haunts of meditation; these  
The scenes were ancient bards th' inspiring breath,  
Extatic, felt; and from this world retired,  
Conversed with angels and immortal forms,  
On gracious errands sent; to save the fall

Of virtue, staggering on the brink of vice ;  
 In waking whispers, and repeated dreams,  
 To hint pure thought, and warn the favored soul  
 For future trials fated to prepare."

It is not, however, to be supposed, that the power of these beings is so large as to alter or suspend the general laws of nature ; for the world is not like a bungling piece of clock-work, which often requires to be set backwards and forwards. Neither is it to be supposed that they can change their condition, so as to ape us or inferior beings ; and, consequently, we are not hastily to credit stories of *portends*, such as cannot be true, unless the nature of things, and their manner of existence, were occasionally revealed. Yet, as men may be so placed as to become, even by the free exercise of their own powers, instruments of God's particular providence to other men, so may we well suppose that these higher beings may be so *distributed* through the universe, and subject to such an economy, unknown to us, as may render them also instruments of the same providence ; and that they may, in proportion to their greater abilities, be capable, *consistently with the laws of nature*, of influencing human affairs at proper times and places.

It is proper, however, to guard this doctrine against abuse. It is to be remembered that the present life is not a state of righteous retribution, but a state of trial ; consequently, men are not dealt with according to their true characters. The goods of nature and Providence are distributed indiscriminately among mankind. The sun shines, the rain falls, upon the just and upon the unjust. It is a dangerous error, therefore, to judge of moral character from external condition in life. This was the error of Job's friends ; this the foundation of the censures they cast against this excellent person, and for which they were reprov'd. The intention of the book of Job is, to show that this supposition is false and unfounded, by representing the incomprehensible majesty of God, and the unsearchable nature of his works. Many instances in the Scriptures confirm this observation. Who that saw David reduced to straits, wandering for a refuge in the rocks and dens of the wilderness, would have believed him to be the prince whom God had chosen ? Who that beheld Nebuchadnezzar walking in his palace, surrounded with all the pomp and splendor of royalty, would have believed him to be the object of the divine displeasure ? and that the decree was gone out, that he was to be driven among the beasts ? Who that beheld Jesus in the form of a servant, would have believed that he was the Lord of life and glory ? But these all proved to be facts. We are not, therefore, to judge of men's moral character by their external condition.

## DISCOURSE IX.

*Objections Answered to the Doctrine of Divine Providence.*

“The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.”—Psalms xcvii, 1.

HAVING, in a former discourse, illustrated the mode of Divine Providence, we shall now proceed to state some of the principle objections which, in ancient or modern times, have been urged against it.

I. The first objection that has been urged against the doctrine of Divine Providence, which we shall notice, is this: *That the system of nature contains many imperfections, which it ought not to do, if it be the work of a perfectly wise and good Being.* To avoid the force of this objection, some modern writers have deserted the ground of supreme and absolute goodness, which the ancient theists always occupied, and have asserted that the divine perfection consists in unlimited power and uncontrolled supremacy of will; that, consequently, the Deity does not always do that which is for the best, but merely, what he himself pleases, and that for no other reason but because he *wills* to do so. But this is no better than Atheism itself. For it is of no importance to us whether the universe be governed by blind fate or chance—that is to say, by nothing at all; or whether it be governed by an arbitrary sovereign will, that is directed by chance, or, at least, by no principle of benevolence.

The true answer to this question is, that no created system can have every perfection, because it must, necessarily, be destitute of self-existence and independence; and, therefore, if being destitute of some perfections be better than nothing, it was worthy of infinite and perfect goodness to create such beings. In our present state, we mortals stand upon too low ground, and are too contracted and limited in our ideas, to take a commanding view of the whole frame of nature. We can only reason concerning what is unknown from the little that is within our reach. In that little, we see that wisdom and goodness reign; that nature always aims to produce perfection; that many salutary effects result even from the thunder and the storm: and we doubt not that a whole view of the structure of the universe would afford an additional argument to the goodness and skill of the great Architect.

We see a regular ascent in the scale of created beings, from mere lifeless matter up to man; and the probability is, that the scale continues to ascend as far above men in perfection, as such beings can possibly be raised. The sole purpose of God in creating the world, must have been to produce happiness; but this would be most effectually done by creating, in the first place, as many of

the most perfect class of beings as the system could contain; and afterwards, other classes less and less perfect, till the whole universe should be completely full. We do not, however, mean to assert that the Divine Architect, in the creation of the world, constituted a necessary chain of existence,

“Where all must fall, or not coherent be,  
And all that rises, rise in due degree;”

in such a manner, that the various races and orders of being are mutually dependent upon each other. For we have reason to believe that certain species of animals, having accomplished the purposes to which they were destined in the creation, have become extinct.

No man, who has examined the subject, will pretend to say that this earth could afford a comfortable subsistence to a greater number of the human race, were all the inferior animals annihilated, than it could at present, swarming as every element is with life. Suppose, then, that as many men had been placed, at first, upon the earth as it could possibly support, and that matters had been so constituted, as that the number should never have been increased or diminished; we beg leave to ask whether, since there would have been room for inferior animals, it would have been worthy of infinite goodness to leave the whole globe to men, or to introduce into it different orders of less perfect beings, which, while they could not incommode this principal inhabitant, would each find pleasure in its own existence? Different answers cannot surely be given to this question. Let us, then, extend our view, and consider the universe, which, however vast, cannot be positively infinite—as one system as much united as the several parts of this globe; let us suppose that there were, at first, created as many of the highest order of beings as it could have contained, had creation there stopped; let us remember that happiness, in many different degrees, is valuable; and we shall not, surely, think it any imputation on the goodness of God that there are, in the universe, many beings far from perfection. The most imperfect of these, in themselves, are better than nothing, and they all contribute to make up a system, which, considered as a whole, we have every reason to believe to be as perfect as anything not self-existent can possibly be.

II. Another objection which has been urged, is this: *If the world has been conducted by a benevolent providence, how came evil to be introduced into it?* This question has perplexed mankind in all ages. The ancient Persians resolved it, by asserting the existence of two gods: Oromasdes, the author of good, and Arimanius, the author of evil. From them the Christians, called *Manichees*, borrowed the doctrine of two opposite co-eternal principles. Both the Platonists and the Stoicks ascribed the origin of evil to the perverseness or the imperfection of matter, which they thought the Deity could not alter; and Pythagoras imagined a state of pre-

existence, in which the souls of men had committed offences, for which they are suffering the punishment. But these hypothesis are, some of them, impious, and all unsatisfactory.

Taking the expression in the most extensive sense, the evils to which the human race are exposed may be reduced to *pain, uneasiness, disappointment of appetites, and death*; of which not one could have been wholly prevented without occasioning greater evils, inconsistent with the perfect goodness of the Creator. As long as we have solid bodies capable of motion, supported by food, subject to the influence of the atmosphere, and divisible, they must, necessarily, be liable to dissolution by death. But if a man could suffer death, or have his limbs broken without feeling pain, the human race had long since been extinct. A fever is a state of the body in which the fluids are in great disorder. If we felt no uneasiness from that disorder, we should feel no inducement to pay proper attention to our state of health, and should die without ever expecting ourselves to be in imminent danger; whereas, under the present administration of Divine Providence, the pain and sickness of disease compel us to have recourse to remedies proper for restoring us to soundness and to health.

Of the uneasinesses to which we are liable, and which are not the effect of immediate pain, the greatest has been sometimes said to arise from the apprehension of death, which constantly stares us full in the face, and frequently embitters all our pleasures, even in the hour of perfect health. But this dread of death is implanted in the breast of man for the very best of purposes. Had we no horror at the apprehension of death, we should be apt, whenever any misfortune befel us, to quit this world rashly, and rush unprepared into the presence of our Judge; but the horror which attends on the reflection of our own dissolution, arising not from any apprehension of the pain of dying, but from our anxiety concerning our future state of existence, tends strongly to make us act, while we are here, in such a manner as to ensure our happiness hereafter. Add to this, that the fear of death is one of the greatest supports to human laws. We every day see persons breaking through all the regulations of society and good life, notwithstanding they know death to be the certain consequence, and feel all the horrors of it natural to man; and, therefore, were death divested of these horrors, how insignificant would capital punishments be as guardians of the law, and how insecure would individuals be in civil society.

With regard to the unavoidable misfortunes and anxieties of our present state, so far from being truly hurtful in themselves, they are proofs of benign beneficence. When we see men displeased with their situation; when we hear them complaining of difficulties, the miseries, and the cares of life; of the hardships which they have undergone, and the labor which still lies before them; instead of accounting them unfortunate, we ought to regard them as active agents, placed only in the situation that is fit for the improvement

of their natures. That discontent, these restless wishes to improve their condition, are so many sure indications that their faculties will not languish. They who are, in the least degree, accustomed to observe the human character, know well the influence which pleasure and repose have in enfeebling every manly principle, and how capable they are of attaching us to a sordid and dishonorable existence.

Happy, indeed, is it for the human race, that the number of those men is small, whom providence has placed in situations in which personal activity is unnecessary. By far the greater number are compelled to exert themselves, to mix and to contend with their equals, in the race of fortune and honor. It is thus that our powers are called forth, and that our nature reaches the highest perfection. It is even, perhaps, a general truth, that they who have struggled with the greatest variety of hardships, as they always acquire the highest energy of character, so, if they have retained their integrity, and have not sunk entirely in the contest, seldom fail to spend their remaining days respectable and happy, superior to passion, and secured from folly by the possession of a wisdom dearly earned.

There is another view of this subject, which sets it in a still brighter light. The benefits of physical evils are realized in the production of moral good. That man is a moral agent, sent into this world to acquire the habits of piety and virtue, to fit him for a better state, is a truth to which no consistent Christian will, for a moment, refuse his assent. But almost all the moral good that is left among us, is the apparent effect of physical evil.

Goodness may be divided into *sobriety, righteousness, and godliness*. Let us examine, and see how each of these duties would be practised if there were no physical evil to enforce it.

*Sobriety* is nothing but the forbearance of pleasure; and if pleasure was not followed with pain, who would forbear it? The world furnishes us with numberless instances of those in whom the desire of pleasure overpowers all sense of past, and all foresight of future misery. In a remission of the gout, the drunkard returns to his wine, and the glutton to his feast; and if neither disease nor poverty were felt or dreaded, every one would sink down into idle sensuality, without any care of others or of himself. To eat and to drink, and to lie down to sleep, would be the chief business of mankind.

*Righteousness*, or the system of social duty, may be subdivided into justice and charity. Of justice, one of the heathen sages has shown, with great acuteness, that it was impressed upon mankind only by the inconveniences which injustice had produced. "In the first ages," says he, "men acted without any rule, but the impulse of desire; they practised injustice upon others, and suffered it from them in their turn; but in time, it was discovered that the pain of suffering wrong was greater than the pleasure of inflicting

it, and mankind, by general compact, submitted to the restraint of laws, and resigned the pleasure to escape the pain."

*Of charity*, it is superfluous to observe, that it could have no place if there were no wants; for of a virtue which could not be practised, the omission could not be culpable. Natural evil is not only the occasional, but the efficient cause of charity; we are incited to the relief of misery by the consciousness that we have the same nature with the sufferer; that we are in danger of the same distress, and may sometimes implore the same assistance. }

*Godliness* is the elevation of the mind towards the Supreme Being—an extension of the thoughts to another life. The other life is future, and the Supreme Being is invisible. None would have recourse to an invisible power, if all other subjects did not elude their hopes. None would fix their attention upon the future, but that they are discontented with the present. If the senses were feasted with perpetual pleasure, they would always keep the mind in subjection. Reason has no authority over us, but by its power to warn us against evil.

In childhood, while our minds are unoccupied, religion is impressed upon them; and the first years of almost all who have been well educated, are passed in a regular discharge of the duties of piety. But as we advance forward into the crowds of life, innumerable delights solicit our inclinations, and innumerable cares distract our attention. The time of youth is passed away in noisy frolics; manhood is led on from hope to hope, and from project to project; the dissoluteness of pleasure, the inebriation of success, the ardor of expectation, and the vehemence of competition, chain down the mind alike to the present scene; nor is it remembered how soon this mist of trifles must be scattered, and the bubbles that float upon the rivulets of life be lost forever in the ocean of eternity. To this consideration scarce any man is awakened, but by some pressing and resistless evil; the death of those from whom we derive pleasure, or to whom we destined our possessions; some diseases which show us the vanity of all external acquisitions, or the gloom of age, which intercepts our prospect of long enjoyment, forces us to fix our hopes upon another state; and when we have contended with the tempest of life till our strength fails, we fly, at last, to the shelter of religion.

That misery does not make all virtuous, is evident from experience; but it is also equally evident, that what virtue there is among mankind, misery produces by far the greater part. Physical evil may, therefore, be endured with patience, since it is the cause of moral good; and patience itself is one virtue by which we are prepared for that state in which evil shall be known no more.

The calamities and hardships of our present state, then, are so far from being real evils, for which Providence ought to be censured, that in every point of view in which we consider them, they

afford the surest proof of the wisdom of its administration, and of its goodness to man.

III. But the most serious difficulty lies in accounting for the *permission of moral evil or guilt, in a system governed by infinite benevolence and wisdom*. Those who, in a consistent manner, hold the doctrine of the absolute necessity of human actions in its full extent, and acknowledge its consequences, find it easy to elude this difficulty. They very fairly deny the existence of moral evil in the abstract, and assert that what we call a crime, is nothing more than an action which we always regard with a painful sensation; that these apparent evils only endure for a time; and all will, at last, terminate in the perfection and happiness of every intelligent being. But this answer is unsatisfactory.

For, *in the first place*, by including the doctrine of mechanical necessity, it destroys the moral quality of all the actions of intelligent beings. To be entitled to rewards, or liable to punishment, a man must act voluntarily, or, in other words, his actions must proceed from that energy of mind which is termed *volition*; and we believe it has never been denied that all men have power to do whatever they *will*, both with respect to the operations of their minds, and the motion of their bodies, uncontrolled by any foreign principle or cause. Every man is at liberty to turn his thoughts to whatever subject he pleases, to consider the reasons for or against any scheme or proposition, and to reflect upon them as long as he shall think proper; as well as to walk wherever he pleases, and to do whatever his hands or his limbs are capable of doing. Without such liberty as this, morality is inconceivable. And this liberty is rejected in the foregoing answer; therefore, we reject the answer, because it destroys the morality of all actions.

*Once more*: We object to this answer, because it undermines the foundation of all religious worship. When we pray for our daily bread, what do we ask but the blessings of God upon the earth, to yield her fruits in due season? When we ask the blessings of God upon our meals, what do we less than recognize his supreme power, and implore him to make the gifts of his providence the means of our subsistence and refreshment? This disclaims every notion of that mechanical necessity which shuts out God from being the active governor of the world; it supposes his concurrence and cooperation in all the operations of nature. Again, when we pray for the graces and virtues of the spiritual life, what do we ask but the divine aid, to strengthen the good dispositions he has already given us, and to direct and order the course of events, that we may be kept from temptation, or not be overcome when we are tempted. But this supposes the superintendence of God over us; supposes his interposition; supposes his providence continually exerted in administering to the wants of his creatures, according as their wants require. If this account be just, then our worship is a reasonable service. But if these are vain words, then is our worship also vain.



Then every one who goes into his closet to pray, goes only to act foolishly; then all the good and the pious, everywhere upon the face of the whole earth, who are calling upon the most high God, are as uselessly and as absurdly employed, as if they were falling down before a dumb idol, and paying their devotions to images of wood or stone.

*Finally*, this mechanical system, in a great measure, annihilates the moral perfections of the divine nature. It places the Almighty in a state of indolence, which is inconsistent with every idea of perfection; it makes him an idle and unconcerned spectator of his own works, and presents him as beholding virtue and vice, the saint and the sinner, with an equal eye. There are many scenes in human life, at which if we were present, it would be criminal for us not to take a part. Did we see the hands of the violent raised to shed innocent blood, and not rush to prevent the horrid deed; did we know the retreat of the robber and assassin, and not endeavor to bring them to public justice, we should be regarded as guilty, in part, of their crimes, since, by a criminal omission, we should endanger the peace of the public, and the interests of society. If we, being evil, would abhor such a character, shall we impute it, can we impute it, to Him who is infinite in goodness, and who is possessed of absolute perfection? To what purpose is God everywhere present, if it must be forever dormant? Why is he inspired with infinite wisdom, if it is to be never exercised? To what purpose are the divine goodness and justice, if we only hear of their names? Are all the attributes of the Godhead in vain? How false, how absurd, how injurious is that sentiment which would destroy every divine perfection?

Reason and true philosophy never separate the Deity from his works. We must own him in the sky, to hold the planets in their respective orbits; we must own him in the earth, and in the sea, to keep them within their proper bounds; and we must own him through the whole system of nature, to support and maintain that gravitating force which gives consistency and stability to all material things. We must also maintain that, in the government of moral and accountable beings, He exercises his providence so as to preserve inviolable the freedom of the human will. Power and freedom of action are indispensably necessary to constitute the conduct of intelligent beings either virtuous or vicious.

Upon the system of liberty, then, the true answer to the question seems to be this: That some things are absolutely impossible, not from any weakness in the Deity, but because they imply absurdity and contradiction. Thus, it is impossible for twice two to be anything but four; and thus it is impossible for omnipotence itself, to confer self-approbation upon an intelligent being who has never deserved it; that is to say, it is impossible for a man of sense to be pleased with himself for having done a certain action, while he himself is conscious that he never performed the action. But self-ap-

probation constitutes the highest, the most unmingled and permanent felicity, of which our nature is capable of enjoying. It is not in the power of omnipotence itself, then, to bestow the highest and most permanent felicity of our nature; it must be *earned* and *deserved* before it can be obtained. In the same manner good desert, virtue, or merit, cannot be *conferred*; they must be *acquired*. To enable us to acquire these, we must be exposed to difficulties, and must suffer in a certain degree. If these difficulties had no influence on our conduct and feelings, if they exposed us to no real danger, no fabric of merit and self-approbation could be raised upon them. All that the Supreme Being could do for us was to confer such an original constitution and character, as would enable us to do well if we should exert our utmost powers. The universe is not ruled by favor, but by justice. Complete felicity must be purchased. Guilt is an abuse of our freedom, a doing ill where we could have done well, and is entirely the work of man. Heaven could not avoid permitting its existence, and exposing us to danger; for temptation is necessary to virtue, and virtue is the perfection of our nature, our glory, and our happiness.

The permission of moral evil has been so ably accounted for by Simplicius, a Pagan philosopher, and therefore not biased by any partiality to the Scriptures, that we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of introducing his reasoning on the subject. He asks whether God may be called the author of sin, because he permits the soul to use its liberty? and answers the question thus:

“He who says that God should not permit the exercise of its freedom to the soul, must affirm one of these two things: either that the soul, though by nature capable of indifferently choosing *good* or *evil*, should yet be constantly prevented from choosing *evil*; or else it should have been made of such a nature as to have no *power of choosing evil*.

The *former assertion* is irrational and absurd; for what kind of liberty would that be in which there should be no freedom of choice? and what choice could there be, if the mind were constantly restrained to one side of the alternative? With respect to the *second assertion*, it is to be observed, that no evil is in itself desirable, or can be chosen *as evil*. But if this power of determining itself either way in any given case must be taken from the soul, it must be either something as not good, or as some great evil. But whoever says so, does not consider how many things there are which, though accounted good and desirable, are yet never put in competition with this freedom of the will; for without it we should be on a level with the brutes; and there is no person who would rather be a brute than a man. If God, then, shows his goodness in giving to inferior beings such perfections as are far below this, is it incongruous to his divine nature and goodness to give man a self-determining power over his actions, and to permit him the free exercise of that power? Had God, to prevent man's sins, taken away

the liberty of his will, he would likewise have destroyed the foundation of all virtue, and the very nature of man, for there could be no virtue were there not a possibility of vice; and man's nature, had it continued rational, would have been divine, because impeccable. Therefore, though we attribute to God, as its author, this self-determining power, which is so necessary in the order of the universe, we have no reason to attribute to him that evil which comes by the abuse of liberty. For God does not cause that aversion from good which is in the soul when it sins; he only gives to the soul such a power as might turn itself to evil, out of which he produces much good, which, without such a power, could not have been produced by Omnipotence itself." So consonant to the doctrine of the Scriptures is the reasoning of this Pagan philosopher.

IV. The fourth and last objection to the belief of the doctrine of a Divine Providence *arises from the apparent confusion of human affairs, that all things alike happen to all, that bad men are prosperous, and that a total want of justice appears to attend the divine administrations.* Even the best of men have, at times, been shaken by this consideration. But there are many reasons for rendering this world a mixed scene; it would become unfit for a state of trial and education to virtue, were it otherwise.

It has been already shown, that physical evil is the parent of moral good; and, therefore, it would be absurd to expect that the virtuous should be entirely exempted from evil. For the occasional prosperity of the wicked, many reasons have been assigned, even by those who, in their disquisitions, were not guided by that revelation by which life and immortality were brought to light. "God," says Plutarch, "spares the wicked that he may set to mankind an example of forbearance, and teach them not to revenge their injuries too hastily on each other. He spares some wicked men from early punishment, in order to make them instruments in punishing others. And he spares all for a time, that they may have leisure for repentance; for men look at nothing further in the punishment they inflict, than to satisfy their revenge and malice, and, therefore, they pursue those who have offended them with the utmost rage and eagerness; whereas God, aiming at the cure of those who are not utterly incurable, gives them time to be converted." The reasoning of this ancient sage appears just and conclusive, as far as it goes; but it does not fully meet the objection.

This objection receives the best solution from the doctrine of a righteous retribution in a future state of existence. The life of man here is but an embryo state, preparatory to a future and immortal state of being. This doctrine is uniformly asserted in the Sacred Oracles, and made subservient to sustain and support suffering virtue under all the trials and afflictions of life: *Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope,* like the anchor of a ship, preserves the soul in safety and security amidst all the storms and billows of life. The good man, having

been persuaded, by the truth of revelation, *that his light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while he looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*, looks forward beyond this vale of tears, and beholds with pleasing anticipations that *inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all the faithful*. At the consummation of all things, when the mystery of God shall be finished, and the clouds of darkness which obscure his providence shall be removed, his justice and equity, holiness and purity, will shine forth as clear as the morning light.

—————And see!

'Tis come, the glorious morn! the second birth  
Of heaven and earth! awakening nature hears  
*The new creating word*, and starts to life  
In every height'ned form, from pain and death  
Forever free. *The great eternal scheme*,  
Involving all, and in a *perfect whole*  
*Uniting*, as the prospect wider spreads,  
To reason's eye cleared up apace.  
Ye vainly wise! Ye blind presumptuous! now  
Confounded in the dust, adore that power  
And Wisdom often arraigned; see now the cause,  
Why unassuming worth in secret lived  
And died neglected: why the good man's share  
In life was gall and bitterness of soul:  
Why the lone widow and her orphans pined  
In starving solitude; while luxury,  
In palaces, lay straining her low thought,  
And moderation fair, wore the red marks  
Of superstition's scourge, that embosomed foe  
Imbittered all our bliss. Ye good distressed!  
Ye noble few! who here unbending stand  
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up a while,  
And what your bounded view, which only saw  
A little part, deemed evil, is no more:  
The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,  
And one unbounded spring encircle all.

Such are the answers which are given to the objections urged against the doctrine of Divine Providence; and although they may not be sufficient to dissipate every doubt, and solve every query, that may arise in a reflecting mind, yet I trust they will prove sufficient to repress that spirit of murmuring which too often arises even in the breast of a good man, and disposes him to consider the ways of God *unequal*. The subject is regarded by all as great and difficult; perhaps, in all its relations and connexions, too capacious for the grasp of the human intellect. To use the sublime language of the Psalmist, *clouds and darkness are round about him*; but of this also we may rest assured, that *righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne*.

## DISCOURSE X.

*On the Uses of the Doctrine of Divine Providence.*

“The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.”—Psalm xcvi, 1.

HAVING replied, in a former discourse, to the objections which, in ancient or modern times, have been urged against the doctrine of Divine Providence, we shall now proceed to illustrate its practical uses.

I. This doctrine is not to be used for the purpose of either *justifying or palliating sin*. The Sacred Oracles assert that *God impels sinners to the commission of sin*, that *he hardens their hearts*, and that *he blinds their understandings*. Although the sacred writers use this strong, forcible, and cogent language, yet we are not to consider God as in the smallest degree the author of sin; for it is not the human heart in a state of innocence and purity, that is induced by him to act deceitfully and wickedly; but after it has conceived sin, and become inflated with latent wickedness, and is about to discover itself by some visible act, he, in his character, as the sovereign disposer of all things, inclines and directs it in this or that way, or towards this or that object. Hence, says the Psalmist, *He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, Jehovah our God shall cut them off*: that is, by the infliction of punishment. Neither does God make that will rebellious and evil which was before good; but the will being already in a state of perversion, he inclines it in such a manner, that out of its own wickedness, it either produces good for others, or punishment for itself; though unknowingly or unintentionally; and, indeed, with the intent of producing a very different result. *A man's heart*, says Solomon, *deviseth his way, but Jehovah directeth his steps*. When the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, in doubt whether he should go to war against the Ammonites or against the Jews, God so ordered the divination as to determine him on going against Jerusalem; but it does not follow that because he instigated this evil agent to do war against Jerusalem, that he was in the least degree the author of his sins; for the mind of this prince was resolutely bent upon war when instigated by God, and all he did was to direct that warlike spirit, which already existed against the Jews rather than against the Ammonites. Had not God have given any direction to the divination, he would have certainly gone to war against either the Jews or the Ammonites; that is, the spirit of war, which was in his heart would have burst forth in some direction. We will illustrate our meaning by the introduction of another example. God saw that the heart of David was so elated and puffed up with pride, by

the great increase of his power, that even without any external impulse, he was on the point of giving some remarkable token of it; he, therefore, excited in him the desire of numbering the people: he did not inspire him with the passion of vain glory, but induced him to display in this manner, rather than in any other, that latent arrogance of his heart, which was ready to burst forth in some visible act. God, therefore, was the author of the act itself, but David alone was responsible for its pride and wickedness. By such means, God proves the inmost intentions of men, and gives them a thorough insight into the latent wickedness of their hearts, that they may be induced, by these means, to forsake their sins; and if not, that they may become notorious and inexcusable in the sight of all.

God, however, is concerned in the production of evil only in one of these two ways; either he permits its existence by throwing no impediments in the way of natural causes and free agents, or he causes evil by the infliction of judgments, which is called the evil of punishment. Hence, in conformity with the language of mankind, he is spoken of as instigating, when he does not prohibit evil: *My people would not harken to my voice, and Israel would none of me: and so I give them up to their own heart's lust, and they walked in their own counsels.* Hence, it is said in Romans, *Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness*; that is, he left them to be actuated by their own lusts, to walk in them; for, literally speaking, God does not instigate, or give up, whom he leaves a sinner entirely to himself; that is, to his own desires and counsels, and to the suggestions of his ever active and spiritual enemy. In the same sense, the church is said to give up to Satan the contumacious member whom it interdicts from its communion. With regard to the case of David numbering the people, a single word will be sufficient. For it is not God, but Satan, who is said to have instigated him. A similar explanation applies to this passage: *Behold, I will raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house*; that is, the evil of punishment—and *I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor*; that is, I will permit thy son to go in unto them according to the counsel of Ahithophel; for this is the meaning of the word *give*, as has already been shown. In both the instances above adduced, God had determined to punish openly the secret adultery of David; he saw Absalom's propensity to every kind of wickedness; he saw the mischievous counsels of Ahithophel, and did nothing more than to influence their minds, which were already in a state of preparation for any atrocity, or for the perpetration of any crime, when opportunity should offer; according to the passage quoted above, *A man's heart deviseth his way, but Jehovah directeth his steps.* For, to offer an occasion of sinning, is only to manifest the wickedness of the sinner, not to create it.

As to the other position, that God eventually converts every evil deed into an instrument of good, contrary to the expectation of sin-

ners, and overcomes evil with good, it is sufficiently illustrated in the example of Joseph's sale by his brethren. They committed, in the sale of Joseph, an evil deed, but God converted it into an instrument of good. Thus, also; in the crucifixion of Christ, the sole aim of Pilate was to preserve the favor of Cæsar; that of the Jews, to satisfy their own hatred and revenge; but God, *whose hand and counsel had determined before everything that was to be done*, made use of their cruelty and violence as instruments for effecting the general redemption of mankind. *Through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles. There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. The things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.*

As God's instigating the sinner does not make him the author of sin, so neither does his hardening the heart or blinding the understanding involve that consequence; inasmuch as he does not produce these effects by infusing an evil disposition, but, on the contrary, by employing such kind and just methods as ought to soften the hearts of sinners instead of hardening them. God produces this effect: *First*, by his long-suffering. *Despiseth thou the riches of his long-suffering. . . . but after thy hardened and impenitent heart treasureth up wrath!* *Secondly*, by urging his own good and reasonable demands in opposition to the obstinacy of the wicked, as an anvil is said to be hardened under the hammer. Thus Pharaoh became more furious and obdurate, in proportion as he resisted the commands of God. *Thou shalt speak all that I command thee—and I will harden Pharaoh's heart. Make the heart of this people fat*; that is, by the repeated inculcations of the divine commands. *The word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.* *Thirdly*, by correction and punishment. *When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die. Thou hast stricken them, but they have not quivered; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock.* The hardening of the heart, therefore, is usually the last punishment inflicted on inveterate wickedness and unbelief in this life. God often hardens, in a remarkable manner, the powerful and rebellious princes of this earth, in order that, through their insolence and haughtiness, his glory may be magnified among the nations. Hence, he said to Pharaoh, *For this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee.* This act of hardening the heart is not so exclusively the work of God, but that the wicked themselves, fully co-operate in it, though with any other view than the accomplishment of the divine purpose. Hence, Pharaoh is said to harden his own heart: *When he saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders had ceas-*

*ed, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. He stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto Jehovah. Harden not your hearts. They made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law and the words which Jehovah of host hath sent.*

By the same course of reasoning it also appears evident, that God cannot be charged with participation in sin when he blends the understanding of the sinner. *It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. . . . Jehovah shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; that is, by withdrawing the light of his grace, by confounding or stupifying the faculties of the mind, or by simply permitting Satan to work these effects in the hearts of sinners. Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. For this cause God shall send them strong delusions.*

Finally, God is said to deceive man, not in the sense of seducing them to sin, but of beguiling them to their own punishment, or even to the production of some good. *If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I Jehovah, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch my hand upon him, and I will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity. . . . that the house of Israel shall go no more astray from me.* God first deceived the already corrupt, wicked, and covetous prophet, by disposing his mind to prophesy things acceptable to the people, and then deservedly cut off both the people who inquired of him, and the prophet of whom they inquired, to deter others from sinning in the same manner; because, on the one hand, a bad intention had been displayed on the part of the inquirers, and, on the other, a false answer had been returned, which God had not commanded.

From the foregoing remarks we conclude, that however mysterious and complicated the providence of God may be, it cannot be justly charged with sin. God is not the author of moral evil: *He cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.* Nothing is more common than to entertain mistaken views of Divine Providence. Even believers themselves are not always sufficiently observant of its various operations, until they are led to investigate the subject more deeply, and become more intimately conversant with the word of God. *As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Until I went into the sanctuary of God: then understood I their end. Many shall be purified and made white, and tried, but the wicked*



*shall do wickedly ; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.*

II. The Doctrine of Divine Providence should serve to correct those anxious cares and immoderate desires about the future events of life. This restless and corroding anxiety is destructive of the peace and happiness of the mind, and the occasion of much sin ; and is, therefore, often rebuked in the Scriptures, as alienating the mind from God, and from the higher objects of virtue and religion, and filling the heart with appetites which both annoy and corrupt it. As it is the parent of much sin, so it is also the offspring of great folly. For, if we have truly and justly described the condition of man in human life, what means this exclusive anxiety, this mighty bustle and stir, this restless perturbation of thought and care, as if all the issues of futurity rested wholly on our conduct ? Much, indeed, rests upon ourselves ; and there is reason, upon this account, for acting our parts in life with prudence and discretion. But, after all, everything depends upon an unseen and invisible hand, which can either overturn all our projects, or crown them with success ; and, therefore, when the issue is so doubtful, we should never suffer our minds to be absorbed with unnecessary and immoderate care. By disquieting ourselves so much about the future, we burden ourselves with an unnecessary load, and a load that does not belong to us. Disquieted, distracted, and borne down by this useless and unnecessary burden, the mind becomes feverish, the spirit fretful, and thus we are disqualified for the discharge of present duties.

The folly of this restless and corroding anxiety is greatly aggravated by this consideration, that all events are under the direction of a much better and wiser conductor than we could possibly give to them. Perhaps, that evil which we have dreaded so much in prospect, may never be suffered to approach us. Providence may either turn into a different course that black cloud which wears such a threatening aspect, or, before the storm bursts, our weary heads may be laid so low as to be out of its reach. Should the storm be permitted to assail us, it may bring under its dark and portentous wings some secret, some unexpected good. *Who knoweth what is good for man all the days of his vain life, which he passeth as a shadow.* Who knoweth this, my brethren, but God ? and who consults it so fully and so effectually as he, *who, by his infinite wisdom, makes all things together for good to them that love him ?* Is it not, then, our greatest happiness, that when *man's heart deviseth his way, the Lord directeth his steps ?* Is it not far better for us, than if the case were reversed ; if the all-wise God were only ineffectually to devise, and man, blind, ignorant, erring, and rash as he is, were to have the full direction of his steps ? Let us not, therefore, give ourselves any unnecessary anxiety. Let us not add to the unavoidable evils of life, the evil of a tormenting anxiety about the success of our schemes and designs. The great

rule, both of wisdom and religion is, do your duty, and leave the result to heaven. *Commit your way unto the Lord*; act your part fairly, and honorably, and as wisely as you can, for your apparent interest and for the glory of God; and then, with a calm and steady mind, wait for that issue which Divine Providence shall appoint. This is true wisdom, and all beyond this is vanity and folly.

III The doctrine of Divine Providence is calculated, not only to repress corroding and distressing anxiety, but also to enforce moderation in every state. It humbles the pride of prosperity, and prevents that despair which is incident to adversity. The presumption of prosperity is productive of innumerable evils, and of endless mischief. It renders men forgetful of their highest interest, the care of the soul; and disposes them to be unmindful of God and religion. It intoxicates them with love, and immerses them into the indulgence of sinful pleasure. It hardens their hearts, and renders them insensible to the cries and distress of humanity. But all this pride and show, is merely a vain and empty boast; for, consider what little ground the real situation of the most vain and prosperous man affords for this vain elevation of mind. He is dependent every moment on the pleasure of the Supreme Being, and knows not but providence may be preparing for him the most melancholy and humiliating reverses. Shall he *boast himself, of to-morrow, who knoweth not what a day may bring forth?* He has, perhaps, said in his heart, *my mountain stands strong*, I shall never be removed. But God needs only *hide his face*, and presently *he is troubled*. That little eminence on which he stood, and from which he surveyed with pride his fellow-mortals below him, was no more than an eminence of dust. The Almighty blows upon it with the breath of his mouth, and it is scattered. Let that man remember, who would utter the voice of contempt, or lift up the rod of oppression over his fellows, over his own head is stretched that high arm of heaven, which levels, at one touch, the high with the low! *vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord.*

The providence of God is attended with this singular advantage, that while it humbles the proud, it revives the contrite. As long as we believe in one who is higher than the highest, to whom all must look up, the greatest man is taught to be humble and modest, and to feel and realize his dependance; and the lowest man, the man in the most abject circumstances, has an object of continued resource and hope. When he is afflicted, or depressed, or injured by men, he can fly to that righteous Ruler of the earth, and, from his interposition, hope for redress and for better days. The providence of God is the great sanctuary to the afflicted, to the distressed, to the persecuted, who maintain their integrity. They can always find consolation in the belief of its existence; and from this sanctuary the most effectual and seasonable relief has been afforded to the oppressed, even when every other refuge has failed. There

is a voice of comfort at all times issuing from it: *Trust in the Lord, and do good; and so thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily, thou shalt be fed. Thine enemies may conspire; the heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. But he that sitteth in the heavens, shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. For the Lord is the keeper of Israel; he is the shield of the righteous. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth and forever.*

IV. The doctrine of a Superintending Providence, lays a foundation for joy, consolation, and contentment, as it respects our lot in life. Many persons are accustomed to murmur and complain with the situation assigned them in life. Their desires and fortunes do not correspond; they think they are misplaced by providence, and look upon the lot of their neighbors as more eligible than their own. This state of mind excites envy, and renders its possessor wretched and miserable in the extreme. It is impossible, in the present system of things, that all men should be alike. Nature, through all her works, delights in variety. Though every flower is beautiful, and every star is glorious; yet one flower excels another in beauty, and one star exceeds another in glory. There are, also, diversities in human life, and a beautiful subordination prevails among mankind. The Father of Spirits has communicated himself to men in different degrees. There is an endless and infinite variety among human beings; hence, there must be a vast difference in the human race. But, although all men cannot be alike, yet all men may enjoy a great measure of happiness. Indeed, they enjoy a greater measure of happiness than they could have enjoyed, had nature observed uniformity in the distribution of her bounties. This variety is necessary, in order that men might enjoy different climates, and fill with pleasure and usefulness the various stations in life. Every station in life possesses its comforts and advantages. In those comparisons you make of your life with that of others, when you would wish to exchange places with some of your more fortunate neighbors, do you not always find something in which you have the superiority? Is there not some talent of the mind, some quality of the heart, some trait of character, something where you think your strength lies; some one source of enjoyment which you would wish to retain? or some defect, or source of evil in your fancied rival, that you would wish to avoid? Is not this the testimony of universal nature, that you are happier in that path of life assigned you by providence, than you would be in any other? Wherever you are placed by providence, you are called to fill a station of honor. A general, in a day of battle, marshals his army as he sees fit, and distributes the posts of danger and importance, according to the courage and ability of his soldiers. Your commander knows your qualifications better than you do yourselves; he prescribes to you the duty you are called upon to execute, and he marked out the

path in which you are to seek honor and preferment. It is from the faithful discharge of the offices assigned you, that the happiness of your life and the perfection of your character arise. Men rank in the divine estimation, and figure in the annals of eternity, not from the sphere they hold in life, but from the lustre they cast around them in that sphere. If, with five talents, you gain five more; or if, even with one talent, you gain another, you are as praiseworthy as he who, with ten talents, gained other ten talents.

Once more: as every line in a circle terminates in the centre; as every highway in a kingdom leads to the capital; so, in the wide circle of nature, every line terminates in heaven; and every path in life conducts alike to the great city of God. The present state is intimately connected with the future; the life which we now lead, is an education for the life to come. If your minds were enlarged so as to comprehend and understand all the connexions and dependencies of things; if your eyes were so opened as to take in at one view, the whole of your mortal existence, you would then see and acknowledge that providence has assigned to you the very station you would have desired to fill; the very part you would have chosen to act. Trusting in that God who presides over the universe; assured of the wisdom and goodness which directs the whole train of the divine administration, each of us may express our joy in the words of the Psalmist:—*The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage: the Lord is the portion of my inheritance; the Lord will command the blessing, even life for evermore.*

V. The doctrine of the interposition of Divine Providence in all the events of human life, places *the vanity and folly of all sinful plans in a very strong and clear light.* All sin, under every view of it, must be attended with eminent danger and peril. He who embarks in any unjust or criminal enterprise, not only endangers the welfare of his own soul, but also incurs the risk of discovering his character, and of meeting with hatred, contempt, and just resentment from the world. One would think that when the consequences on one side are so dangerous, the bribe on the other side must be very great, and the prospect of success very fair and promising, to induce an evil action. Now consider the light in which this matter stands. The sinner must incur the hazard of all that uncertainty which attends all the designs and projects formed by man. Could the most artful and the best concerted means always ensure success to our enterprises, some apology might be made for occasionally departing from the path of rectitude. But no road that is sure of success can, on any occasion, be found. On the contrary, the experience of the whole world teaches us that the most plausible and the best devised plans are frequently baffled and thrown to the ground. Nothing is more remarkable in the whole history of man, than the sport which providence makes of his plans, schemes, and devices.

This view of things alone is sufficient to show the sinner the folly and danger of the system on which he acts. But this subject may be placed in a still stronger light. For the sinner, by his guilty plans, has engaged against him one certain and formidable enemy, to whom he has great reason to look up with terror and dismay. The all-seeing, the all-penetrating eye of the righteous Governor of the world looks down upon him with watchful vigilance, and all of his perfections are engaged to expose his devices and punish his wickedness. Against him, Divine Providence has pointed its darts, has bent its bow in the heavens: *the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*. Other designs may fail; those of the wicked, God has engaged to overthrow. It is true, that a righteous retribution is not rendered to every man in this life; but it is equally evident that divine justice is not always delayed. The history of mankind is constantly furnishing us with examples of the wicked *taken in their own devices*; of the crafty *snares in their own hands*; of sinners *falling into the pit which themselves had digged!* How often has God interposed when signal crimes were ready to be perpetrated; has spread his shield before the righteous, and warded off the fatal blow; or has unnerved the arm of the assassin; or has struck a sudden damp into his mind at the critical moment! Obnoxious, then, as the sinner is to so many dangers; exposed perpetually to the disappointment of his designs by the uncertainty of human events, and to the avenging interposition of heaven; what strange infatuation has tempted him to depart from the plain and safe path of duty? These considerations should dispose every sinner to tremble when temptation is first presented to the mind, and to reject it without delay; for he cannot hope to escape the avenging wrath of God, should he elude the scorn and derision of man.

VI. The doctrine of Divine Providence *lays a just and sensible foundation for religious worship*. If the Supreme Being was removed at an infinite distance from this world, and was ignorant of the passing events in the life of man; or if he was an unconscious spectator of human actions, he could not be a proper and suitable object of religious worship. A belief in such a doctrine would allay all devotional feelings, instead of exciting them. But, on the other hand, when we raise our thoughts from earth to heaven, and consider the perfections of God, as they appear in creation and providence, what a vast field is laid open to the contemplation of a devout mind! What a truly infinite knowledge was requisite to foresee so many ends, and so many means requisite for obtaining those ends, as are contained in the works of creation above, around, and beneath us! Let us, for example, consider light, which was to be emitted for so many ages, from so many luminous bodies, with so great a velocity, so as to penetrate so many mediums with different degrees of reflectibility and refrangibility, with so many other wonderful qualities; at the same time, so many bodies

were to be perfectly fitted for reflecting this light in a certain manner, and the animal eye was to be so formed as to have a picture of visible objects painted on the bottom of it. How many particular combinations were necessary for all these results? What shall we say of so many herbs, and flowers, and trees, and animal bodies, as there are scattered over this, our earth? All their kind and species, all the series of their individuals, all their parts and particles were foreseen, intended, and contrived by one act of the divine mind. Again, how wonderful are the heavenly bodies! of what surpassing magnitude, moving in the most beautiful order, at an immense distance from each other! to say nothing of the numberless creatures that are beyond the best telescope, or below that of the microscope. He who reflects over these things, must necessarily see the most evident proofs of an infinite power, wisdom, and providence; and must be filled with admiration and awful respect for the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

In this great plan of creation and providence, we are all deeply interested; none are unconcerned spectators of this grand and imposing scene. God has singled us out from among an infinite number of human beings, in order to call us into existence at a fixed period; and he has made a vast number of his creatures contribute to the formation of these wonderful machines, our bodies; as likewise to our nourishment, to our preservation, to our necessities, conveniences, and gratifications. Every moment that we exist, we are enjoying a great number of benefits expressly designed for us by the Supreme Ruler of the universe. And our existence depends every moment upon his supporting and sustaining energy. His ever-watchful providence guards and defends us from innumerable evils. Thus he counteracts, curbs, and often suspends in their operations, the principles which produce storms, tempests, earthquakes, pestilence and plague; or, while permitted to exert themselves with all their natural violence and malignity, gives them a particular direction, so that their strength may be expended in such a way, and in such places, as they shall be innocuous to man. Thus, the thunder-storm that might slay thousands, has seldom human life for its victim; the tornado and tempest exhaust themselves on the waves of the sea, or the uninhabited forest; and the pestilence that walketh in darkness, is generally consigned to the arid desert. These destructive causes, which exist in millions, are seldom let loose against man. God also restrains moral evil by curbing the passions of ambitious and revengeful men, who, if left to themselves, would fill the earth with confusion and blood.

Thus the Providence of God, when duly considered, is calculated to fill the devout mind with awe and veneration, and inspire us with a spirit of gratitude, love, and obedience. It also lays a just and reasonable foundation for prayer. We pray to God to avert evil, because we believe he exercises a universal Providence in the world. We pray to be preserved in the midst of danger, and from

surrounding harm, because we are persuaded that he has sway everywhere, and that all things serve the purpose of his gracious will. All men, everywhere and in every place, who pray and make supplication to God, expect to be heard, because he is omnipotent, and can and will interpose in the matters which concern them. And should evil be coming against them in a direct course, he can direct it from that course, so that it shall pass by them; or, averting it, turn it entirely back, so that it shall have no operation near them; or, if he permit it to advance, convert it to their spiritual advantage, by counteracting the bad effects which it would otherwise produce, and by his providence and grace, in answer to prayer, cause all those things which would be otherwise mischievous, to work for their present good and future happiness.

VII. The doctrine of an overruling Providence *will yield us consolation under the afflictions we are called to pass through in life.* If we believe the universe was a state of confusion, anarchy, and reproach; that the Governor of the world was a cruel and malignant being, who made sport of human misery, and took pleasure in punishing his unhappy creatures, such a thought would overwhelm the mind; it would turn the gloom of adversity into the shadow of death, and mingle poison in the cup of bitterness, which we are doomed to drink. But we are informed by the Scriptures, that the dark dispensations of providence are part of that plan which has the good of mankind for its object; take their rise from the goodness of our Father in heaven; and are intended for the reformation and final happiness of his children. The same Divine Oracles which say, *Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and maketh approach unto thee,* say also, *Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth.* So far from being marks of the divine displeasure, the afflictions of life are tokens of the divine love. While, thoughtlessly and heedlessly, we go astray, God enters himself in our favor and sends these his messengers to bring us back to himself and to the path of duty. It is but a narrow and imperfect view we take of afflictions, when we consider them only as trials. They are intended not so much for the trial, as for the cultivation of virtue and holiness. They are sent by the Providence of God, to mortify your unruly passions; to wean your affections from the world, and to prepare for a happy immortality. They are sent for the improvement of your nature; for the increase of your graces; and for the promotion of your joy to all eternity. When under the afflicting hand of heaven, you are, therefore, standing a candidate for immortality; you are singled out by Providence to act the part of a Christian; and you are called to show forth to the world a pattern of suffering virtues. He is but a novice in the school of Christ, who has not learned to suffer. Christians are called to a warfare, and they are to endure hardness as the good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The best affections of the human heart, the noblest graces of the soul, the highest virtues of life, and the most acceptable

offering to heaven, arise from the proper improvement of adversity. The blessed above, whom the prophet saw arrayed in white before the throne, came out of great tribulation; they learned the first notes of the song of Moses and the lamb on a bed of sorrow.

Such is the intention of afflictions, which Providence sends; and even under these afflictions, God is with his people. You are ever under the hand of a merciful Creator, who does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. He knows your frame; he remembers that you are but dust; he will afflict you no further than you are able to bear; and as your days are, he has promised that your strength shall be. Nay, in all your afflictions he is present with you and the hand that bruised you, binds up the wound. Let not, then, your hearts despond—bear up under the pressure of wo—rejoice because the Lord reigneth—exult in the language of the prophet:—*Although the fig-tree should not blossom, nor fruit be found in the vine; though the labor of the olive should fail, and the field should yield no meat; though the flocks should be cut off from the field, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

VIII. Finally, from all that has been said on this subject, we clearly see how much it concerns us *to perform those duties which a proper regard to Providence requires, and to obtain protection from that power which directs and disposes all.* There cannot be a sounder maxim than this, that if a man only devises his way, while God overrules his devices and directs his steps, an interest in the favor of God is far more important than all the wisdom and ability of man. Without his favor, the schemes and devices of the wisest will be disconcerted and baffled; under his protection and guidance, the simple are led in a plain and sure path. In vain do the giddy and profane throw Providence out of their thoughts, and affect to think and act as if all depended upon themselves. This boldness of conceit and self-sufficiency is affectation, and nothing more. For there are seasons when the man of the most wicked and daring heart feels the strong subjection under which he is held, and would gladly grasp at heaven. As long as human affairs move on in a smooth train, without any alarming presages of change or danger, the man of the world may remain pleased with himself, and be fully confident in his own powers. Under such circumstances, resting in self-complacency, he may not distrust his own abilities. But whose life continues long in a tranquil and prosperous state, undisturbed by the cares of life and by the uncertainty of human events? Let any uncommon violence shake the elements around him, and threaten him with destruction; let the aspect of public affairs be so lowering as to forbode some great calamity; or let some sudden change arise in his private concerns to shatter his fortune; or let sickness, or the harbingers of approaching dissolution, show him his frailty; and how ready will he then be to send prayers from the heart, that Providence would in-



terfere and relieve him? Religion, my brethren, is not a matter of speculation; its foundations are laid deep in the nature and constitution of man. It lays hold of every man's feelings. In every man's heart and conscience, it has many witnesses to its importance and reality. If we fail to make religion our sanctuary and God our friend, we are in the most exposed and defenceless state; and shall find, sooner or later, every other shield to be wholly ineffectual in defending us against the adversaries of life, and utterly useless in the solemn and trying hour of death.

Let us, then, use every means which may be effectual in procuring the grace and favor of that Divine Providence on which so much depends. Let no duties be overlooked or neglected, which belong to us as the servants of God. Let us humbly and devoutly engage in his worship, pour forth the song of grateful praise for all his blessings. Let us trust in his goodness, and yield implicit submission to his will. Let us render a constant and cheerful obedience to his laws. Let us be thankful that God has clearly made known to us what he requires, in order that we may be accepted in his sight; and that he has not only revealed the rule of duty, but that he has also pointed out to us in the gospel, the direct method of reconciliation with him, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us rejoice that Divine Providence has condescended to become our great instructor in this article; has taught us in what way our sins may be forgiven, our imperfect services accepted, and an interest in the grace of God attained by means of our Redeemer. Let us remember how inexcusable we shall be if we wantonly cast all this offered grace and mercy under our feet. In a world so full of vicissitudes and uncertainty, let us secure to ourselves one resting place—one habitation that cannot be moved. By faith and penitence, by purity and a virtuous life, by prayer and supplication, let us seek the friendship of the Most High; so shall he who *directeth the steps of man, and doth all his pleasure*, conduct our path in such a course as shall, in the end, bring us to immortality and eternal life.

## DISCOURSE XI.

*The Rich Youth Forsaking Christ.*

“Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”—Mark x., 21, 22.

It is very difficult to ascertain the true character of a man till he has been tried. Those who are the most confident of their own powers, when they are called into action, frequently discover the greatest timidity; and those who most dread a conflict, when once they actually engage in it, sometimes approve themselves the most steadfast and heroic. The vehement protestations of the fidelity of Peter to his Master, and his eagerness to walk upon the waves, might have gained him a reputation of undaunted courage and of invincible firmness, had he not been left to prove, by actual experiment, the weakness and inefficacy of his resolutions. The man who engaged to follow Jesus whithersoever he might go, began to waver in his determination, as soon as he was informed of the destitute condition of the Son of God. Penetrated with the persuasion that he could derive little benefit from one who had not where to lay his head, he determined to abandon him, even without an experiment. So the young man in our text might have passed for the most excellent of characters, had he not been brought to the touchstone, and suffered to manifest the true dispositions of his soul. Jesus Christ, doubtless, fully understood his true character; he, therefore, gave him a command by which his character was fully elicited and publicly disclosed.

I. In the elucidation of his conduct, we proceed to consider, in the first place, the injunction given him: *Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor: and come, take up the cross and follow me.* It must be confessed, that the command was very difficult to obey. He was a youth of opulence and rank; the sentiments he had imbibed, the hopes he had entertained, the habits he had formed, must all have rendered the command under consideration extremely hard and difficult to obey. The change proposed to him was, doubtless, irksome and arduous in the extreme. To exchange wealth for poverty, prosperity for adversity, ease for trouble, honor for disgrace, homage for contempt; *this* was hard, extremely hard, for human nature to endure. It is a trial which few could stand—an ordeal which few could pass. Indeed, nothing but Almighty grace could qualify the heart of any man for such a work as this.

But this command, however difficult, was not *unreasonable*. God had given to him his existence and his powers; his riches and his

honors; and had he not a right to recall what he had merely *lent*? Had he any just cause of complaint, if God, who, for a time, had elevated him above his fellow-creatures, should now reduce him to a level with the poorest of his people? Had not God the same right to disperse his wealth among the poor, as he before had to accumulate upon one single man? Moreover, this sacrifice, which he was called to make, would contribute very much to the comfort of suffering humanity, and would ultimately return with a rich and abundant recompense into his own bosom. Can this command, then, under such circumstances, be deemed unreasonable? Is it not what the whole mercantile world are glad to do, to sacrifice the temporary possession of their treasures, in the hope and prospect of far richer treasures in return? Every trading man in the universe acts upon this principle; and upon this principle, the most splendid fortunes have been accumulated.

Neither was this command, however difficult, *singular*. This young man was a Jew, and with his countrymen in general, gloried in being a descendant of Abraham, who was called out from his country and kindred, to go he knew not whither, to subsist he knew not how. He was well acquainted with this historical fact, and he also knew that Abraham never found occasion to repent of his self-denying obedience. He furthermore had, at this very moment, before his eyes, persons who had obeyed a similar call, and who could say, *Lo, we have left all, and followed thee*. And, in fact, though we are not called to the same act of obedience; we are called to manifest that *spirit* which would ensure the performance of this act, if, in the course of Divine Providence, we are called to it. Every true disciple of Jesus must renounce, whatever of temporal good God in his providence requires, and must also submit to every privation, to every trial and affliction, which he may be called to endure in the faithful discharge of his duty. Nor was there anything in the latter part of this injunction either unreasonable or singular. He came to Jesus for instruction, and he bade him to become a stated attendant on his ministry. In the discharge of this duty, he would, doubtless, have a cross to bear; but, had not all his disciples to bear the same cross? and had not Jesus a far heavier cross to bear than any of them, or than all of them together? Indeed, had not he come from heaven to bear the cross for them? Was it unreasonable for them that the *disciple should be as his master, and the servant as his lord*?

Had this young man been really desirous of obtaining salvation, there was nothing in the injunction given him which did not deserve a cheerful and unreserved compliance. Moses, in the very prime and vigor of life, cast behind his back all the honors and all the treasures of Egypt, *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward*. And had this youth been animated by the same principles, had the honor of God

and a desire for his own salvation been as deeply rooted in his heart as they were in the heart of Moses, he would not have found the least difficulty in obeying the injunctions given to him.

II. But we shall have clearer views of this subject, in the second place, if we consider *the peculiar reasons* for the command under consideration. Our blessed Lord, in his reply to the young man, designed to discover to him *the depravity of his own heart*. This young man was ready to imagine, because he had not been guilty of any notorious breach of the commandments, that he had no ground of humiliation and contrition. In this he was most wofully deceived. Our Lord, had he pleased, might have convinced him of his error, by opening to him the spirituality of the law; he might have shown him how greatly he was mistaken in supposing that he had *kept all the commandments from his youth up*. But he took a shorter and a more convincing method: he gave him a specific charge, which was his indispensable duty to obey. By his reluctance to obey his command, our Lord showed him that his heart was not so much in unison with the law of God as he imagined, and that he was greatly deceived on this subject. He taught him, that if duty and interest should stand in competition with each other, he would prove as great a rebel as most flagrant transgressors.

Thus our Lord sought to counteract his *pride* and *self-complacency*, by leading him to manifest the worldliness and carnality of his heart. He demonstrated to him, in a most clear and convincing light, that his heart was not right in the sight of God, and that he loved and served the creature more than the Creator. Alas, what powerful obstacles the possession of riches throws in the way of our duty. *The love of money is the root of all evil*: let those, therefore, who have large possessions beware of their danger, and take the alarm. Let them remember that they are surrounded with snares and temptations, which require constant watchfulness and care. Let them see that it does not darken the understanding and warp the judgment, and dispose them to neglect the duties they owe to their own souls, and also to society around them.

He also designed to wean him from *self-confidence* and *self-dependence*, which seem to have gained great ascendancy over his mind. This is evident by the question which the young man so confidently asked—*What lack I yet?* It seems, by this question, that he saw no defects in his obedience, and had no doubt of his acceptance with God, on account of that obedience. The drift of his original question, *What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?* seems to have been to this effect: "Master, I perceive that thou art a teacher sent from God, and that thou requirest of us something different from what I have been accustomed to hear or practice, be so kind, therefore, as to inform me what it is; for I would not willingly omit anything, whereby I may secure the salvation of my soul." It appears, according this view of the

question, he wanted to establish more firmly, and substantiate more fully, his claim to eternal life, on the footing of his own obedience. Against this fatal error, the injunction of our Lord was strongly directed. It was an axe laid to the root of his self-righteousness and self-dependence. It had a most powerful tendency to convince the youth, that all his hopes of heaven were built on a foundation of sand. It showed him that he had been trusting in a refuge of lies that would fail him in the trying day, and expose his defenceless soul to the devouring wrath of God. And if this refuge would not sustain him, it must fail all who put their trust in it. May God shake the sandy foundation of the self-righteous, and make them sensibly feel its insecurity before it be everlastingly too late.

He further designed, in this injunction, to lead him to the *salvation provided for him in the gospel*. Our Lord might have preached the gospel to him more clearly and more fully, and might have informed him that salvation was to be obtained only by faith in him, as *the way, the truth, and the life*. But the time, as yet, had not arrived for the full disclosure of gospel truth. Jesus Christ made known the great truths of the gospel by degrees, as the mind was prepared for their reception. The son of righteousness had not yet risen in his full glory; he merely gilded with his refulgence, the highest mountains, and the tallest trees, and shed but a faint and feeble light over the land of Judea. Besides, had our Lord plainly and clearly declared unto him the way of salvation, there is reason to think that the young man would either have rejected the truth without further inquiry, or would have embraced it without a due preparation of soul for its reception; and, in either case, he would miss the end which he was solicitous to attain. In leading him to salvation, it was the best way to show him, in the first place, his need of it. He would then enter upon this great work with an earnest zeal that would ensure success, and with a gratitude which was necessary to establish him in the true faith. Little can be affected in the great work of saving the soul, till the mind can be impressed with a deep sense of the evil of sin, and of its lost and helpless state without the divine interposition. When this can be truly and properly done, no sacrifice is deemed too great to make, no difficulties too hard to surmount, in order that we may obtain *the pearl of great price*.

III. But while we thus vindicate the injunction given to him, we cannot but lament, in the third place, *the effect it produced upon him*: *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions*. The injunction of our Saviour produced a very different effect from what he intended. This was owing entirely to the state of mind in which the young man sought instruction. He was not an ardent and sincere inquirer after truth; he was not deeply and sensibly impressed with his lost and perishing condition; for, had he been, he would have received the in-

structions of the Saviour gladly. But, instead of rejoicing at having obtained a knowledge of the right way, he was filled with grief—*He was sad at that saying.* But what made him sad? Was he grieved and ashamed on account of his backwardness to obey the injunctions given him? No, no; that would have been a hopeful sign, and would probably have issued in his conversion to God. But, alas! he was grieved at the strictness of the precept. *He had great possessions,* and could not prevail upon himself to part with them, though they might prove his eternal ruin. His riches were his idol; and of more value, in his estimation, than any treasure in heaven. Had he been called to sacrifice *a part* of his property, he would probably have complied with the injunction; but to bereave himself of *all*, to reduce himself to a state of poverty, to place himself in a condition of entire dependence, this was a requisition which he could not comply with, a command which he could not endure.

Such is the effect of the gospel upon many at the present time: they would gladly embrace it, and would make some sacrifices to obtain its blessings; but to renounce the world with all its riches, honors, and pleasure, to mortify the deeds of the body with the affections and lusts thereof, to turn their backs upon all that is pleasing and engaging to flesh and blood, and to bring upon themselves nothing but contempt and persecution from their dearest friends and relatives, appears to them too great a sacrifice, and they hope to get to heaven upon some easier terms. Such a doctrine appears to them to be absurd, such a command unreasonable, and they turn away from them sorrowful. Thus, the reforming efficacy of the gospel is frustrated; and between a sense of their duty, and an aversion to perform it, its only effect is to render them unhappy.

But the injunction of our Lord, finally, determined him to forsake Christ altogether: *He went away grieved.* Much as he revered the Lord Jesus, and wished to partake of his salvation, he could not continue with him on such terms as these. The price which Jesus demanded for salvation was too great for him to pay, and he therefore turned his back upon him—*He went away grieved;* and this is the last we hear of him. He, probably, from this time abandoned all idea of becoming a disciple of Christ. He chose rather to abide in his legal views and practices, and suffer the consequence, than to yield obedience to a demand so contrary to his views and feelings.

Unhappy youth! How much better had it been for him if he had been born in a low estate—in the humble walks of life! The good things of this life, which God designed as a blessing, proved a curse to him; his riches stood between him and the Saviour of the world; they robbed him of the richest treasure, the most sparkling diamond heaven could bestow. Who is not ready to weep over the folly of this young man, when he reflects upon the fatal effects of his decision? Who, that sees this hopeful youth turning

his back upon his Lord and Teacher, giving up all hopes of heaven, and deliberately preferring a portion in this life to an inheritance in the life to come, does not tremble, lest he himself should be left to make the same wretched and foolish choice?

1. In the conclusion of our remarks on this subject, we shall offer a few reflections. What multitudes there are who think themselves entirely safe, yet, at the same time, they are on *the very brink of ruin*. Had we seen this youth approach Christ in the respectful manner here described, *kneeling before him* with the profoundest reverence, addressing him in manner and language as to intimate that he thought Jesus to be more than human; if we had seen him declaring confidently, that, to the best of his knowledge, he had persevered in the uniform obedience to all the commandments, and was ready to fulfil any duty that could be pointed out to him; above all, if we had seen Jesus himself, struck with his amiable deportment, and *loving him* for his excellent qualities; who amongst us would not have been disposed to envy that youth his prospects of a happy immortality? Yet, after all, this young man came short of heaven! There was *one thing he lacked*; and for that one thing, he perished forever. What a terrible thought! My dear young friends, you are moral, you are amiable, you are lovely; but not more moral, amiable, and lovely, than was this young man; but he turned his back upon his Saviour, and sunk down to hell in chains and rings of gold; he could not go to heaven, he *lacked one thing*; he was not willing to forsake all for Christ. And what multitudes there are in this city, who, like this young man, are rich, and moral, and amiable, and lovely, and yet lack one thing; they are unwilling to forsake all for Christ; they would sooner part with him, than part with *all for his sake*. They are willing to have a religion that requires no sacrifices, no crosses; that admits of pomp and splendor, fashion and parade, pride and luxury; but a religion of humility, of self-denial, of the mortification of sinful passions and appetites; a religion that leads to a renunciation of the world, and to obey God in all things, they cannot endure, away with it. They are unwilling to purchase heaven at so great a price; they prefer present gratifications and indulgences to deeds of mortification and self-denial; they seek first the kingdom of this world and the glory thereof, and still flatter themselves that all is well. Deluded by a false hope, they go on anticipating the joys of heaven; and perhaps the illusion may not be dispelled, till they awake in all the horrors of despair. O, my young friends, let this matter be duly weighed by you; and never imagine yourselves in the true way to heaven, till you can *count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*; till you are willing to *suffer the loss of all things*, rather than part with Christ.

2. If the lack of one thing cuts a man off from a true hope of heaven, how awful is the condition of those *who have no concern*

*for their souls!* There are multitudes everywhere to be found, whose lives are far from being moral; who, instead of having kept all the commandments from their earliest infancy, have violated them in many flagrant instances; and who never came to Jesus with an unfeigned desire to receive instruction respecting the way to heaven. What, then, must be their state? I appeal to you yourselves, my young friends; if this amiable youth was not saved, how can you imagine that salvation belongs to you, who have not done half so much for it as the perishing youth? Methinks this one example speaks more forcibly to you, than ten thousand arguments. You must be wilfully blind if you do not see how deplorable is your condition, and how certain your ruin, if you continue in your present state. Rest assured, it is not an easy matter to get to heaven. You must have a real concern about your souls; there must be a deep conviction of the evil of sin; there must be earnest and persevering struggles after holiness; the attainment of heaven must be paramount to every other consideration. If you would gain heaven at all, you must make religion the serious business of life; you must lay aside every wait and the sin that so easily besets you; you must cultivate every Christian grace, and yield a ready and cheerful obedience to every requisition of the Saviour. If you would gain heaven, you must *take it by the holy violence* of faith and humble prayer.

3. *Finally*, how little to be desired are great riches, since it is so difficult to have riches, and not *cleave to them instead of Christ*. The reason assigned for the young man's forsaking Christ was, that *he had great possessions*; and hence, our Lord's reflection on the almost insurmountable difficulties which riches interpose in our way to heaven. The fact is, that though every one is not called to renounce his riches precisely in the same way that this opulent ruler was, every one is required to sit loose to them, and to be willing to renounce them all, whenever they shall stand in competition with his duty to God. And every man is called to make some sacrifices for Christ. Now, a rich man's reputation is exceedingly dear to him, and his interest in the world appear to him of almost incalculable importance; and if he be called to renounce them all, the sacrifice appears too great to be endured. He hopes he shall find an easier way to heaven; and chooses, rather to risk the salvation of his soul, than to subject himself to such grievous trials in order to obtain it. And even should he taste the good word of life, and enjoy the sweetness of religion, yet still, like Demas, he is in danger of being turned aside from the path of duty by the love of this present evil world.

Regard it not, then, my young friends, a misfortune that your lot has been cast in the humble walks of life. If the rich have the advantage of you with respect to the present world, you have incomparably better prospects in regard to the world to come. You are comparatively free and unincumbered, and ready, as it were,



to run the race set before you; while they are impeded by their lusts as with flowing garments, and have their *feet ladened with thick clay*. It must not, however, be imagined, that you will be saved because you are poor, and others damned because they are rich. All must run, if they would obtain the prize. He who regards the salvation of his soul as the one thing needful, shall be saved, whether rich or poor; and he who does not, will perish. Neither the riches of the one, nor the poverty of the other, will avail him anything. The only grounds of distinction in the coming world will be, your several attainments in real piety. All other distinctions will be lost in death. Let us, then, seek to be rich *in faith*, rich in every *spiritual grace, rich towards God*. *Lay up your treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal, for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also;* and soon you will go to possess and enjoy it forever.

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## DISCOURSE XII.

### *On Prayer.*

“O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.”—Psalm lxxv., 2.

SET your affection on things above, and not on things on earth. This is the language of a heart devoted to God—of a heart aspiring to be conformed to the divine image. True religion breaks off the affection from earth, and places it on things above, *where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*. It consists in devoutly admiring his greatness, reposing in his government, submitting to his authority, confiding in his goodness, and ardently desiring to form the temper and conduct after the example of Christ. Prayer holds such a distinguished place in religion, that the whole of religion is frequently described by it: *This is the generation of them that seek thee, that seek thy face, O God of Jacob*. The neglect of prayer is a most dangerous feeling in the soul. It springs from pride, and is a denial of that homage due to God. A due preparation of heart for the reception of the mercy and grace of God, must precede the bestowment of these blessings. The hungry and thirsty relish meat and drink; the sick value health; and a sense of want will make us relish the blessings of salvation. It is painful to a minister of the gospel, who has labored many years among a people, to see a growing deficiency in this respect, and to be obliged to urge the importance and the necessity of prayer; but the depravity of the human heart urges this imposing duty upon every ambassador of heaven.

I. In considering the subject of prayer, we shall notice, in the first place, *the character* under which we are to view God, when we approach him in prayer: *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.* When we approach God in prayer, we should come to him,

1. *As God in Christ.* We have rebelled against the government of heaven—we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. We have, therefore, no right to approach a throne of mercy, in the eyes of law: for, *by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* Many forget this, and come to God without thought. They cherish no sense of guilt; they invent compliments; they turn their periods, and affect to make a display of eloquence in prayer to the Almighty. Such persons *honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from him.* They seek the praise of men more than the glory of God. *God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,* and as guilty, depraved, endangered men, it is in this character we are to come to him—as *God in Christ.* Through him all have access by one Spirit to the Father, and by him the streams of the grace and mercy of God flow to the human family. His mediation is the only ground of hope to lost and perishing man; it is the life of our prayers, and the aspiration of our desires. The throne is, as the prophet calls it, *a glorious high throue;* but it is also *a throne of grace,* where we can *obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Let us, therefore, come to *God in Christ;* but let us come as sinners, and rejoice that the way is opened.

2. We should come to him as to a *sin-pardoning God.* He who is pressed down under a deep sense of guilt, will be earnest and fervent in his supplications. He will have no time to study *manner,* or *words;* the pressure of his guilt is too heavy to admit of this. Like the publican, he will smite upon his breast, and pray to God, *Be merciful unto me a sinner.* Mercy is the loadstone which has attached him to the throne, and mercy is the burden of his prayer. Guilt overwhelms him, and shame covers his face; but the mercy and compassion of God inspires him with the hope of success. He who listens to my prayer, is a God plenteous in mercy—a God who delights in mercy—a God who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin—a God who will abundantly pardon. A persuasion that *God is rich in mercy,* to all who call upon him, will inspire us with holy boldness. This furnished the Psalmist with an impassioned argument, when he addressed the throne of grace: *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand! but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plentiful redemption.* Let this sentiment inspire the penitent soul with humble confidence; let it animate him to approach a God of mercy; and let it dispose him ever to pray, and never to faint.

3. We should come to him, as to an *all-sufficient God*. Many and diversified are the wants of the children of God; but there is a sufficiency in the *Father of mercies, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift*. *My God*, says the apostle, *shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Jesus Christ*. And Jesus himself declared to an afflicted and suffering disciple, that his *grace was sufficient for him*. We should, therefore, in our approaches to God, come to him fully persuaded of his all-sufficiency, and ask of him great things. If we want knowledge, let us come to the Father of lights. If we lack wisdom, let us ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. If we desire the aid of the Holy Spirit, to purify our hearts and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, this is also the gift of God. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*. By the exercise of devout and humble prayer, we may bring this all-sufficient God to our aid, we may enlist him in our favor; and *if God be for us, who shall be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also, fully give us all things*.

4. We should come to him as to a *bountiful and compassionate God*. To give us evidences of this, he has clothed himself in those characters we are sure to understand and to feel, especially that of a *Father*: *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*. If the son, who has been exposed to the cold wind blowing from the north, comes home to his father hungry, will he give that son a stone instead of bread? His heart revolts at the thought of it. But, *How much more will your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him*. That of a mother also, *As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you*. *I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*. The poor, dejected, trembling soul, who is overlooked by the world, shall not fail to have his dwelling visited by God. Men may pass by it, but it is the dwelling-place of the Lord, the Lord of all grace and glory. God compassionates those whom men often despise, and is bountiful to those to whose wants men turn a deaf ear. Let us cherish these views of God, and they will inspire us with humble confidence in the day of adversity, and assuage our grief in the hour of distress.

5. We should come to him as to an *omnipresent and omniscient God*. Our minds should be thoroughly persuaded when we engage in the exercise of prayer, that God is intimately acquainted with all our wants, and is able to supply them; that he knows our distress, and is able to relieve it. The Sacred Oracles teach us that, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place; that His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings; that all things are open and naked to the eyes of him with whom we have to do*,

*even the thoughts and intents of the heart. Man looketh on the outward appearance, said Samuel, but the Lord looketh on the heart.* There is no shadow of death impervious to his glance. *His eyes run to and fro through the whole earth,* to observe the humble suppliant, and afford immediate relief. Jonah was in the depth of the sea, but he cried unto God, and he heard him, and sent him deliverance. David in the cave Adullam, Peter in prison, Lazarus at the rich man's gate, John at Patmos, these all cried to God, and found him to be a present help in trouble. O how cheering is the thought, that how much soever others may overlook us, and disregard us in the days of suffering and poverty, he will not ! He will look upon us with the eye of pity and relief, and this is more than if all creation were to fix their attention upon us beside him.

6. We should come to him, as to a *God of infinite power and strength.* He who has an eye to observe and to pity, has also an arm to protect and defend. He is *The Lord God Almighty.* There is no enemy, therefore, that he is not able to subdue. All their preparations are but as a spider's web before the northern blast. He can call the things that are not, as though they were. You have often to lament the inveteracy of your lusts, the strength of your passions, and the keenness of your appetites ; you frequently feel your sins prevailing over your reason, over the voice of conscience, and over the restraints of the Holy Spirit ; but the God to whom you are here invited to draw nigh, is the God of Omnipotence, and his grace is Almighty. Draw nigh to him, and he will draw to you—bow the knee before him, and he will lend a listening ear to your supplications—call upon him, and he will subjugate all your rebellious passions, all your corroding appetites, by the power of his grace. He will bind the strong man armed, and cast him out, and spoil all his goods wherein he trusted ; he will bring the whole man, body and soul, into captivity to Christ, with all its members, affections, and desires.

7. We should come to him, finally, as *the Father of Christ, and as our Father in him.* This is a relation, infinitely more close and tender than that in which our children stand to us. He has created us, and is acquainted with all our wants ; he knows that we are to be clothed, fed, taught, and to have an inheritance provided for us. And if he be our Father, all jealousy and suspicion, all doubt and sullenness, are unworthy our character ; and poor is the excuse the best of us can make for these things. It becomes us to tell God with reverence and frankness, all the feelings of our souls, and all the aspirations of our hearts. Having received the spirit of adoption, it is our privilege to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. If we did but cherish an abiding sense of these views of God, how happy should we be in the darkest hours ! what a source of comfort and delight it would open to us in the day of adversity ! How would it dispel the clouds of darkness that gather

around us! How would it charm away some of the dullest and gloomiest hours of life!

II. But we pass, in the second place, to consider *the nature of those prayers* that God will accept. They are not the prayers of the wicked, who daily set at defiance the authority of God. Such men are in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity. Their addresses are represented by the prophet, as howling—the cries extorted by distress—the mere expressions of suffering humanity. The accents of anguish arising from the damned in hell, might as properly be called prayer.

1. God will hear the prayers of *all penitent believers*. This sentiment is fully expressed by the Apostle Peter: *Of a truth I perceive, said he, that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* Such persons become the children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. And God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts, enabling them to cry, *Abba, Father*; and it is a strong evidence that we are the children of God, when we combine obedience with prayer. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, said David, the Lord will not hear me. Your iniquities have separated between you and me,* said the Lord to a people, who, nevertheless, prayed to him as the God of Israel. Sin, is highly offensive to God, and while we cherish the love of it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives, God will turn a deaf ear to our prayers—the heavens will be as brass over our heads, and the earth as iron under our feet. If we read the fiftieth Psalm, and the first of Isaiah, we shall learn that something more is required than the mere utterance of words, to constitute an acceptable prayer in the sight of God. A change of heart must be effected; there must be the temper and spirit of a child; there must be ardent desires after our Father's image; and there must be honest and persevering struggles against sin, if we would have our prayers come up with acceptance before God.

2. They should be prayers for things, *necessary for us and suitable to the will of God.* *This is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.* To ask otherwise, is to ask him to violate his own law to please us. And this God would not do, *though Moses and Samuel stood before him.* To some, it may be said, *you have not because you ask not.* To others, however, *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.* What you ask is not suitable for God to bestow, nor beneficial for you to receive. To ask to be rich, to be great, and to be honorable—what is it, but to ask poison, to pray to be led into temptation, and to be exposed to a sure and swift destruction. What God has commanded you to do, you may ask for grace to perform. What he has promised to bestow, you may safely ask him to give. These things are necessary and beneficial for us; and God is ready

and willing to impart them as our necessities require, for he gives *grace to help in time of need.*

3. God will hear those prayers that are offered up under the *guidance and assistance of his Spirit.* Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. This he does through the teaching of the word of God, which is given as a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path. And he also creates in the soul such a deep feeling of its interest in the things for which it supplicates, that it can only groan; and this groaning the apostle declares to be *unutterable.* The Christian either cannot find words at all, or is led to ask God for what he cannot understand. It is the breathing of a new nature for objects congenial to it. God ever hears such prayers. Such a Christian stands on high ground; but he wishes to stand on higher, and to go on to perfection. He never forgets that it is not the words contained in prayer, but the feelings of the heart, that constitute true prayer in the sight of God. In the fifty-first Psalm, we have more of the true spirit of prayer, than in any other portion of the Bible besides. What deep penitence pervaded the heart of David, and what devout aspirations inspired his soul, when he offered up his prayer to God! *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* When the heart speaks to God, words are a matter of indifference.

4. Our prayers to find acceptance with God, should be offered up *through the mediation of his Son.* As all the blessings of the gospel which we enjoy, have been conferred upon us through Christ; so our services and sacrifices, which we are enabled to perform and offer, should be presented to the Father in and through him. Our prayers should be offered to God in the name and through the mediation of his Son. He is the hallowed altar on which all the offerings of his disciples must be laid, in order that they may rise up with acceptance before God. Jesus Christ inculcated this doctrine in the most clear and explicit language. *Whatsoever, said he, ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me.* The apostles enjoined upon all the churches to approach God in praise and prayer, in thanksgiving and confession, *through him, by him, and in his name.* The injunction has ever been observed; but the constant devotion of believers, have ascended to God through Christ. They come to the mercy-seat, not in their own name, but in that of the Mediator, and hope to be heard because they come through him. Such are the prayers that God will hear, and in answer to which he will send down the blessings of his love. Such prayers as these are the marrow of devotion and the essence of religion. This is true Christianity—the life of God in the soul. This is the grand end of all knowledge,

of all profession, of all attendance upon the institutions of the gospel. God inspires such prayers, and they come up with acceptance before him, and will meet with a sure reward.

III. We pass now to consider, in the third place, *the encouragements that God has given to such prayers*. They are many and various. We shall only have time to notice some of the most prominent.

1. The first ground of encouragement to which we shall call your attention, is *the free access which God has given us*. A throne has been erected, and is called *a throne of grace*. A Mediator is provided, and through him we may have access with acceptance. Having such an High Priest, we are invited to draw nigh, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. And this privilege is represented as extended to all nations, to all ages, and to all conditions of society—high and low, rich and poor. Hear St. Paul's liberality: *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ*. And thus our Saviour, when he taught us to pray, saying, *Our Father*, taught us to unite ourselves with all others, everywhere, that call upon him in sincere prayer. And, as God allows us access, so he permits us to use importunity: *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall not hold their peace, day nor night; ye that make mention of the name of the Lord, keep not silence and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*. Jesus Christ was a man of prayer; and, in addition to his own example, he has furnished us with many parables, for the purpose of encouraging and exciting us to engage in this duty. Such is the parable of the importunate widow, by which we are taught that *men should ever pray, and never faint*. The fact is, that importunity generally marks sincerity; and with this God is well pleased. The case of the woman of Syro-Phœnicia is in point. She pressed her suit with a holy vehemence, amidst much that was discouraging; and our Saviour admired, and publicly extolled, her importunity. God allows us access continually—permits us to come in every time of need; and though, for wise reasons, the blessings for which we importune may be delayed, they shall at last be bestowed, and in many cases hastened: *The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come*. Such is the access that God has granted us. It is to be regretted, that some are found so disingenuous as to presume on this allowance, and be less sensible of it, because it is a common and standing privilege; just as the blessings of air, and water, and bread, are lightly esteemed, because we enjoy them every day. If access to the throne of grace were allowed but once a year, how eagerly would the church long for the arrival of the important moment! Blessed be God, we may come

continually; for *he that keepeth Israel never slumbers nor sleeps.* This is one ground of encouragement. Then, consider,

2. *The readiness God has manifested* in hearing the prayers of his people. We have a remarkable testimony to this effect, in Isaiah: *It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* As soon as the desire is formed in the heart, God knows it, and acts accordingly. Daniel says: *Whilst I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting the supplication of the Lord my God; yea, whilst I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel touched me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.* Here Daniel is represented as receiving an answer to his prayer, before it was concluded. The Sacred Oracles represent God as being much more ready to give good things to them that ask him, than parents are to give good gifts to their children. They assure us that *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* When no other ear can hear but his, no other arm can save, no other power relieve or help; when we are destitute, and almost in despair, then his ear will hear, and his mercy will deliver us. And what a source of consolation it is, that we can never come unseasonably to him. A great man, or even a friend, may be so circumstanced, that we cannot be permitted to interrupt him, or he may be so far off that we cannot approach him; but our God is very nigh to us, he is always with us—*a very present help in trouble.* He even waits to be gracious, and stirs us up to pray, that he may bestow his bounty upon us. And, indeed, such is the readiness that God hears and answers prayer, that he has even declared, *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not.*

3. Another ground of encouragement to come to God, is *the liberality with which he has always answered prayer.* It is here as in a time of extreme drought, when a nation prays for rain. The rain falls, not only on the parched ground, but also upon the sand, the sea, and the fountains of water. So here, if any man lack wisdom, and asks of God, he giveth *liberally*, and upbraideth not. God is represented as being *plenteous* in mercy, *abundant* in goodness, *rich* in communication: *The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.* In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the mind of the great apostle seems to swell with his theme: *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.* What, is God able to give *all, above all, abundantly above all, exceeding abundantly above all*—above all that we can *ask*, above all that we can *think*? What a sublime climax is here! and all to illustrate and confirm the liberality of God. Thus, when Solomon prayed for a wise and understanding heart, God was pleased with his request, and said: *Behold, I have done according to thy word; lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; and I have also given thee* THAT WHICH THOU HAST NOT ASKED, *both riches and*



*honor.* Such is the liberality of our heavenly Father's heart. Indeed, such is the benevolence of God, that he himself has earnestly invited us to come to him, has promised to supply all our wants, and to give us durable riches and righteousness. It is the solemn declaration of Jesus Christ to his disciples: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* And now, what shall we think of the state of that man's heart, who has not offered prayer to God for a week, for a month, for a whole year? Is he the friend of his own soul? If he be destitute of God's salvation, surely he has nothing but his own sloth to blame: *he has not, because he asks not.*

4. Another source of encouragement to come to God, is *the great things he has done in answer to prayer.* He has, in answer to prayer, softened hard and malignant hearts. Jacob had lost the affections of his brother Esau. He had given Esau just reasons to hate him; and he might well expect to find him brooding over the injuries he had received, and intent on taking full revenge. But Jacob wrestled hard with God in prayer, using the most powerful arguments. God heard his prayer, changed the heart of his brother, and their meeting was accompanied by embraces and affectionate words. O, there is nothing that can bring alienated friends together like prayer! This brings the heart into an element so warm, that all its hardness and coldness will disappear. Hence, our Lord says: *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on their heads. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* This sentiment is beautifully expressed by a celebrated poet:

"So artists melt the sullen ore of lead,  
By heaping coals of fire upon its head;  
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,  
And, pure from dross, the silver runs below."

You may also remember the great things which God did in answer to the prayer of Moses; such as the removal of the various plagues of Egypt, and the innumerable manifestations of mercy to the Jewish people. Think of Elias, of Asa, of Jehosaphat, of Hezekiah. And of what shall be said of David? These were all men of like passions with us; and yet, how great things God did for them, and for those in whose behalf they called upon him. What encouragement, then, is all this to pray? The praying Christian is the strong and thriving Christian; *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* As the naturally weak ivy, which, had it no support, would only grovel upon the earth, but adhering to some neighbouring tree, and entwining itself about it, thus grows and flourishes, and rises higher and higher; and the more the winds blow, and the tempest beat it, the closer it adheres, the nearer it

clings, and the faster the fibres embrace the prop that supports it, and it lives and grows uninjured ; just so the Christian, naturally weak, by prayer connects himself with the Almighty, and the more dangers and difficulties beset him, the more closely they unite him to his God, he clings to him through all the storms and tempests of life, and is strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inner man. High, indeed, is the privilege of prayer ; it turns our very wants to our advantage, leading us by them into a constant intercourse with God, and keeping us in a spiritual and heavenly state of mind.

5. *The manner in which God is represented to be overcome by prayer*, forms another strong encouragement to its continued exercise. Thus, in the case of Jacob at Peniel, to which we have already referred, the prophet Hosea says: *By his strength he had power with God ; yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed ; he wept and made supplication unto him.* Here we have a fine picture of the success attendant on the holy wrestling of a suppliant mind with God. There is another fine illustration of this fact in the book of Exodus. The Israelites had very greatly provoked God, and he was determined to destroy them ; but, while he intimated his intention to Moses, aware that he would intercede for them, he says, *Now, therefore, LET ME ALONE, that I may consume them.* Do not interpose thy powerful supplication. Moses, however, did intercede, and was successful. *The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.* A similar instance occurs in the book of Numbers. God said again, *I will smite this people.* But, said Moses, *The Egyptians will hear of it, and they will say that thou didst slay them, because thou wert not able to bring them into the land, which thou didst promise to give them ; rather let thy power be manifested in forgiving them ! and the Lord said, I have pardoned according thy word.* Thus God has, on many occasions, put on the appearance of alteration, in order to encourage holy importunity and perseverance on the part of his people. Imitate those holy men in your addresses and supplications to the throne of grace, and who will dare say that you will not be successful ? God has never sent the needy away empty.

6. We are excited to engage in the exercise of prayer, *by the supernatural instinct created in all renewed minds, which leads us to God as the only adequate good of the soul.* When God bestows upon a man the ability to pray, it is, in effect, giving that man an encouragement to pray. It was said of Saul of Tarsus, after his conversion, *Behold, he prayeth.* And this same apostle, afterwards writing to the Galatians, says, *Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth !* How said God to his people of old, *Shall I put thee among the children ; and I said thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me.* This instinct is so power-

ful, that, wherever it exists, it controls the heart and the affections, it leads its possessor to look upwards—to pray affectionately to God—to plead with fervor and importunity—to take hold of the skirts of the robe that covers the Deity, his powerful and efficacious promises. The Spirit of God is imparted to all renewed and sanctified persons, to help their manifold infirmities, and to teach them how to pray. God, indeed, pours into their hearts a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplication. *He has great reasons to doubt his regenerations who is not a man of prayer.*

7. *The glorious and continued intercession of Jesus Christ*, forms another encouragement to come to God in prayer. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.* In the seventeenth chapter of John, we have an admirable specimen of the mode in which Jesus Christ intercedes for his people. Let us not entertain the thought for a moment, that because Jesus Christ is removed from this scene of noise and strife, he has ceased to be interested for his disciples on earth. The Sacred Oracles inform us that he has entered *into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* It is an encouraging and interesting thought, when we approach the throne of grace, to reflect that he who was in all points tempted as we are; who died for us, and rose again, and is seated at the right hand of God; who will come again to judgment in the clouds of heaven, and from whose own voice we hope to receive a welcome to the joys of our Lord, that he is making intercession for us. Let this sentiment inspire us with confidence when we approach God in prayer; let it inflame our devotion, and kindle up in our breast the undying fires of zeal and love in the cause of our Redeemer.

8. *The numerous promises of God* open up another source of encouragement, to engage us in the exercise of prayer. These cluster on every page of the Bible. They assure the praying soul, that *the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ear is open to their cry—that the prayer of the upright is his delight—that he will fulfil the desires of those that fear him, and hear their cry, and save them—that every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.* In the prophecy of Hosea, a mighty chain is represented as passing through the heavens, from heaven to earth, from the earth to the church—*I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.* In this sublime passage, the heavens are represented as praying to be stored with clouds, that they may drop down fatness upon the earth—the Lord answers the heavens, and the clouds are formed—the earth invokes the clouds, that they may drop down their fatness into its bosom—the

bottles of heaven are unstopped in answer to the call of the earth—then the corn, and wine, and olive, implore the earth to put forth its vegetative energy—the earth answers; and corn, wine, and oil, are produced—Jezreel, the people of God, who are perishing for the want of food, cries for the necessaries of life, and their wants are abundantly supplied. All these are dependant on each other, as the links are which constitute a chain; and God has the government of the whole. He manages all for the benefit of man. How wondrous are the ways of providence! How gracious and merciful is the God of the whole earth! Here is a series of personifications linked together. Corn, wine, oil, the earth, the clouds and their contents, the heavens, and the air, are all represented as intelligent beings, influencing and speaking to each other. God is at one end of the chain, and man at the other; and, by means of the intermediate links, the latter is kept in a state of continued dependance upon the former for life, breath, and all things.

9. *The gracious and endearing relation in which God stands to his people*, is another ground of encouragement to approach him in prayer. In the enumeration of the various laws which were given to the children of Israel, we meet with a very touching proof of the gracious disposition of the Almighty towards his creatures: *If thou lend money to any of thy people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down; for that is his covering only; it is his raiment for his skin, wherein shall he sleep! And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me that I will hear him,* FOR I AM GRACIOUS. He who will thus look on a poor man, will not fail to look on those who cry to him for salvation. There are innumerable passages of Scripture, in which he represents himself under the touching relation of a parent; of a father pitying his children, giving them everything; of a mother comforting them; bearing them on his mind with greater constancy of affection, than is even felt by the mother towards her nursing infant. He declares, that *in all their afflictions he is afflicted*; and that *by the angel of his presence he will save them*. He assures them, that *as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so he is round about them that fear him*. He says, *he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye*. Think of these, and many, many more endearing relations which he sustains, and then ask, if it be probable that he will reject spiritual, humble, fervent, persevering prayer.

10. *Finally, the experience of the people of God* forms a strong ground of encouragement to engage and persevere in the exercise of prayer. And here, to which of the saints shall we turn? Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, David, Daniel, Paul; these were all men of prayer, and they all rejoiced in its efficacy and success. In fact, the very exercise of prayer does good; it calls up to our recollection our very necessities; it is calculated to inspire gratitude

and confidence ; it tends to bring the various perfections of God full to view ; and in every way it is likely to benefit the individual who engages in it. The reasonableness of the exercise, the comparative ease with which it may be engaged in, and the ample encouragement held out, leave all without excuse who neglect it. From the whole may we not infer,

1. *That the privileges of good men are very great.* Whatever may be the wants they feel, they have a Father in heaven whose eyes are ever upon them, whose heart is love, whose hands are ever open, whose stores are ever boundless and inexhaustible. They have an advocate ever nigh, able and willing to plead their cause. They have a Spirit to help their infirmities, and to teach them how to come to God in the exercise of prayer, acceptable to him. The throne of grace is accessible at all times, and God is a very present help in trouble. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Let us, my brethren, prize and improve this privilege. Let us avail ourselves of its advantages to the utmost. Let us be often found at the throne of grace, supplicating the divine mercy and imploring the divine aid. Let us erect the family altar, and bring before the Lord our domestic afflictions, and ask his sustaining grace. Let us enter into our closets, and pray to our Father in secret ; and our Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward us openly.

2. *How ought we to bless God for a Mediator.* But for him, there could be no access to God ; no blessings of salvation could be enjoyed. But the Mediator has removed all obstructions out of the way, and made the throne of mercy accessible. How graciously has he toiled, how earnestly entreated, how willingly suffered, that the path of promise might not be hidden, and that none of God's creatures might leave the way of life for lack of a cheering voice, or an assisting arm. Weak, sinful, ignorant, in our best desires and purest offerings, and often dreading to approach directly to him who is infinitely pure and *cannot look on sin* ; how consoling it is to know, that there is one to offer encouragement and hope, and to lead us tenderly by the hand to our heavenly Father's feet ; one himself who has shared our infirmities, and can, therefore, pity them ; who has himself endured temptations, and borne our weakness ; and who, tender and forbearing, *breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax*, and whose accents to the humble and believing are full of encouragements and peace. Let these cheering thoughts dispel from our minds gloomy and desponding apprehensions. Let us remember, *he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things.* Seeing that we have this great high priest, *Jesus the Son of God*, let us hold fast our profession, and come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

3. *How evident is the sin and folly of those who neglect prayer.*

To cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God, is evidence of impiety and wickedness. And the case is much the same with those who pray coldly and indifferently. God, the God of grace and glory, is seated on his throne; he invites you to come that you may be blessed, and you keep away. O what cruelty do you practice upon your souls! If you are lean and lifeless, and not what you ought to be, it may be generally traced to the neglect of prayer. The whole world cannot supply a single want of one soul, but God can supply the wants of all souls; and he will supply the wants of those who call upon him. *Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*

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### DISCOURSE XIII.

#### *On Fasting.*

“When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.”—Matt. vi., 16.

RELIGIOUS fasting has been practised by most nations, from the remotest antiquity. Some divines even pretend it had its origin in the earthly paradise, where our first parents were forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge. But, though this seems to be carrying the matter too far, it is certain that the Jewish church has observed fasts ever since its first institution. Nor were the neighboring heathens, the Egyptians, Phenicians, and Assyrians, without their fasts. The Egyptians, according to Herodotus, sacrificed a cow to Isis, after having prepared themselves by fasting and prayer: a custom which he likewise attributes to the women of Cyrene. Porphyry affirms, that the Egyptians, before their stated sacrifices, always fasted a great many days, sometimes for six weeks, and that the least continued for seven days; during all of which time, the priests and devotees not only abstained from flesh, fish, wine, and oil, but even from bread, and some kinds of pulse. These austerities were communicated by them to the Greeks, who observed their fasts much in the same manner. The Athenians had the Eleusinian and Thesmophorian fasts, the observance of which was very rigorous, especially among the females, who spent one whole day sitting on the ground, in a mournful dress, without taking any nourishment. In the island of Crete, the priests of Jupiter were obliged to abstain all their lives from fish, flesh, and baked meats. Apuleius informs us, that whoever had a mind to be initiated into the mysteries of Cybele, were obliged to prepare themselves by fasting

ten days; and, in short, all the pagan deities, whether male or female, required this duty of those that desired to be initiated into their mysteries, of their priests and priestesses that gave the oracles, and of those that came to consult them.

Among the heathens, fasting was also practised before some of their military enterprises. Aristotle informs us, that the Lacedæmonians having resolved to succor a city of the allies, ordained a fast throughout their whole dominions, without excepting even the domestic animals. And this they did for two ends: one, to spare provisions in favor of the besieged; the other, to draw down the blessings of heaven upon their enterprise. The inhabitants of Tarentum, when besieged by the Romans, demanded succors from their neighbors of Rhegium, who immediately commanded a fast throughout their whole territories. Their enterprise having had good success by their throwing a supply of provisions into the town, the Romans were compelled to raise the siege; and the Tarentines, in memory of this deliverance, instituted a perpetual fast.

Fasting has always been considered a particular duty among philosophers and religious people, some of whom have carried their abstinence to an incredible length. At Rome it was practised by kings and emperors themselves. Numa Pompilius, Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Vespasian, and others, we are told, had their stated fast-days; and Julian the Apostate was so exact in this observance, as to outdo the priests themselves, and even the most rigid philosophers. The Pythagoreans kept a continual lent; but with this difference, that they believed the use of fish to be equally unlawful with that of flesh. Besides their constant temperance, they also frequently fasted rigidly, for a long time. In this respect, however, they were all outdone by their master, Pythagoras, who continued his fast for no less than forty days together. Even Apollonius Tyaneus, one of his most famous disciples, could not come up to him in the length of his fasts, though they greatly exceeded those of the ordinary Pythagoreans. The Gymnosophists, or Brachmans of the east, are also very remarkable for their severe fastings; and the Chinese, according to Father Lecompte, have also their stated fasts, with forms of prayer for preserving them from barrenness, inundations, earthquakes, &c. The Mahometans, too, who possess so large a part of Asia, are very remarkable for the strict observance of their fasts; and the exactness of their devices, in this respect, is extraordinary.

The abstinence of the ancient Jews commonly lasted twenty-seven or eight hours at a time; beginning before sunset, and not ending till some hours after sunset next day. On these days they were obliged to wear white robes, in token of grief and repentance; to cover themselves with sackcloth, or their worst clothes; to lie on ashes, to sprinkle them on their heads, &c. Some spent the whole night and day following in the temple, or synagogue, in prayers and other devotions, barefooted, with a scourge in their

hands, of which they sometimes made frequent use, in order to raise their zeal. Lastly, in order to complete their abstinence, at night they were to eat nothing but a little bread dipped in water, with some salt for seasoning; except they chose to add to their repast some bitter herbs, and pulse.

The ancients, both Jews and Pagans, had also their fasts for purifying the body, particularly the priests, and such as were in any way employed at the altars; for when nocturnal disorders happened to these, it was unlawful for them to approach all the next day, which they were bound to employ in purifying themselves. On this account, at great festivals, where their ministry could not be dispensed with, it was usual for them, on the eve thereof, not only to fast, but also to abstain from sleep, for the greater certainty. For this purpose, the high-priest had under-officers to awaken him, if overtaken with sleep; against which other preservatives were also used.

In the words which we have selected for our present meditation and improvement, we have the authority of our Saviour for fasting, under the Christian dispensation, and the manner in which it is to be observed. This duty was frequently performed by the apostles and primitive Christians. The Apostle Paul, in recounting the history of his life, uses the following emphatic and moving language: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeying often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in *fastings* often, in cold and nakedness." Here the apostle mentions having been often engaged in *fastings*; and, doubtless, this was the custom of the other apostles, and early Christians. It was also customary, before the *imposition of hands*, to spend a portion of time in *fasting and prayer*. It furthermore appears, from the evangelical history, that married Christians, on particular occasions, separated for a season, that they might the more effectually give themselves wholly up to *prayer and fasting*.

1. In addressing you from these words, we propose, in the first place, to consider the manner in which religious fasting should be performed. When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

2. We should observe a religious fast, by *abstaining from food*. A fast is termed, by the Greeks, *nesis*; and literally signifies, *not to eat*. Hence, fast means a total abstinence from food, for a certain time. Abstaining from *meat*, and living on *fish, vegetables*, and *other light food*, is no fast; or, more properly considered, is a burlesque on fasting. Some have supposed that a true idea of fasting



is an abstinence from sin. This however is a mistake. There is no such term in the Bible as fasting from sin. The very idea is absurd and ridiculous—as though sin were a part of our daily food. The first and most serious test of a fast is a total abstinence from all kinds of food. We have however some instances in the Scriptures of partial fasting. These instances occur in cases of sickness or bodily weakness when a total abstinence for any length of time would endanger the health of the individual. *In those days,* says Daniel, *I was exceedingly weakfulnesse. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth, neither did I allow myself at all to be comforted, because my face was made pale with fasting.* This fast which was kept by Daniel was only partial. It was extended no long for this abstinence. A Jew on fast usually used about twenty-eight sorts of things which some they wholly abstained from all kinds of food.

*Warn ye fast,* says our Saviour, *be not as the hypocrites: that they never keep a hypocritical fast. First several instances in the Sacred Oracles, it appears that many who pretended to keep a fast did not in fact abstain from food: In the day of their fast they find pleasure: they anoint and rub their heads. The pleasure to which the prophet here alludes, was certainly the pleasure of eating and drinking with their usual qualifications. This course of conduct was merely playing the part of a hypocrite; for they only kept a hypocritical fast. And may not this charge be repeated to us daily brought against us? Have we not been admonished, *and our lives long to take our regular meals on the days of our public solemnities and fasting?* How then can we refer the charge of keeping hypocritical fasts? *Warn ye fast,* be not as the hypocrites: *Do not merely pretend to fast, but fast in reality.**

2. We were to observe a true fast by the humble confession of our sins to God, and a public confession for them. The humility and approbation of our sins is properly considered, which chiefly affect our hearts; but the numerous words which we are continually press upon our thoughts, eyes and ears distract them: the eagerness and desirous will with which we pursue worldly objects, blind the moral sense of the soul, and smother the voice of conscience, and our sinful thoughts pass on and appetites hurry us along with the impetuosity of a torrent. Thus we are hurried by the din of the world, and thus we are misled by the enticements of pleasure, in the vanity of youth, pleasure away, and the wisdom of old age gathers around us, and tells us the strange of life is the very foundation. As we are unprepared to meet our God and our Judge, we sink into the very jaws of death. Now, the great object of fasting is to subvert these worldly objects and to weaken our passions and appetites, so that we may obtain a clear eye and a more feeling sense of our sinful condition. When we see our sins in all their heinous deformities, and view the inner man which they have perverted, we will inevitably turn upon our souls, we will

be led to hate them and renounce them. Indeed, distress of soul on account of sin, or of its punishment, will naturally lead us to abstain from food. In such a condition of soul, people will have little regard even for their sustenance, much less for the delicacies of life. The history of Saul furnishes us with a striking instance of this fact, who, in his distress because of Samuel, *had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night*. We have another striking instance to illustrate this fact, recorded in the history of David, when he mourned the death of Saul and Jonathar. "And they mourned, and wept, and fasted till evening, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword. And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son. The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askalon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there is the shield of the mighty vilely cast away, the shield of Saul as though he had not been anointed with oil."

When good men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, and behold with the eye of the mind the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrow of heart for their offences, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open the grief of their hearts to the Almighty, and call upon him for mercy. When this is done seriously, the mind is so fully occupied with sorrow and heaviness, and with an earnest desire to be delivered from wrath to come, that all the desire for meat and drink is for a season entirely subdued, and the soul loathes worldly pleasures and carnal delights, and is wholly absorbed in weeping, lamenting, mourning, and manifesting this state of mind by expressive words and appropriate behavior.

By means of abstinence, godly sorrow and hatred to sin, may be increased as well as manifested. For, as the fulness of bread, and the indulgence of our appetites, tend to produce levity and thoughtlessness of mind, carelessness and stupidity of spirit, so fasting and denial of the appetite tend to produce reflection, seriousness, concern about salvation, and a deep sense of the importance and certainty of spiritual and eternal things.

When a hypocrite fasts, being destitute of all true sorrow for sin, he is under the disagreeable necessity of putting on the appearance of a sad countenance, and of disfiguring his face, that he may appear unto men to fast. A hypocrite has always a very difficult part to act; he wishes to appear penitent, and not possessing any godly sorrow at heart, he is obliged to counterfeit it the best way he can, by a gloomy and austere look, which is highly offensive in the sight of God. He has, therefore, forbidden his people, under

the gospel age, to use any outward badge of sorrow and mourning on occasions of fasting and prayer. *When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* That is, dress in the ordinary manner ; and let the whole of thy deportment prove, that thou desirest to recommend thy soul to God, and not thy face to man. Men look at the outward appearance ; but God looks at the heart, and requires truth and sincerity in the soul.

3. We should observe a religious fast, *by humble and devout prayer.* Nothing is more reasonable than to set apart special seasons to engage in this devout exercise. It has been done by the church of God, and by great and good men in every age of the world. Jacob devoted one whole night in fervently wrestling with the angel of God ; *he wept and made supplication unto him, and by his strength he had power with God.* We also learn from the evangelical history, that the primitive disciples spent a great proportion of the ten days in prayer, which intervened between the ascension of our Lord and the day of Pentecost. The prayers which were offered up on these special occasions, were marked by great strength of fervor, and by a faith that would take no denial. *I will not let thee go,* said Jacob, *except thou bless me.* In order to excite this fervency of soul, and vigor of faith, fasting has been united to prayer. When the stomach is empty, the understanding is most clear, the emotions of the soul the most easily excited, and the mind and the heart best prepared for holy and heavenly exercises in every part of Christian worship. Then we discern most clearly, and feel most deeply, spiritual and eternal things, and are the most sensibly affected with the importance of our duty in all respects. Such is the deep feeling that should move the soul in prayer, on special occasions of fasting, for it requires extraordinary efforts to procure extraordinary blessings.

When hypocrites fast, they are not internally and spiritually moved, but merely external and formal agents in all the duties of the day. They honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from him. He, therefore, says respecting them : *He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man ; he that sacrifices a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck ; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood ; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in abominations. I will also choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them, because, when I called, none did answer ; when I spake, they did not hear ; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.*

4. We should observe a religious fast, *by reformation of heart and life.* A thorough reformation of heart and life should always accompany fasting and prayer. Indeed, the chief design of fasting and prayer, is to subdue the power of sin over us by laying the

most powerful considerations to heart, and by chastening our stubborn and rebellious appetites. He who does not forsake the love and practice of sin, has fasted and prayed to no good purpose. *Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon him. But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also, the axe is laid to the root of the trees: therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.* How necessary it is to do so, at the present time, especially, as there are so many indications of the divine favor. All hopes of deliverance from the power and dominion of sin, and of obtaining a blessing to our souls without this, are vain. The only alternative afforded to the sinner, is, *reformation or ruin.*

Our fasts may be called hypocritical when they are not followed by any reformation. All hypocrites, when they fast, are inconsistent; for they return to the commission of those very sins to-morrow, for which they pretend to fast, and mourn, and earnestly to seek pardon to-day. *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.* Let not that man who is thus polluted with sin, whose throat is an open sepulchre, and whose lips are full of deceit, expect any spiritual blessings from God, till he enter seriously upon the great work of reformation. It will be in vain for him to *fast and afflict his soul*, and return to his former course of sin and folly. All such exercises, while we cleave to our sins, will be regarded by God as stench in his nostrils; he will turn away from us with loathings, as we turn away from putrefaction. And have we not reason to fear, that thousands among us fast as do the hypocrites! Have not many of you, my hearers, fasted, if indeed you can be said to have fasted, in this hypocritical manner, on such days as the pre-

sent, if not on this day? But can we hope by such fasts to avert God's wrath, to obtain blessings for ourselves and our country? Surely, it is in vain to expect them.

II. Having shown the manner in which a religious fast should be kept, we shall proceed, in the second place, to *point out the end proposed in its observance*. We are informed by our Saviour, that those who observe a religious fast in a proper manner, and in a becoming spirit, should be rewarded openly. The reward which is here promised, may be comprised under two general ideas: the judgment of God may be averted, and his blessings secured.

1. *The judgments of God may be averted*. No sentiment is more fully and clearly expressed in the Sacred Oracles, than this. The Scriptures furnish us with many striking examples for its confirmation and illustration. Among others, we have one full of glowing imagery, as recorded in the book of Joel. A grievous famine threatened the Jewish nation, in consequence of being overrun by the palm-worm, locust, canker-worm, and caterpillar. These reptiles and insects, in succession, like a numerous and destructive army, passed through the land. That which the palm-worm left, was eaten by the locust; and that which was left by the locust, was eaten by the canker-worm; and that which was left by the canker-worm, was eaten by the caterpillar. The land was like the garden of Eden before them, and behind them as a desolate wilderness. All the green fields, and every green leaf, was eaten up; and every fig-tree was barked. The vine dried up, the fig-tree languished; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree, the apple-tree, and all the trees of the field, were withered. The seed rotted under the sod, and the harvest was cut off. The flocks of sheep were desolate, the cattle lowed for pasture, and the beasts groaned with hunger and thirst. The whole land was one wide and barren waste, as though it had been consumed by a burning and desolating flame. All the beauty of nature departed, and even the wilderness itself was clothed in mourning. These reptiles and insects increased and multiplied, till they covered the face of the land, and filled the air, like a thick, dense cloud; so that the sun was darkened by day, and the moon by night. They marched on their way, and their ranks could not be broken. They penetrated into the city; they ran upon the wall; they climbed up upon the houses; they entered in at the windows, like a thief. The earth quaked before them, and the heavens trembled; the sun and moon were darkened, and the stars withdrew their shining. The Lord went before his army, and uttered his voice in great and terrible judgments; for he was strong to execute his word. The inhabitants of the land trembled, and every face gathered blackness; for it was a day of darkness and gloominess—a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains.

In this state of national calamity and distress, a solemn fast was sanctified. The trumpet was blown in Zion; the people were as-

sembled, and the elders gathered. The bridegroom came forth from his chamber, and the bride from her closet; and the solemn assembly turned to God, with all their hearts, with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And they rent their hearts, as well as their garments, in turning unto the Lord their God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. And the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, wept between the porch and the altar, and said: Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. And the Lord pitied his people, and answered and said unto them: Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen. I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate. The pastures of the wilderness shall be clothed with verdure; the tree shall bear her fruit; the fig-tree and the vine shall yield their strength. The floors shall be full of wheat, and the land shall overflow with wine and oil; and I will return to you the years that the locust has eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palm-worm—my great army which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that he hath dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God. Such was the national calamity—such was the desolating scourge, that was removed by fasting and prayer.

But the spirit of prophecy has foretold a more terrible day of the divine displeasure, than that which we have described—a day when the wrath of God shall burn to the lowest hell—a day when he will rain upon the wicked fire, and snares, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest—a day that is emphatically styled *the great day of his wrath*. It shall be ushered in with the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of the archangel. The signal shall be heard by the sleeping millions, who shall come forth from their dusty beds. The sea shall cast up its dead, and roll on the majestic wave its living forms to the shore. The living shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; and all shall be caught up into the regions of the air. The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and the works thereof, burnt up. In the midst of these august scenes, fear and dismay shall seize the ungodly. In their frantic rage, they shall gnaw their tongues with pain; and shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the presence of God, and to shield them from the wrath of the Lamb. But rocks and mountains shall flee away, and deny them their friendly protection. The Judge shall descend, in awful grandeur, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel. He shall proclaim, as when seven thunders utter their voices, Bring hither these

mine enemies, that would not that I should rule over them, and slay them before me. And, O my God, will the unconverted, who hear me this day, be among the number? Will they appear before this awful tribunal naked, and unprepared to meet their Judge? Will they be exposed, in that awful period, to that devouring wrath, which will consume their souls?

My friends, we have consecrated this solemn fast to avert this impending storm, which ere long will burst upon the guilty heads of the wicked. And how many of our parents, and children, and companions, and associates, are among the number of the wicked, and exposed to the fiery indignation of the Almighty? And can we bear the thoughts of their going on in sin, and finally laying down in sorrow? Will that awful sound fall upon our ears, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? Shall these eyes behold the flaming sword of divine justice unsheathed against those bound to us by the strongest ties of nature? Shall we see them, all pale and ghastly, sinking down into the shades of darkness, to rise no more? O come, fellow-sinner, and unite with us to-day in rending the heart, in weeping over the condition of perishing man, and in calling upon God to avert this impending storm of divine wrath! O God! save the ungodly from the power and dominion of sin; save them from the corroding cares of the world; save them from the snares of the devil; save them from the pleasures of sense; save them from the fear of death and the horror of hell! O, save them from the storm of vengeance, in the great day of thy wrath!

2. The judgments of God may not only be averted by fasting and prayer, but *his blessings may also be secured*. The Scriptures are replete with this sentiment. We have two instances of the consecration of a special fast in the Jewish church, (1 Samuel vii., 5, 6; Neh. ix., 1,) to obtain the pardon of their sins in departing from the commandments of the Lord. At these fasts they put away their *strange gods*, and also *separated themselves from their strange wives*, and served the Lord only, and kept his commandments. In the days of Ezra they consecrated a solemn fast to beg special mercies of God, and *to seek of him a right way*, (viii., 21.) These fasts were observed with becoming solemnity, and were attended with the divine blessing. Such fasts, when duly celebrated, are styled *such fasts as God has chosen, an acceptable day to the Lord, a day holy to the Lord, and honorable*; and such seasons not only meet with the divine approbation, but will likewise be attended with the blessing of God.

These are the very blessings we need, and to obtain which we have consecrated this solemn fast: we ask of God mercy to pardon our sins, and his Holy Spirit to direct us in the right way, and to give us strength to walk therein. And these blessings are certain and sure to all who rend their hearts, and turn to the Lord their God. *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,*

*whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

In conclusion let me, in the first place, address myself to the *unconverted part of this assembly*. If you would be benefited by this consecrated fast, you must become truly penitent, you must rend your hearts. To rend the heart is a figurative expression, but a figure full of meaning. The ancient Jews, on the occasions of public fasting, wore a mean and coarse habit as a token of grief. Hence, *to rend the garment*, was used as a sign of great sorrow and amazement. This custom, however, when a sense of the evil of sin and sorrow for it were wanting, degenerated into a hypocritical form. We are, therefore, commanded to rend our hearts, and not our garments. If we would gain the favor of God, our hearts must be rent from sin—from the love and practice of sin—from sinful passions and desires, as well as from sinful customs and sinful habits. We must put sin away from us as that abominable thing that God hates. And we must do it now—to-day. And your souls must be deeply humbled within you on account of your sins, and you must weep and mourn over them, and pray God to pardon them. Your hearts must be rent from earthly pleasures and delights, from the love of riches, and that honor that cometh from man. *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world.* Think of the young man who came to Christ seeking a knowledge of eternal life. But his love for earthly riches overcame his desire for heaven, so, after the way was pointed out to him, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. How melancholy to see him sinking down to hell in chains of gold! Thrice happy, indeed, would that young man have been, had he rent his heart from the love of earthly possessions. You must rend your hearts from all creatures, however fondly or affectionately you may be attached to them, at least so far as they obstruct your salvation. Every offending eye must be plucked out, and every offending arm cut off. O! how often do young people ensnare each other's souls! how often do we suffer our hearts to become so much attached to our worldly associates, or to be so ensnared by the fear of their displeasure, as to hold us back from Christ! But if they will not go with you to Christ, it is better to part with them here, than to sink down with them here-



after into perdition. Your hearts must be rent from pride, and you must be abased low in the depths of humility. Pride is highly offensive to God; he has said that he will *resist the proud afar off, but will give grace to the humble*. O restrain the pride of your hearts, and seek *that meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is an ornament of great price*. When the heart is glued to pride, the soul is ashamed to fly to Jesus for refuge; it lingers upon the plains of destruction, till ruin, irrecoverable ruin, overtakes it. O, fellow sinner, rend your heart to-day from every sinful object, from every endearing delight that would hold you back from Christ; make one mighty effort, and cast yourself at the feet of sovereign mercy; and there mourn, and weep, and pray, till in the strength and majesty of heaven, you are enabled to rise, clothed in your right mind, and filled with all the fulness of God. All heaven is waiting to be gracious, and the angels of God are ready to rejoice over every repenting sinner.

2. My brethren, *let us to-day humble ourselves before our God*, and see if he will not exalt us; let us rend our hearts from every sinful and from every forbidden object, and see if he will not restore unto us the joy of his salvation; let us break off from the love and practice of every sin, and turn to the Lord our God with all our hearts, and see if he will not display his power and manifest his glory in our midst; let us try him and prove him to-day, and see if he will not open the windows of heaven, and pour us out a rich and lasting blessing. He has promised to come down upon his people like *rain upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth*—he has declared that *the wilderness shall bud and blossom as the rose, and that springs of water shall break out in the dry and thirsty land*—then his people shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: *the mountains and the hills shall break forth before them into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir-tree; and instead of the briar, shall come up the myrtle-tree; it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. Then shall our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters will be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. Then the Lord will create in Zion a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night; indeed, he will be a wall of fire round about us, and the glory in the midst of us.*

## DISCOURSE XIV.

*God richly Provides for the Wants of all his Creatures.*

"Thou openest thine hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing."—  
Ps. cxlv., 16.

CREATION is full of God—wherever we turn our eyes, we see the clearest traces of his existence, his power, his wisdom, and his goodness. The heavens declare his glory, the firmament showeth forth his handiwork, and the earth is full of his goodness. *The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* How much soever men may be in the dark respecting God, it is not for the want of evidence. He is not far from every one of us; for *in him we live, and move, and have our being.*

The passage before us is truly and wonderfully sublime; it expresses a great truth in the most simple and forcible language. It represents the Supreme Being as the Father of his creation, surrounded with an innumerable family, whose eyes all wait on him for daily food; while he, with paternal goodness, opens his bounteous hand, and satisfies their various wants. How wonderful, how surprising, and how complicated is the machinery of Divine Providence—a providence extending to all events, and supplying the wants of every living creature—a providence ever watchful, and never forgetting or overlooking a single living thing—a providence acting with all the force and regularity of the laws of nature. It is to this bounty of providence, to which our attention is called in the text. In the discussion of the subject, I shall offer some remarks by way of explanation, notice the evidence on which it rests—and conclude by an improvement of the subject.

I. We proceed, then, in the first place, to make some remarks *in explanation of the subject.* *Thou openest thy hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.* There is much discontent among men; they are seldom satisfied, but are often found murmuring and complaining against God. Objections to the equality and goodness of Divine Providence, are too generally entertained; and there are but few persons who feel themselves duly impressed with the reality and the importance of the doctrine. In order, therefore, to obviate such objections, I would observe—

1. The desires which God satisfies, are to be restricted to those of *his own creating.* Men have created many artificial and sinful desires. These God has nowhere engaged to satisfy; and if men take the bounties of providence to satisfy these self-created and sinful desires, they prostitute them to an unlawful purpose; and

must, therefore, be reduced to a state of want and suffering, for which providence is not to be held responsible. The truth of this remark must be obvious to every strict observer of the state and condition of society. For instance, God has created no desire for ardent spirits; the burning thirst of the intemperate is self-created; it is not a natural, but an artificial desire. The pain, the distress, the uneasiness, which is felt by the intemperate man, when he is deprived of his usual drams, are the result of a self-created, and not of any natural desire that God has implanted in the breast of man. If this doctrine be true, the conversion of bread-stuff into intoxicating drinks is the perversion of the bounty of providence. It is taking the staff of life, and converting it into the instrument of death. It will also follow, that all the money which is employed in the purchase of this article to be used as a drink, is likewise misapplied. It is taking so much money from the ordinary channels marked out by Divine Providence, and forcing it in an unnatural direction. This prostitution of the order of a bountiful providence, is productive of a two-fold evil: it is an evil to the man who drinks the poisonous draught, and to his innocent family, who are thus deprived of their proper and legitimate support. And what a terrible scourge this demon of intemperance has been to our country! What ravages have marked its progress! What bitter lamentations and cries have been its constant attendants! It has entered the peaceful abodes of the domestic circle, where nought but joy and happiness reigned, and converted them into the habitations of strife and contention, of wretchedness and misery! It has reduced thousands to poverty, and clothed them in rags! It has peopled our alms-houses with inmates! It has filled our jails and halls of jurisprudence with criminals! It has consigned a multitude of all classes and conditions of men to an untimely grave! But as great and as numerous as are the evils which arise from intemperance, Divine Providence is not to be held responsible for one of them. God has not made any intoxicating liquor; it is one of the inventions of man. Neither has he created any natural desire for its use; the desire of the intemperate man is self-formed, arising from the constant or frequent use of intoxicating drinks. The providence of God may then be still regarded as good and bounteous, notwithstanding all the poverty and distress intemperance may have brought upon mankind.

Similar remarks may also be extended to the common use of tobacco. The love of tobacco is not a natural, but wholly a self-created desire. In any, and in all the forms in which it is used, it is exceedingly repulsive to the natural taste of man. It requires a long and severe course of discipline to render it at all palatable. Nature, at first, sickens at its taste, and even at its smell; and the conflict is long and severe before this natural repugnance can be overcome, and an agreeable habit in the use of tobacco formed. But when the habit is once formed, it becomes obstinate and invete-

rate, and is attended with a needless and useless expense—an expense which is often painful and burdensome, because it trenches upon the very necessaries of life, and becomes the occasion, in other respects, of want and suffering. I know of individuals who purchase their pipes by the dozen, and their tobacco by the pound, and, at the same time, they represent themselves as in a suffering condition for the necessaries of life. But is providence to be held responsible for their sufferings and distress? Certainly not. They misapply the bounties of providence, and deprive themselves and families of food and raiment convenient for them. No man ought to complain of poverty or distress, as long as he takes the bounties of providence to supply self-created desires; for he is the author of his own poverty and distress, and the correction of the evil properly and necessarily devolves upon himself.

But there are other desires, which, in some respects, differ from those we have mentioned, and which, at the same time, are proper exceptions to the rule under consideration. I allude to all sinful desires, of every kind and description. These desires, instead of being gratified, should be chastened, subdued, and rooted out of the heart. Among these may be reckoned a desire for riches, for splendid equipage, for sumptuous living, for elegant houses and furniture, and for costly apparel. A desire for these things springs up from the pride and ambition of the human heart; and the more they are gratified and indulged, the stronger they become, and the more difficult it is to subdue and eradicate them. To supply such desires, for the most part, would be to build mankind up in pride and wickedness. They are wholly inconsistent with those graces which constitute the essence of the Christian temper. They are unnecessary to either the comfort or enjoyment of life; and Christians are expressly forbidden to covet these things, in the gospel, as inconsistent with their calling and profession: *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*

2. Though God satisfies the desires of every living thing, yet not all in the same way; but of every creature according to its nature and circumstances. There is a wonderful diversity in the works of God; yet everything is under the direction and government of regular laws—nothing is left to chance. Many of the creatures, like the lily, neither toil nor spin; but receive the bounties of providence ready prepared to their hands. This, however, is not the case with all. Every living creature must procure its food by its own exertions. The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the forest, must all necessarily exert themselves, to supply the craving appetite of hunger. But it is especially the doom of man to labor for all he acquires. It is a part of the load laid

upon him, that, by the sweat of the brow, he shall eat his bread. And this is a most wise and salutary provision of Divine Providence. Idleness is a soil which produces a luxuriance of evil; and, considering what man is, it is well that he is compelled to labor. It is generally amongst the rich, who have nothing to do, and the very poor, who will do but little, that wickedness is most prevalent. The laborious and the industrious are exposed to the fewest temptations, and are consequently the most virtuous and happy. The prayer of Agur is no less the fruit of wisdom, than the result of experience: *Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*

3. We are to understand the language of the text in a general sense: *what the Lord does ordinarily, not universally, or in all cases.* Although the operations of Divine Providence are, for the most part, regular and uniform, yet there are occasional instances when this rule is not observed. There are times of famine, when God, as it were, shuts his hand, on account of the sins of men. And when he does this, the heavens become brass, and the earth iron; and multitudes perish for the want of bread. Famine is one of those terrible scourges, by which God chastises the wickedness of nations. He often sent this terrible calamity upon his ancient people, and sorely punished them for their transgressions. But there is still a sorer evil than that of famine, arising from a disordered state of society. Great numbers of mankind labor under the hardships of poverty, pine away, and are stricken through, for want of the fruits of the field. This evil especially abounds in those countries that are thickly populated, and where the iron hand of despotism reigns. And this is one of those evils under which the world groans, owing to the sin of man. If there were no idleness, no luxury, no waste, or intemperance, amongst one part of mankind, there would be a sufficiency for the rest. Then the earth would abound in plenty, and the native wants of all would be richly supplied. Every man then could appeal to God, and say: *Thou openest thine hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.*

II. We shall now proceed, in the second place, *to state a few of the evidences, by which this important truth is supported.* It is difficult to prove some subjects, not from a scarcity, but from a profusion of evidence. And this is the case with the subject before us: the difficulty lies in the selection. On this occasion, I shall merely call your attention to three considerations, in confirmation of the truth of the doctrine advanced.

1. The supplies we constantly receive cannot be ascribed to our own labor, *as their procuring cause.* The ultimate of human labor is merely a kind of manufacture of the materials, with which the bountiful Creator is pleased to furnish us. We create nothing; we

only change the forms of different productions, to suit our own convenience. To this end is the toil and labor of man directed, and in this way are his wants supplied. We are as really, though not so sensibly, dependent on God, as Israel was in the wilderness, who were fed with manna from heaven. It is not in the power of man to give life to a single plant, or to cause one seed to spring out of the earth, and come to maturity. We can merely use the ordinary means of cultivation; but the process of bringing the seed, that is cast into the ground, to maturity, is entirely of God. After we have labored to the utmost, it amounts to nothing, without a divine blessing. All, therefore, that we possess, proceeds from the opening hand of God. If he close his hand, the labor of man is lost, and his hope perishes.

2. But the truth of this doctrine will also be confirmed, if we consider the *number and magnitude of the wants of the creatures God has made*; for nothing short of his all-sufficiency can supply them. What a quantity of vegetable and animal food is required for a single town, even for one day; and what for a city, a nation, a world, during successive ages. The earth is supposed to contain, at least, eight hundred millions of inhabitants; and the wants of these are to be daily supplied. And this supply must be furnished constantly and regularly, for ages of ages. But what are men, however numerous, compared with the whole animate creation? All nature teems with life; the air, the earth, the sea, are full of living creatures, who are nourished with food, and whose wants are to be daily supplied. How vast, how complicated, must be that providence, which provides, and regularly supplies, these multifarious wants! Such a providence can originate in no other, but in Him who made them. He stands at the head of universal government, and, as the Father of creation, supplies the wants of all: *He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.*

3. *Finally*, if we consider *the various ways and means by which our supplies reach us*, we shall be convinced of the truth of the doctrine under consideration. The Lord does not satisfy our desires immediately, but through the medium of second causes; and though we may be too insensible of that hand which puts all in motion, yet it is no less engaged than if we were supplied by a miracle. The energy of God is everywhere operative, directing the laws of nature to their proper results. A chain of concatenation of causes is everywhere evident, in this vast universe; and all is under the guidance and direction of the Supreme Architect. Our food is prepared by a complicate, but beautiful machinery. The heavens are made to hear the earth, the earth to hear the corn, the wine, and the oil; and the corn, the wine, and the oil, to hear the people. All these are dependent on each other, as are the links which constitute a chain; and God has the government of the whole. He manages all for the benefit of man. God is at one end of the chain,

and man at the other; and, by means of the intermediate links, the latter is kept in a constant dependence upon the former, for life, breath, and all things. The tendency which we discover in the various parts of the creation, to satisfy the desires of the rest, is the operation of the hand of Him, who has engaged to supply the wants of every living thing. The earth abounds in fruitfulness, the air with salubrity. The clouds drop down fatness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. Fire and hail, storm and tempest, and winds and seas, contribute to our welfare. We inhale life with every breath we draw; and all the elements are employed for our sustenance and happiness.

But let us take another view of this interesting subject, and contemplate the instruments as well as the means, which God employs in supplying the wants of his creatures. He has given to us affectionate parents, who have watched over us in our infancy, guarded and defended us in our riper years, and supplied our wants in childhood and youth. When our way has been hedged up, and clouds and darkness have been round about us, he has opened our path before us, and provided means to relieve our wants. Under the guidance of his providence, the most intimate and endearing connexions have been formed, which have proved to us a fruitful source of enjoyment. In seasons of danger and difficulty, friends have kindly assisted us, and relieved our wants. When pressed by the pinching hand of poverty, supplies have reached us from an unknown and an unexpected quarter. But what are all these but the opening of his hand! It is a part of that divine arrangement by which the wants of man are supplied; and all is under the guidance and direction of the Father of mercies, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.

III. We shall now proceed, in the third and last place, *to improve the subject*. Every divine truth is pregnant with important consequences. Man is deeply interested in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The subject under consideration is deeply interesting, and involves consequences of the highest moment.

1. If such be the bounty of Divine Providence, what obligations are we laid under *to love and serve God*; and what are the *actual returns we have made for all his goodness*? He requires us to love him with a pure heart fervently, and to render him a constant and uniform obedience. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and him only shalt thou serve*. But, alas, are there not many of you still his enemies, and have not your whole lives been marked with disobedience? Have you not indeed added rebellion to stubbornness, and preferred the pleasures of sin to the service of God? That a being so supreme in goodness should have an enemy, is truly awful; yet so it is. The worst thing said of one of the worst men was, *He did eat of my bread, and hath lifted up his heel against me*. What is blacker than the sin of ingratitude! How debased must be that heart that returns evil for good! And this

is the sin of rebellious man. He has received nothing but good from God, for which he has been unthankful, and has returned nothing but evil. In providing for the wants of rebellious men, God has been feeding a generation of vipers, which, under the frost of childhood or adversity, seemed to claim his compassionate regard, but which, under the sunshine of maturer years and prosperous circumstances, do not fail to cast forth their venom, and recoil upon their benefactor. The complaint which God preferred against his people of old, may with equal justice be preferred against many of you: *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. I drew them with human cords, with the bands of love: and I was to them as he that lifteth up the yoke upon their cheek, and I laid down their fodder before them.* Thus God acted with the people on whose necks was the yoke of his law. He mingled many privileges, advantages, and comforts with his precepts, to make them at once a righteous and happy people. And he has dealt with you in the same way; giving you line upon line, precept upon precept, grace for grace. And, like the Jews of old, you have been a stiff-necked and rebellious people. But remember these things must come into an account another day; the divine goodness towards us, and our abuse of it, will all be brought to light, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. And what an awful and fearful account some of us will have to render in that day!

2. From this view of the benign beneficence, we may be encouraged to trust in the Lord amidst all our wants and difficulties. The evils to which we are exposed are innumerable; and the wants and weakness of man are proverbial. But with what ease can God defend us in time of danger, or supply our wants in time of need? In how many ways, unknown to us, and unexpected by us, can he give a favorable turn to our affairs? *Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* And these precious promises have been verified to man in all ages of the world. Indeed, David declares, as the result of his observation, that this is the uniform course of Divine Providence. *I have been young, and am now old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* Why, then, should any yield themselves up to desponding fears, or sink under the weight of accumulated afflictions? If the clouds of adversity seem to lower over the head of any desponding saint, let me exhort you to trust in the Lord; for in the Lord is everlasting strength. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is he weary? He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly*



*fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.*

3. If such be the bounty of providence, *how rich must be the provision of grace!* If this be the opening of his hand, that is the opening of his heart. If he satisfies natural desires, much more those that are spiritual. *He will fulfill the desire of those that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and save them.* The bounty of his providence only provides for the temporal wants of man generally, while the riches of his grace provides for our spiritual wants in all possible cases. Not one soul shall ever perish through want or famine, whose desires terminate in Christ. He tasted death for every man, and has commanded his gospel to be preached to every creature. *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* The fulness treasured up in Christ, is sufficient to supply the spiritual wants of every human being. While, therefore, we cherish gratitude for temporal mercies, let us not rest in them, and neglect the interests of the soul. Worldly prosperity often proves a snare; and though a blessing in itself, yet through sin may be turned into a curse. God gave to Nebuchadnezzar all the kingdoms of the earth, and all the glory of them; but he became lifted up in the pride of his heart, and forgot God his maker; *his kingdom was wrested from him, and he was driven from among men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws.* Beware, fellow-sinner, lest worldly prosperity fill thy heart with pride, and thou become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Remember that solemn caution of the dear Redeemer: *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* The value of the soul is infinite, it is beyond all price; and he who barter it away for the fading glories of this world, in the end loses all and gains nothing.

4. If the goodness of God be thus displayed in a bounteous providence, and in the riches of his grace, *what must sin be, that arms itself against him, and despises all his goodness.* Sin is opposed to every one of the divine perfections, and is odious and hateful in the sight of God. It defiles, debases, and destroys the souls of men. *Fools make a mock at it; but at last it will sting like a serpent, and bite like an adder.* It has filled the earth with misery, and threatened man with the wrath to come. How great that evil which can incense even goodness itself with anger, and arm it with the vengeance of eternal fire. All the perfections of God are arrayed against sin; his holiness, his purity, his truth, and his justice, are all engaged to punish it. Sin is not merely opposed to the authority and majesty of God, which it dares to treat with contempt, but it is directed against all that is amiable in moral beauty, all that is

lovely in holiness, all that is innocent in purity, and all that is awful in goodness; and herein its malignity is indescribable. It is, indeed, an evil and bitter thing to sin against the Lord. And those who persist in its downward course, will surely in the end reap the wages of sin, the death of the soul.

5. If God can so easily supply the natural wants of the whole creation, *how great and inestimable must be the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* To effect the one he has merely to open his hand, and the work is done; but to accomplish the other, the Son of God must appear among men in the likeness of sinful flesh, and expire upon the cross. The wisdom and the power of God are all-sufficient in one case as well as in another; but there are things relating to moral government which God cannot consistently do. He cannot deny himself. Had it been possible for man to be redeemed without the shedding of blood, God would have spared his own Son, and the cup should have passed from his lips; but *it became him*, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. God devised this method of saving sinners because the highest ends of justice were secured, and because the means were adapted to the end. Man had rebelled against God his Maker, and he must be brought back to his allegiance, or be lost for ever. Jesus Christ came into the world, as the messenger of God to lost and rebellious sinners, to make known to them the kind purposes of his Father, and to preach *peace to those who are afar off, and to those who are nigh.* He came, commissioned with all the authority and power, all the wisdom and holiness, all the light and truth, that should be necessary to convince, and persuade, and win men to their allegiance to God. And by employing all these powers, by exercising all these gifts, by establishing a new dispensation, by his instructions, doctrine, and example, by his life and sufferings, his labors and toils, and especially his death upon the cross; he did all that was needful to teach men the way to return, and lead them back to God.

6. The subject under consideration suggests the most powerful of all motives for kindness and charity *towards the poor and needy.* If we be the children of God, our conduct should resemble his; and while he so bountifully supplies our wants, he may well say to us as he did to Israel of old: *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.* Our Lord also gives a similar charge to his disciples: *Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* Charity to the needy and destitute is everywhere recommended and enforced in the Scriptures, and a disposition to supply their wants constitute an essential part of the Christian temper. *Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of*

*compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* As we always have the poor with us, let us then remember them, and as much as in us lieth supply their wants. A cold and cheerless winter is approaching, and multitudes in this large and populous city\* are but ill-prepared to meet it. Their sufferings must be great and severe, if the hand of charity be not opened wide for their relief. May it be our delight to remember them; and let us cause the widow's heart to sing for joy, that the blessings of the needy may come upon us.

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## DISCOURSE XV.

### *The Remembrance of God in our Youth.*

“Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”—Eccl. xii., 1.

A VARIETY of modes may be profitably employed, in giving instruction: indeed, in order to be effectual, it must be accommodated, in some measure, to the dispositions and habits of the persons addressed. To one who is wayward and self-willed, the pungency of irony may be well applied; whilst, with the tractable and the docile, the more plain, simple, and direct way, of affectionate exhortation, may be the most effectual. Both these methods are adopted by Solomon, in the passage before us. In the verses immediately preceding our text, he addresses a young man whom he supposes to be bent on the prosecution of his evil ways: *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* Then, after a serious admonition to avoid the evils which ungovernable passions will bring upon him, he affectionately exhorts him to devote his early life to the exercises of true piety. In addressing you from these words, we shall,

I. In the first place, show you what is implied in *Remembering our Creator.* *Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.* The course of a religious life is very properly here expressed by our remembrance of God; for, to remember a person or thing, is to call them to mind on all proper and suitable occasions—to so think of them as to do what the remembrance of them requires. To remember a friend, is to be ready to do him all good offices; to remember a kindness, is to be ready to requite it, when there is

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\* Boston.

an opportunity. To remember an injury, is to be ready to revenge it; and to remember our Creator, is to consider the relation in which we stand to him, as his creatures, and to be ready to fulfil the duties of this relation. We should remember, then,

1. *His authority over us.* God is our Creator, and we are the workmanship of his hands. We have derived from him all our powers, whether of body or mind. It is of his bounty alone, that we have been endowed with the faculty of reason, which elevates us above all the rest of this lower world, and brings us into a near conformity with that higher order of created intelligence, the holy angels. But, for what purpose has he thus distinguished us, but that we might render him services worthy both of our present state, and our future destinies? *He hath formed us for himself, that we might show forth his praise.* This is the end for which we are to live; nor is anything on earth to divert us from the course which he has marked out for our steps. Obedience, it is true, is due to our parents, and to all others, whom the providence of God has placed over us: but the authority of the creature must always be regarded as subordinate to that of the Creator. And if, at any time, the will of man stands opposed to the will of God, we must then reply: *Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* Whatever solicitations we may have from the world, or from our passions and appetites, from within us, to violate any part of God's revealed will, we must withstand them manfully, and resist them, even unto death. Knowing that *we are not our own, but God's, we must glorify him with our bodies and spirits, which are his.*

2. We should also remember *the commands he has given us to regulate our conduct.* We will not, at this time, enter into the different commandments of the law; but draw your attention rather to that great commandment of the gospel, to believe in Christ: *This is his commandment,* says St. John, *that ye believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* This command should be had in continual remembrance. It is addressed to all mankind, without distinction. There is no one so innocent, as not to need a Saviour; nor any one so guilty, but that he may, through penitence and faith, obtain an interest in that Saviour, whom God has provided for a ruined world. Do not imagine, my young friends, that you are not concerned in this commandment, or that it will be time enough for you to attend to it, when you shall feel a greater need of mercy. You all are sinners: you all have a consciousness, within yourselves, that you have done many things which you ought not, and left undone many things you ought to have done. You, therefore, have in your own bosoms a witness, that you need a Saviour; and, as in the presence of the Most High God, I declare unto you, that there is no mercy for the young, any more than for the old, but in the name, and through the mediation, of Jesus Christ: *There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of*

*Jesus Christ.* Go, then, to God, through this Redeemer, and implore mercy at his hands. Look to Jesus as *dying for your sins, and as reconciling you to God through the blood of his cross.* Let every one of you, from day to day, wash in the fountain of his blood, and clothe yourselves in the robe of his unspotted righteousness; and live altogether upon his fulness, receiving out of it continued supplies of all needful grace.

3. *Once more,* we should remember *his continued presence with us, to inspect our conduct.* God is in every place, beholding the evil and the good; and wherever you are, you should see, as it were, this inscription written: *Thou God seest me.* This is a point you should never forget, no, not for a single moment; for it is only by bearing this in mind, that you will be kept from the indulgence of secret sins. When no human eye is upon us, we are apt to think that we may give a greater latitude to our conduct; but we should remember that the darkness is no darkness with God, but *the night and the day are both alike to him.* *There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the works of iniquity may hide themselves.* Oh, if you bear this in remembrance, you will never do what you know to be wrong, nor utter what you know to be false. You will act, in all things, as in the immediate presence of your God; and will do nothing but what you believe to be good and acceptable in his sight.

4. *Finally,* we should remember his determination *to judge us according to the deeds done in the body at the last day.* God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained, even by his Son Jesus Christ. In that day, all shall be summoned to his judgment-seat: the old and the young, the rich and the poor. Not one that has ever come into the world, shall be forgotten. The child that died in infancy, as well as the man of a hundred years old, shall be summoned to receive his everlasting doom, according to what they have done in the body, whether it be good or evil. To those who die before they have attained the knowledge of good and evil, we doubt not but that the mercy of God will be extended; but to those who have lived to your age, judgment or mercy will be dispensed, according as you have *remembered or forgotten God.* Most awful is that declaration of the Psalmist: *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that FORGET God.* If you have forgotten his authority over you, and especially his command to believe in his Son Jesus Christ; if you have forgotten that his eye was continually upon you, inspecting your most secret thoughts, and noting them down, in order to his future judgment; and if you have lived without any concern about the sentence that shall then be passed upon you—it will indeed be an awful day to you: the commencement of such a misery as no words can describe, no imagination can conceive. Remember, then, that God marks down, in the book of his remembrance, your every act, and every word, and every thought; and

that it is your wisdom so to live, that, whether called at an earlier or later period of life, you may give up to Him your account with joy, and not with grief.

II. Having pointed out the duty of all to remember God, we shall now proceed more particularly to show, in the second place, why we should thus remember him *in early life*. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.* Many reasons might be offered why we should comply with this injunction, but we shall content ourselves with assigning a few of the most obvious.

1. We should, in the first place, remember our Creator in the days of our youth, *because he is the most worthy object of our remembrance*; and that which is the most worthy, has the first and highest claims upon our attention. Our Creator unites in himself, an assemblage of all possible perfections. How unsearchable is his wisdom! *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* Consider his almighty power as exerted in the works of creation: *And God said, let there be light, and there was light. He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.* Consider, again, his inviolable truth and faithfulness to his word: *God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said it, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Reflect upon his boundless mercy: *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. His tender mercies are over all his works. Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reaches unto the clouds. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and testimonies.* Contemplate his essential goodness: *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the vallies are also covered with corn: they shout for joy, they also sing. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.* Reflect, also, upon his gracious holiness: *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of glory.* Wherever we turn our eyes, we see much in the wonders of creation to astonish us, much in the beauties of nature to charm us; but all that we can behold, can no more be compared to the ineffable glories of our Creator, than the twinkling of a taper can be likened to the blaze of the meridian sun. Surely, if any character in heaven or earth is worthy of our remembrance, it is *He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.*

And can we forget so great a benefactor, and be unmindful of the God that formed us? Can we choose but to remember the founder of our being, the great preserver of our lives? Ought we not, as soon as we discover him to whom we owe our lives and all the blessings of them, to render him homage, and to say with David, *O come and let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our maker, for he is the Lord our God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

2. We should remember our Creator now, in the days of our youth, because such a remembrance, at this time, is *peculiarly acceptable to God.* O how delightful is youthful piety! O how lovely to consecrate the flower and strength of our days to the service of God! then the blessing of life is new, and its memory fresh upon our minds; then our health is in its strength and vigor, and the pleasures and enjoyments of life have their full taste and relish; then the mind is soft and tender, and free from every other impression. Under the law, the first fruits, and the first born, were all the sole property of God; and the buds of being, and the earliest blossoms of youth, are the sweetest incense, and the most acceptable sacrifice that we can offer to our Creator; and shall we neglect these offerings? shall we refuse to render to God the first fruits of our existence? Do we prefer to sacrifice them to the god of this world? Shall we rob our heavenly Father of these tithes and offerings? To discover how amiable early piety is in the sight of God, we need only to refer to the testimonies of the Bible. *Joseph remembered his Creator in the days of his youth, and his master saw that the Lord was with him.* Solomon, when yet a little child, as he called himself, *loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of David his father.* Abijah came to his grave in peace, because he had some good thing in him towards the Lord God of Israel. Joshua, while he was yet young, began to seek after the God of David his father. Daniel, and his three companions, were eminent for early piety; and how remarkable was their preservation by God? John was the youngest of all the apostles, and Jesus loved him with a peculiar love. *Timothy knew the holy Scriptures from a child, which, through faith in Christ Jesus, were able to make him wise unto salvation.* What a list of shining examples is here presented for your emulation? May you strive to walk in their footsteps, and render the homage of early piety to your Creator.

Since there is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner, it must be interesting to see a young person besieged by the powerful temptations of the world, acquit himself gloriously, and resolutely hold out against the most violent assaults; to behold one in the prime and flower of his age, courted by pleasures and honors, by the devil and all the bewitching vanities of time and sense, reject them all, and cleave steadfastly to God, saying, "Let them doat

upon these things who are ignorant of all the sincere and solid pleasures of religion and virtue: let them run into the arms of temptation who can forget God their creator, preserver, and the guide of their youth: as for me, I will serve the Lord, and will employ my time either innocently or usefully in serving God, and doing good to men: the work shall take up my whole life, there shall be no void or empty space in it: I will endeavor as much as possible, that there may be no breach in it for the Devil and his temptations to enter in: Lord, I will be thine; I have chosen thee for my happiness and portion forever. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*"

3. We should remember our Creator in the days of our youth, because of all others, *it can be done with the greatest comparative ease.* Forgetfulness of God is natural to man: *The wicked through the pride of their countenance, will not seek after God. God is not in all their thoughts.* Whenever we begin to remember our Creator, we shall find difficulties, and these difficulties are so great and complicated, that we shall find a strong inclination to put the subject off till a more convenient season; and the longer we put it off, these difficulties will be constantly accumulating and multiplying, and every day rendering our conversion more difficult and uncertain. The young are as yet only like plants sprouting from the earth, pliable and easy to be trained; whilst at a more advanced age they become like trees, which retain their form, unyielding and unmoved. In declining age, the heart becomes hard and unfeeling; the whole sensibility is blunted; hence it becomes exceedingly difficult for the old and greyheaded sinner, who has lived long in folly and wickedness, sensibly to be affected with his lost and perishing condition. The will, also, becomes obstinate and perverse; having been long indulged and gratified, it refuses to bow to the authority of its Creator. From the very employments, too, of men in more advanced life, there arises many disadvantages: being drawn to a more vigorous pursuit of earthly things, they are, not unfrequently, so oppressed with the *cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, that the good seed which has been sown in them, cannot grow up into perfection.* Sinful habits, when once formed and rooted, become inveterate, and it is but seldom they are overcome. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* O the omnipotency of habit! It has been well termed a second nature. Sinful habits are like the current of a mighty river, constantly flowing. And when we attempt to obstruct their course, they swell, foam, and rise the higher, till, at length, they break through the obstruction, and then with redoubled force they rush on, carrying with them everything which impedes their progress. But from these things young people are comparatively free. In youth, the understanding is more vigorous; the heart more soft and pliable; the memory more active and retentive; and the con-



science more susceptible : hence the difficulties of remembering our Creator are much less than at any other period of life. If ever the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light, it is in the days of youth. Besides, at this season they have an express promise from God, which they cannot plead in future life. *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find.* This, like the other promises of God, rests upon his immutability and faithfulness. May this promise, my young friends, encourage you to seek him with all your hearts, animated by the persuasion that youth is the most convenient season for piety that can ever occur.

4. We should remember our Creator now, in the days of our youth, *because the present is the only certain time we can command for doing it.* The past is gone, and can never be recalled ; the moments that have been wasted, are fled for ever. The future does not belong to us, we have no claim upon it ; *who can tell what a day will bring forth ?* We can never be too young to die, we may be too old to live. Thousands younger than we die daily. The youngest and healthiest may be speedily removed. Let any one survey the monuments that surround him, and he will see that multitudes have been cut off at his age, though once they appeared as likely to live as any who have survived him. Death, perhaps, has come very near to some of you ; has laid his cold and icy hand upon your little brother or sister, or upon some of your youthful companions ; the rose that blushed in the beauty of life, faded ; your little companion has languished, has fainted, has died ; its innocency could not protect it, its beauty could not shield it from the stroke of death ! And O, remember that you may be the victim death has marked for his prey ; and while I am addressing you, the king of terrors may be advancing towards you with a slow and silent, but firm step ; and while you are rejoicing in the anticipations of to-morrow, and neglecting the concerns of the soul, you may suddenly be brought down to the dust of death. And what if disease or accident arrest you before you have truly devoted yourselves to God ? Will you have any opportunity to repair your errors in the grave ? Is there any work or device there, by which you can accomplish what was left here undone ? No ; *as the tree falleth, so it lieth ;* and as you die, in a converted or unconverted state, so you must remain forever. *To-day, then, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts,* as the generality are too prone to do. Be persuaded to enter upon the work of remembering your Creator now, while it is an accepted time and a day of salvation. Remember that delays are dangerous ; this may be your last opportunity, your only season for doing it.

5. There will certainly *come a time* when we shall wish we had sought the Lord *in early life.* The text speaks of evil days as coming ; and, sooner or later, they are coming to all. There is a time of sickness or of old age coming, wherein we shall find no pleasure in earthly things ; and shall we not then wish that we had

sought the Lord in our youth? Shall we then look back with pleasure on the sins we have committed, or on the vanities that have kept us from God? Will it, then, afford us pleasure to consider how much of our time we have wasted in folly, how much of our money we have squandered away in licentiousness, how many of the mercies of God we have abused, and how many of the calls and invitations of the gospel we have rejected? Nothing but the consolations of the religion of Christ will then be of any avail to make us happy amidst the evils which, from pain or debility, we shall have to sustain. But there is a time of death, also, which we must meet; and what will be our reflections at that period? Then it will be of little moment to us what joys or sorrows we have met with in our former life. All our anxiety will be about the future. Oh! with what force will this question press upon the mind, "Am I ready? am I prepared to meet my God? Shall I be saved, or shall I be damned?" How different will our feelings then be, according as we have given up ourselves to God in early youth, or put off the work of our souls to a dying hour! And what an unfit season will this be to begin that great work! The last hour is one of the most difficult periods in life in which for a sinner to be converted—the soul is exhausted—the heart hard—the conscience seared—the mind disordered—the body racked with pain—and the whole frame sinking into stupidity and death. What an awful period this will be to the sinner; the body racked with pain, the soul convulsed with the agonies of despair, and the mind chilled with the darkness and horror that surround it. His friends stand weeping around his dying couch, unable to afford him any relief—the objects that surround him recede from his view, and a dark and gloomy mist covers his eyes—the light of heaven is withdrawn from his soul, and the darkness and horror of death fill his mind. He sighs deeply—his eyes fix—his features change—his countenance becomes disfigured—his livid lips convulsively separate—his whole frame quivers—and his soul tears itself from the body of clay, and falls into the hands of its God. But, alas! it is polluted with sin, it is defiled with guilt. It has no meetness for heaven, for glory, for felicity. It must now receive the doom of the wicked. The sentence of damnation must now be passed upon it. It must go away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels—for ever banished from the presence of God, and the glory of his power. And shall this sentence ever be pronounced against any of the youth who hear me to-night? Shall these eyes ever behold the flaming sword of divine justice driving you into perdition? Shall these ears ever be saluted with the awful sound, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? Shall I ever be called to witness the heartrending scene of an eternal separation between a pious mother and a prodigal daughter, between a godly father and a dissolute son? Shall that family circle which surround the same hearth, and feast at the same table, be separated in a coming day, to unite no more? O how you will wish then

that you had not hated instruction and despised reproof—that you had not rejected the calls and invitations of the gospel. Come, then, my young friends, and seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. At this moment, even though you choose not to live the life of the righteous, you are saying inwardly in your heart, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be, like his.* Then, as these times must come, let us work while it is day, knowing assuredly that the night is coming when no man can work, and when we shall bitterly lament that ever we lost this day of our visitation, and neglected the things that belonged to our everlasting peace.

1. Let us collect all these reasons for remembering our Creator in the days of our youth into one point; let us ponder them over again and again in our hearts; let us thoroughly weigh them in our minds, and see if our judgments will not be convinced, and we disposed to listen to the voice of wisdom, and obey the instruction of understanding. We, then, should remember our Creator now, because he is the most worthy object of our remembrance—because such a remembrance, at this time, is peculiarly acceptable to God—because of the comparative ease with which it may be performed—because the present is the only certain time we can command for doing it; and, finally, because the time will certainly come, when we shall wish we had sought the Lord in early life. My young friends, permit me to inquire, are you remembering your Creator? I fear your minds are too much engrossed with the vanities, the pleasures, and the amusements of the world. Youth are too apt to be thoughtless, to be vain, to be giddy; to seek happiness where it is not to be found; to waste their time in idle pursuits; to spend their thoughts on vain and foolish things. O, can it be said of any of you, that God is not in all your thoughts—that your minds are so fully occupied about the trifles of a day, that the concerns of eternity are wholly excluded? Do not suffer yourselves to be cheated and bewitched by sensual pleasures, and to be destroyed by ease and prosperity. Let not continued health and pleasure soften and dissolve your spirits, and banish all wise and serious thoughts out of your minds. O, remember that the world, and the fashion thereof, passeth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever. Consider that you are constantly exposed to the ravages of death; that in the midst of all your folly and vanity, all your pride and gaiety, the scythe of death may mow your glory down, and you be hurried, unprepared, into the presence of your Judge. Then all will be lost, forever lost. *O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end!*

2. But, should your lives be spared, how soon will the spring of youth pass away, and all her flowers and blossoms drop off! How soon will the winter of old age, with a train of infirmities, press upon you! *Then the evil days will come, and the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them.* And what will you

have to support you, under the burden of age, if the flour of your days, and the prime of your years, are spent in folly and sin? If you look back upon your past life, your crimes will reproach you; if you turn your eyes within, your hearts will condemn you; and if you look forward to your approaching dissolution, all is blackness of darkness! No wonder, then, *that the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and all the daughters of music are brought low.* But, if we remember our Creator now, in the days of our youth, we shall *lay up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come.* A life that has been spent in the cause of God and virtue, will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness in old age. If, when we become old, we can say, *I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame: I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out: I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him: the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy: I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was a robe and a diadem*—if we, I say, can adopt this language, will it not be a source of happy reflection to us, in old age? Such will be blessed of God in the decline of life: *his rod and his staff shall comfort them. The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. He shall come to his grave in full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*

3. Have any, in this assembly, neglected to remember their Creator in the days of their youth? Every argument, used with the young, presses with additional weight on you, and says, with greatly augmented force: *Remember now thy Creator.* You have already neglected the first and best opportunity of dedicating yourselves to God; repent, therefore, quickly, lest all opportunity of doing it be lost forever. Resolve to redeem, if it be possible, the time which you ought to have improved. You have squandered away too much already—waste no more. You have deferred a necessary work too long—delay it no longer. Do not delude yourselves with the vain hope, that, if you can fashion your last breath into *Lord, have mercy upon me*, this will prevail with God, and make atonement for the sins of a long and wicked life. What strange thoughts have such persons of God and of heaven! What extravagant conceits of the little evil of sin, and the great easiness of repentance, have they who can impose upon themselves at this rate! O, aged sinner, suffer not these infatuations to delude you any longer! Reflect upon your ways: consider, and show yourselves men. What will you do in the day of distress, who have neglected God in your most flourishing condition? What will you say to him in a dying hour? Can you have the face, at that time, to address him in the language of your conduct through life?—“*Lord, now the world and my lust have left me, and I feel myself ready*

to sink into eternal perdition, I lay hold upon thy mercy, to deliver my soul. I have heard strange things of thy goodness, and that thou art merciful, to a miracle. This is what I always trusted to, that, after a long life of sin and vanity, thou wouldst, at last, be pacified with a few penitent words and sighs, at death." But, is this a proper address to be made to a wise man? much less to the all-wise Judge of the world? And yet, this seems to be the plain interpretation of a great and habitual sinner's application to Almighty God, when he is just going to appear before his dreadful tribunal. I say again, let not these delusions deceive you any longer; for, as sure as God is true, they shall never see his kingdom, who, instead of seeking it in the first place, make it their last refuge and retreat.

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## DISCOURSE XVI.

### *The Way of Transgressors hard.*

"The way of transgressors is hard."—Proverbs xii. 15.

It is frequently urged as an objection against Christianity, that its service is hard—that it requires sacrifices incompatible with human happiness—that all its enjoyments are future—and that, in order to acquire the blessings of eternity, religious persons are rendered miserable in time. If this doctrine were true, even then, good men have an infinite advantage over wicked men; for, if religion makes a man miserable now, in order to make him happy hereafter, religious people are partakers of happiness at last, while her adversaries finally render themselves miserable. But pray, who has drawn this picture of religion? her friends, her acquaintances, her associates? No; they, with united voice, testify, *That her ways are ways of pleasantness, and that her paths are paths of peace; they uniformly declare, that Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and that which is to come.*

But let us examine the ways of those who bring such serious charges against our holy religion, who are altogether strangers to its nature and to its joys. They account themselves happy in having cast off the yoke of God, and freed themselves from the restraints which his law would impose upon them. But the truth is, they are under a most fatal delusion, and miserably deceive their own souls. *A good understanding, regulating the conduct agreeably to God's commands, will insure to a man favor and comfort, both in this world and the next—But the way of transgressors is*

*hard* ; they are miserable in time, and will be damned in eternity ; they are even disappointed now ; and if they vainly dream of heaven, they will be awfully disappointed at last. Whatever these persons may say of religion, however they may deride its votaries, they are by no means competent judges. The testimony of universal experience is against them. But while we charge misery upon them, as the legitimate offspring of depravity, we stand on high ground ; before conversion, many of us were in the secret. We know that sin has no lasting, no solid joys, while it has a thousand real pains ; and it is a truth as clear as a sunbeam, that *the way of transgressors is hard*, a way full of briers and thorns. In the further illustration of these words, let us enquire—

I. What are we to understand by the *way of transgressors*—*The way of transgressors is hard*. The word *transgressor*, is but another name for sinner. Characters of this description have always occupied a way peculiar to themselves : *Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden ? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with flood : which said unto God, Depart from us*. The very name supposes those to whom it belongs to be under the obligation of law, and to be violators of it ; for where there is no law to bind men, there is no law to be transgressed by them. Hence, the apostle says, *Sin is the transgression of the law but where no law is, there is no transgression*. Transgressions, therefore, necessarily supposes either something done that was forbidden, or something omitted that was commanded. Every man either has been, or is now in the way of transgression : *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. The pious and the good were in the way of transgression before their conversion to God ; for *the way of the upright is to depart from evil* ; and *he that keepeth his way, preserveth his soul*. Hence it is, that we are told that the law was not made for a righteous man ; that is, for his justification—*But for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves among mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for purged persons, and if there be anything contrary to sound doctrine*. The way of transgressors might be thought the most honorable, and the happiest way in the world, considering the confidence of those who are in it, and their unwillingness to leave it ; but, alas, it will be found a fruitless and shameful path ; nay, a path leading directly to damnation. *What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, but the end of these things is death*. But this point will become more apparent—

II. By illustrating the doctrine of the text, respecting *this way* : *The way of transgressors is hard*. This is the uniform declaration of the sacred oracles. *The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*. *There is no peace,*

*saith my God, to the wicked.* What an emblem of sinful disquiet is the ocean, restless when most at rest? and such is the metaphor employed to represent the unhappy condition of transgressors. They find the voyage of life rough and tempestuous; they, indeed, travel a rugged and thorny road.

1. The way of transgressors is hard, *because it often leads to penury and want.* It is indeed true, that many of God's people are poor; but theirs is a sanctified poverty—they have a sovereign antidote against all their disadvantages. Do they want the benefit of human learning? to supply its place, they have the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Do they want many comforts? but they have the promises of the living God. Do their afflictions abound? but their consolations also abound in Christ. Under whatever disadvantages they may be supposed to labor, they have everything that they need treasured up for them in Christ Jesus; and out of his fulness they receive, in the time and measure which he knows to be best for them. Poor they may be in this world's goods; but they are enriched with *the unsearchable riches of Christ.* Thus, the poverty of the virtuous poor is a sanctified poverty, placing them in a condition to possess and enjoy the highest consolations of religion, and to attain the highest state of perfection. But the poverty of the wicked is abject and miserable; it is a poverty often brought upon themselves by their indolence, their love of pleasure, and their wickedness. Religion promotes industry, industry gains respect, respect gains recommendation, recommendation gains business, business gains wealth; and thus religion of itself naturally leads to prosperity. But, on the contrary, vice promotes idleness, idleness brings reproach, reproach cuts off recommendation, and want of recommendation stagnates business; and thus a wretched poverty often falls to the lot of the ungodly. Could we enter the wretched abodes of thousands, and ask what has clothed your children in rags? What has stripped your houses of furniture? What has painted misery in your countenances, and robbed you of all the comforts of life? What, if the truth were spoken, would be the answer? Was it religion? Was it honesty? Was it temperance? Was it industry, that has rendered your abode the habitation of wretchedness, and turned all the joys of life into the bitterness of affliction and sorrow? No; it was the want of these. It was imprudence—it was intemperance—it was indolence—it was licentiousness—it was vice that led to these scenes of wretchedness and misery. Surely, *the way of transgressors is hard.*

2. The way of transgressors is hard, *because it destroys a man's reputation, and reduces him into deep disgrace.* A good name can never be too highly prized. It should be eagerly sought, and tenaciously retained.

"A spotless name,  
By virtuous deeds acquired, is sweeter far  
Than fragrant balm, whose odors round diffused  
Regale the invited guests. Well may such men  
Rejoice at death's approach, and bless the hours  
That end their toilsome pilgrimage; assured  
That till the race of life is finish'd, none  
Can be completely blest."

Now, vice robs a man of this good name, and stamps him with infamy and disgrace. Hence, it is said, a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. Sin may promise much, but her steps are marked with infamy. She leads in a flowery path, but it is the path of disgrace. She points, indeed, to the temple of honor; but her votaries return covered with shame.

The Divine Being so supremely hates sin, that he is determined no honor shall be attached to that which so dishonors him. He has, therefore, stamped the higher degrees of vice with the character of the ridiculous and contemptible, and it is not in the power of man to efface it. All men, whose characters are stained with crime, become odious and execrable; and they deeply feel the disgrace attached to them. Who is he that blushes? Who is he that is ashamed? Who is he that skulks in obscurity, and is doomed to dwell in the shades of infamy and contempt? Who is he that every one distrusts? Who is avoided as a walking pestilence—as a living hell? Is it the man of virtue, of probity, of religion? No; it is the sinner—it is he who has offended God, and violated the laws of conscience, and truth, and justice, and holiness. Surely, *the way of transgressors is hard.*

3. The way of transgressors is hard, because it entails disease upon the human system, and brings on racking and excruciating pain. The human system is obnoxious to diseases, many of which are increased or avoided, by attention or inattention to our health. What a host of diseases do gluttony, drunkenness, indolence, disorder, and inordinate pleasure, entail upon a man! Religion, on the other hand, saves from all these; for it leads a man to be temperate in all things. Hence it is said: *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness; but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright; but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.* Vice not only shortens the days of the wicked, but fills them with bitterness and wo. Those trembling hands, that shaking head, those disjointed knees, that extinguished resolution, that feeble memory, that worn-out brain, that body all infection and putrefaction—these are the dreadful rewards which the devil bestows on those for whom he is preparing himself. shortly, to exercise all



his fury and rage. Vice is the gate of death, the very entrance of hell. Surely, *the way of transgressors is hard.*

4. The way of transgressors is hard, *because it brings the mind into a state of bondage.* Whatever be the besetting sin of the ungodly, it has within them all the force of law, to which they are compelled to yield a willing obedience. Such is the inward and invincible propensity of the worldling, the sensualist, and the drunkard, that they readily follow the impulse of their own corrupt hearts. A spring will not more naturally rise, when the power which compresses it is removed, than their lusts will rise to demand their wonted gratification, when an opportunity for indulgence is afforded them. These poor infatuated beings, who are the slaves of passion and appetite, call this liberty; but the whole Scriptures designate it bondage: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?* Yes, in yielding to the power of temptation, we become the servants of sin, and also of Satan; for *he it is who worketh in the children of disobedience, and leads them captive at his will.* Indeed, the whole gospel takes this for granted; for Christ was sent into the world to redeem mankind from this bondage, and to make us free indeed. Now, while thus enslaved, is not the sinner in a most deplorable and pitiable condition? What slavery is so degrading, so humiliating, and so debasing, as the slavery of sin? It blunts the moral sensibility of the soul, it extinguishes the light of reason, it pours darkness upon the mental vision, and it converts the image of God into the likeness of a brute. The whole life of a wicked man is occupied in things which tend to the destruction of his own welfare. Surely, *the way of transgressors is hard.*

5. The way of transgressors is hard, *because it produces anxiety and mental distress.* The ungodly man, whatever may be his pursuits, finds nothing in which his soul can rest. Give him riches, give him honors, give him pleasure; yet, in the fulness of his sufficiency, he is in straits. He has no God, and anxieties and perplexities torment him, notwithstanding he has his portion in this life. There is always a secret something unpossessed: some object which he thinks would make him happy, but which constantly eludes his grasp; and after he has *hewn out to himself a cistern, with great labor, he finds it only a broken cistern, that can hold no water.* His continual disappointments fill him with vexation; inso-much that he finds even the objects of his fondest hope, in the issue, to be only vanity and vexation of spirit. Having never given his heart to God, he sensibly feels the want of those enjoyments and those prospects which alone can afford support and consolation to him, under his trials. Under the continual pressure of a heavy burden, he feels his strength gradually exhausting, till, at length, he becomes wearied and disgusted with life.

To his other pains are added those of a guilty conscience. Against these no brutality can shield him, no skepticism can harden

him. The Sacred Oracles furnish many examples to confirm and illustrate this declaration. Adam flies; Achan turns pale; Belshazzar trembles; Saul despairs; Judas hates existence, and hurries out of life: *Yea, the wicked even flee when no man pursueth.* Could we penetrate the heart of a sinner, what misery should we find there! What, but a book, on every page of which was written, lamentation, mourning, and wo!—what, but a fountain, from whence none but bitter streams continually flow!—what, but a den of savage beasts of prey, tearing and devouring, tormenting and destroying, till, at last, nothing but ruin and death appear. Ah, conscience! how dost thou rack the sinner, sting his guilty soul, witness against his crimes, and treasure up the remembrance of them to his confusion! He in vain tries to stifle thy voice: he betakes himself to business, and pleasure, and company, in order to get rid of thy remonstrances: but it is impossible. There are times of sickness and approaching dissolution, when thy voice will be heard, and when thy reflections will be cutting. I appeal to the conscience of every wicked man, whether that declaration be not verified in his own experience: *The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* Yes, verily this testimony is incontrovertible; and it proves, beyond all doubt, the truth of the declaration contained in the text, that *the way of transgressors is hard.*

6. The way of transgressors is hard, *because it exposes them to temporal calamities.* We do not suppose that God renders a righteous retribution to moral conduct in this mutable state; but there are instances in which he manifests his displeasure against sin by a signal punishment; and by which he gives the world to understand that he has power to vindicate the honor of his laws, and to make examples as often as he pleases. It is not, however, for us to be rash in pronouncing judgment, even on the wicked; but let us look for a few moments on some of the instances in which God has manifested his displeasure against the ungodly. I behold a Cain, on whom God has placed an indelible mark, a skulking vagabond; I see a whole world, with a small exception, expiring in the agonies of death. Yonder is one turned into a pillar of salt—here is another, struck with the leprosy, and become white as snow. On this side, one falls down dead with horror; on that, another seeks destruction from his sword; one is smote by an angel, and eaten up of worms; another is instantly consumed by devouring flames. What an awful catalogue do the Scriptures produce! On what monuments this epitaph may be written—*The way of transgressors is hard.*

7. The way of transgressors is hard, *because it exposes them to danger.* In some respects, it may be said of every man, that he is exposed to danger, and that *we know not what a day may bring forth.* But, if we be the servants of Christ, we have nothing to

fear; since he is pledged to preserve us from everything that shall be really evil, and to make all things work together for our good. *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Even death itself is a blessing to the pious man, who is privileged to count it amongst his richest treasures. Indeed, for him to depart and be with Christ, is far better than to remain in the flesh. Far different from this, however, is the state of the ungodly man: he knows not but what the next moment may hurl him into the abyss of hell—the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Death waits but for its commission from on high, and it will in an instant transmit his soul to the bar of judgment, and into the presence of his offended God. What a fearful thought! With what terror would it inspire the unconverted man, if it were contemplated aright! Could we but conceive a transgressor hurried to the tribunal of his Judge, to give up his account, and to receive his final doom, what a view should we have of the folly of his ways! O, the anguish to which he is now subjected under the wrath of an avenging God! what *weeping* under the load of his misery! what *wailing* on account of his folly, in having so wasted his day of grace! and what *gnashing of teeth* against that God who is executing upon him the fierce displeasure of his wrath! Such is the imminent danger to which the unconverted man is every moment exposed. At his convivial feasts, at his mirthful pastimes, at his bacchanalian revels, at his pleasurable delights, this sword is suspended over him by a single hair, which is liable to be cut every moment, and instantly consign him to endless wo.

O miserable and deluded transgressor! to what art thou come at last. Thou hast cast off the yoke of religion, and freed thyself from the restraints which the law of God would impose upon thee; thou hast taken refuge in Atheism, under the pretence of following the law of nature. But dost thou pretend to follow the laws of nature, when thou art trampling on the laws of the God of nature? when thou art stifling his voice within thee, which remonstrates against thy crimes? when thou art violating the best part of thy nature, by counteracting the dictates of justice and humanity? Dost thou follow nature when thou renderest thyself a useless animal on the earth? and not useless only, but noxious to the society to which thou belongest, and to which thou art a disgrace; noxious by the bad example thou hast set; noxious by the crimes thou hast committed; sacrificing innocence to thy guilty pleasures, and introducing shame into the habitations of peace; defrauding the unsuspecting of their just due who have trusted thee; involving in the ruins of thy fortune many a worthy family; reducing the industrious and the aged, to penury and want; by all of which, thou hast justly brought upon thyself the resentment and reproach of the wise and virtuous, and just indignation of an aveng-

ing God. Tremble, then, at the view of the gulf which is opened before you. Look with horror upon the precipice, on the brink of which you are now standing. Say not that your life is a life of pleasure, and your death a death of triumph; that God is to be discarded, religion despised, and the soul neglected; for on thy conscience now, on thy countenance in the day of judgment, and on the gates of hell forever, shall this sentence be written: *The way of transgressors is hard.* From all of which we may learn,

1. *The evil of sin.* Let not any imagine that this way is rendered any harder than it ought to be, through the undue severity of God. His love, forbearance, and long-suffering towards sinners, clearly prove the contrary; also the strong measures which he adopts to bring about their salvation, and the ready and gracious manner in which he receives those of them who return to him with a godly sorrow, furnish additional proofs that the Most High is not unnecessarily severe. Nor could the exercise of undue severity towards transgressors be easily conceived. Reflect on the heinous nature of sin: against whom is it committed? Against the greatest, the wisest, the kindest, and the best Being in the universe! And by whom is it committed? By one who has derived his being and all his comforts and advantages from him, and the very end of whose existence is to resemble and enjoy him forever. And under what circumstances is it committed? Even at the very moment, when all his thoughts and acts towards us are those of unmerited love and good will. Could any treatment of beings so abominable, be too severe? In what way could Jehovah make his love of order, his spotless purity, his inviolable truth, his inflexible justice, and, in short, his infinite perfection appear, were he not to visit the ingratitude and baseness, the levity and incorrigibility of transgressors, with unspeakable, interminable, and intolerable sufferings beyond the grave? These are the just demerits of sin; and every impenitent transgressor will be called to endure *tribulation and anguish, lamentation and wo, forever and ever.*

2. If such are the evils to which transgressors are exposed, *what a blind infatuation they must be laboring under to reject the offers of mercy.* Truly, if men were conscious of their danger in an unconverted state, they could no more sleep than could a man in a house that was on fire; or than could a shipwrecked sailor on a plank, by which he was making his escape to land. O, fellow-sinner, I pray you to consider the shortness and uncertainty of time! Consider, how every day's continuance in sin operates to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, to harden your own hearts, to confirm your evil habits, to accumulate your load of guilt, and to augment the misery that awaits you. As long as you live in sin, you must be miserable here; and if you die impenitent, you will certainly be damned hereafter. O, then, will you delay to turn unto your God? Will you delay a single hour? What if your soul should be required of

you this very night, and your doom be fixed without a hope or a possibility of change forever? I beseech you to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts, but *repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.*

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## DISCOURSE XVII.

### *Expostulation with those who neglect the work of God.*

“Why stand ye here all the day idle?”—Matt. xx., 6.

THE case of the rich young man, who turned away from Christ on account of his love of worldly possessions, gave occasion to our Lord to observe that many, who, like that young man, are first in the enjoyment of outward advantages, and in the appearances of piety and virtue, should be last in the esteem of God, and be found the most wanting in the day of judgment; and that the last in external advantages, and who are rejected by such as judge according to outward appearances, shall be the first, or the highest, in the divine favor, in that day. In illustration of this doctrine, our Lord delivered the parable recorded in this chapter, in which he represents the proceedings of God in his kingdom under the figure of a house holder, who went out at different periods of the day, to hire laborers into his vineyard.

In the first place, he went out early in the morning, or about six o'clock, called by the Romans and Jews the first hour of the day, when he engaged some at the usual price of a day's labor; and then, at the third hour, which would be, as we reckon time, at nine o'clock in the morning, when, finding others unemployed, he engaged them on a promise that they should receive whatever was right. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, or, as we reckon time, at noon and at three in the afternoon, and did likewise. Finally, about the eleventh hour, or at five o'clock in the afternoon, when there was but one hour remaining before sunset, he went out, and finding others standing idle, he expostulated with them in the language of our text, *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* These he also sends into the vineyard on the same general assurance, that he would give them what was just and reasonable.

The different hours of the day, at which the house holder is represented as going out and hiring laborers into his vineyard, when applied to those who live under the gospel age, may be considered as referring to the several periods of human life, as that of childhood, youth, middle age, the decline of life, and old age. Thus

some, like Samuel and Josiah, are called into the service of God in their earliest days. Others are led to forsake the paths of sin and folly, and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Many, again, are not induced to obey the call of the gospel, till they attain to manhood, or even to an advanced age. Finally, some, having spent almost all their days in vanity and sin, do not enter into the vineyard till nearly the close of life, when, at this advanced age, through the mercy and grace of God, they exhibit the fruits of true repentance, and genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. All, however, who really obey the gospel call, enter into this spiritual vineyard, and labor till the close of the day, will, undoubtedly, obtain eternal life; not, indeed, as the wages due to their work, but as the gift of God. *The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The reward which the laborer receives is the reward of grace, and not of debt. *And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.* Even those who enter into this spiritual vineyard and labor diligently, are said to be unprofitable servants; none can, therefore, claim any thing as a reward of merit. In the further illustration of these words, we propose to show,

I. That Christianity is a work which must be performed. *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* These words are addressed to the irreligious portion of mankind; they, therefore, imply that true Christians, instead of standing idle, are at work in the vineyard of God. All the metaphors which are employed in the Bible, to illustrate the Christian character and conduct, uniformly represent him as actively, diligently, and perseveringly engaged for God. Sometimes he is described as a warrior, fighting the good fight of faith; at other times, he is represented as running the race set before him, in which he strains every nerve, and puts forth all his energies. It is intimated in our text, that he is a laborer working in the vineyard of God, where he plucks up every pestiferous weed, and cultivates the plants of grace.

The gospel calls the sinner to the great work of salvation: *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* The heart of a sinner, to use the sublime metaphor of the text, resembles an uncultivated wilderness. Here Satan has his pathway, and here he sows the pestiferous seeds which produce briars, and thorns, and brambles, and every foul and noxious plant. Here the wild beasts of the forest roam, and the birds of prey build their nests. It is the habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. Here the satyr cries to his fellow, and screech-owl finds herself a place of rest. The sun pours its warm and genial rays upon it without producing any fruits of righteousness, and the dews of heaven descend, year after year, without generating fertility. Such is the condition of that soil, God has committed to the sinner for his cultivation. It resembles the field of the slothful, de-

scribed by Solomon : *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding ; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face of it, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it : I looked upon it, and received instruction.* Such is the sublime imagery employed by the Sacred Oracles to illustrate the miserable state of the sinner. O fellow-sinners, you are in a ruined condition—your souls are pining away in your iniquities—there is a burden of guilt on you that will sink you—there is a swarm of living lusts preying upon you that will devour you. The gospel is calling upon you to consider your ways, and to engage in the great work of salvation before it is too late.

Jesus Christ is calling upon you to enter into this vineyard, overgrown with thorns and brambles, to convert it into the garden of the Lord. You must shake off that spirit of indolence which has paralyzed all the energies of the soul, and gird yourselves for labor. You must pluck up every noxious plant, and not suffer one root of bitterness to remain in the ground. You must seize the gospel plough of conviction, and thoroughly break up the fallow ground, by the exercise of true penitence. You must build a hedge round about it of imperious resolutions, that will resist every encroachment, and protect it from every bird of prey, and every devouring beast of the forest. When the soil is suitably prepared, and the vineyard properly protected, you should sow the seed of light, life, and glory. And God will command the dews of heaven to descend upon it, and the genial rays of the sun to invigorate it. *Instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir-tree ; and instead of the briar, shall come up the myrtle-tree ; it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.* The wilderness shall bud and blossom as the rose, and the desert land shall become the garden of the Lord. Then will God fulfil to you that sublime promise : *I will be as the dew unto Israel : he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return ; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine : the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.*

Indeed, the work to which sinners are called by the gospel, is a great and comprehensive work. It commences in a due preparation of heart for the reception of the divine mercy, by the exercise of godly sorrow for sin, and proceeds by an unreserved dedication of the whole man, body and soul, to the service of God. It is the work of practical godliness, styled in the Scriptures, *the work of righteousness, and the labor of love.* The Christian is a laborer, and he labors in a manifest and uniform course of obedience to all the commandments of God. The Christian is not left to choose the ground he will occupy, or the plants he will cultivate ; he must labor in the vineyard of God, and he must bring forth the fruits of

righteousness, or he cannot reap in mercy. In other words, he must render such obedience as God demands—he must comply with the institutions of the gospel as they are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, if he would render an acceptable service to God. But we pass to remark,

II. That this is a work in which the sinner *manifests much reluctance to engage*. *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* This language certainly implies that the sinner prefers idleness to labor, sin to holiness. Sinners do not engage in this work,

1. *Because it is a work to which, of all others, they in their hearts feel the most opposed*. *The carnal mind*, says the Apostle, *is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. All unregenerate men are in the flesh, and under the influence of this carnal mind, which is the very principle of rebellion in the soul. This carnal mind refuses submission and obedience to God, and excites hatred and rebellion against him. It is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and minds the things of the flesh—it has no relish for spiritual and heavenly exercises. While the sinner is under the influence of the carnal mind, he would rather do anything than to go and work in God's vineyard. The prodigal son would rather go and feed swine, than to go back to his father's house, till he came to himself. To put off the old man with his deeds, and crucify the flesh with its lusts, is like cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. And this is the first act a sinner is directed to perform, and it is a most painful and distressing exercise; therefore, sinners dislike to engage in it.

2. Sinners dislike to go and work in God's vineyard, *because of their prevailing love to carnal ease*. Spiritual sloth is so sweet a sin, that the carnal heart is always in love with it. *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth, and thy want as an armed man*. The sinner lies upon the bed of sloth, and would not miss of heaven if desiring and wishing would carry him there; but if these will not he must indeed miss of it, for he cannot leave the embrace of his dear ease. Fighting, running, wrestling, striving, praying, taking heaven by violence, are exercises for which his indolent soul has no relish. He lies upon the bed of sloth, and suffers the roots of bitterness to spring up and grow till his vineyard is overrun with thorns, and nettles cover the face of it. He sleeps away his golden moments, till ruin, irrecoverable ruin, overtakes him.

3. Sinners neglect to go and work in God's vineyard, *because Satan furnishes them with constant employment*. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*. When the call of the gospel comes to sinners, Satan does to them as Pharaoh did to the Israelites—doubles their tasks: so that they always have



busy heads and hands. The sinner generally finds the present time inconvenient to attend to the subject of religion, and desires to put it off till he has more leisure time, when the cares of the world will be withdrawn, and the mind will be unoccupied with the pleasure of sense. For the present, the desires of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are all pressing their claims, and demanding special attention. These furnish constant and continued employment. They shoot up like luxurious plants in a rich soil, and prevent the growth of the good seed. Thus the sinner can find neither disposition nor time to enter into this spiritual vineyard, and labor for God.

And, fellow-sinner, have you not found, by woful experience, that this picture is too true? that this portrait is too exact to be denied? Have you found within you any relish for the holy exercises of religion? Did you ever find any pleasure in communion with God, or in the fellowship of saints? Have not the desire of riches, and the love of pleasure, been the ruling passion of the soul? When you have contemplated the subject of religion, when the power of truth has touched the heart, have you not felt that the work of reformation was too arduous to engage in? When you have seen how many evil tempers must be subdued, how many vicious habits must be overcome, how many roots of bitterness must be plucked up, before you can become a humble follower of Jesus, have you not shrunk back, and said, the work is too mighty for me to perform? Or, have you gone so far as to form resolutions and make vows, have not all the energies of your soul been withered, merely at the thoughts of encountering the first temptation? And when you closed in with it, did not your indolent soul find itself unequal to the conflict? Did not all your courage die within you, as snow is consumed by the scorching rays of a burning sun? I ask, fellow-sinner, if you have not, to this day, said to Christ, as Felix did to Paul: *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.* Why stand ye here all the day idle? You must search for the true cause of your idleness, in your own hearts. There lurks the foe of man, and there the destroyer has erected his seat.

III. Once more, these words imply, that the *day of labor will soon end.* Why stand ye here all the day idle? These words were spoken at the eleventh hour, only sixty minutes in advance of the setting sun. God not only calls upon us to labor in his vineyard, but directs us to labor during the day; *for the night cometh wherein no man can work.* At the period of death, the day will close, and close forever. Then shall cease all opportunity of *working out our salvation with fear and trembling.* Then shall the sinner be no longer interested in the Saviour's blood, nor in the mercy and grace of God, which is now so freely offered to him in the gospel. He is, therefore, exhorted: *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge,*

*nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.* The works of the present life cannot be performed in a future state; they must be wrought during the day man is permitted to live. And how short is the life of man! How fleeting are the moments he spends on earth! The life of man is like a vapor, that soon vanishes away; or like a bubble, that rises, and floats, and bursts, and mingles again with its own element. Indeed, Solomon says, *There is a time to be born, and a time to die*; but the stay of man is so short upon earth, he makes no mention of a time to live. The life of man, to use the sublime metaphor of the text, does not consist of years, of months, or of weeks; it is a day—only a short day of twelve hours. And, alas! the day is far spent, and the night is at hand. The hours are almost numbered; one hour more, and the sun sinks behind the western hills, and the dark and gloomy mantle of death will be spread over the sinner. O sinner! but sixty minutes to live, and the work of a life to perform. You have trifled away nearly the whole day of life, and you are still standing idle. You have much to do, and but little time to do it in. Time is fast receding, and eternity is heaving in view. Will you consume the few remaining moments in indolence? *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* But we pass to inquire,

IV. Who are those that *stand all the day idle?* *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* All, in the language of the Bible, are considered as standing idle, who neglect the great duties of religion. Man was sent into the world, not merely to eat and to drink, and to die; but to acquire a character that will fit him for that better country, *that land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign*—to obtain that meetness, which will qualify him for a *seat at God's right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.* We are, therefore, directed by our blessed Lord, to seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, with assurances that all things shall be added thereunto. All who do not obey this commandment, but neglect the moral and religious cultivation of the soul, how much soever they may be engaged in the discharge of the common duties of life, are regarded, in a religious sense, as idlers. The laborious mechanic, the busy merchant, and the bustling statesman, while they neglect the cause of God, and the interests of religion, are pronounced, by the word of truth, as standing idle. The reason is obvious; they are regarded as standing idle, because the inferior objects of time and sense have absorbed their thoughts, and occupied the whole of their attention, to the utter neglect of the momentous concerns of eternity. The claims of the body have engrossed the whole of their attention, to the absolute neglect of the interests of the soul. They have been sowing to the wind, and must reap the whirlwind. They have been sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh must reap corruption. Such persons do not answer the great end of their creation, nor fulfil the purposes for

which they were sent into the world. They are, therefore, represented as standing all the day idle.

They stand idle, who do not acquire divine and saving knowledge of the true God, and of his Son Jesus Christ: *This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*; who do not seek a knowledge of Jesus, as the only Saviour of sinners, as the only true way of eternal life to lost and perishing man; who do not inquire for the old paths, and walk therein: for the *ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*; who do not enrich their hearts with the saving graces of the gospel, and with the treasures of heavenly wisdom: for *she hath length of days in her right hand, and in her left riches and honor*; *she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her*; who do not adorn the soul with that meek and quiet spirit, which is an ornament, in the sight of God, of great price.

They stand idle, who do not heartily engage to promote the glory of God, by living a life of piety and devotion; who do not adorn a profession of Christianity with a well-ordered life and a godly conversation; who are not richly laden with the fruits of righteousness. Such persons are represented as standing idle, for a most obvious reason. They resemble the slothful man, who refuses to plough by reason of the cold; who neglects his vineyard, till it is overrun with brambles and pestiferous weeds. The hearts of such men resemble a wild and uncultivated forest; they are fruitful in wickedness, but destitute of righteousness. There lurks every hateful and evil passion; there grow the plants of sin, and the weeds of corruption. Satan has his seat there, and leads such men captive at his will.

Those stand idle, who do not come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and labor for the conversion of a lost and perishing world; who do not exert all their influence to bring mankind to the knowledge and service of God. Our time, our talents, and our money, are the treasures of God, which he has put into our hands, to be employed in his service. The man who wastes, who misimproves, or who buries them, is regarded by God as *a wicked and slothful servant*, and will be held accountable for his idleness and indolence, at the bar of Justice. Such men live to no good religious purpose. Like barren trees, they are an incumbrance in the vineyard of God; and, ere long, the order will go forth, cut them down, that they may no longer remain an incumbrance to the ground.

Some stand *all the day idle*—the whole day of life. It is always winter with them; the streams of life are chilled to the very fountain. They neither plough nor sow, nor pluck up any roots of bitterness. They are mere animals, and only live to gratify their passions and appetites. They are in the flesh, and mind the things of the flesh. They say, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

And is not this the case with some who hear me to-day? What have you done for the cause of God? What provisions have you made for the eternal world? Are you not polluted in your own blood? Are you not defiled with your own sins? And are you not still reclining upon the bed of sloth? *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* But we pass to examine,

V. The various *excuses which are offered in justification of this course of conduct.* *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* There are several answers, which are frequently given to this question. We shall proceed to examine them.

1. Some urge, in justification of their idleness, that *they have no ability to labor.* They assert that Adam, by the appointment of God, was the representative of the whole human family; and that, in consequence of his transgression, all his posterity, down through all the successive ages of time, became wholly inclined to evil, and lost all their moral ability to obey God. To illustrate the idea by a figure: that his posterity came into the world with all their limbs maimed, and all their joints out of place; and that they are incapable of either walking or standing—that, in consequence of this melancholy and unhappy event, they are wholly incapacitated to labor in the vineyard of God, but are just fitted for the service of the devil—that they must remain in his service till God, by a special agency and an irresistible power, comes and heals the maimed limbs, and puts the joints in their proper places; and if he never does this, they must finally sink down to hell. But, is this doctrine true? If it is, then is the sinner justly excused; for God requires no impossibilities. Surely, if this doctrine be true, then the calls and invitations of the gospel to sinners, are but the solemn mockery of their miseries; for the posterity of Adam have done nothing to bring these miseries and misfortunes upon themselves, and they can do nothing to redeem themselves from the burdens under which they are groaning. But this doctrine is not contained in the Bible.

A proper attention to the nature of man will show, that such an inward freedom as renders him the master of his own conduct, and able to do or not to do what he pleases, is so necessary to the morality of his actions, that without it they are neither good nor evil, neither capable of rewards nor punishments. Madmen, or men asleep, are not to be charged with the good or evil of what they do; therefore, at least, some small degree of liberty must be left us, otherwise why are we praised or blamed for our conduct? All virtue and religion, all discipline and industry, arise out of this as their first principle, that there is a power in us to govern our own thoughts and actions, and to raise and improve our faculties. If this be denied, all efforts, all education, all attention bestowed upon ourselves and others, become fruitless and vain. If a man accounts himself under an inevitable necessity, as he will have little remorse for the evil he does, while he imputes it to that inevitable force that

constrains him, so he will naturally conclude, that it is to no purpose for him to struggle with impossibilities. Men are sufficiently inclined to throw all censure off from themselves, and to indulge in indolence; and, upon the supposition of the moral inability of man, who can blame them, seeing that their efforts can be of no value?

Matter is inactive of itself, and only moves in consequence of its being acted upon by some other being. Man is possessed of a power to begin motion, and to determine it in any direction he may think proper. This power and this intelligence constitute his liberty, and form that image of God which is stamped upon his nature. Whether man possesses this power of acting originally and of himself, or whether he is incapable of forming any resolution, or making any effort, without being acted upon by a foreign cause, is not a point to be reasoned on, or to be disputed about: it is a question of fact, which, as far as can be possibly known, every man has it in his power to determine by the evidence of his own consciousness. We do affirm, then, that every man is conscious that he is a free agent, and that it is not possible for the most staunch advocate of man's moral inability, who has ever yet appeared, seriously and practically to convince himself of the contrary. It is not possible for man in his senses to believe, that in all those crimes which men charge themselves with, and reproach themselves for, God is the agent; and that, properly speaking, they are no more agents than a sword is when employed to commit murder. We do, indeed, on some occasions, feel ourselves hurried on so impetuously by violent passions, that we seem for an instant to have lost our freedom; but on cool reflection we find that we both might and ought to have restrained that heat in its first commencement. We feel that we can divert our thoughts, and overcome ourselves in most instances, if we set seriously about it. We feel that knowledge, reflection, and proper society, improve the temper and disposition; and that ignorance, negligence, and the society of the worthless and abandoned, corrupt and degrade the mind. From all this we conclude, that man is free, and not under inevitable fate, or irresistible motions to do good or evil. This conclusion is confirmed by the whole style of the Scripture, which, upon any other supposition, becomes a solemn and unworthy mockery. It is full of persuasions, exhortations, reproofs, expostulations, encouragements, and terrors. But to what purpose is it to speak to dead men, to persuade the blind to see, or the lame to run? To what purpose is it to direct a man with a disjointed frame to labor in a vineyard? If we are under impotence till the irresistible grace comes, and if, when it comes, nothing can withstand it, what occasion is there of these solemn discourses which can have no effect? They cannot render us inexcusable, unless it were in our power to be improved by them; and to imagine that God gives light and blessings, which can do no good, to those whom before he intended to damn, only to make them more inexcusable, and for the purpose of aggravating

their condemnation, gives so strange an idea of his character as it is not fit to express in the language that naturally arises out of it. We, therefore, conclude that God has set before the sons of men, life and death, blessing and cursing; and that the soul that chooseth life shall live, as the soul that chooseth death shall die; and that man has the moral ability of choosing the good as well as the evil, so that the sinner is without excuse.

2. It is urged by others, in justification of their idleness, *that it is not necessary anything should be done*. They maintain that the salvation of the whole human family is fixed by an immutable decree of heaven, and nothing can change it. That, so far as the conduct of man in this life is concerned with reference to his eternal interests, it is wholly a matter of indifference whether he is active or idle; that all, in a future state, the saint and the sinner, the righteous and the wicked, the clean and the unclean, he that swear-eth and he that feareth an oath, will be equally owned and blessed of God. This corrupt and licentious doctrine was never broached till the last century. I say corrupt and licentious, for what libertine can desire greater latitude than this doctrine affords? This doctrine strengthens the hands of the wicked by promising them life. It holds out a sure retreat from the uplifted hand of justice, whenever the guilty wretch can find courage to take his own life. According to this doctrine, a culprit in state prison may exchange his cell for a seat at God's right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore, without penitence or reformation. The assassin may imbrue his hands in innocent blood, and then by the act of suicide enter heaven, while the cries of a bereaved widow and orphan children are going up to God for vengeance on the author of their sufferings.

But this doctrine finds no countenance in the Sacred Oracles; the whole Bible stands in hostile array against it. All the writers, whom the Universalists claim, from Origin down to Mr. Murray, have freely and fully admitted this statement. Dr. Chauncy, who examined them, has made the following concession: "It may not be unseasonable to add here, that it is fully and freely acknowledged, by all the above writers, that *many* among the sons and daughters of Adam, will pass through a state of *unutterable* misery, before they will be prepared for, and admitted to the joys of God's presence, in the heavenly world. This I judge proper to mention, because the doctrine of universal salvation has, in this, and some other towns, been held forth by a stranger, (meaning Murray) who has, of himself, assumed the character of a *preacher*, in direct contradiction, not only to all the before-mentioned writers, but to the *whole tenor of the New Testament books*, from the beginning to the end. According to this *preacher*, a man may go to heaven, notwithstanding all the sins he may be guilty of in the course of his life. Such a doctrine looks very like an *encouragement* to libertinism, and falls in with the scheme of too many in this degenerate

age, who, under the pretence of *promoting religion*, undermine it at the root. It is certainly fitted to this end, and has already had this effect upon many; especially upon our younger people, who, by means of it, have lost all sense of religion, and given themselves up to the most criminal excesses. If this kind of preaching is encouraged, it may prove as hurtful to *civil society* as to *religion*. Would to God it might be realized as an *undoubted truth*, that there is the same reason from Scripture to believe there is a HELL as a HEAVEN. And those who are infidels as to the former, would do well to take care lest they should know, from their *own experience*, the horrors of that *dreadful place*."

The Sacred Oracles assure us that impenitent sinners are unfit for, and shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven. They positively declare, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*; and *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. They assert, *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*. For *he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption*; but *he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*. They teach us that *The wages of sin is death*: but *the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*; and that *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness*: but *the righteous hath hope in his death*. Jesus Christ himself declared to the unbelieving Jews, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins; and whither I go, ye cannot come*. He taught his disciples not to fear *Them that kill the body, and after that have no more power that they can do*. But *I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear*: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. And the Apostle Paul proposed to the Jews this pungent question, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* Indeed, he declares, *When they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them*. Such is the testimony of revelation respecting the fearful doom that awaits the impenitent sinner. And while this storm of divine vengeance is gathering around him, and just ready to burst upon his guilty and devoted head, he is standing idle. *Why stand ye here all the day idle?*

3. But there is another class who form excuses in justification of their indolence; I mean, the idle professors of religion. When we press upon them the duties of the gospel, they justify their idleness by an appeal to their feelings. Their stupid and indolent souls have fallen asleep, and they feel no relish for spiritual exercises, and, consequently, have no enjoyment in the discharge of Christian duties. These considerations furnish them with a plausible excuse for idleness. The fact is, these persons, instead of laboring in the vineyard of God, have gone and joined the company of idlers. If they ever entered the vineyard, they soon ceased to be active, they have relapsed back into their former state of lethargy. They have a name to live, while, in fact, they are dead. What can be greater folly, than for such persons to expect to feel the lively exercises of

an engaged Christian, when they come so far short of the Christian life! If a man would feel lively and interested in the cause of God, he must be a laborer in his vineyard—he must lead a watchful and prayerful life—he must husband his resources and diligently cultivate all the fruits of righteousness. While he folds his arms and sleeps upon the bed of sloth; while he squanders and idles away his invaluable moments; while he neglects year after year known and manifest duty, he cannot feel the love and peace of God flowing through his soul, or the word of God like fire shut up in his bones. O, idle professors, up! get ye out of this place, and bestir yourselves in the vineyard of God. Shake off sloth and stupidity, and you will soon begin to feel both the relish and enjoyment of spiritual things.

In the conclusion of my discourse, permit me to enforce this question: *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* Is it because you have no work to do? Have you no sins to forsake, no vicious habits to renounce, no evil temper to subdue? Have you repented of all your sins, and washed away its guilty stains in the Redeemer's blood? Have you put off the old man with his deeds, and crucified the flesh with its lusts? Have you adorned the soul with the graces of the gospel, and kindled up the undying fire of love and zeal upon the altar of a frozen heart? Have you obtained a meetness for an inheritance among the saints in light? Have you provided for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not away? O, sinner, why stand ye here all the day idle, while you have a heart to renew, and a soul to save! while there is a hell to shun, a heaven to win, and a God to serve!

*Why stand ye here all the day idle?* Here upon earth, a stage for action, a field for labor! Here is the vineyard, and now is the time, the only time for labor. You have no time to waste in idleness, or to consume in sleep. While you sleep, the enemy of your soul is sowing tares; while you are standing idle, your poverty is coming like one that travelleth, and your want as an armed man. Your poverty and want, like an armed traveller, are making sure steps, every hour coming nearer and nearer to the door, to effect your total destruction; and you are standing idle! *Why stand ye here all the day idle?*

I have come by the authority of my Master, to employ laborers for his vineyard. And shall I first engage those of you who are in the morning of life? The householder first went out, *early in the morning*, to hire laborers into his vineyard. God is delighted with the services of the young mind: he is pleased with the devotion of a youthful heart. He says, *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.* Some of the youth who hear me, have already entered into the vineyard, have already engaged in the service of God. They find the ways of wisdom to be pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace—they find the yoke of Christ to be easy, and his burden to be light. They have gamboled with



you upon the plains of pleasure, and sported with you upon the hills of delight. They have gone with you to pluck the flowers of sin, and to gather the blossoms of pleasure. O now come, and go with them into the vineyard of God; O, travel with them up the hill of Zion—for there grows the tree of life, and there is the paradise of God. Here the plants are clothed with verdure, ever fresh and ever green—here the flowers never wither, here the blossoms never die.

Young man, my Master needs your services in his vineyard. You who are strong to labor, you who are full of health and vigor, come and enter into his vineyard, and spend the flower of your days in his service, the prime of your years to his glory and honor. While you live on earth, live to some valuable purpose and to some noble end. By entering into the vineyard now, you may not only secure the reward of grace, a crown of glory that shall never fade away, but you may be the means of enlisting many others in the same cause, of inducing many of your associates and companions to enter into the same vineyard. Young woman, my Master needs your services, and to-day he calls you to enter into his vineyard. Many of you have left a father's house, a mother's home, to seek employment in this village, and here my Master has sent his servant to hire laborers into his vineyard. As an encouragement to engage in his service, he offers you the gift of eternal life: he offers you a seat at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Come and enter into his vineyard to-day, and he will clothe you with a robe as white as the lily and as pure as the light; he will beautify you with salvation: he will give you the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price. If you are thrown an orphan upon the world, he will be your father; if the afflictions of life press heavily, he will assist in carrying your burden, and he will never leave you nor forsake you.

This householder also went out at the *sixth and the ninth hour*, to hire laborers into his vineyard. By this metaphorical language, we are to understand the call of the gospel to those, who are in the middle and the decline of life. With you, my friends, the spring of life has passed away, and all the flowers of youth have dropped off. You are now going down the declivity of time; and the winter of old age, which must chill all the streams of life to the very fountain, is rapidly approaching you. Often did you say, in your youthful days, when I become settled in life, then will I seek the Lord: when I have made provisions for time, then will I lay up treasures in heaven. These days are past, and you are still in the eddy of folly, you are still in the whirl of sin. Like the sluggard, you are saying a little more sleep, a little more slumber. How long will you be deceived by the intoxicating pleasures of sin? how long will you be allured by the enchanting paths of vice? Shall the flesh reign till the very day the soul is summoned before the tribunal of God? Shall it be surrendered up all stained with crimes.

all polluted with sin? Have you not neglected your souls, and robbed God long enough? Have you not made vows and promises enough? O, then, to-day enter into his vineyard; to-day close in with the overtures of mercy; to-day wash out the guilty stains of sin with the atoning blood of the Lamb.

*Finally*, he went out about the *eleventh hour*, and found others standing idle; he saith unto them, *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* It is the eleventh hour, the day is nearly closed, the sun is just ready to sink behind the western hills. Venerable fathers and mothers, to-day you have one more gospel call, you have one more offer of mercy. It is your last, your only opportunity of securing a saving interest in Christ. The dark clouds of death are now floating over your heads; the quicksands of life are giving way under your feet. Soon, the curtains of life will be drawn; soon, you will be shrouded in the dark mantle of death. If you ever enter into the vineyard, you must enter it without delay. Now is no time to meditate, no time to consider; you must act, and you must act immediately, if you would be saved. After so long a time as to-day, and the last hour of the day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. How awful would be the sight, to see a sinner accursed, an hundred years old. But if he were a thousand, and lived and died in sin, he would be banished from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

But, alas, why do I speak to the man of grey hairs, to the man with trembling limbs? for who can tell, among all who are numbered in this assembly, the heart in which the first shaft of death will be transfixed? In all this assembly, who can decipher the individual that will be first laid away in the cold grave? God has whet his glittering sword, his uplifted arm is stretched out over us, and he will soon strike the fatal blow: but who is first to fall by it is a question we cannot answer? It may be that wicked young man! It may be that gay and thoughtless young woman! God, for wise purposes, has hid the future from us! He has assured us that we must all die, but has reserved the times and seasons to himself. We should all, therefore, have our *lamps trimmed and burning, and be as servants waiting for the coming of their Lord.*

## DISCOURSE XVIII.

*On Spiritual Declension.*

“Peter followed afar off.”—Luke xxii, 54.

WHAT! Peter, the courageous, the zealous Peter, who had made such a noble confession of his Lord—who had always been so prompt and indefatigable in his cause—who had declared himself ready to die for his sake—does he begin to waver? does he follow his Lord afar off, like one ashamed to desert him, and yet afraid to stand by him? Yes, that man who appeared so ardent, so confident, so heroic, now acts the part of a hesitating coward, and follows his Saviour *afar off*. The language of the text not only describes the literal distance of his person from Christ, but indicates the state of his mind. His heart was distanced from him; hence, although he did not totally forsake him, yet he followed with faint and faltering steps.

But Peter has many imitators in the present day, of whom it may be said with equal propriety, *they follow Jesus afar off*. The time once was when they followed hard after him, and beheld his glory, *the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*; but now to them Jesus has lost his charms; *he is like a root out of dry ground; there is no form nor comeliness in him that they should desire him—the gold has become dim, and the most fine gold is changed*. They are no longer delighted in the service of God, for to them his yoke is *hard*, and his burden is *heavy*.

I. In addressing you from the words of the text, we shall consider, in the first place, what is implied in *following Christ*. The apostles followed Christ, both *literally* and *morally*, as his personal attendants and approved disciples. They gladly received his word, acknowledged his Messiahship, and obeyed his injunctions. In these respects we ought to be followers of God as dear children.

1. We should follow Christ as *our Teacher, to instruct us*. Jesus Christ is a Teacher come from God to instruct us. He left the bosom of the Father, and came down from heaven to earth to declare him to us, to make known his perfections, and to reveal his mind and will concerning man. In particular, he has come to inform us what plan his heavenly Father has devised for the restoration of a guilty world to his favor; and in what way they must walk so as to please and honor him. He directs us to come to him with the docility of little children, and receive instruction from his lips: *Learn of me*, says he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*; that is, for I can bear with your infirmities, and will carefully convey instruction to you, as you are able to receive it. It was in this way that Mary sat at his feet, whilst her more worldly-minded sis-

ter Martha was deeply interested to provide for the guests she was about to entertain, a rich and sumptuous repast; and this was the good part which Mary chose, and which our Lord assured her should never be taken from her. To inculcate this lesson, and to induce this habit, was the real scope of our Lord's address to the rich youth, who desired to know what he must do to inherit eternal life. Our Lord told him he must *keep the commandments*. And when the young man, ignorant of their spiritual import, affirmed that he had kept them all from his youth up, our Lord said to him, *Go and sell all thou hast vnd come and follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven*; by which he meant, not that the sacrifice of earthly treasures would purchase those which are eternal, but that, by disincumbering his mind of earthly cares, and attending diligently to the instructions that should be given him, he should gradually be guided into all truth, and finally attain that eternal life about which he had professed so much concern. This is what our Lord requires at our hands also; and not merely at the commencement of our Christian course, but throughout our whole lives. After he had taught his disciples during the whole of his ministerial life, even after he was risen again from the dead, he both *expounded to them out of the prophets all that related to himself*, and *opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures*; and in like manner must we, to the latest hour of our lives, come to him for the illumination of our minds by his word and Spirit. We shall still need the same teaching as at first, and must come to him for that spiritual *eye-salve which he alone can give*.

2. It is not sufficient, however, that we follow him as our Teacher; we must, also, follow him as our *Master, to rule over us*. *We call him Lord and Master, and we say well; for so he is*. But to what purpose shall we call him *Lord, Lord, if we do not the things he says*? His word must be a law to us at all times, and under all circumstances. There is no authority whatever that is to be regarded in comparison as his. When the apostles were forbidden to preach in his name, they made this appeal to their rulers: *Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye*. No menaces should ever intimidate or deter us from the path of duty; we must say with St. Paul, *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me*, so that I may discharge the duty that I owe unto my Lord, and approve myself to him as a faithful servant.

3. We must, furthermore, follow him as our *Saviour, to save us*. There is no other Saviour, no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved. It is he, and he only, who has power to deliver us from the dominion of sin, and impart to us that holiness and purity by which we can be admitted into the presence of God. *Through him we must be reconciled to the Father*; and *by him we may be justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses*. Hence he says, *look unto me*,

and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, that the wounded Israelites might look unto it and be healed, so, says our Lord, *have I been lifted up, that whosoever shall believe in me may not perish, but have everlasting life.* But we must look to him alone. We must receive him as a whole and entire Saviour; for he will not endure any rival. If St. Paul desired to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God in Christ Jesus, much more must we renounce all dependence upon our own works, and seek to be justified by Christ alone. As in heaven there is but one song, *To him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and the Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever;* so on earth there must be an entire and exclusive affiance in him for all the blessings of salvation.

4. Finally, we must follow him as *our example, to regulate the whole of our life and conversation.* When he washed his disciples' feet, he declared, that he intended in this symbolical act, to show how they were to demean themselves towards each other; and, by the example he then set, to inculcate the necessity of their performing, towards the meanest of their brethren, every act of condescension and love. We are, also, informed by St. Peter, that, under still more trying circumstances, the Lord Jesus Christ *has set us an example, that we should follow his steps;* and more especially in those duties which are most difficult and self-denying. As he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, and when he was reviled, he reviled not again, and when he suffered threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; so we, under all the heaviest afflictions that can come upon us, are to suffer them with all meekness;  *blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who despitefully use us, and persecute us.* Our determination, through grace, must be, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. In one word, *the whole mind must be in us that was in Christ Jesus;* and under all imaginable circumstances, we must approve ourselves as followers of Christ, walking as he walked, and doing those things only which will please and honor our Father which is in heaven. It must, at all times, be our meat and drink, to do the will of our heavenly Father.

Such I understand to be the meaning of the phrase, to follow Christ. And those who follow him fully, who have respect for all of his commandments, and go without the camp bearing reproach, *will be strong in the Lord and the power of his might.* Such persons will be healthy, and thriving, and growing Christians. But, alas! what multitudes there are, who *run well for a season, then are hindered; their goodness, like the morning cloud and the early dew, soon vanishes away.* If they follow Christ at all, it is like Peter, *afar off.*

II. Having considered what we are to understand by following Christ, we shall now proceed, in the second place, to inquire what

is implied in following him *afar off*. *Peter followed afar off*. St. Peter's mind was agitated between hope and despair; his fears had vanquished his zeal, and his doubts had subdued his confidence. He was rapidly sinking into that state of mind, which finally led him to deny his Lord and Master. He, however, at this time, still felt some attachment to his Saviour. Without this, he would not have followed him at all, under such circumstances of danger. Indeed, considering how long and how sincerely he had loved him, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that he had, in so short a time, become wholly indifferent to his Master. It would be contrary to nature, to imagine that he had, all at once, lost the whole of his attachment to his Redeemer.

Some degree of love is, also, found in those who follow Christ *afar off now*; indeed, no one can follow him at all without it. They have some attachment to his name, to his cause, to his ways, and to his people. Their condition resembles the church at Ephesus; of whom the angel said: *I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* It is this love, although cold and feeble, that distinguishes this state from that of *formalists, hypocrites, worldlings, and apostates*. But this state is also distinguished from that of a faithful and devoted Christian.

1. The love of Peter was in a *decaying condition*. Had it been as warm, as ardent, and as vigorous as formerly, no trouble nor danger would have kept him at a distance from his dear Redeemer. Instead of following him *afar off*, he would have followed hard after his Saviour, and been ready to have shared the same fate of his Lord and Master. He would have followed him to prison, and to death, rather than to have denied him. But his love was now relaxed, his zeal abated, his energies paralyzed, and his confidence shaken. His love, though not wholly extinguished, yet burnt with a feeble and languid flame.

And such is the case with his modern imitators—their holy ardors are damped, and almost ready to expire. Their love is waxing cold, and receiving the chill of death. Their devotions are marked with formality, coldness, and indifference. And such, I fear, is the state of many who hear me to-day. Once you could say, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, and forget not all his benefits*; but now, “*hosannas languish on your tongues, and your devotion dies.*” The time has been, when, with David, you could affirm, *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*; but now, like the sluggard, you say, *A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands*

to sleep. Formerly you could declare, from a happy state of experience, *My cup is full and running over*; but now you exclaim, *My leanness, my leanness, wo is me!* And does this languid and dying frame of mind excite no alarm, create no uneasiness? Do you rest contented, in this land of drought and barrenness, where all is withered, and dried, and parched up? In this dreary land there is no dew to water the soul, no blossoms to delight the eye, no odors to regale the senses, no fruit to sustain the life. This is the land into which you have wandered; here you have hung your harps upon the willows—here you have sat down to languish, to faint, and to die. O remember, if you are satisfied to rest in this state, God will not be satisfied for you to rest here. You are in that state of lukewarmness, which God so supremely hates, so utterly abominates: *I would*, says he, *that thou wert cold or hot; so, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* And if he spews you out of his mouth, where will he spew you? He will spew you into hell; he will spew you into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; he will spew you into the blackness of darkness forever.

2. Peter's heart, at this time, was in a *divided, irresolute state*. It fluctuated to and fro, and halted betwixt two. He followed Christ because he loved him, but he followed *afar off*, because he did not love him with an *undivided heart*. The love of ease, of honor, or of life, combated the love of Jesus, chilled its ardor, and weakened its energies. He had too much generosity, and too much love to his Master, wholly to abandon him; but he had too much selfishness to abandon all for his sake. Unhappy condition! agitated and torn by conflicting principles and passions, and not wholly subdued by any.

And such is the state of many indolent and loitering followers of the Saviour, at the present day, feeling it "worse than death their God to love, and not their God alone." Their hearts are divided, their affections are divided, and their minds are divided—like a double-minded man, *they are unstable in all their ways*. They are surrounded by objects full of attraction, drawing them different ways—sometimes one prevailing and sometimes another. Now they are diverted from duty by fashionable society—now by worldly pleasures—now by the corroding cares of life—now by the praises of men—and now by improper associates. In the midst of these aberrations, their consciences check them—the Spirit of God reproves them—the Holy Scriptures condemn them—and the faithful minister of the gospel warns them. They do not follow the Lord *fully*, but are double-hearted and faint-hearted—unwilling to forsake the path of pity, yet walking in it with feeble and hesitating steps. They are sickly, and weakly, and puny; full of doubts, and fears, and discouragements. They sin and confess; and confess and sin. They comply with the forms of religion, but find no inward delight in the service of God; they are, therefore, led to doubt the truth of

Christianity, and sometimes the existence of God himself. O miserable state, wretched condition! What tormenting anxieties, what distressing doubts what opposite and powerful attractions, agitate and distract the minds of those who follow Christ *afar off!*

III. We shall now advert, in the third place, to some of the causes which led to *this state of mind, and to this course of conduct.* Many of these may be traced in the history of Peter himself.

1. One cause which led to the fatal catastrophe was *presumption.* Peter confided in his own strength. Hence his profession of greater attachment to Christ than the other apostles. Even when admonished by our Lord, he still appeared to rely upon himself: *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* And such was the unhappy effect of his confidence, that every one of the apostles caught, as it were, the contagion, and expressed themselves in the same vehement language as he: *Likewise, also, thus said they all.* Doubtless they all meant well; the resolution itself was good; but it was evil, as being made in dependence on their own strength.

Presuming on their own strength, is usually the first step towards that declension which is discoverable in many modern professors. The presumptuous person imagines he can do everything, and can do nothing; thinks he can excel all, and excels in nothing; promises everything, and performs nothing. Being ignorant of his own helplessness, he does not rely with all his heart upon the Redeemer. He especially neglects to solicit, in fervent prayer, the divine aid. Hence the Spirit of God is grieved, and its quickening energies counteracted in the soul; the presumptuous person is left to himself. There is scarcely anything we know so little of as ourselves—scarcely anything we see so little of, as of our own weakness and depravity. When the mind is inflated with pride and vanity, and we become self-confident and presumptuous, we are standing on very dangerous ground. *Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* My brethren, let me warn you against this spirit of presumption. The more self-confident we are, the more we provoke the Lord to jealousy, and challenge him to leave us to ourselves. *Thus saith the Lord: cursed be man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land not inhabited.* Cherish a spirit of humanity; consider your own weakness; and remember you can only hope to stand when you are *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

2. Another cause which produced this unhappy state of mind was *shame.* Jesus was now making his entry into Jerusalem amidst the hosannas of the multitude. Peter, no doubt, was conspicuous, and, perhaps, the foremost on that honorable occasion. But Jesus was now in the power of his enemies, and led away as



a vile impostor. Peter knew his innocence, but was ashamed to be in the company of his Master, under circumstances so disgraceful. He accordingly followed afar off.

A similar shame is now often the cause of modern declension. When Jesus is honored and adored by his followers, many join in the exclamation of *hosanna*; but when he is disgraced among the ungodly with whom they associate or converse, they are unwilling to appear very intimate with him. They are ashamed of him—in his people, who, perhaps, are in the humble walks of life—in the reproaches of his cross—in the institutions of religion, especially of baptism—and before relatives and superiors. There are many ways of being ashamed of Christ—when we are ashamed of his people, of the doctrine of the gospel, of the institutions of Christianity—then are we ashamed of Jesus. This shame discourages the mind, sinks the spirits, and enfeebles all the active powers. Thus a person under the influence of shame, falls an easy prey to temptation, and is turned aside from the path of duty by the most slender resistance.

3. *Fear and worldly prudence* afforded other causes for Peter's conduct. These appear to have been the most immediate and direct causes of his following at a distance from Christ. The views of Peter during the whole period of Christ's personal ministry, appear to have been very worldly. He seems to have considered the kingdom his Master was about to establish, more a temporal than a spiritual kingdom; and he was, doubtless, animated with the prospect of becoming one of the principal men in it. It was this sentiment that fired his soul with passion, and urged him forward with a vehement zeal in the cause. But circumstances were now changed—the sun of Peter's glory was about to set—already had the approaching shades of night spread a gloom over his mind. Judas had turned traitor, and betrayed his Master—Jesus had been apprehended by the civil officers of justice, and appeared as weak and helpless as a mere man—his disciples had forsaken him and fled. Finding himself left alone, Peter's confidence vanishes into fear, and he became alarmed for his personal safety. Prudence immediately suggested to him the propriety of observing due caution at this critical and perilous moment. He was in no state of mind to encounter troubles, to brave dangers, to endure persecution, to face a stern and apparently conquering foe. He, therefore, falls in the rear, and follows on afar off, like an idle and disinterested spectator.

And how many imitators has Peter in this respect, in modern times, both in the pulpit and in the pew. How many ministers there are, who adopt such a time-serving, man-fearing, and earth-born policy, as to keep out of sight some of the most essential features of the Christian religion. They never have the rudeness to disquiet the sinner's conscience—they are so very civil and polite, as never to utter the word *hell* without an humble apology, nor to

name the *prince of darkness*, without turning him into a harmless eastern metaphor. Such men never dare to look titled wickedness in the face. Full of worldly policy and aspen timidity, they always say, yes, to the world, whatever it may declare or propose. They never trouble the rich, the gay, the polite, with any of the unwelcome and old-fashioned topics of religion; or, at any rate, not till they are just leaving the world, and want to be assured that such harmless and good-hearted people as they are, have nothing to fear. Such ministers, if they be considered the followers of Christ, must, like Peter, follow him *afar off*; they come very far short of discharging the duties of a faithful and devoted minister of the gospel.

But such worldly prudence is far from being confined to the pulpit; it descends into the pew—it disseminates itself through the whole church—it weakens and enervates the very vitals of religion in the soul, and produces a weakly, and sickly, and puny race of Christians. When such dwarfish Christians, if Christians indeed they may be called, are about to connect themselves with a church, almost the first inquiry is, what church shall I join to increase my personal honor, and to advance my temporal interest? Thus they commence a Christian life under the influence of worldly policy, and prosecute it by following Christ *afar off*; while others, perhaps, run well for a season, and then fall under the dominion of this fatal influence, and begin to hesitate, and shrink, and decline in their Christian course. They do not fear death in the service of God, for this does not menace them; but they fear to lose some temporal good, to forget the esteem of men, or to incur their displeasure. Under the influence of this fear, they shrink at the cross, they neglect duty, they bring darkness upon the mind, and death into the soul; and if they do not wholly renounce Christ, they, at best, follow him *afar off*.

4. *Finally*, another cause of Peter's following Christ *afar off* was *unbelief*. This was at the root of Peter's base and cowardly conduct. The eye of faith was nearly closed, and flesh and blood prevailed against it. And unbelief still remains one of the most common and fatal evils that afflict the church of God. It pervades the whole atmosphere of the Christian church, but its darkness is more visible in some minds than in others. And O! how fatal and deadly are its effects upon the vitality of the soul. There is no grace so highly honors God as faith; nor any evil so reprobated by him as unbelief. Other evils are acts of rebellion against his authority; but this rises up against every one of his perfections. It doubts his wisdom, his power, his goodness, his love, his mercy; yea, it questions even his veracity, and reduces the infinite Jehovah to a level with his creatures. Other evils, if we come to God in the exercise of faith, may be forgiven; but this evil, while it remains dominant in the soul, precludes the possibility of forgiveness; because it keeps us from God, to whom we ought to come, and puts away from us that mercy which he offers to bestow. Every

degree of unbelief is injurious to the Christian, since it pours darkness upon the understanding, and beclouds and obscures his future prospects. It cuts him off from divine direction, and also from divine aid. It fills the mind with doubts, and fears, and discouragements. Thus the unbelieving Christian is left to take refuge in false expedients; to fall back from God, from holiness, and from a sense of duty, and to follow Christ *afar off*. And how can it be otherwise, for unbelief weakens the Saviour's attractions—obscures his glory—enervates the soul—depresses the spirits—and stupifies the feelings. And this habit of mind is fatal to the growth of Christianity, and withering to all the graces of the spiritual life.

IV. But we have not delineated the worst feature in the character we have been drawing—there still remains a darker shade to be exhibited—it is the *fatal consequences attending this course of conduct*. These are awfully displayed in Peter himself. He, at length, stumbled, and finally fell; and a dreadful fall indeed it was. Poor Peter's heart finally became so alienated from his Lord and Master, that he could deny him with oaths and curses. Alas! for poor sinful nature! What is man when left to himself? Samson, shorn of his locks, becomes as weak as another man; and so an apostle, when his heart becomes alienated from Christ, is unable to resist the most slender temptation, and immediately falls into the grossest sins.

And what melancholy falls succeed a declining state of piety in the present day! What sad reverses, what doleful crimes, have marked the history of some of the most eminent saints in modern times! Some ministers of the gospel, of shining parts, of deep piety, of great moral worth, by laying down their watch, and suffering the spirit of piety to decline within them, have by degrees departed from the Lord, till, finally, they stumbled and fell, and have been left to commit crimes shocking to humanity. The same has also been the case among the private members of the church. Even the most heaven-daring and out-breaking sins have marked their wayward course, adultery and murder not excepted. One falls into drunkenness, and another into licentiousness; one is brought under the dominion of covetousness, and another of censoriousness; one falls a prey to pride, and another to envy. And thus the very land we inhabit is polluted, and the public morals of the community corrupted by the unholy and impure examples of fallen professors of religion.

1. *Again, what a gross dishonor to the cause of Christ, was the conduct of Peter!* What an insult to the Saviour for his first apostle to be ashamed of him, and to deny all knowledge of him! To declare, openly and publicly, that he did not so much as know the man! What a weapon it put into the hands of his enemies! How did they triumph over the fallen cause of the dear Redeemer, and exult at the approaching signs of its extermination! And deep reproach is still brought upon the sacred cause of religion by those

halting followers of Christ, when they lose their piety and zeal, fall into sin, or manifest a worldly and trifling spirit. Such professors of religion bring upon the cause of Christ a deeper and more lasting stain than do all the reproaches of infidelity. Indeed, nearly all the poisonous darts of infidelity fall harmless to the ground; while those of fallen professors penetrate deep, stick fast, and rankle and poison even to the very core. Whenever Christ is wounded in the house of his friends, then the self-righteous and profane rejoice—then the wicked triumph. And what is still more melancholy, the feeble and the lame are often turned aside.

2. *Finally*, the conduct of Peter brought upon himself the *most keen reflections and the most bitter remorse*. This is a certain consequence, especially where, as in the case of Peter, the fall is scandalous. *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways*. Happy, indeed, if remorse be indulged in due season—if it lead to the cross of the injured Jesus. Too frequently, it is to be feared, repentance is resisted, and endless remorse in the flames of hell become the lot of the unhappy backslider. One thing, then, is certain, wherever sin exists, it must become the occasion of keen remorse here, or of painful emotions hereafter. Every sin that is not repented of, and pardoned in this life, will most assuredly be punished in the life to come.

1st. In the conclusion of our remarks on this subject, permit me to urge upon you, in the first place, the importance of guarding against *the beginnings of declension in religion*. A declension in religion usually comes on gradually, and by degrees. Christians are seldom plunged from a state of deep and fervent piety, into the depth of sin and depravity. At first, they usually neglect duty, which brings darkness and death upon the soul, and then, little by little, they depart from the path of rectitude, without intending to do any thing materially wrong, or to backslide from the Lord. And thus by degrees the comforts and consolations of religion depart, till, at length, they are wholly lost. Nothing now remains but *a form of godliness*, which is maintained by many painful and disagreeable expedients. In this state of things, the mind is dissatisfied, restless, and uneasy; and, at length, breaks through the restraints of law, and seeks indulgence and gratification in sinful pleasures. Then God is dishonored, the conscience wounded, and the cause of religion disgraced. To guard effectually against this state of things, we must watch the most secret and hidden emotions of the heart, and constantly preserve a lively and deep sense of inward piety. We must adopt and maintain the principle of *total abstinence* against all sin—against *little sins* as well as against great ones; for we are more in danger of yielding to the influence of the temptation of small sins, than of great ones. Many professors of religion would shudder at the temptation of a large crime, who are living in the daily practice of small sins. We should maintain a state of active piety, for this is the most effectual way to guard against evil and

corrupt influences. The Christian who is active in the cause of religion, will preserve and maintain a vigorous state of piety, and this will be an effectual barrier against all the encroachments of sin. We should also be constant and regular in the discharge of every moral and religious duty, neglecting nothing which God requires of us, and doing nothing he has forbidden. Let us, then, follow hard after our Saviour, keeping our eye continually upon him, imitating his example, and walking in his footsteps; and thus *shall we be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*

2d. *Finally*, if there be any in this assembly who, like Peter, are following Christ *afar off*, I would urge upon you to consider the sin and danger of your state, and call upon you immediately to return to the Lord. You may not yet have fallen into any gross and scandalous sins; but remember you are rapidly declining into that state of mind which will provoke God to abandon you, and to give you up to believe a lie that you may be damned. Solemn thought! but it is no less solemn than true. You cannot remain long in your present condition; you must return to the Lord from whom you have wickedly departed, or you will be swept away into the vortex of sin and ruin, by the current of the world. It is in vain for you to hope to stem the tide of worldly popularity, and corrupt appetite, at a distance from Christ. Peter was unable to do it; and you will be found as weak as he was, unless you are supported by the all-sustaining arm of divine grace. And how can you hope for this at a distance from Christ, and in the neglect of duty? The path of duty is the only way of safety; and it is only in the way of duty that we can either claim or expect the divine protection. God has nowhere promised to spread his shield of protection over the idle, the indolent, and the loitering. If you would claim and secure the protection of heaven in this world of sin and danger, you must be found in the way of duty—you must watch unto prayer, and put forth in the service of God all the active powers of the soul. *While the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing, the soul of the diligent is made fat. He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.* If you, then, would secure the favor of God, and replenish the soul with divine grace, you must shake off sloth and stupidity—you must rouse yourself from that dull, stupid, and lifeless frame into which you have fallen—you must come up to the full measure of duty, and once more engage in the service of God, soul, spirit, and body, as in former days. Then new vigor will spring up in the heart, and fresh grace will be imparted to the soul, and new light will be poured upon the understanding; and you will experience that inward renovation which will cause old things to pass away, and all things to become new. When the heart is thus touched by the living energy of the gospel, then the yoke of Christ becomes *easy*, and his burden *light*; then the joy of the Lord, a joy unspeakable and full of glory, springs up spontaneously in the mind;

then the soul is delighted with the fatness and marrow of God's house; then the undying fire of zeal and love is kindled up in the heart, and the watchful, prayerful, and devoted Christian, goes on his way rejoicing; then the Christian is not only prepared to be active, but also to be useful, in the cause of God and in the salvation of the world.

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## DISCOURSE XIX.

### *A Sermon to Young Men.*

"I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding."—Proverbs vii, 7.

"'Tis education forms the common mind;  
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

SOME moralists have compared the state of infancy to a blank sheet of paper, to be filled up in after life, with either good or evil, as the case may be. This comparison, however just and striking in some respects, yet in others will be found defective. The infant may resemble a blank sheet of paper, with respect to ideas, remaining as yet in a state of entire ignorance. It may also be represented as a blank sheet of paper with regard to moral actions, having done neither good nor evil. But, at the same time, it possesses all the passions and appetites, all the powers and capacities of a man, in miniature. The infant, by the growth of years, or by the acquisition of knowledge, acquires no new powers or capacities; but merely develops its latent principles, and unfolds and illustrates the vigor of its intellect. It is not in the power of the universe to give one new faculty to the infant mind. We can merely improve the powers and faculties that are imparted in the gifts of nature.

I should, therefore, prefer to illustrate the infant mind by the young twig, which will yield, at least in some degree, to the power of art, and the force of habit; while the man of years resembles the sturdy oak, that has struck its roots deep into the bowels of the earth, and lifted its trunk aloft in the air, and becomes stubborn and unyielding. *Train up a child, says Solomon, in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* If, in early life, we are brought under a religious influence, and receive proper and suitable instruction, and are led, by good examples and right influences, to form the habits of piety and virtue, we shall be doubly fortified against the seductions of sin, and the wiles of the devil—we shall be fortified in principle, and fortified in habit. Such persons resemble, indeed, the sturdy oak. Having struck their roots

deep into a religious soil, they have become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and are enabled to overcome the world, with all its enchanting pleasures, and all its fascinating charms.

\* But the case is directly reversed, with the irreligious portion of mankind. By rejecting a religious influence, and yielding to the dictates of passion and appetite, their corrupt dispositions become inflamed, and are easily excited. When allured by the seductions of sin, they are capable of making but a slender resistance. The attractions of vice become too strong for repulsion, and the young and irreligious are led away by them, as the ox goeth to the slaughter. Such was the course of the unhappy youth, to whom Solomon refers, in the language of the text: *I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding.* We are led to remark, from these words,

I. A young man is void of understanding, *who refuses to yield obedience to the reasonable requirements of his parents.* The Scriptures of divine truth require children to obey their parents: *Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.* Indeed, this is a subject of so much importance, that it was incorporated into the law of God, and made one of the ten commandments: *Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* This requirement will appear reasonable, when we consider that young people need some guidance and government in their minority; and there are peculiar reasons to trust the prudence, care, and affection of a parent, in preference to any other person. It will appear reasonable, I say, that children, while in their minority, should obey their parents, provided, nevertheless, that the commands of parents are not inconsistent with the will of God. The evil consequences of transgressing the commands of parents, are many. They are not confined to the individual offender; they extend, by their influence, to the whole household.

1. It introduces disorder and confusion into the family.
2. It lays a foundation for greater crimes.
3. It destroys the happiness of the parent.

Permit me, before I conclude my remarks, on this head of my discourse, to make a few observations on the duty of parents to their children. The Scriptures lay a restraint on parents, with regard to the exercise of their authority. It is not to be attended with harshness and severity, lest they provoke their children to anger, and discourage them from attempting to fulfil their duty, under the idea that, whatever efforts they may use to please their parents, it will be a hopeless task. Parents have much to answer for, when they produce such an effect as this on their children's minds. If, on the one hand, it be said, that *there is much folly in the heart of a child, and that the rod of correction must drive it out,* it must be remembered, on the other hand, that the mind of a child may soon

be cast down, and that we may, by hard restrictions and undue severity, augment that very rebellion which we endeavor to subdue. There can be no doubt but that many parents harden their children's hearts against their authority, in the first instance, and ultimately against God himself, purely by the tyranny which they exercise, and by the continual irritations which they occasion; and, in the last day, they will be found, in too many instances, the prime movers, and the real causes, of their children's eternal ruin. Fathers, be upon your guard, respecting this; and, instead of thus driving your children to despondency, endeavor to bring them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*. See in what way God dealeth with his children; how he bears with their infirmities, and consults their best interests. So should you do, and, like Abraham of old, be solicitous of their eternal welfare.

II. A young man is void of understanding, *who indulges himself in the habit of profane swearing*. God has forbidden us to use his name irreverently: *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*. Those who transgress this commandment, offend against the majesty of heaven; and God has declared that he will not hold such guiltless. There is no greater mark of the corruption and depravity of a man's heart, than this practice; for no man can be tempted to profane the name of God. Temptation supposes the allurements of either pleasure or profit, but profane swearing administers to neither. When we commit some crimes, we plead the indulgence of passion, or the gratification of appetite; while we are tempted to the commission of others, in the hope of supplying our wants, or of increasing our treasures. But the profane swearer cannot justify or excuse himself, in this sinful practice, by either the one or the other. It must, then, be the offspring of pure wickedness; the overflowings of a corrupt and diabolical heart. It is a contempt of the authority of God, and an insult to the majesty of heaven. It is a perversion of reason, and a prostitution of those high and exalted faculties, which God has given to man for the best of purposes. It is a mark of vulgarity and low breeding. It renders our language obscene and incoherent. It has a tendency to corrupt and demoralize society.

III. A young man is void of understanding, *who is accustomed to intemperance*. The sin of drunkenness draws along with it almost an endless variety of bad effects.

1. It betrays most constitutions into the extravagance of anger, or sins of lewdness.

2. It gradually undermines and destroys the constitution of man, and shortens life.

3. It impairs the faculties, stupifies the senses, and renders man unfit for business.

4. It is extremely difficult to break off from the habit when once formed.

5. It is a violation of the word of God. *Wine is a mocker,*



*strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine inflame them. Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine: they that go to seek mixed wine. Look thou not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his odour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright: at the last it biteth like the serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit.*

IV. A young man is void of understanding, *who pursues the practice of gambling.* The evil of gambling will appear evident if we consider the following propositions.

1. *It is a waste of time.* Time has been given to man for wise and valuable purposes, but when it is appropriated to gaming, it is totally lost. Gaming brings no valuable considerations to either body or mind: it does not refresh the body, nor invigorate the mind. It furnishes no valuable information: it adds no strength to the reasoning powers. It neither sweetens nor elevates the temper; but, on the contrary, sours it and renders it morose, and frequently inspires the spirit with envy and malice, which, when cultivated for any length of time, strengthens into habit. In the meanwhile, all the time employed in it is wasted and lost. This loss is immense. No man can answer for it to his Maker: no man can repair the injury that is done to himself. It cannot be too often said, nor too strongly realized, that time is the most valuable of all things; since on the proper employment of it depends every blessing, which we are capable of receiving. He who wastes it, as every gamester does, is guilty of a prodigality that cannot be estimated. All men are bound by the most solemn obligation to redeem their time; that is, to make the most profitable use of every day. But gaming is profitable for nothing; it is absolutely useless.

2. It is connected with *many entanglements.* The truth of this position may be illustrated by the relation of a single historical fact: I allude to the case of Samson and the Philistines. A wager was laid by Samson with thirty Philistines relating to his riddle. Seven days were allowed them in which to solve it. The forfeiture was thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments. After three days fruitless inquiry, the pride of these thirty companions was greatly mortified, and their covetousness excited to a most fearful degree. Not being able to endure the thought of losing their wager, they were filled with indignation, and threatened to burn his wife, together with her father's house, if she did not get the secret from her husband, and reveal it to them. She, partly through fear, and partly from a partiality for them, labored inces-

santly to gain from her husband the solution of his riddle. With this view she wept before him the remaining days of the feast, pretending that his reserve was a proof of his want of affection for her; and at last, having quite wearied him with her importunity, she obtained from him the secret, and then revealed it to them, and enabled them to gain the wager. He might justly have disputed the point with them, because they did not find out the riddle themselves, but obtained the knowledge of it by treachery. But, though he told them, *If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle*, yet he determined to pay the wager. But what a terrible resolution did he adopt! He determined to kill thirty men of the Philistines, and with their garments to pay the wager that he had lost. It is said, indeed, that *the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Askalon and slew them*; nor can we presume to question, for a moment, the justice of God in inflicting such judgments on the enemies of his people; he may cut them off by whom he will, and when he pleases. But viewing the action by itself, we see in it altogether a most dreadful exhibition of the effects of gaming: in his friends, pride, covetousness, wrath, cruelty, and a confederacy to gain by fraud what they could not obtain any other way; in his wife, hypocrisy, deceit, and treachery; in Samson, revenge, robbery, and murder. Perhaps, in the annals of the whole world, we shall not find a more striking display of the manner in which debts of honor, as they are called, are contracted, acknowledged, and discharged. They are contracted at friendly and convivial meetings; they are acknowledged as of greater obligation than all the common duties of justice and charity; and the peace of whole families, that were wholly unconnected with the transactions, is invaded; yea, many are reduced to poverty, to prison, and to death, in order to discharge the debts contracted by the cast of a die, or by the turning up of a card. And, on the other hand, the winner in the game, having obtained the property of his companion, discards all thoughts of his domestic troubles, and rejoices over the spoils he has gotten. Thus the gambler, having lost his property, and having been abandoned by his friends, seeks shelter from his troubles by the commission of suicide. Indeed, of all the sources of suicide, this is by far the most fruitful. As to the endearments of friendship, or the sweets of conjugal affection, gaming almost invariably produces the same result as in Samson's case, who left the place in disgust, deserted his treacherous wife, and had the mortification to find her afterwards in the embraces of one who had just before professed himself his greatest friend. If there is a gambler present on this occasion, I hope he will duly consider this piece of history, and reflect upon the evil and hazard that attend his course, and endeavor, from this time, to refrain from it.

3. *It is insatiating*; a man never comes to a period in its prosecution. Gaming is a most bewitching vice. When the passion

for gaming is once excited, it is seldom allayed ; it most generally increases in strength and ardor, till every valuable consideration is made a sacrifice to it. "The Germans," says Tacitus, "addict themselves to dice when sober, and as a serious employment ; with such a mad desire of winning or losing, that when stripped of every thing else, they will stake at last their liberty, and their very selves. The loser goes into a voluntary slavery ; and, though younger and stronger than his antagonist, suffers himself to be bound and sold. And this perseverance in so bad a cause, they call a point of honor." And what Tacitus here says respecting the ancient Germans, is true, in general, respecting all gamblers. When men are thus intoxicated with so frantic a spirit, laws have been found of little avail to check them ; because the same false sense of honor that prompts a man to sacrifice himself, will deter him from appealing to the magistrate. Hence the duellist and the gambler resemble each other : the one resolves to kill or be killed ; and the other to ruin or be ruined. Thus, when this passion is once fairly lit up in the breast of a man, it bears him onward like a resistless torrent ; and neither the laws of his country, nor the cries of a distracted wife and helpless children, nor his own personal safety, will arrest him in his progress.

4. *Finally*, gaming is an amusement wholly *unworthy of rational beings*, having neither the pretence of exercising the body, of exerting ingenuity, or of giving any natural pleasure, and owing its entertainment wholly to an unnatural and vitiated taste ;—the cause of infinite loss of time, of enormous destruction of money, of irritating the passions, of stirring up avarice, of innumerable sneaking tricks and frauds, of encouraging idleness, of disgusting people against their proper employments, and of sinking and debasing all that is truly great and valuable in the mind.

Let me, then, my young friends, warn you against this vice ! Let me entreat you never to enter this dreadful road ! Shun it as you would the road to destruction. Never take the first step ; if you do, all may be lost. Do not say that you can command yourselves, and can stop when you approach the confines of danger. So thousands have thought as sincerely as yourselves—and yet they fell. The probabilities that we shall fall where so many have fallen, are millions to one ; and the contrary opinion is only the dream of lunacy, the imagination of a mind carried captive by a spirit of frenzy.

When you are inclined to think yourselves safe, consider the multitudes who once felt themselves equally so, but who have been corrupted, debased, distressed, and ruined by gaming, both for this world, and that which is to come. Think how many families have been plunged by it into beggary, and overwhelmed by it in vice. Think how many persons have become by it liars at gaming-tables ; how many perjured ; how many drunkards ; how many blasphemers ; how many swindlers ; how many robbers ; how many sui-

cides. "If Europe," says Montesquieu, "is to be ruined, it will be ruined by gaming." If the United States are to be ruined, gaming in some of its forms will be a very efficient agent in accomplishing the work.

V. A young man is void of understanding, *who gives himself up to the practice of licentiousness*. I wish it were in my power to conclude my remarks, without feeling that I had made an important omission. But such is the tendency of human nature, especially in the case of the young and ardent, to turn the most valuable blessings conferred upon man into curses, and poison at their very sources, the purest streams of human felicity, that it will be necessary to advert briefly, but plainly, to some of the most frequent forms of youthful irregularity.

We cannot suppose; that there are any persons so ignorant as really to think that licentiousness is right: but there are multitudes who do not consider it materially wrong. Criminal excesses are indulged, and palliated by the mild appellations of conviviality and youthful indiscretion, and they are deemed necessary to the well-being of society. They are even made the subjects of boasting; and persons, who through age and infirmity are disabled from pursuing their former courses, will yet repeat them in effect, by glorying in the remembrance of them, and in encouraging others in the same career. So far from condemning these things in their minds, many will laugh at those who are scrupulous enough to doubt the lawfulness of such courses; and if any one were bold enough to bear a decisive testimony against them, he would instantly be characterized by some opprobrious name. To suppose that such indulgences, if restrained within moderate bounds, would subject a man to the wrath of Almighty God, would be considered as bordering on insanity, and the individual entertaining such an opinion would be branded as a fanatic.

Let us, then, inquire what foundation there is for such a sentiment. Does God say nothing in his word respecting the issue of such ways? or does he speak of them in the same gentle terms? No: not a syllable of this kind is to be found in all the Sacred Oracles. A general caution is given us by Solomon, in reference to carnal indulgences of every kind: *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* The general warning given by St. Paul, is plainer still: *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.* Lest we should mistake his meaning, he frequently enumerates the works of the flesh: *Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; these, says he, are the sins of the which I tell you before, that they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* But because men are ready to offer vain pleas and excuses for such things, he particu-

larly guards us against laying the smallest stress on any surmises of our own, or any suggestions of others: *Let no man, says he, deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* But Moses, and after him the prophet Jeremiah, met the case in the most pointed manner: *It shall come to pass, says Moses, when a man shall hear the words of this curse, and shall bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart; the Lord will not spare him; but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man; and all the curses that are written in this book shall come upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.*

Now permit me to ask, for what end are these things written? is it merely to alarm and terrify us? Can we conceive that God would falsify, in order to keep us within some decent bounds? Is there any necessity for him to resort to such an expedient? or could he do it consistently with his own perfections?

Here, then, we are reduced to this dilemma: either to believe that the word of God is full of the most palpable falsehoods from one end to the other, or to acknowledge that these things are highly criminal. They, indeed, corrupt and deprave the mind more than any one assemblage of vice of all other kinds. Licentiousness gradually benumbs the conscience, and leads on, step by step, to those blacker vices at which the youth would once have shuddered. Believing, as I do, the word of God to be true, I must believe, and must exhort you also to believe, that they who make light of sin, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* The drunkard, the swearer, the gambler, the whoremonger, may think his way right; but, if there be any truth in the word of God, they shall end in death. The express declaration of God concerning them is, *The end of these things is death.*

VI. A young man is void of understanding, *who neglects the concern of the soul, the one thing needful.* The Scriptures represent the interest of the soul of the first importance. Hence, we are directed by our blessed Lord to *seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness.* Indeed, if a man should gain the whole world, and finally lose his soul, he, in the end, would lose all and gain nothing. Although this truth is generally acknowledged, yet, when we press upon the youth the importance of attending to religion, and urge the necessity of giving immediate attention to this subject, they, for the most part, desire to excuse themselves, and to put these things off till a more convenient season. But, in a late repentance, here are many peculiar aggravations, even admitting that you may become a Christian in advanced life. These arise from,

1. The abuse of divine goodness.
2. The multitude of evil to be reviewed.
3. The injury done to society.

4. The uncertainty that necessarily attends such deferred repentance.

But if you neglect the means of grace now, and slight the offers of mercy, who has assured you that you shall have, in old age, grace to repent? It may be, that you have not been tempted to the commission of any flagrant evil, and, therefore, you have sustained a respectable character in the world: from hence, you are led to conclude that you are in no danger of being led so far astray but what you can return to the path of rectitude at any given period. But if you be tried by any violent temptations, you may be carried away like the dust before the wind, and fall a prey to the great enemy of your soul. Behold the swearer, the gambler, the drunkard, the duellist! each in his calling was esteemed a man of worth, till, by his want of principle, he was betrayed into the evils by which he fell. But, had he, in the first instance, rejected the counsels of ungodly men, and listened to the voice of God in his word, he had escaped the snares which were laid for his feet, and avoided the destruction that has come upon his soul. Nor is it into occasional sin, only, that men are drawn by the want of religious principle, but frequently into a contempt of all religion; as the Psalmist intimates, when in a *triple climax*, he describes a man, first *walking* in the counsel of the ungodly; then *standing* in the way of sinners; and, at last, *sitting* in the seat of the scornful. Such a man, by resisting the operation of the Holy Spirit, and living in the gratification of passion and appetite, may have quenched the last spark of grace, and be given over to the corrupt influences of a hard and reprobate heart. Of such an one, God may say, let him alone, he is joined to his idols. How unwise, then, is that man, who presumes upon the goodness and mercy of God now, under the false and delusive notion of receiving grace in old age, to purge his conscience from dead works to serve the living God!

But who has given you assurances that you shall live to see old age? But a small proportion of the human family, live to advanced life. Many die in a state of infancy, many in childhood, many in youth, and many before they arrive at middle age. And can all the youth who hear me at the present time, reasonably expect to escape the ravages of death, till their heads have been whitened with the frost of threescore years and ten? Certainly not! Death will plant his artillery of diseases against these clay tenements, these mud walls, and, before long, many of them will be battered down. He will sweep over you with his cold and chilling blast, and many of the blossoms and flowers among the youth will wither, decay, and drop off. O, young man, he is now sharpening his scythe to cut you down, and you are dreaming of long life, and neglecting the interests of the soul! Awake from your delusion, grasp the moments as they fly, and work out your salvation with fear and trembling, before the fatal blow is struck. O, young woman, your beauty will fade at the touch of death; and, except you

are converted, your soul will sink down to hell to rise no more. And can you, under these alarming circumstances, rest contented in your sins? May you be aroused from the bed of sloth on which you are reposing, and enter into the Spiritual vineyard, and labor for God!

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## DISCOURSE XX.

### *Delight in Public Worship.*

[Delivered at the opening of the Christian chapel at Hope, N. J., December, 1841.]

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.”—Psalms xvi, 8.

THE Christian church and congregation of this place having erected a house for public worship, we have assembled on the present occasion for the purpose of dedicating it to the worship of the Most High God, to his Son Jesus Christ, and to all the sacred purposes of the Christian religion in general. By the act of dedication, we do not suppose that the worship which may be performed in this house will be any more acceptable to God than if offered in any other building, or in the open air. *God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.* He regards the moral purity and sincerity of the worshipper, more than the place where his homage is rendered. We merely regard the act of dedication as a solemn expression of the purposes for which the building has been erected, and its exclusive devotion to those purposes.

*Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.* Such was the language of David, a man after God's own heart, a man of extraordinary and distinguished piety—a virtue which marked the several periods of his office. Piety sanctified the eminent and distinguished talents which he possessed, and piety adorned the different stages through which he passed, and the different situations he occupied. When the sacred historian first introduces him to our notice, in the writings of the Old Testament, we behold him feeding his father's flock; and under these circumstances we see a most interesting and lovely sight; we behold the pious youth consecrating his harp to the God of Israel, while he employed his vigorous understanding, and his fruitful imagination, in composing sacred odes, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and, with all the fervency of enkindled piety, and all the charms of poetic numbers, he celebrated the glories of the divine perfections, as the God of nature, as the God of providence, and as the God of grace; and for these unrivalled compositions,

the church of God has been indebted to him in every age, and will continue to be so in every succeeding age. While they have been perused in private and read in public, many a drooping spirit has been refreshed, and many a faint heart has been raised from earth to heaven.

But in tracing the history of this extraordinary and distinguished individual, we behold him called, by the providence of God, to exchange a pastoral crook for a regal crown; a shepherd's tent for a royal palace; from a keeper of sheep, to be king over Israel. But the fascinations of an earthly court did not estrange his heart from one that was heavenly and divine. We behold the splendors of royalty shining with transcendent lustre, mingled with piety. Most ready was he on all public occasions to descend from his throne, that he might mingle with the company of devout worshippers, and call upon him by whom *kings reign and princes declare justice*; never was he so truly at home as when thus employed; never were the feelings of his heart and the intensity of his understanding so truly alive, as when worshipping God. How did his language glow, when he said, *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after.* It will be interesting to know what this one thing was. Was it, that he might enjoy a long and prosperous reign? Was it, that he might lead his host from conquering to conquer? Was it, that he might sway his sceptre over a devoted people? Ah! no. This was not what he wanted. There was a more prominent object of desire in view. And what was it? *That I might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* And again, *Blessed are they—Who? They that sit on thrones? No. But blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will still be praising thee. I will go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy.* No wonder that such was his resolution, for his heart was there; and where the heart is, there goes the man. Therefore he says, *I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.* And do I not speak this morning to those who have some sympathy in common with the Psalmist on this subject? Do I not speak to those who share in his devout feelings, while they are ready to employ his language to give expression to those feelings? Are they not saying, we have loved *the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth*? But what are we to understand by the house of God? why this strong and ardent attachment to the house of God? and what are the practical operations of these devotional feelings?

1. What are we to understand *by the house of God*? From the earliest memorials of time, altars have been erected, and houses built, and employed in the service of God, when sacrifices and



prayers have been offered. The patriarch Jacob, when, in a night vision, he was blessed with a special view of the heavenly state, and of the intercourse carried on between this world and another, was deeply impressed with a sense of the divine presence, and erected an altar to the Most High; this altar became the tabernacle of the Lord, and was designated by the patriarch as the house of God. Surely, said he, *the Lord is in this place; this is none other than the house of God; this is the very gate of heaven.* But the house of which the Psalmist more immediately speaks, was the tabernacle of the congregation, a portable building, which was carried from place to place, during the journeyings of the children of Israel through the wilderness; and afterwards erected in different places of the land of promise, till it was at length fixed at Jerusalem. This tabernacle was divided into two apartments: the holy place, and the *most* holy. In the latter of these was the ark of the covenant, the lid or covering of which was the mercy-seat, overshadowed by the wings of *the cherubim of glory.* Upon this, between the cherubim, the cloud of glory, or the symbol of divine presence, appeared. And from this place, God communed with Moses; so that the Psalmist seems to have respect particularly to this, as the place where *Jehovah's honor or glory dwell.* But this habitation gave place to Solomon's temple; and that temple was succeeded by another, whose very foundations have been ploughed up, in fulfilment of the Redeemer's prophecy. But does it follow from hence, that God dwells no longer with man upon earth? Has he no longer a habitation wherein to dwell? Yes, my brethren, there is a sense in which the universe itself is the temple of the Lord, hallowed by his sacred presence. Jehovah's temple is everywhere streaming with glory; for every devout heart is the habitation of the Lord. The temple where Jehovah dwells, is where the incense is continually ascending to God Most High. The church is, also, his temple, associated together for his honor and glory. This chapel is also the house of God, his spiritual house, where he has promised to dwell—*the house where he resides.* Here, says he, *will I dwell,* in the house where his family dwells, and where he spreads an ample table, and makes his family satisfied with the fatness of his house, and drink of the river of his grace. Under the dispensation of the gospel, the church is his house, the place where his people assemble to worship; for he expressly says, *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* And can any good man enter such a place without emotions like those of the Psalmist, when he uttered the language of the text? *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.*

The attachment which the Psalmist cherished for the house of God was a *strong and ardent affection*; an affection that absorbed his whole soul, and enkindled in his heart the most ardent flame of devotion. Hence, he could appeal to the Searcher of hearts, when

he desired to interest him in his favor, for the honesty and sincerity of his profession. And such was the address of Peter, on another occasion: *Lord*, said he, *thou knowest that I love thee*. And such should be the zeal and fervor of every professed follower of Jesus, in his cause, that he can appeal to God, in the utmost sincerity, for the uprightness of his course and conduct. This attachment of the Psalmist to the house of God was also a *constant affection*. When speaking of the past, he could say, *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house*; and the same affection still prevailed. His heart was still full of it. Hence, he delighted to dwell upon the subject, and declared that, *in the congregations will I bless the Lord*. This attachment of the pious Psalmist to the house of the Lord was, furthermore, a *practical affection*. Hence, he says, *I will compass thine altar, O Lord; that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works*. He was not a mere *nominal professor*, of which there have been but too many in all ages. We do not mean here those whose tongues and purses are ready on every public occasion; but those who *profess* to be friendly to religious institutions, while they withhold everything but *good words* and *wishes*. David was a practical saint; and such should be the followers of Christ, in all ages. The alms and the prayers of the people of God should go up together, for a memorial before him.

Perhaps, if some in the present day had heard the king of Israel speak the words before us, they would have looked down upon him with pity and contempt, calling him an enthusiast. But, my friends, if the captain of the host of Israel be an enthusiast, it is an enthusiasm with which every chapter of the Bible abounds. If attachment to the house of God be enthusiasm, then it must be an amiable enthusiasm. If this be enthusiasm, then prophets, and kings, and apostles, and the most useful of men who ever lived, were enthusiasts. If attachment to the house of God be enthusiasm, it is a useful enthusiasm; advantageous and useful to the individual himself, and to the community at large. If this be enthusiasm, it is a rational enthusiasm; and my heart says, if this be enthusiasm, O for more enthusiasm! O for a warmer attachment to the house of God! But, we have said it is a rational enthusiasm; and if reasons should be called for, reasons are at hand.

II. We shall, therefore, in the second place, endeavor to show *the grounds of this reasonable attachment*. These are many, and various; and we propose, on the present occasion, to illustrate the truth of the position we have assumed, merely by a reference to a few of the most prominent.

1. Every devout man loves the house and service of God, because *he loves him to whose glory it has been erected*. It is the very essence of piety to love God supremely. The true Christian loves him with a true heart fervently; but he knows there was a time when he did not love him. He now regrets that he lived so many

years without God and without hope in the world. He was formerly a lover of sin, and a lover of this world; but there was a period in his moral history, there was a crisis in his moral character, when the word of the Lord was sharper than a two-edged sword to his conscience. And in that moment, the commandment came home; *sin revived, and he died*. He received the sentence of death in his soul; and, as a contrite sinner, he asked the momentous question, *What must I do to be saved?* To this question the gospel gave an answer: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*. And on the Lord he did believe. At this time, the love of God was manifested to him, and enkindled in his heart. He could then say, from the fulness of his soul, *Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee*. Now, as it is the essence of piety, not only to love God, but also to love everything which belongs to God: the pious man must, therefore, love the house of God. Why does every good man love the *word of God*? Because it contains some of the oldest records in the world! Because it contains some of the most inimitable specimens of poetical genius! Because it is a charter of human salvation, and is the nursery of human redemption! He loves it for all these reasons, but more especially because of him by whose authority it is stamped; because it is the Book of God; and because it came from him whom they love. Why does every good man love the sabbath? The philanthropist looks upon it as a day of rest, for man and beast. But does the Christian love it on this account, principally? No: he loves it because he is not *to think his own thoughts, nor speak his own words*; and especially because it is the sabbath of the Lord. And why do men love the ministers of the sanctuary? Not merely because they are useful—no; but for the Master's sake, and because of the message they bring from him, to a world lost in sin. And, for this plain reason, a good man loves the sanctuary of God.

2. A good man loves the house of God, *because it is the residence of the Proprietor*. It is not only the property, but the *habitation* of my Friend, my Benefactor, my God; the *tabernacle of thy honor*, and therefore I love it. Hence, David set his heart upon it, and declared, that *one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; that I might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple*. Here he met his God, and enjoyed sweet communion with him. Here he beheld the glory and beauty of the Lord, and conversed with him face to face. But, we are aware, there may be other inducements to our attendance in the house of God. It may be an elegant place, the music may be good, the preacher may be attractive, the society may be engaging; or, we may deem it to be both for our interest and honor, to give the place our encouragement and support. But it should be remembered, that just as much of respect to God as there is in our service, just so far it is good and well-pleasing in his sight, and no farther. We should come to the

house of God, not merely to be interested and delighted, but to be made wiser and better; so that we may approach nearer the presence of our Maker, and understand and know more fully his will concerning us.

3. The good man loves the sanctuary of the Lord, *because of the exercises performed therein.* *My house,* says God, *shall be called a house of prayer*—prayer for ourselves, prayer for our neighbors, prayer for our families, prayer for the church of Christ; prayer for our rulers, for our country, and for the whole human race. Now, every good man loves *prayer*, and must, therefore, love the house of prayer—love the place where prayer is wont to be made. The good man loves the living oracles; and because he has an appetite for this food, he loves to be where they are *read.* Our Saviour says, *Search the Scriptures;* and the Apostle Paul commanded that, *These epistles be read in all the churches;* therefore the good man comes with an appetite for this spiritual food; he eats it, and his soul is nourished in the sanctuary of the Lord. Here the word is also to be enforced and expounded; Jesus saith, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Thus it behoveth Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations;* and *It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* Now, every good man knows how to value the preaching of the word, and he delights to be where it is preached by divine authority to the benefit of his soul. And here, again, *the praises of God* are to be sung. It is very remarkable that one of the Evangelists has recorded a fact, that singing constituted a part of their worship. Jesus and his disciples sung an hymn; and how often do the inspired apostles give command that we are to *sing with the spirit and with the understanding also, making melody in your hearts unto the Lord.* And how delightful it is when we assemble with the people of God in the sanctuary, and unite to celebrate his praises. The words of the venerable Dr. Watts, though composed for children, may well be used by adults:

“Lord, how delightful ’tis to see,  
A whole assembly worship thee;  
At once they sing, at once they pray,  
They hear of heaven, and learn the way;  
I have been there and still would go,  
’Tis like a little heaven below.”

Yes, it is like what it is; it is a little heaven below, when all are in tune, and sing with grace in their hearts. These exercises of the sanctuary are in perfect accordance with the best convictions of the mind of every truly pious man, and he cannot be pleased with those things that do not accord with his feelings; therefore, it must be a good man that loves the exercises of God’s house. The vicious man, were he to speak out, would say, *how wearisome it is.*

But when the good man comes to the house of God, he finds himself in his element; he finds himself quite at home, and he engages in its institutions with a holy delight; yea, when the rich and the poor, the young men and maidens, old men and fathers, all join together in the worship of God, it is delightful—it forms a moral constellation of melody. No wonder that the believer exclaims, *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.*

4. The good man loves the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honor dwelleth, *because of the company with whom he there associates.* Man, from the very principles of his nature, is obviously formed for society; he is not intended by the God who made him, for solitary ends. When, by the operation of Divine Providence, any sudden and oppressive calamity befalls a man, wo to that man if he be alone; but if he can have the kind sympathies of a friend, Oh! what an alleviation to his wo. And when we meet with anything appalling to the feelings of humanity, what pleasure, what delight does it give to have some kind friend near, to wipe the tear of affliction, and to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded heart! On the other hand, if any joyous circumstance occur, we are not satisfied till we go and tell it to another; for the Scriptures saith, *It is not good for man to be alone;* from hence it is apparent that religion and the Bible cannot have their full effects in private. The Christian should first meet his God in private, and then come into the public sanctuary of the Lord, and then the maxim of the wise man will be verified: *As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.* At such a time, and at such a place, the power of holy and heavenly sympathy is brought into action, and runs from bosom to bosom, till all catch the sacred flame, and all partake of the glory of the Lord. Brethren, with whom do you associate in the house of God? The doors are open, it is true, to the most profane, and we are glad to see them here, hoping that a word may be spoken that will reach their hearts, and do them good; but whom do you expect to see here generally? The believer comes to the house of God, and he expects to meet his brethren and his sisters here; and who are they but the saints of the Most High? The good man expects to find, and here he expects to meet the pious and the good; and with David he can say, *My delight is with the saints of the earth, and with them that excel in virtue.* But with whom do you associate in the house of God? Not merely with the wisest and the best of men. The Bible teaches us that beings of a higher order, though invisible to us, are here also. According to the sentiment of the gospel, *The angels of the Lord encamp round about them that fear him.* And again, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?* And when the services of the sanctuary prove successful, and when some poor penitent begins to smite upon his breast, breathing the prayer of

the publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, then it is that the swift winged messengers fly to the portals of the sky, seizing their golden harps, and attuning them to their loftiest strains, and all heaven rings with joy; *For there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth on earth.*

But with whom does the Christian associate when he comes into the house of God? Why talks the preacher about good men? Why does he speak about the holy angels? *The Lord himself is there; it is the place*, says David, *where thine honor dwelleth.* With what pleasure do you go to any place to meet a friend, who has been absent from you for a long period? But with far greater pleasure does the good man come to meet the Lord in his house; thus he exclaims with holy joy and with reverential awe, *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.*

5. The believer loves the habitation of God's house and the place where his honor dwells, *because of the valuable blessings which are there dispensed.* But let me not be misunderstood; let no man go from this place, saying, the preacher meant to confine the blessings of God to his tabernacle; for nothing can be further from my intention. God is everywhere; wherever *we* are, there *he* is; whenever and wherever we have a heart to pray, he has an ear to listen and a hand to help; for if we are lawfully detained at our dwellings by afflictions, or any other circumstance, he has promised to be there; but I maintain that we shall not enjoy the same blessings if we willingly and negligently absent ourselves from the house of the Lord. I confess to you, I understand not that dispensation of which some people speak. Some tell us they have no need of going to hear sermons, and that they can enjoy as much at their dwellings as at the house of God. But who does not perceive that this sentiment impeaches the wisdom of the Most High; and not only his wisdom, but his goodness also. God, in his wisdom and goodness, has established the services of the sanctuary; but such persons contend that these services may be safely omitted, and that Christians may enjoy greater advantages in the omission, than in the performance of these services. Banished from your hearts be this impious thought! What, my brethren, is it in vain that God has appointed the institution of the sabbath to be observed? What, is it in vain that he has said to Zion, *There will I command my blessings, even life for evermore?* What, is it in vain that our adorable Saviour has declared, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* I ask again, is it in vain that the apostle has said, *Forget not the assembling yourselves together as the manner of some is?* But let us forbear, for I trust I am addressing those who perceive and who know the mercies they have received in the sanctuary of the Lord. When was it, my dear brother, that you came into the sanctuary of the Lord, a poor benighted sinner? perhaps you had not spent

five minutes of all your preceding life in seriously reflecting on the state of your immortal soul, which must exist for ever and ever. Perhaps, you scarcely knew that you had a soul; or, if you knew you had a soul, you had been unmindful of its true interests all your life long. But, led by some motive of novelty or curiosity, you came into the sanctuary of the Lord; the truth, as it is in Jesus, was there proclaimed, and it came home to your heart; your transgression began then to stare you full in the face, and you then saw yourself a condemned criminal before God. When was it, you came to the sanctuary, bowed down beneath a load of guilt and misery, urging the momentous question, *What must I do to be saved? Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?* When was it, that the servant of the Lord declared unto you the way of salvation; saying, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* And now you have obtained redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. When was it you came to the house of God, buffeted by the enemy? Then did you hear of Jesus Christ, *Who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* Then it was that your soul escaped like the bird from the snare of the fowler, and you had a happy release. Or when was it, that you came to the sanctuary of the Lord, and you had a painful struggle against sin? happy was it for you that you came to the house of God; for there the joyful truth was proclaimed, *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;* and here your soul was blessed with peace. Or when was it that you came to the sanctuary, the subject of some painful bereavement; having lost, perhaps, a son, a sister, a brother, an indulgent father, a tender mother, a kind husband, or a sympathising wife; and your spirit was quite overwhelmed with trouble and distress? But there, the providence of God was considered; there the equity of his conduct was demonstrated; there you was reminded that *he doeth all things well;* and your attention was directed to that approaching period, when the moral government of God shall be fully illustrated and explained; and you were enabled to say, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.* Or when was it, that you came to the sanctuary of the Lord, contemplating the hour of your dissolution? Then did you not only hear of Jesus, but of his resurrection; how he burst the bars of death asunder, started from the gloomy vale in triumph, and opened a door at the other end of the valley, and let in a flood of immortal day; and then it was, that you could join with the apostle, and exclaim, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Or when was it, that you came into the sanctuary, and your heart was anything but devout? What darkness covered your mind! How cold was the atmosphere that surrounded your heart! But, soon the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit were imparted.

Soon did the frozen heart begin to melt. You were led to say, like Jacob at Bethel, *This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* Nay, did you not see, through this gate, the blossoms of Paradise, and feel their refreshing fragrance? and cry out, with Peter on the mount of transfiguration, *Master, it is good for me to be here?*

III. We pass, in the third place, to consider the *practical operations of these devotional feelings.* It must be obvious to every one, that a mere profession of religion is but of little value. It produces no practical results. Would you give me credit for attachment to any particular house, if, possessing an opportunity, I never frequented it? If you love the house of God, you will make it manifest by attending there; nor will you suffer yourselves, by every trivial circumstance, to be prevented from attending on divine worship. I am aware, that persons may go from custom; but custom is a very mutable thing, and may soon change from the house of God to the house of wickedness. I know that every man ought to engage in the services of the sanctuary, from the convictions of duty; but it should not only be a duty: there should be affection also. Again, if we really love the house of God, this love will discover itself in the way we seek to worship him. He has forfeited every legitimate claim to everything that is called good breeding, who does not behave himself in a decent and becoming manner, in the sanctuary of the Lord. I refer to that state and temper of mind, to that spirit of devout reverence, which should be always manifested, when we come before God, in the place where *his honor dwelleth.* *Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever.* Is the word of God preached? Such an one will take heed how he hears, that he may receive the truth with the love of it. Are the praises of God sung? If we have a voice, shall we not employ it in singing the praise and glory of God? And if we love the house of God, we shall be glad to see it filled. We shall not only attend ourselves, but use our influence to bring others with us. We shall say to our neighbors and friends, come and let us go up to the house of the Lord. If we are parents, we shall bring our children. If we are masters, we shall bring our servants. And thus we shall do what we can to give to the word of the Lord free course, that it may be glorified.

Lastly, if we really love the house of God, we shall manifest our love by giving a portion of our property to its support. It is an easy thing to say, I love the house of God; but we are not to love in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth. Were I to say to a person in great distress, *Be ye warmed, be ye clothed,* and make no effort to furnish him with these necessary articles to his comfort, *how dwelleth the love of God in me?* Now, with reference to the instruction of men, and the evangelizing the world, if I merely say, *Be instructed;* if I merely pray that God would send out his light and his truth, but refuse, if I am able, to give my pecuniary aid to



the support of the cause of Christ—what is the worth of my prayers and my admonitions? You, my friends, have acted a consistent part. You have looked around you, and discovered what the cause of truth demands; and, I trust, are determined not to withhold for its accomplishment. You are come, this morning, not only to join with us in the worship of God—not only to hear his praises sung, but to give an additional proof of your affection and love. I know it is proverbial to say, such and such things are as cold as charity. And is charity a cold thing? No; but I know what is. Avarice is a cold thing. It is always winter there; it is always in the frigid zone. But charity is a heavenly fire; it is always summer there.

We end as we begun, by dedicating this house to God, the Father Almighty, the only living and true God. We dedicate it to his undivided unity, to his supreme and unrivalled majesty. We dedicate it to his paternal love, to his free grace, to his supreme worship. We dedicate it to his Son Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and men; to the memory of his love, to the celebration of his moral perfections, to the preaching of that gospel which he sealed with his blood, and confirmed by the resurrection from the dead. We dedicate it to the Holy Spirit, the regenerating and sanctifying power of God; to those heavenly influences which bring back the rebellious sons of men to the smiles of their heavenly Father; to those celestial visitations which communicate peace, joy, and strength to the devout soul. We dedicate it to the sacred cause of Christian liberty, to the rights of individual judgment. We dedicate it to social worship, to religious intercourse, to the communion of saints. We dedicate it to Christian morals, to social order, to diffusive benevolence, to universal good will. We dedicate it to those solemn warnings, to those affectionate entreaties, to those persuasive arguments, by which a perishing sinner may be arrested and brought back to God. We dedicate it to the precious promises of the gospel, which pour consolation into the devout heart, and lighten the burden of human wo. We dedicate it to the hope of a blessed immortality, in that brighter world of glory, where reigns one eternal day of rest, and peace, and joy. Finally, we dedicate it to the great work of preparing the soul for that state of blessedness, and for nearer approaches to God, its Maker. Here, in this house, may heart meet heart. Here may man meet God. Here may devout gratitude, may fervent prayers, may songs of praise, as fragrant incense, ascend to heaven. Here may the blessings of God descend upon his people, and the dews of heaven water generations to come. May parents bequeath to their children, down to the latest posterity, this sacred spot, this holy temple, where they have met the smiles of their heavenly Father, and received pledges of his everlasting love.

## DISCOURSE XXI.

*The Fall and Recovery of Peter.*

“And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said unto him, ‘Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.’ And Peter went out and wept bitterly.”—Luke xxii., 61-62.

THERE IS scarcely an incident recorded in the gospel history, more remarkable, more affecting, or more instructive, than the fall and recovery of Peter. It is remarkable, that one of his character and standing, should fall at all into known sin, but especially, into a sin of such a black and aggravated character. Peter had been a disciple and an apostle of Jesus Christ during the whole of his public ministry, and had been an eye witness of the most of his distinguished and shining miracles. He attended him in his secret retirements, as well as in his public exhibitions; he was present at his transfiguration upon the mount, when his face shone like the sun in his meridian glory, and his raiment became whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten it. He, himself, had been the subject of the miraculous power of Christ, in being rescued from the devouring jaws of death, when sinking in the midst of the angry waves—yet he declared, and reiterated the declaration, and finally confirmed it with an oath, that he knew not the man.

We can but pause and mourn over the weakness, the fickleness, and the frailty of human nature. Peter had been honored by his Lord and Master in receiving from him the appellation of *Petros*, which, in Greek, signifies a stone; a *title*, pointing out his firmness and stability; but, alas! how weak, how irresolute, and how easily overcome; and such are the best of men when left to themselves, and exposed to the assaults of the great adversary. We should take the example of Peter as a warning, and, remembering our weakness, ever live a watchful and prayerful life, lest we fall into the condemnation of the devil. In the discussion of the subject before us, we propose to speak of the occasion of his fall, the aggravation of his sin, and his restoration to the divine favor.

I. We are, in the first place, to notice the *occasion of his fall*. The fall of St. Peter was occasioned by a concurrence of circumstances all combining to depress his spirits, and to fill him with fear and terror. The first thing which operated to produce his fall, was his *self-confidence*, arising from too high a sense of his firmness and stability. The source of this mistake was the vehemence of his own natural temper. Persons of warm and ardent temperament are subject to higher elevations and lower depressions, than those who are more cold and phlegmatic. We are in danger from those very elements of mind, which lay the foundation of all true great-

ness, as a ship from her sails. A ship could do nothing without sails, but when all her canvass is spread, how liable to be capsized if the wind strikes her in an opposite direction? So men of glowing imaginations, and of warm and ardent temperament, are very liable to yield to the influence of sudden and powerful impressions, although they may, at times, lead them astray into the paths of sin and folly. In consequence of the noble confession which Peter made, when he declared that *Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God*, our Lord had treated him with great condescension, had conferred upon him a *title*, and had promised to give to him *the keys of the kingdom*. Hence arose Peter's high thoughts of himself, and the confidence he expressed, when he declared, *Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I not be offended*.

Another reason that induced the fall of St. Peter, was *his worldly views and expectations, and his aversion to the cross of Christ*. These he exhibited when our Lord began plainly to predict his sufferings. *From that time forth, began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee*. This aversion to the cross of Christ, which Peter exhibited on this occasion, originated in that strong and ardent attachment, which he possessed in common with mankind, to the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. These passions and desires, predominate in the breast of man till they are subdued by divine grace. Peter had still the feelings and desires of a man, and even of an ambitious man. Believing, as he did, at this time, that the kingdom of Christ was temporal, he flattered himself that he should be elevated to the post of one of the principal officers of state; he could not, therefore, endure the thoughts of poverty, of shame, and of disgrace.

Another reason that operated to produce his fall, was *his unbelief*. The high conceptions which Peter had of himself, and the erroneous views which he entertained of the kingdom of Christ, were naturally productive of unbelief. Hence, when Jesus warned him of his weakness and danger, and foretold the assault which would be made upon him by Satan, and of his being overcome and falling, he was not credited. *Then saith Jesus unto them, All of you shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I not be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*. How little did Peter know of himself? Little did he expect, that, with the change of circum-

stances, such a revolution was about to take place in his mind ! Thus, when Elisha foretold to Hazael, the cruelties which he would afterwards perpetrate towards the children of Israel, thinking it then impossible that he ever would be guilty of them, he said, *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing.* And Elisha answered, *The Lord hath showed me, that thou shalt be king over Syria.* This answer explained the mystery. Few men can tell how they would act, placed under totally different circumstances. If we were all made kings and queens, or suddenly plunged into the most trying circumstances, who can tell but what our conduct would be quite as inconsistent as either Peter's or Hazael's ? *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Once more : St. Peter's *unwatchfulness* was another great occasion of his falling. This unbelief led to unwatchfulness. He slept naturally, and much more spiritually, at the time when great temptation was at hand ; and Satan, as a punishment of his self-confidence and unwatchfulness, had obtained permission to sift him as wheat. *While men slept, the enemy sowed tares.* If an army in camp, neglecting, under a sense of false security, to set proper watches and guards, should be attacked in the midst of the slumbers of the night, it would become an easy prey ; so it is with the Christian : if he be overcome by an assault of the enemy, it is when he imagines himself safe, and ceases to preserve his watch. Hence, said Christ, *What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.* Had Peter regarded this injunction, he might have resisted the attack of the enemy, and overcome all the wiles of the Devil. But, alas ! Peter was unwatchful, and he fell.

Again, another occasion of the fall of St. Peter, was *his neglect of prayer.* Perceiving no immediate danger, and feeling confident in his own resources, he did not guard against the subtlety and power of his grand adversary. As he sought no assistance from God, he received none. He trusted to his own resources, and these in the hour of trial were found insufficient. When the trial came, he found himself like Samson, shorn of his locks, and as weak as another man. And thus it will be with all who neglect prayer. It is by prayer, and not by native strength, that any prevail against the grand adversary of their souls. By prayer, our bow shall abide in strength, and the armies of our hands shall be made strong by the mighty God of Jacob. Yes,

"Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."

For it is by the gracious exercise of prayer, that God communicates living energy to the soul. Hence, Jesus directs us *to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation ;* and gives all such the assurance that *his grace shall be sufficient for them.*

Finally, *his impatience and rash zeal* was another cause of his

fall. When awakened to a sense of his danger, and alarmed by the sudden and unexpected coming of the band to apprehend Christ, he gave way to a spirit of impatience and rash zeal, by drawing his sword to defend his Master; but upon being reproved by Christ, and convinced of his error, he passed over to distrust, dejection, and cowardice. Aware that his hasty and inconsiderate conduct had exposed him to the laws of his country, he instantly forsook his Master and fled; even the very Master with whom he had expressed his resolution to go to prison and death; and he did this through a dread of reproach and suffering. After having overcome the sudden perturbation of mind with which he fled away, he returned and followed Christ *afar off*; which was a striking emblem of the state of his mind.

By this cowardly conduct he exposed himself still more to temptation by thoughtlessly venturing upon forbidden ground. Led by curiosity to know what would become of his Master, he went in among the wicked servants of the High Priest; and this at a time when he had, in a great measure, lost his religion, and was weak and helpless like another man. Under these circumstances he was but ill prepared to resist temptation. The evil hour came; and while under the influence of the fear of man that bringeth a snare, he was overcome by the seductions of the enemy, and cast a stain upon his character, which the strength of years and the lapse of time can never efface. And such are the fatal steps by which most Christians, who turn back to the beggarly elements of the world, fall. We should all do well to take the example of Peter, as a lively caution against treading on forbidden ground. We had better face the frowns of an angry world, and endure the weight of its displeasure, than to be drawn into sin by its seductions, and wrong our own souls.

II. Having noticed the steps by which Peter fell, and the means which led to that sad catastrophe, we shall now proceed, in the second place, to *consider the aggravation of his sin*. The crime of which Peter was guilty, was the denial of his Lord and Master. By comparing what the Evangelists have said on this subject, it appears that Peter, at first, hesitatingly denied Christ. It is possible he did not mean to tell a direct falsehood, but merely evade the truth by equivocation. According to St. Mark, whose gospel, it is generally supposed, Peter himself revised, his words, at first, were, *I know not, neither understand I, what thou sayest*; which is the same in sense in St. Matthew. But this was, in substance, denying him, and so it was understood by the persons who were present. Hence, St. Matthew says, *He denied him before them all*. After a short time he grew more bold and confident, telling a plain and direct falsehood, and confirming it with an oath, as St. Matthew informs us, declaring, *I do not know the man*. How amazing that such language should ever have fallen from the lips of this apostle! What, Peter! dost thou not know the man? did he not

heal thy wife's mother of a fever? did he not afford thee a miraculous draught of fishes, when thou hadst toiled all night without effect, and which made thee fall down, saying, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord?* didst thou not go to him walking upon the water, who stretched out his hand and supported thee when sinking in the midst of the angry waves? didst thou not behold his transfiguration upon the mount? didst thou not confess him to be the *Son of God?* did he not surname thee *Peter*, and declare that he would *give unto thee the keys of the kingdom?* Ah! Peter, how art thou fallen! What a falsehood thou hast uttered! There is scarcely a Jew in the whole nation but what knew Jesus, he having become so noted throughout the country for his doctrine and miracles. Yet his own disciple, who had been with him for three years, affirms with an oath, he *did not know the man*. He repeated his falsehood after the space of an hour or more, after having had time for reflection. *Of a truth*, said another servant, *this fellow was also with him, for he is a Galilean*. And Peter denied again, saying, *I know not the man of whom you speak*. To gain the greater credit to what he had said, and to show that he was not the disciple of Christ, *He cursed and swore*. He first denied his Lord and Master; he then denied him with an oath; and he afterwards denied him with horrible imprecations. And all this he did, after he had received the most solemn and repeated warnings from him whom he knew to be the *Son of God*, who was acquainted with all these things.

The conduct of Peter is rendered the more criminal when we consider *the smallness of the temptation with which he was beset*. He was questioned as to his knowledge of Christ, not by a mighty monarch, a king, a prince, or a magistrate; but by an equal, an inferior, a servant, a girl! Is this Peter, the zealous, the courageous *Peter*, the *rock*, as the name imports? How little does his conduct answer to the name he bears! He appears more like a feather, blown away by the slightest puff—a pillar in the temple of God, blown down by the breath of a damsel! Alas, what is man, left to himself in the hands of the tempter, if he be permitted *to sift him as wheat!*

He denied his Master within his very *hearing*, and, as it seems, in his *presence*; a Master of whose wisdom, power, and justice, as well as mercy and love, he had the fullest evidence; and even after he had just received the sacrament at his hands. One would have supposed that the personal presence of Christ would have imposed upon him a restraint, sufficient, at least, to have prevented these solemn and repeated denials with oaths and imprecations. But, alas! when man throws off restraint, and gives himself up to the dictates of unbridled passions, there is scarcely a bond to check, or a limit to restrain; but he ranges through the extensive regions of fraud, of falsehood, and of forgery, till he is arrested in his wild career by some mysterious arm of providence. He becomes like

a beast before you, so stupid and insensible is he. This appears to have been the case with Peter, when, in the presence of his Master, he denied him.

But the conduct of Peter will appear still more aggravated, if we consider the *time when he was guilty of such nefarious conduct*. It was at the period when he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and when he was about to give his life a sacrifice for the sin of the world. It was when Jesus was giving the tenderest mark of his love to Peter, Peter discovered the blackest ingratitude. While Jesus yielded himself up to the bloody death of the cross for Peter, Peter refused to confess him. Such was the nature and turpitude of the offence committed by one of the apostles of the Lamb.

III. But we hasten to consider, in the third place, *his restoration to the divine favor*. As the fall of Peter was sudden, so was also his recovery. As his sin was not premeditated, but was the effect of a sudden and unexpected temptation, under circumstances peculiarly appalling to his mind, so he soon felt the power and force of conviction, and was as suddenly restored to the divine favor. The means of his restoration were as inconsiderable as the temptation by which he fell. They were two: The *first* was the crowing of the cock. This having been foretold, brought to Peter's remembrance the admonitions and warnings of Jesus, and gave him a fresh and striking instance of his wisdom, veracity, and power. Thus, at the very moment Jesus foretold his fall, he prepared the means of his recovery. *But the look* of Jesus was employed as the principal means of his restoration. *The Lord turned and looked on Peter*.

This was a look of *complaint*. It is the man of sorrows complaining of a new burden, while he is ready to sink under what he already bears. How eloquent was that eye when it was turned upon Peter, and spoke the language of the Saviour's heart? Is it not enough, Peter, that I am falsely accused, and cruelly dragged before this mock tribunal, where I shall be unjustly condemned, and shortly called to endure the painful and ignominious death of the cross? O, Peter, will you pierce my heart with a fresh dagger? will you add new gall to the cup that I am now drinking? will you give a sharper point to those arrows that are piercing my soul? O, Peter, have you no heart to sympathize with me in my sufferings, no tears to shed on this scene of wo, that will fill heaven and earth with mourning?

This was a look of *reproof and resentment*. The Saviour felt indignant at the base and treacherous conduct of Peter. He had given Peter suitable cautions and proper warnings, to which he paid no special regard, but was continually boasting of his firmness, and of the strength of his attachment to his Master. How did the eye of Jesus, when he looked upon him, flash with reproof? What do you think now, Peter?—where is all your boasted confidence and

courage? What, are you the man who declared he would sooner die, than forsake me? A look from Christ, which carries in it so just a reprimand, must be supposed to enter deeply into Peter's heart, who still respected his Master, though, through fear, he had acted so base and treacherous a part. This look of Jesus must have cut him to the very soul.

This was a look of *tender compassion*—a look of love, that carried in it tender mercy, and the pity of a friend. When Jesus cast his eye upon Peter, it glowed with the tenderest emotions of love—it was full of endearing attachment. O, Peter, unhappy creature, where are you now—how could you be so confident—I well knew your weakness—you knew not yourself. But is this your kindness to your friend? have I deserved this at your hand? When Julius Cæsar was murdered in the senate-house, his friend Brutus gave him one stab among the rest, which entered deeper into the dying emperor's heart, than any he had received before, and made him cry out, *What, my dear Brutus among my murderers!* Something so touching we may suppose to have been in that gracious look of Jesus, when he fixed his eyes on Peter. What, Peter among my persecutors—could I expect this from you? I could bear it better from any other. And believe it, your treachery, profaneness, and apostacy, have more deeply affected me, than all the insults and indignities that I have met with.

It was a look of *reconciliation*. Not a look of wrath and indignation, but an overture of peace and pardon, conveyed by the eye to the heart. Ah, Peter, I will not disown you, though you have denied me—though you have forsaken me, I will not cast you off. How I do pity you, behold these eyes; do you not see something of pity and tenderness in them? Believe me, Peter, you have not lost all your interest and all your love in me. I have prayed for you, and the blood I am about to shed shall wash away your guilt. No wonder that Peter could not withstand such a look. No wonder that he was compelled to retire, and seek seclusion to vent the anguish of his soul.

It was a look of *exhortation*. By the expression of the eye, Jesus reminded him of what had passed between them. You now remember my words, let them sink deep into your heart. Go think on what I have said, and on what you have done. Repent, and weep, and mourn—remember the look which I now give, and remember it is a mercy that I ever looked upon you again. You have denied me; if you now love me, let your repentance be as remarkable as your fall.

Our blessed Lord, situated as he was, did not have an opportunity of a personal interview with Peter; had he have had an opportunity of conversing with him, we may reasonably suppose he would have addressed him in the manner we have been describing. But all this he might convey with one steady cast of the eye; and doubtless he did, when he gave Peter that piercing and converting



look. There is something in a fixed, commanding look of the eye, that is inexpressibly more eloquent than all the arts of speech. There is no such thing as resisting the silent language of the eye, when dictated by the emotions of the heart. And such was this look of the Saviour, that pierced through Peter's heart, and forced all his sorrows through his eyes. *He went out, and wept bitterly.* He left the place where he had sinned, and forsook the company which had been the occasion of his transgression. He sought retirement, that he might the more freely pour out the bitter anguish of his soul in a copious effusion of tears.

1. We learn from this subject, that no dependence can be placed on mere natural strength, or on great attainments, to enable us to resist temptation, and to persevere in true religion, *without the assistance of the grace of God.* The names of nearly all the saints, whose histories have been recorded in the Bible, have been stained with crime. Noah drank too much wine, and became intoxicated. Abraham was guilty, in several instances, of prevarication. Moses gave way to the impetuosity of his spirit, and dashed in pieces the tables of stone, inscribed by the finger of God. David was guilty of seduction and murder. Solomon gave way to the foolishness of his heart in old age, and Peter denied his Lord and Master. These were all men of great piety, and eminent attainments; but under peculiar circumstances, they were overcome by the power of temptation. And who can say, that I could stand, were my faith and virtue put to as serious a test as theirs? were I assailed by as strong and powerful temptations as they? *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* We should do well, my brethren, to remember our weakness, and never trust in our own strength, or lean upon our own understanding; but let us trust in the Lord, *for they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, that cannot be removed.*

2. When men fall into actual sin, however great may have been their attainments, or however eminent they have been in holiness, they generally proceed from *bad to worse.* Every step makes way for another, involving us in more aggravated guilt. This was the case with Peter. At first, he, perhaps, only intended to conceal the truth; but we shortly find him absolutely denying all knowledge of Christ, and then confirming that denial with oaths and horrible imprecations. This was also the case with David, in the matter of Uriah. At first, he only committed adultery; he then went on, that he might conceal his guilt and shame, to the commission of murder. We should, therefore, avoid the least appearance of evil, and learn to distrust ourselves. We should resist temptation in its first stages, and never permit wicked thoughts to lodge in our minds. In most instances, before men commit outbreaking sins, they render their minds familiar with vice by contemplation, and thus they are gradually prepared for the perpetration of sin before the act is committed. A pure and sincere heart, whose

thoughts and feelings are all holy, will reply, when attacked by the most violent temptations, in the language of an eminent patriarch: *How can I commit this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Let us, then, keep our consciences and our hearts pure and undefiled. Let us look continually to God for persevering grace, for he heareth the needy when they cry, and has stiled himself the keeper of Israel. Such persons have the assurance of finding strength equal to their day.

3. If any have fallen, they are instructed, by the restoration of Peter to the divine favor, not to *despair of mercy*, provided, like him, they remember the words of Jesus, are pierced with deep remorse for their sins, and experience that godly sorrow *which worketh reformation not to be repented of*. Doubtless there are many here, on this occasion, who have denied their Saviour since he redeemed their souls, in words, if they have not in oaths and imprecations. O that Jesus would look such into repentance, as he did Peter, and that they might feel all those lively emotions of sorrow, that swelled the heart and filled the eyes of this penitent apostle! Could many of us see our true condition, we should doubtless behold ourselves as much alienated from Christ as was Peter, when he denied him. And may our hearts become as penitent as his was, and we shall be as soon restored to the divine favor. Indeed, God says to us, return unto me, thou backsliding daughter; and promises to heal our backslidings, and to love us freely.

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## DISCOURSE XXII.

### *Joy in Heaven over a Repenting Sinner.*

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”—Luke xv., 7.

THE instructions of our Saviour were delivered in the most plain and familiar manner; and the imagery employed to illustrate them was chiefly drawn from the various sources of common and domestic life. Jesus came not to the rich; he could not be affected by circumstances of temporal rank and wealth. He looked upon man as he exists, abstracted from these considerations; and, therefore, directed his teaching to the great mass of mankind, the common people. They were the chief objects of his ministry; and, accordingly, his discourses were popular. The context presents us with the familiar figure of a shepherd, who had lost one of his flock; who, after a toilsome search, recovered the wanderer; and who calls his friends together to rejoice with him, that he had found that

which was lost. Then are introduced the words of our text: *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.* The doctrine of the text is further illustrated, in a subsequent part of the chapter, under the familiar and domestic image of a woman, who had lost a piece of money; and who, on its recovery, calls on her friends to rejoice with her, that she had found that which had been lost. Both of these parables are intended to show, in all its force, the value of repentance. This was the great object of the Saviour's ministry, and these expressive discourses all had in view the production of this important effect.

I. In considering the subject before us, we shall, in the first place, *inquire who the just persons are, that need no repentance.* Our Saviour declares that there is no alternative but perdition and repentance; and the universal necessity of repentance is one of the most prominent positions in the whole of his divine ministrations. Who, then, are those that need no repentance? There are two modes of solving this difficulty, so as to harmonize the doctrine of the text with the general system of divine truth.

In the first place, there are those who have repented, and are no longer denominated penitents. In the next place, there is no necessity for taking the words in their absolute sense. Our Lord frequently speaks in a hypothetical or suppositious manner. Such was the case in the parable of the prodigal son. The elder brother witnesses the joy which is demonstrated on the return of the ruined spendthrift, and he remonstrates with his father. He points out the rectitude of his own conduct; he contrasts it with his dissolute brother's; and he then upbraids his father: *Thou never gavest me a kid to make merry with my friends.* Now, the father does not deny the dutiful behavior of his son, nor his claims to consideration; but gives this very good reason for his conduct: *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost and is found.* Some have supposed that the Jews were exhibited under the character of the elder brother; but this is, in no degree, confirmed by their conduct. Indeed, they are most pointedly condemned by the Saviour, whom they rejected. Much less can it be supposed, that this character is descriptive of those who are matured in the Christian graces and virtues. No; those who most fully exemplify the practical effects of the Christian character, are the most disposed to encourage and foster repentance. We may, therefore, safely conclude, that the elder brother is altogether a hypothetical character. It is not that there are those who need no repentance; but that, if there were, still there would be more joy over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-nine just persons.

II. But let us consider, in the second place, why it is that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over nine-

*ty-nine just persons that need no repentance.* In the tenth verse of this chapter, the expression is somewhat different: *Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* The doctrine implied is, that the blessed spirits of heaven take a lively interest in the affairs of mankind. It is one of the blessed results of the gospel dispensation, that angels stand in a nearer relation to the church of Christ, who reconciled not only the things on earth, but also the things in heaven. They are now sent to the earth on messages of benevolence, and we are led to believe that there are multitudes of them in the assembly of the saints; that they are continually the observers of the thoughts and actions of the human race; that they witness the effects of the gospel upon the hearts of sinners; that they notice and rejoice at the success of that process upon the character, which conforms every true believer to the image of Jesus Christ; and that they are the joyful heralds of the good news of repentance to their fellow-spirits in the celestial world.

If we consider that the angels are the friends and lovers of mankind; that they take pleasure in all that advances our happiness; that they stand diametrically opposed to our great adversary, the devil, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may destroy—their very antipathy to evil must serve to augment their joy, when malignity is defeated, and the objects of their benevolence are made happy.

Angels are the subjects of Immanuel; they belong to his blessed government. They owe and pay to him an unlimited love and allegiance. Now, their loyalty to the King of kings must inspire joy in their minds, when they witness the translation of one of the subjects of Satan into the kingdom of heaven, and brought under the government of the Saviour. And repentance is the first act of allegiance. They must rejoice when they see their own happy character, their own benevolence, their own felicity, all the benefits of their own laws, extended to the human race. Angels dwell in the immediate presence of God; they drink pleasure at the fountain head. They, therefore, can form a more sublime conception of the loss which is sustained by the impenitent; and they know what are the boundless blessings which result to sinners, from the conforming influence of repentance.

The text clearly intimates, that the repentance of a sinner is the peculiar cause of joy to the angels; that it is the cause of joy superior to all others. Who can conceive the happiness of angels? Who can measure its magnitude? Their past knowledge, their exalted virtues, their celestial refinement, the infinite variety of the causes of joy, all adapted to their nature and character, and corresponding with the magnificence of their capacity; these would seem to render their happiness beyond augmentation; and still there is *more joy*--there is an increase even of their blessedness, when they witness the delightful effect of repentance.

They have long basked in the effulgence of the beatic vision. Their views are more extensive; they look further into the vast prospect of eternity; their searchabilities are infinitely more exquisite, and their hearts glow with infinitely more fervor, and still their joy is increased, when they behold repentance springing up in the hearts of sinners.

It may, however, be observed, that a state of confirmed Christian character undoubtedly must be more perfect, and, therefore, a more desirable state than that of repentance, which is but the first step in the process. It might, therefore, be supposed, that angels would feel more joy at the maturity, than the germination of Christian character. Whether we can fully understand the cause of their joy, is uncertain. There may be certain relations in which they exist, that our more limited nature cannot comprehend, and which powerfully affect their minds with impressions of joy.

We are a great deal more affected by recent, than by remote causes. Now, it is probable that all beings have a great similarity in this respect; and as repentance is a thing of recent occurrence, as it is the essential fact in the history of man's felicity, as it is the very gate to the celestial country, angels may feel a peculiar delight in an event so singular, and connected with infinite results. Although it is more blessed for the saints of God to be confirmed in their faith, and perfected in their character, than that they should continue in the infancy of their nature, still there is a uniformity in their experience, and they are daily producing the same natural fruits of holiness, and enjoying the same fruits of happiness and glory.

It is probable that, like ourselves, angels are affected by contrast; and what contrast can be more striking than that exhibited by the impenitent and penitent? Heretofore, man's face was directed towards the regions of perdition: now, he is earnestly struggling—he is agonizing to enter in at the straight gate. Heretofore, sin was his element, and his soul was bent to work iniquity: now, the unwavering bias of his thoughts and feelings, the constant tendency of his actions, and the operations of the general system of his mind and of his heart, are brought under the sanctifying control—the sacred dominion of the divine Spirit. So entirely are his ruling principles and passions changed, that he may be said to have participated in the divine nature; thus *old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new*. Is it wonderful, then, that angels should joyfully sympathize in such a purification of character, in such a transformation of the will, in such a splendid instance of the divine grace and goodness? How intense must be their pleasure, how glowing their joy, when they see those who were *in the wicked one*, changed into the image of Christ, assimilating to their own celestial nature, and destined ultimately to rival themselves in the ardor of their love and devotion. The same is equally true in the ministers of Jesus Christ—their joy is augment-

ed in proportion as their spirituality is increased ; and the nearer they approach to heaven, the more their minds approximate to their celestial character—the more they know and feel the value of repentance.

III. In the third and last place, we shall suggest a *few reflections which seem naturally to arise out of the subject*. And, in the first place, what an infinite value is stamped upon this transformation of the heart—*repentance*. The penitent becomes entitled to all the benefits which are comprehended in the enjoyment of the presence and blessing of God. In the present stage of existence, we are apt to promise ourselves much future prosperity ; we picture to ourselves a scene of future felicity, founded on the possession of riches, the elevation of power and greatness, or some change in our condition : but all things deceive our hopes ; and when these hopes are the most realized, we have to suffer the anguish which results from reflections on their evanescent state. Now, we cannot assign too much importance to conversion. Its benefits are not only infinitely valuable, but imperishable ; not only imperishable, but progressively augmenting. I do not inquire whether you are living a life of celibacy, or enjoying the felicity of conjugal union. I ask not whether you are rich or poor, whether you are in possession of rank or power, but whether you have repented ; whether you have been made the subject of that divine process, which gives the heavenly host more joy than all the other causes which conspire to scatter blessedness over the celestial plains ? O, earnestly desire this great change ! O, earnestly pray that God would give repentance unto salvation, that need not to be repented of.

We see, in the second place, *the importance of the gospel*. This is the great instrument for producing repentance. The sacred principles of divine truth are conveyed to the soul by the preaching of the word of God. It is by these means that all the graces and virtues of the Christian character are induced, which create that sweet fruit of repentance, whose fragrance diffuseth itself to the very gates of heaven, and gives new joy to the celestial throng of angels.

The subject affords, in the third place, the most delightful *encouragement for sinners to repent*. The bare promise of pardon is calculated to excite in the bosom gratitude and love ; but as if it were not sufficient to operate upon the minds of men, by assuring them of happiness on repentance, the text is calculated to move them on in a still more alluring manner, by pointing out to them the happiness which thereby results to others. The very angels rejoice. Penitents are not received with reluctance, but the celestial bands are ready to celebrate their conversion, with all the benevolence of congratulation and joy. And shall all these heavenly motives to repentance be rendered ineffectual by the rebellion and obstinacy of the sinner ? Ah, fellow-sinner, will you continue, by the indulgence of vicious passions and irregular appetites, to fur-

nish fresh occasions for the celestial spirits to mourn over your folly and wickedness, while the devil and his angels are rejoicing in the possession of his prey? God, this day, makes new offers to you of pardon and salvation, he furnishes new motives and incitements to repentance; and shall these, like all others, be slighted and neglected? Let me urge upon you the importance of immediately entering upon the great work of repentance, by all the considerations of eternity. Let me excite you to engage in it, by all the hopes of heavenly bliss, which await the righteous. And, as we are about to draw our exercises to a close, permit me to inquire, whether the glad news shall be borne up to the skies that another sinner has yielded to the holy impressions of the gospel, and thus diffuse joy throughout the heavenly host? or shall the news be borne hence, that another gospel sermon has been preached in vain, and thus spread a mournful gloom over the tenants of the celestial world?

Finally, we observe that this subject is full of *encouragement for the ministers of the gospel*. What an infinite value the heavenly host put upon the smallest success attending the labors of a minister of the gospel! If the single event of the conversion of one sinner is an occasion of such inexpressible joy to the angels of God, surely it must be a source of encouragement for every minister of the gospel to prosecute his labors with increasing fidelity. Ministers are too much in the habit of desponding at the recollection of the small success of their labors, not reflecting that one soul is of infinite value. The great apostle of the Gentiles, in the midst of the most splendid and effectual efforts to convince sinners, rejoiced over Onesiphorus as though he had been the only fruit of his ministrations—as though there had been no other penitent in the world. And, indeed, as every man must give an account for himself, his personal and individual salvation is of the same importance to him, as though he were the only sinner to be saved. Hence, ministers of the gospel have encouragement to labor for each and every individual soul, as though he were the only one to be brought to repentance. And, surely, this thought should inspire in the bosom of every minister of the gospel fresh zeal in the delightful work of saving souls, and should induce them to make more active and vigorous efforts to bring sinners to repentance. And now, may Almighty God animate and encourage the hearts of all his faithful servants, to prosecute the important and delightful work of preaching the gospel with increased zeal and energy, and may he render their efforts successful in bringing sinners to the saving knowledge of truth.

## DISCOURSE XXIII.

*The Consequence of Neglecting Prayer.*

“There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee : for thou hast hid thy face from us.”—Isaiah lxiv., 7.

MAN is surrounded with dangers which no human sagacity can perceive, no human prudence can avoid, and from which no human power can deliver him. He is oppressed with wants, which no creature can supply. It is to God, and to him alone, that he must look for the blessings which he needs ; for it is he that *giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength*. But man is naturally so averse to prayer, so disposed to confide in his own wisdom, and to trust in his own strength, that he will bear all his own burdens rather than apply to God for relief. It is on this account, that so many faint under their afflictions ; and this was the ground of God’s controversy with his ancient people.

I. In addressing you from these words, permit us, in the first place, to call your attention to *the nature of prayer*. Many expressions and metaphors are employed by the sacred writers, to represent to us the nature of prayer. It is here set forth, under the idea of *calling upon God*. It is through the medium of prayer that we make our wants known to God, and petition him to supply them. But petitions, either with or without a form, are not worthy the name of prayer, if they be not attended with a devout spirit. Prayer consists more in the devout exercises of the heart, than in the expression of the lips ; it supposes that we feel our wants. A sense of want excites desire, and desire is the very essence of prayer. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, says David, and that will I seek after*. Prayer, without desire, is like an altar without a sacrifice, or without the fire from heaven to consume it. When all our wants are supplied, prayer will be converted into praise ; till then, Christians must live by prayer, and dwell at the mercy-seat. God, alone, is able to hear and to supply their every want. The revelation which he has given of his goodness, lays a foundation for our asking with confidence the blessings we need ; and his ability encourages us to hope for their bestowment. *O, thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come*.

Prayer is also described in the language of the text, as *a taking hold of God*. God has set himself, as it were, before us in the promises. We are to lay hold on him by faith. Faith is the arm by which we reach God, and the hand by which we take hold of him in the exercise of prayer. Hence, effectual prayer must be offered up in a believing frame of mind. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth*



*not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for let not the wavering man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* It is our privilege, then, to lay hold upon God with the strong hand of faith, and, like the patriarch of old, refuse to let him go till he bless us. Yea, it is not merely our privilege to do it, it is our duty to do it; for this is the very means prescribed by God for the attainment of his blessings. *Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.*

Prayer is further called, in the language of the text, a *stirring up of one's self to lay hold on God*. It is not an easy thing to gain access to God in prayer. We engage in it, for the most part, with much reluctance. The objects of time and sense press upon us, and excite within us such a lively sensibility, that they dry up the very spirit of prayer within us. The press of business, the calls of our families around us, the perplexity and anxiety necessarily attending all worldly enterprises, occupy so much of our time, and engage so many of our thoughts, as to check and stifle the spirit of devotion within us; while, on the other hand, prosperity elates us, and inflates our minds with that spirit of pride, which is hostile to a spirit of devotion. When our enterprises are unsuccessful, and misfortune pursues us in all our undertakings, our spirits sink down into lifeless insensibility. Under these circumstances, when we attempt to approach God in prayer, our thoughts wander ere we are aware, and in spite of all our endeavors to fix them. At other times, our spirits become so depressed, that we seem to lose the accustomed energy of our minds. We need, again and again, to stir up our sluggish hearts, and, if possible, acquire that true spirit of prayer which will enable us *to lay hold on God*.

II. When we consider the duty in this light, we shall see reason to lament, in the second place, *the general neglect of it*. There are many who live entirely *without prayer*. Their time, their attention, and their thoughts, are wholly and entirely occupied with worldly concerns. They live as though this world were their eternal and everlasting home. They are not sensible of their spiritual wants, and make no provision to supply them. They are deaf to the calls of the gospel, and blind to their highest, their best interests. They rely on their own industry for their temporal advancement; and, when success attends their enterprises, they ascribe it to their superior skill and discernment. They acknowledge, before God, neither their sins nor necessities. *God is not in all their thoughts*. Such men in the refinement of their minds, and in the spirituality of their conceptions, are removed but a small distance from beasts that perish. They are characterized by the apostle, as being without hope and without God in the world. They exhibit the legitimate fruits of Atheism.

But there are others, who only *occasionally lift up their hearts to*

*God.* They resemble the Jews of old, who only cried to God when oppressed with the weight of heavy and severe afflictions. *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee ; they poured out a prayer when thy chastising was upon them.* Such exercises, however, hardly deserve the name of prayer. The prophet expressly denies to them the name of prayer, and styles them the mere howlings of distress. *They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they have howled upon their beds : they assembled themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.* Such persons, when they are taken out of the furnace of afflictions, resemble metal extracted from the fire ; they soon return to their former hardness. *When he slew them, they sought him ; and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.* Flushed with victory, or animated with the joy of some signal deliverance, they will lift their voice in praise to God, but, like the Israelites of old, they would soon forget his mercies. *The waters covered their enemies : there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words ; they sang his praise. They soon forgot his works ; they waited not for his counsel : but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.* And how many such partial and unstable worshippers has God had in every age and country ? And is not this the character of many of us ? Surely, this is a very important and serious subject, and one that deserves our strictest attention ; for such worshippers can never find acceptance with God.

But there are others, again, who maintain, with consistency, *an external regard to the duties of prayer.* They will repeat their accustomed forms at stated seasons ; but they are as dry as the bones in Ezekiel's vision, and as destitute of the spirit of prayer as these were of vitality. And there are others who will, at stated or occasional seasons, offer up a few general and cold petitions ; and with this outward act they seem entirely satisfied. They take neither pleasure nor delight in the duty, but perform it as a necessary task, and seem to rejoice when it is ended. But such exercises are essentially destitute of the true requisites of prayer. They do not flow from ardent and living desires in the soul—they are offered up in a cold and formal spirit—they are but the mere offerings of the lips—and as they have not been put forth in the exercise of faith, there is not the least expectation of any answer from God. My brethren, let us not deceive ourselves into the belief, that these cold, formal, and lifeless performances, are acceptable to God. *God is a spirit, and they who worship him acceptably, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* To honor God with our lips, while our hearts are far from him, is a sacrifice with which he is not well pleased.

But in the midst of abounding wickedness, hypocrisy, and formality, we rejoice that there are some few, indeed, *who pray to God aright*. When the prophet declared, that *There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee*, he speaks in general terms; for there was a remnant then, as there has been in every age and period of the world, who were the true worshippers of God. The prophet himself was one of this class, for he declares, speaking of himself and his associates: *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion*. Surely, the prophet did not mean to exclude these in his censure. This remnant *stirred up themselves to lay hold on God*, but they were few when compared with the bulk of the Jewish nation; they may be said, comparatively, to be none at all. And although, in the exercise of charity, the true worshippers of God are vastly more numerous now than in the days of the prophet, yet the smallness of their number, when compared to the body of mankind, should still be the subject of lamentation. And who, in the devout spirit of the prophet, can cast his eye over the Christian world, and view the smallness of the number that *stir up themselves to take hold on God*, without making it a subject of lamentation before him. But, my brethren, let us bring the subject home, and apply it to ourselves. I rejoice that there are in this church a few praying souls; but, at the same time, there are just grounds for lamentation that the number is so small. I will make it the subject of lamentation before God, with the humble hope that he will regard us with a favorable eye, and shed down upon us the reviving and quickening influences of his Holy Spirit. And let this be a subject of lamentation by every praying soul in the church—let every one who has access to the throne of grace cry mightily to God that he would regard us in our low estate, and that he would especially increase the recent tokens of his favor among us.

III. To counteract this evil, we proceed, in the third place, to set forth *the consequences of this neglect of prayer*. The tokens of God's displeasure, which those in the text experienced, will certainly be felt by all who neglect prayer. God will surely *hide his face from them*. He will not reveal to them his glory. The manifestation of the divine presence has been eagerly coveted by the people of God in every age. Moses besought the Lord to show him his glory, and God revealed himself to him. He entreated God that his presence should go with the children of Israel through the wilderness, and God said, *My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest*. To the faithful and upright, God reveals himself as he does not unto the world; he shines into their hearts to discover to them his glory; and they behold a beauty and perfection in the Lord, which is never seen by the ungodly. To them, he will vouchsafe no such mercy. They who cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God, never behold his glory, never enjoy his smiles.

His perfections are, to them, rather an object of terror than admiration; for his holiness, his justice, and his veracity, are all engaged against them. The prophet declares, that *God is angry with the wicked every day*, and that *they should be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God*.

Neither will he manifest to them *his love*. The humble and devout Christian is the object of God's special favor and regard; he lifts upon him the light of his countenance, and gives to him the most evident tokens of his approbation. He *sheds abroad his love in his heart*, and communes with him daily from off the mercy-seat. He defends him in the midst of danger, and declares *he that toucheth him toucheth the apple of his eye*. The good man acknowledges, with the Psalmist, that *God has put gladness into his heart*, which far exceeds the joy of worldly pleasure. But the neglectors of prayer *intermeddle not with their joy*; they are strangers to the spirit of adoption, to the love of God, and to the *peace of God that passeth all understanding*. They desire to banish God from their thoughts; and wish, like the fool, that there was *no God*.

*Finally*, he will not communicate to them *his blessings*. The faithful worshippers of God have the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come. God will give to them all the blessings of grace and glory. They may be called to endure great privations, and to suffer severe afflictions; but they shall be rewarded an hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come receive life everlasting. But the wicked, the profane, the ungodly, the neglectors of prayer, have no part or lot with them. The common blessings of life, which are lavished upon them with a profuse and liberal hand, are turned into a curse unto them; even as David says, *Their table shall become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them; and their eyes shall be darkened, that they may not see; and their back shall be bowed down alway*. These terrible curses are the fruits of sin and unbelief; and to all eternity they must ascribe their misery to their own neglect. If all the souls that are banished from the divine presence were asked, *Wherefore has God hid his face from you?* they must assign the reason that is given in the text. They will not be able then to offer one justifiable excuse for their conduct; *every mouth shall be stopped, and the whole world of ungodly sinners shall stand guilty and justly condemned before God*.

In the conclusion of our remarks, we would call upon those who live without prayer, to *duly consider these things*. This offence has been awfully marked by the indignation of God. *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels. God gave them up*, to what? to their enemies? to death? or to immediate and eternal damnation? No; to what was worse than even that, *their own hearts' lust*, that *they might treasure up wrath against the day of wrath*. And what is more terrible than for God

to withdraw his restraining grace, and to give a man up to the dominion of his own corrupt passions? Such men are filled with the inventions of their own wicked hearts, and cherish the most fatal delusions—delusions that beguile them on in the way of certain and inevitable destruction. *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* These terrible calamities befall men in consequence of cherishing the love and practice of sin, and rejecting the counsel of God. How bitter, then, must be the reflections of those who perish through their own neglect! And have we not reasons to fear that this may be the case of some who are present? Be entreated, then, *to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near; for now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.*

They, also, who merely engage in prayer formally, *should lay these things to heart.* Such persons, being more liable to deceive themselves, are in the greater danger. Our prayers must be fervent, in order to be effectual; the cold and formal offerings of the lips will never prevail with God. He demands the heart, the whole heart; and he will accept of nothing short of this. Our hearts must go out in prayer to God, if we would offer to him an acceptable sacrifice. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* God looketh at the heart, and requireth truth in the inward parts. *Upon this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* God has even promised to do more than to look with a favorable eye upon such, he has promised to dwell with them: *I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and revive the heart of the contrite ones.* When our hearts are thus imbued with the spirit of Christianity, we shall be animated with a laudable zeal in the cause of our Master; we shall press with violence into the kingdom of heaven, and use all diligence to make our calling and election sure. Do we indeed possess this broken, this contrite spirit? and are our hearts inflamed with this holy ardor? If they are not, rest not satisfied with a round of ceremonies. The form of godliness, without the power of it, can never avail to secure the favor of God; we must *have the spirit of Christ*, if we would be his true disciples.

*Finally*, this subject should be particularly remembered by those *who profess godliness.* Unless we stir up ourselves continually, we shall soon lose the divine presence. And when the presence of God is withdrawn, the soul will be dark and lifeless. It will resemble the dry and parched ground, when the showers and dews of heaven are withheld from watering it; or the cold and frozen earth, when the sun is withdrawn to the southern hemisphere. Our light and life come from God, and he imparts these in the same degree as we cherish and exercise the true spirit of prayer. How important, then, that we should guard against a spirit of formality

in prayer, and that we should *stir up ourselves to take hold on God*. He has declared that *the prayer of the upright is his delight*, and that he is as well pleased with the sighs and groans of a contrite soul, as with the songs of the angels that surround his burning throne. If we feel weak and languid, dull and heavy, cold and lifeless, let us endeavor to shake off this spirit of sloth and insensibility—let us bring home to our minds the most powerful considerations, to excite us to activity and diligence in the cause of our dear Redeemer—let us call into active exercise every Christian grace—let us be found continually in the way of duty—and let us add fasting to prayer, and obedience to faith, and charity to love, so that by any and every means, we may *stir up ourselves to lay hold on God*, and secure to ourselves the promise of eternal life.

The tokens of divine favor, which God has recently conferred upon us, are the pledges of greater mercies, if we will but secure them in God's appointed way. He is now stretching out his golden sceptre, and calling us into a divine and more sacred nearness to himself. He is calling upon us to open our mouths wide, with the endearing promise that he will fill them. He is stirring us up to the exercise of a stronger faith, a warmer love, and a more fervent spirit of devotion, that he may crown our efforts with a rich and plentiful harvest. He is doing more than all this, he is exciting a deep interest in the minds of sinners around us, and in the midst of us, and disposing them to ask an interest in our prayers. Surely, my brethren, in the midst of so much to interest and encourage us, we shall find it an easy and delightful employment to *stir up ourselves to take hold on God*, and to cherish a strong, firm, and enduring faith in him.

## DISCOURSE XXIV.

### *The Sure Foundation.*

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”—Matt. xvi, 15—18.

DURING the personal ministry of our blessed Lord, the public mind was greatly divided and agitated respecting a variety of opinions concerning him. Some regarded him as a politician, who, under a veil of humility, hid the most ambitious designs; others took him to be an enthusiast. Some thought him an emissary of the devil; others, an envoy from God. And even among those who en-

tertaind the latter opinion, *some said that he was Elias, some John the Baptist, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.* The faith of the apostles was in danger of being shaken by this diversity of opinion: for nothing is more directly calculated to make deep impressions upon a rational mind, than a variety of opinions. They not unfrequently drive men into a state of uncertainty, which produces doubts, and finally ends in skepticism. At this critical time, Jesus Christ comes to the relief of his apostles, and requires their opinion on a question which divided all Judea, for the purpose of establishing them in the true faith. Peter, who, on all occasions, appears to be the most forward, answers for the whole apostolic college. Jesus Christ confirmed the truth of the opinion which had been expressed by Peter, and declares that he had received it by a revelation from heaven. He then assured his apostles that the *rock*, which had been confessed by Peter, should become the foundation of his church, and that the gates of hell should never prevail against it.

I. In addressing you from the words which we have selected as a foundation of the following remarks, we propose to take them up in the order they lay before us. And, in the first place, it is, he declared that, *Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

The doctrine of the divine Unity, is the first article of all natural and revealed religion. The works of nature not only declare the existence of a first cause, but they also bear testimony, by the unity of design, and harmony of plan, which is observable in their whole course, that this first cause is *one*. The Scriptures of truth are also plain and explicit on this point. They testify that there is but one *living and true* God, the Creator of all worlds, and source of all blessedness. They also testify that this *living* God is the Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. *But unto us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things.* They furthermore assert that Jesus Christ is the Son of this one *living and true* God.

The term, Son of God, is an ambiguous phrase, and used by the inspired penmen as expressive of very different ideas. It is applied to both angels and men, because they were created by God. As a Creator, God stands in the relation of a father to them; hence the propriety of calling them sons of God. Christians are said to be the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, because they have been regenerated by a divine influence, and born into the family of God. But Jesus Christ is spoken of in the holy Scriptures as the Son of God, in quite a different sense from that in which all others are called the sons of God. He is said to be *God's only Son, his own Son, his beloved Son, his begotten Son, his only begotten Son.* The phrase *Son of God*, when applied to Christ, may not always signify the same thing, but it most generally refers to the dignity of his person. The reasoning of the apostle, in the commencement of the first chap-

ter of the epistles to the Hebrews, proceeds upon this principle. His design is to show, that Jesus Christ is superior to angels. This he does by proving him to be the Son of God. He commences by observing that God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of his person—being made so much better than the angels, as he hath obtained a more excellent name than they. Here Christ is called the Son of God, and this Son is said to be made superior to angels. The apostle evidently uses the term Son in this verse, to express the dignity of the person of Jesus Christ; and by this Sonship he has by an inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels.

II. We are furthermore taught in the text, that, in the second place, *This Son of God is the Christ, the promised Messiah. Thou art the Christ*, the very person promised from the foundation of the world. Thou art the seed of the woman—the seed of Abraham—the seed of David according to the flesh—the long expected Messiah of the Jews.

The term Christ, for the most part, refers to the divine mission of our blessed Lord, and not to the dignity of his person. *Christ* in the Greek, and *Messiah* in the Hebrew, are synonymous terms, and literally signify one who is anointed. When Jesus is called the *Christ*, or the *Messiah*, we are to understand that he is a divinely commissioned and inspired messenger of God to the world, whom God has sent to reveal his mind and will to his rebellious subjects; to set an example of piety and rectitude for them to imitate; and to recover them to a virtuous and holy life.

III. It is further stated in our text, that, in the third place, *This Christ is the foundation on which the church is built.—Upon this rock will I build my church.*

It is maintained by the church of Rome, that Christ in this passage intended to point out Peter as the foundation of the church, but this is a mistake. Jesus Christ is the foundation, and the only foundation of the Christian religion, 1 Cor. iii, 11. Christ had previously given to Peter the name of *Cephas*, which, in the *Syriac* language, is of the same import with *Peter* in the *Greek*: they both mean a *stone*. Now, says our Lord, thou hast acknowledged me to be the Christ, and I acknowledge thee to be justly and deservedly named *Peter*, and on this rock, myself, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Christ here declares himself to be the foundation, and recognizes Peter as a suitable stone to incorporate into the building. This is the true sense of the passage.

When Christ calls himself the foundation, it is not of his abstract person that he is speaking, but of his Messiahship. Christians are greatly divided in their opinions respecting the person of Christ;



some maintaining that Jesus Christ in his person is properly God, others contend that he is a mere man ; while others have taken what is called the middle ground, that which we assumed in the first part of this discourse. Much confusion has arisen among these contending parties, and many uncharitable censures have been thrown out against those who confine supreme deity to the Father. They have been frequently charged with denying the Lord that bought them, and the only foundation of the sinner's hope. But this mistake has arisen from not paying a due regard to the express language of Scripture. However dignified Jesus may be in his person, it is not of his abstract person that he or his apostles speak when they call him the foundation ; but of him as the Christ, the anointed of God. *Upon this rock will I build my church ;* this shows that the church is built on him as the Messiah. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.* The apostles here teach us that all who believe Jesus to be the Christ, are Christians ; consequently are on the foundation. Again, *That if thou shalt confess, says the apostle with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thy heart that God raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* The resurrection of Jesus proved him to be the Christ, and as such, he is Lord of all. These, and many other passages which might be quoted if necessary, sufficiently prove that Jesus as the Messiah is the foundation God has laid in Zion for the hope of the guilty. All Christians fully believe that Jesus is the Christ, and as such cordially embrace him. This necessarily includes his divinity ; that is, the divinity of his mission and office, his divine authority and powers, the divinity of his doctrine and works, and the divine gifts and blessings that came through him. As a divinely commissioned, divinely empowered messenger, who spoke the words of God to men, he is the foundation.

When the apostle speaks of Christ as the foundation, this necessarily includes the doctrine he revealed and taught. All that Christ is to us, he is by the gospel. The name Christ is sometimes used when his doctrine, the whole of what came by him, is meant ; as the name of Moses is used in some places in the New Testament, when not the person of Moses, but his law is intended. When we build on Christ as the foundation, we must receive his doctrine, and practice his precepts. It will avail us nothing to call Jesus Lord, Lord, and not do the things he says. Except we take up our cross daily, and follow him, we cannot be his disciples.

We will now notice more particularly of what Christ is the foundation ; and,

1. *He is the foundation of our faith as Christians.* The word of faith, which we believe, was revealed by him ; he is both the author and the finisher of it. This word is the gospel, which contains all that is necessary, both for the faith and practice of a Christian. No doctrine ought to be received as a Christian doctrine, but what is plainly taught in the New Testament. No practice ought

to be enforced and observed, which is not required in the gospel. All that is here revealed is important, and ought to be heartily embraced by every disciple of Jesus. He left nothing optional with his followers; it is the duty of all to seek to know his will and do it. The gospel is the standard to which the various religious opinions are to be brought, the test by which they are to be tried. Whatever is found to be in opposition to the express declaration of the gospel should be rejected as anti-christian, notwithstanding it may be held in high repute by many of the professed disciples of Jesus. Whatever is clearly revealed we are bound to receive solely on his authority. It ought to be sufficient for any disciple of Jesus to know, that such a doctrine is revealed by him. Those most assuredly build on this foundation, who can express the sentiments they believe, the doctrine they preach, in the express language of Scripture; and language that is frequently repeated in the New Testament.

2. *Christ is the foundation of all our Christian privileges.* Though they all flow from the love of God, our Heavenly Father, as the original fountain, and are his free gifts, yet they come to us by Jesus Christ, through his labor and sufferings. We partake and enjoy all the blessings of the gospel through faith in him. By faith we have access to God by Christ, through whom also we receive rich communications from the Father of mercies. These sentiments are clearly expressed in the gospel. *This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. But after the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his own mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* No Christians admit more freely than we, that all the blessings of the new covenant come to us through Jesus Christ; and in this respect, he may emphatically be called the foundation of them; for it is by union with him that we are made partakers of the *divine nature*, and attain to that mind which was in Christ. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit or disposition with him.

3. *He is the foundation of our redemption, or deliverance from sin. God raised up Jesus, and exalted him at his own right hand, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.* Though salvation is by the free grace of God, it was revealed and communicated by Jesus Christ, and confirmed to us by his death. He is the instrumental cause of our salvation, and is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. *Let all the house of Israel assuredly know, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

4. *Christ is the foundation of evangelical righteousness; of that righteousness which is required of the Christian.* He gave the

rule of it; it consists in obedience to his precepts, and a conformity to his gospel. It was illustrated in his life and conversation, and in him was exhibited its pattern in a most striking likeness. He furnished all the motives; and by furnishing the motives, gave strength to attain to evangelical righteousness. It can only be produced by the light and influence of the gospel.

5. *He is the foundation of our consolation and joy.* The Christian religion is calculated to produce a greater joy than can possibly flow from any other source. *Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increaseth.* *We rejoice,* says the apostle, *with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* But this consolation was in Christ—these transports of joy were in him; the Christian has no confidence in the flesh. The witness of the Spirit, its sealing influence, its sanctifying effects, are all calculated to produce a high degree of joy in the heart of the Christian. But this spirit comes to us by Christ; our consolation and joy flow from the promises of God, which are in him yea, and in him amen. All the bright prospects of a state of future glory and blessedness, which fill the Christian with everlasting joy, were opened before us by Jesus Christ.

6. *He is the foundation of our hope.* Without Christ there can be no well grounded hope of future glory. It is he who has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, *who hath begotten us again to a lively hope through his resurrection from the dead.* It is Christ in the Christian, the hope of glory. Without him we should be without the assured hope of eternal life.

7. *Christ is the foundation of the Christian church in distinction from all human authority.* He is the only Master of Christians, who alone has authority to dictate to them what they are to believe, and what they must practice. The New Testament is the law of the kingdom. As the subjects of Christ, we are under the strongest obligation to believe what is there taught, and practice what is there required. The subjects of this kingdom are all upon a level, and have no authority over one another, but are all to be subject to the great head, the Lord Jesus Christ. All creeds and confessions of faith, all the decisions of councils, are but the opinions of fallible and erring men, and who are to be regarded as such. They do not come to us sanctioned by any divine authority, they have no claim to implicit faith. They ought never to be regarded as terms of communion, or grounds of fellowship. Those churches that build Christian fellowship upon a confession of faith, as something distinct from the Scriptures, at most, are building upon a fallible exposition, an exposition of no authority. *Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?* We recognize the authority of Christ and his apostles, but we know no other divine authority in the gospel age: we know of no men who are authorized to interpret the Scriptures, and require of others implicit faith in their decision. Christ, including the system of faith revealed by him, is the only

foundation of the Christian church ; and all, without distinction, are called upon to build on this foundation.

IV. This foundation in the fourth place *was laid by God*. Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian religion, because God has made him such. The Scriptures plainly teach, that God has laid this foundation ; that he has made Jesus Christ what he is to us ; has made him the head of the corner. *Therefore, saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet ; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall overflow the hiding place.* These passages sufficiently show that the foundation was laid by God.

A plan of this building was drawn, and Christ was set apart as a suitable foundation, from the commencement of the world ; but it it was not actually laid, till Jesus was exalted at the right hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, and constituted Lord, both of the dead and the living. And this is what I understand by God's laying the foundation in Zion. That Jesus Christ was thus constituted and qualified by God, is evident from the positive declaration of Scripture. Jesus Christ is said to be the gift of God. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift !* He is said to be sent by God. *And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. I came not of myself, but the Father sent me.* God gave him his mission. *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. I speak the words of God.* He was anointed by God. *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power. God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.* The miracles that were wrought by Jesus, were wrought by the mighty power of God, which he gave to him. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.* He healed the sick that came unto him, *because the power of God was present to heal them. The works which the Father hath given me (power) to finish, the same works that I do, bare witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* He cast out devils by the finger of God, and did these works by the Spirit of God. And again : *the Father, saith he, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you.* It was God that raised him from the dead. *We have testified of God that he raised up Christ. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.* After his resurrection, God exalted him at his own right hand, *far above all principalities and powers, and might and dominion, and hath given him a name which is above every name. He hath given him power over all flesh, to give to them whom God hath given*

him, eternal life. *He gave him all power in heaven and earth. Him hath God appointed heir of all things; and hath given him to be head over all things unto the Church. He is Lord of all, because God hath made him both Lord and Christ.*

All the offices that Christ sustains he was appointed to by his Father, and qualified to sustain them. Is he a prophet, as such he was sent by God, and spoke in the name of God. Whence he declared, during the execution of that office, that he spake not of himself; but, as the Father that sent him had given him a command, so he spoke. Is he a Priest? as such he is called to this office by God. *And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.* As he saith also in another place, *Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.* As for his regal office, the Scriptures plainly testify, that God constituted Christ, King: *Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.* God gave him both his dominion and authority. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions. The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

From what has been said, it is abundantly evident that God has laid the foundation of the Christian church, and that Christ is this foundation; and that, by God's laying this foundation, we are to understand that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was divinely commissioned, and qualified to reveal the will of God to man, and to sustain the character of the Saviour of the world, by Jehovah himself: that he is divinely appointed to be mediator between God and men; that God by him dispenses his favors and blessings to the human family; and that it is in him, through him, and by him, that we have access to God the Father. We may rest assured that Jesus is every way adequate as a suitable foundation to sustain the building, for it was laid by God himself; and most assuredly he would not have laid a defective foundation. *In him, saith the apostle, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; because it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him.*

I would farther remark, that we are to build on Christ as the foundation laid by God, and to honor him on the ground of this constituted character, and in so doing, we shall comply with the positive directions of our divine Master: *Thus all men should honor the Son, even as (that is, as truly) they honor the Father; and the reason assigned why we are to honor the Son is, because the Father hath committed, or given all judgment to the Son.*

He that refuseth to honor the Son on the ground of this constituted character, *honoreth not the Father that sent him.* Again, says Jesus, *He that receiveth me, receiveth not me, but Him that sent me. He that believeth in me, believeth not in me, but Him that sent me.*

*This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* In these passages Jesus Christ is said to be the Messenger of God, and by receiving him as such, we honor God that sent him; and as the mercy of God is revealed and communicated by him, eternal life is connected with a knowledge of Christ, as well as with the true God. Once more: all in heaven, and in earth, are commanded to bow at the name of Jesus, and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, because *God has highly exalted him, and made him both Lord and Christ.* As God has conferred this honor upon him, as a reward of his humiliation and obedience unto death, it is to the glory of God, that we join in the ascription of praise: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.* Lastly, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, in proving that Christ is superior to the angels, expresses himself thus: *And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* This passage refers particularly to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ; and is much better translated as it stands in the margin of our Bible than in the text. It there reads thus: *But when he again bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* He was once brought into the world at his incarnation. At his death he left the world and went to the Father, and, therefore, at his resurrection, God is said again to have brought him into the world. Immediately upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ he was inducted into his *regal office*, and invested with the high prerogatives which he has exercised since. Upon his being crowned *with glory and honor*, the order went forth for all the angels of God to *worship* or to *subject themselves* to him. As Christ is exalted above every name that is named, angels, authorities, principalities and powers, are to be in subjection to him. And as this high authority, and these extensive prerogatives were conferred upon him by God, those who refuse to honor him as worthy to receive them, greatly impeach the wisdom and justice of God the Father. But it must be remembered that Jesus, although so highly exalted, still sustains, in relation to us, a constituted character, and while we admire the foundation, we must not be unmindful of him who laid it. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

V. We pass to notice, in the fifth place, *the materials of which this church is to be built.* The word which we translate church, in the original literally signifies an assembly of people, called out by the civil magistrate. In this sense it is used by the Greeks, and particularly by the Athenians; and thus it is applied, Acts xix. 39. It is sometimes applied to a tumultuous, or an assembly unlawfully convened, xxxii. 40. But by the church of God, as the word is used in the New Testament, we are to understand an assembly, or society of men, called out from the world by the preaching of the

gospel, who have embraced the Christian religion, and become the true disciples of Jesus Christ. The qualification, and the only qualification that the Scriptures require in order to become a member of a Christian church, is discipleship. Faith in Jesus, as the Christ of God, was the point mostly insisted on; this faith, however, appears to be put for the whole of religion. When the eunuch requested baptism of Philip, all that he required of him, as an evidence of his being a suitable candidate, was faith in Christ. But this was a faith which carried the affections along with it. *If thou believeth with all thy heart, thou mayest. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* In the language of Scripture, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, is the same as to be born of God. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* All such overcome the world, and live a life devoted to God. *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.*

A Christian church ought to be composed of Christians. The cause of Christianity has suffered much by receiving as members nominal professors and hypocritical disciples, who have been actuated by no higher motives in making a public profession, than worldly honor or sordid gain. But when men of corrupt characters and profligate lives assume the garb of public teachers, who with defiled garments and polluted hands ascends the holy place to be the minister of God to the people, the cause of Christianity suffers still more. When the people, having itching ears, heap to themselves teachers of this character, merely because they are men of learning, eloquence and wit, or because they preach a doctrine that encourages the hearts and strengthens the hands of the wicked, crying peace, peace, when God has not said peace, it argues a high degree of corruption in the public morals, and a total misconception of the nature, character and design of the Christian religion. That drunken priests and lewd professors should receive public countenance in this enlightened age, must be a subject of grief to the truly pious and godly of all denominations.

This subject is most beautifully illustrated by the apostle, in the third chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. The apostle had been at Corinth, and preached Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, which he calls laying the foundation. But after he left, other public teachers went to Corinth, and built upon the foundation which he had laid, and incorporated into the building bad materials with the good. The good materials he calls gold, silver, and precious stones, materials that will abide the fire. The bad materials he distinguishes by hay, wood, and stubble, combustibles that are easily consumed. There was a day of trial, and a fire of persecution at hand, which would prove the firmness and stability of the building that had been erected at Corinth; and as the action

of fire tries metals, and discovers the dross which is in them, so will that fiery trial discover the unworthy mixture that has been incorporated into the church.

By these two kinds of materials we are to understand two characters of which the church was composed, the nominal and true disciples. That there were many unworthy members in that church is evident from the confusion and disorder which prevailed among them, and from the scandalous crimes of which some of the members were guilty. And what rendered the state of the church still worse was, that these notorious acts of immorality were passed over in silence, or justified by the ruling party in the church.

It is always a damage to the cause of Christianity to receive unworthy members into the church who will dishonor their profession by a disorderly walk, and, like a foul contagion, infect the whole body. The church of God is a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, built up of lively stones, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. A Christian church is the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. Holiness of heart and purity of life ought to be the motto inscribed upon the forehead of every professor of religion, and exemplified in his daily walk and conversation.

VI. We come, lastly, to notice *the firmness and stability of the building. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* The original word *hades* (we translate *hell*) properly signifies the receptacle of departed spirits. And as we enter hades by death, by the gates of hades we are to understand death. Then the promise of Christ is equivalent to saying, *Upon this rock will I build my church, and it shall never die, it shall never become extinct.* Various have been the attempts, in the successive ages of Christianity, to overthrow the Christian religion, and rase to the foundation the church of God; but it is founded upon a *rock*. Here the waves beat and are broken; here the winds blow and are baffled; here time hovers and corrodes, but it is not wasted away; it is a rock that defies every assault, and successfully resists the most powerful foe—the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

We will mention a few of the most probable causes that might have operated, if possible, to have overthrown the Christian religion. And,

1. *Persecution.* Persecution has been employed in the most successful manner that the power and policy of a wicked world could devise; but it has not obtained its object. Persecution commenced at the birth of Christ. No sooner than the intelligence of the birth of Jesus was communicated to Herod, than the lightning of his vengeance began to blaze around him; he sought the young child's life. And that he might be certain of effecting his object, *he sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.* But God, who sent



Jesus to be the Saviour of the world, had provided for his safety. While the sword of persecution was drinking the blood of the innocent children in Judea, the blessed Jesus was quietly reposing in the arms of his mother in Egypt.

After Christ commenced his public ministry, the wrath of the priests and Jewish rulers was kindled against him, who finally succeeded in persecuting him to death. But God, by his mighty power, raised him from the dead, confirmed the truth of his doctrine and the divinity of his mission, and thus defeated all the nefarious plans of his wicked persecutors. But, intent upon the execution of their design of finally exterminating from the earth the Christian religion, with redoubled envy they commenced their attack upon his disciples. In consequence of persecution, the disciples were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

But, fully persuaded of the truth, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word, so the number of his disciples was greatly increased and multiplied. Finally, during the three first centuries, ten persecutions followed each other in quick succession. But the disciples *loved not their lives unto the death, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.* The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church; and from their ashes God raised up faithful witnesses, who, with undaunted courage and flaming zeal, proclaimed the gospel to a gainsaying world. Wearied with a fruitless attempt, persecution, at length, hid its deformed head in shame, confusion, and despair. The church of the living God still exists, it is founded upon a rock, and the power of persecution has not been able to prevail against it.

2. The next thing that we shall notice as one of the most probable causes to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, *is internal divisions.* It was a maxim of our divine Master, *that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.* A superficial observer, from the apparent contentions, divisions, and oppositions, among the professed followers of Jesus, might imagine that this maxim applied with all its force against his own kingdom. But I apprehend that this, upon a more careful investigation, will be found to be a mistake. We readily grant that if all are Christians who have been called by this name, that in this case the application would be just. But this is far from being the case. It is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, that Jesus recognizes as a subject of his kingdom, but he that doeth the will of his Father in heaven. The kingdom of Antichrist has been confounded with that of Christ, and too many have taken this mixed medley to be the kingdom of Christ. The man of sin no doubt has been revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. During the reign of the man of sin, we must expect that the false prophet will introduce many erroneous

standards of faith, clashing systems and false creeds, and will brand with heresy all who refuse to subscribe to such tests, and that the beast will tread them down in his wrath, and drink their blood in his fury. But, I ask, is the religion of Jesus Christ, a religion that breathes good will to man, and inspires its possessor with love to his enemies, to be held responsible for these misdemeanors? Shall we not make a distinction between this kingdom of darkness and hypocrisy, where vice revels and sin abounds, from the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?

We grant, however, that many unhappy divisions and angry contentions have arisen among the true disciples of Jesus; but in all these cases they have fallen out by the way, and so far as they have indulged wrong tempers and dispositions, they have wandered from the path of rectitude. We maintain that all sects and parties ought to be done away; that all the true disciples of Jesus Christ should be recognized as one body; that all should enjoy equal rights and privileges; that the Scripture should be the only rule of faith and practice; that every individual should be secured in the right of private judgment, and so long as he professes faith in Christ, and maintains the Christian character, be fellowshipped as a brother. Although the state of the Christian church is materially different from this, yet happily for us that the rents and divisions have not reached the foundation. Christians of all denominations are striving for one great end; and how much soever they may be divided in their opinions respecting minor points of doctrine, and the means by which this end is to be secured, they have ever been agreed in first principles. They all maintain that Christ is the Messiah of God, and this is the faith necessary to salvation.

3. *The next attack that we shall notice which has been made upon the Christian religion, is by the infidel.* The infidel takes different ground from that of other opponents; he attacks the Christian religion with unbelief, and with what he calls the sober dictates of reason. He boasts that he is a man of reason, and who, not like the credulous multitude who believe every idle tale, requires to be convinced by the force of evidence. Upon this ground of infidelity, the Jews opposed Jesus Christ; and with great pretensions to candor and sincerity, professed to hold themselves in readiness to acknowledge his pretensions to the Messiahship. *Show us, say they, a sign from heaven!* Work a miracle that is worthy of the Christ of God, and we will believe on you. But when Jesus wrought miracles the most shining, and gave them evidence the most demonstrative, they always attempted to make some evasive shift or other; and when they could no longer resist the force of evidence, they mocked, derided, and insulted him. And after he was nailed to the cross, they held out the same pretensions; and asserted that if he would come down from the cross, they would believe on him. But when he was raised from the dead, a miracle far

greater than it would have been to have come down from the cross, so far from believing, they bribed the soldiers to swear that his disciples came and stole him away. In the conduct of the Jews, we have a fair specimen of infidel candor and deistical reasoning.

It is not for the want of evidence, that the infidel rejects the Christian religion; for it has been confirmed by evidence the most clear and demonstrative. We must seek for other causes of infidelity. From a careful investigation, it will be found that infidelity does not take its rise from the result of sober inquiry, close investigation, or full conviction; but it is rather the slow production of a careless and irregular life, operating together with prejudices and erroneous conceptions, concerning the nature of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It may, therefore, be laid down as an axiom, that infidelity is, in general, a disease of the heart more than of the understanding; for we always find that infidelity increases in proportion as the general morals decline. The corruption of the heart pours darkness upon the understanding, and the love of sin deforms the amiable features of the gospel. Impatient of restraint, and dreading a righteous retribution, the sinner takes refuge in infidelity, and unblushingly rejects Christianity as a system of priestcraft, and brands the blessed Jesus with the epithet of a vile imposter, and thus attempts to laugh religion out of countenance.

But Christianity has little to fear from such vile attacks as are made upon it by infidels. They very much resemble the ravings of a demoniac, who, in his madness and folly, attempts to blot out the sun by shooting arrows at him; they rebound again upon his own head, while the sun continues to shine in his own resplendent glory and majesty. After all their laborious exertions, what have they effected? While they have been saying, *Let us break these bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us: he that sitteth in the heaven has laughed; the Lord has held them in derision*—their works only remain as a monument of their folly, and living testimonials of the declaration of Jesus: *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* The tide of infidelity has risen to its highest pitch, it cannot prevail in this enlightened age. Its inconsistency with reason; its incongruity with the nature of man; its opposition to the dictates of conscience; its cloudy and obscure prospects; its unsanctifying nature; its pernicious tendency to eradicate every just principle from the breast of man, and to lead the way for every species of vice and immorality, shows that it cannot flourish but must finally fall. In fact, infidelity is rapidly declining; the waters of this overflowing scourge are retiring, and must continue to recede, till they fall back into that sea of blackness from whence they were poured forth. But the Christian religion is spreading its benign and benevolent influences, and will continue to spread till, agreeable to the prediction of the prophecy, *The knowledge of the Lord shall fill and cover the whole earth.*

4. *The last probable cause that we shall mention, which might have operated, if possible, to overthrow the Christian faith, is its corruptions.* Whosoever will take the trouble to cast his eye over the pages of ecclesiastical history, and carefully compare the Christian religion as taught in the New Testament, both in relation to doctrine and practice, with the same religion as incorporated into human creeds and confessions of faith, which have been framed by fallible and erring men, will readily perceive that it has been most grossly corrupted. Its doctrines, which all accorded with the plainest dictates of reason, have been represented as in direct opposition to it; its moral maxims, which taught love to God and good will to man, have been made the occasion of strife, contention and animosity; its equalizing spirit, which places all the disciples of Jesus upon a level without distinction, has been the fruitful source of exalting one and degrading another; its annihilation of worldly grandeur and earthly pomp, has abundantly increased them both; the hand of charity, which it stretches to relieve all distressed nature, has poured its millions into the treasure to enrich the few, to enable them to live in idleness, luxury, and dissipation. Crimes the most flagrant, and practices the most humiliating, have been supported and justified by the Christian religion. Nothing too absurd to believe, or too wicked to do, only sanction it with Christianity, and cover it with the specious pretence, for the glory of God. So great, in fact, was the corruption of the Christian religion for many centuries, that little more was left than its name. Many, viewing Christianity in this corrupted state, and beholding the desolations that it made in the earth, the wake of sin, and the river of blood that marked its progress, without further examination, rejected it as a system of corruption and wickedness. And it is easy to imagine, had it been possible, that its gross corruptions and this universal deluge of wickedness, might have been the means of the final overthrow of the true church of God. But during the whole of this period, God has had a seed that has served him, who has not worshipped the beast, neither received his mark, nor subscribed to Christianity in this corrupted state. During the period of this day of darkness and corruption, Jesus has had a few faithful disciples; and it has been a source of consolation to them that they were forewarned of this falling away, and revelation of the man of sin, and popularity of the doctrines of devils.

In the midst of these appalling representations, it is a source of consolation to the truly pious of all denominations, that after so long a night of gross darkness, the returning light of the morning sun is rising upon them. By the successive labors of learned and pious men, much of the darkness of the middle ages has been dispersed, many mysterious and unintelligible doctrines have been exploded, many superstitious practices, useless forms, and unmeaning ceremonies have been laid aside, and the Christian religion is already purged of its grosser corruptions. The work of restoration

is, at the present time, advancing apace, a spirit of inquiry is disseminating itself among all classes of people and denominations of Christians, and a spirit of sectarian bigotry is yielding to the more mild and benevolent influence of the gospel. The age is discriminating, and can no longer be satisfied by the mere decision of councils and the confessions of faith, which were framed at the dawn of the Reformation by men who had but just emerged from popish darkness; nothing can expect to abide the searching ordeal, but what is founded upon substantial evidence, and is in accordance with the plainest dictates of enlightened reason. We are assured by the inspired writers that the man of sin shall be destroyed, and the reign of darkness abolished; and Christianity finally purged of all its corruptions. This is undoubtedly to be effected in the ordinary course of events, by the faithfulness and perseverance of the more discriminating part of the Christian community, who may embrace the Christian religion in a more pure and rational form. By these means, antichrist shall be consumed by the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

Truth is mighty, and will finally prevail; although its progress may be tardy, yet its march is resistless. Is there anything omnipotent or invincible, combining its influence to resist the increase of light and the march of truth? No. Ignorance may be enlightened and error corrected, where the mind is free from prejudice. Although prejudiced in favor of a particular system, and against every thing that may oppose it, united with a firm resolution to support it at all events, yet this prejudice, however deeply rooted, is not eternal; it cannot be transmitted to posterity and after ages. But truth, like its author, is eternal, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. Time must weaken the strength of prejudice, truth will march then triumphant; *Then shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

Thus, my brethren, we have seen the accomplishment of the declaration of Christ, *Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*; my church shall never die. The Christian religion shall never become extinct. It has been assailed by the power and policy of hell, but the arm of Jehovah was engaged to defend it; although it has been cast into the furnace, it has abode the fiery ordeal; and, like the pure gold, is now coming forth, without lessening its quantity or changing its substance, to shine in its native purity, glory and excellency. We shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. From what has been said, we perceive that the glorious plan of salvation originated *in the infinite wisdom, love, and benevolence of God*. It has been supposed by many that the plan of salvation originated in the benevolence of the Son, and that before he could save lost sinners, he had to reconcile the jarring attributes of an offended Deity, appease his wrath, and satisfy his justice. But these ideas are no where taught in the word of truth. The Scripture

every where represents God to be love in his own nature, and every part of the creation bears the stamp of his perfections: the whole earth is full of his goodness. The Scripture teaches us that *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God commandeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loves us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation of our sins.* These passages speak a language that cannot be mistaken, they plainly assert that the gift of the Son was the fruit of the Father's previous love; from this it must be evident that Jesus did not come into the world to engage the Father to love the world. But should any one ask, did not the death of Christ produce some important change in God? I answer, none at all; for it was *by the grace of God that he tasted death for every man.* The death of Christ was not designed to produce any change in God; he suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God, and not God to us. We must trace the effects of the death of Christ upon the heart of the sinner, and not in the character of God.

2. By the righteous appointment of God, *Jesus was constituted the person through whom he was to dispense all his blessings to the human family, and by whom we are to have access to God.* Jesus Christ is the messenger of God to man, who was every way qualified to reveal his will, and to be the Saviour of the world. *We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* God communicates his grace and mercy to Christ, and he to us. *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.* And again, *God gave not the Spirit unto him by measure. He was full of grace and truth, saith the apostle, and of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.* As Christ was filled with *all the fulness of the Godhead* by God himself, so by Christ *we may be filled with all the fulness of God.*

That my views on this subject may be rightly apprehended, I would observe, that the instrumentality which we ascribe to Christ in the work of redemption, is active and not passive, an instrumentality in which the benevolence and faithfulness of the person employed is exhibited, on whose benevolence and faithfulness the execution of the plan was necessarily suspended. God gave his Son in the same way of goodness to the world, as he affords particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow creatures, when, without it, their temporal ruin would be the certain consequence of their follies. In the same way of goodness, I say; though in a transcendent and infinitely higher degree. And the Son of God loved us, and gave himself for us, with a love which he himself compares to human friendship; though, in this case, all comparisons must fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated by them.

Had Jesus, when he was appointed to be the Saviour of the world, declined the office, as necessarily involving him in a scene of sufferings, or had he proved unfaithful, and betrayed the trust reposed in him, it is easy to perceive that the present plan of salvation could never have been carried into effect. But the fact has been otherwise; he readily accepted the appointment, and faithfully executed the order of his Father, not by constraint, but of a ready mind. Hence, says the apostle, *Christ loved us, and hath given himself for us; and was faithful to him that appointed him. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, and thus he sacrificed his life in the execution, and proved himself worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings. This is an important view of the subject, and shows that we are under obligation to the Son as well as the Father; and also shows in what sense eternal life is connected with a knowledge of the Son as well as the Father.

The ideas which have been expressed in the foregoing inferences are contained in a declaration of the apostle, in his epistle to Titus, iii. 4—7. *After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his own mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we shall be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* The original cause of our redemption is here represented to be the kindness and love of God the Father, who is likewise called our Saviour, because all the blessings of salvation originated in him. But this kindness and love of God, these blessings of salvation, are shed upon us through Jesus Christ, who is also said to be our Saviour, for God has constituted him such; has *exalted him at his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour*; and from him *we receive grace for grace*. It is, however, by the Spirit, the power and energy of God, that the work of salvation is wrought upon the heart, and the grace and mercy of God conveyed to the soul.

3. We remark, lastly, *that all the stones of the building rest upon the foundation, and are equally dependent; thus they have equal rights and equal privileges.* Christ is the only Master of Christians; their faith must stand in the power of God, and not in the wisdom of men. There is a perfect equality among all Christians; they are a family of brothers, a society of equals, who are all to be subject to their head, the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament is the standard of their faith, and the rule of their life; and every one is to exercise his own understanding in ascertaining its true import, both in relation to doctrine and practice, and conscientiously discharge a sense of duty to God and man. Jesus is the only foundation, Lord, Lawgiver, King and Master; he has left no successor, vicegerent, or authorized interpreters. Those who assume these characters

are usurpers, they are tyrants, and belong to the kingdom of anti-christ; and those who support their unauthorized claims, partake of the same spirit, and belong to the same kingdom. As the stones in a building are all united and cemented together, so should all the disciples of Christ be united in the temper and spirit of their Master, which is love. They should keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Nothing can supply its place, and without it there can be no Christian union. The untempered mortar, which is used by the greater part of the builders, I mean subscription to a human creed arranged by fallible men, is wholly unauthorized by the New Testament, and in direct opposition to that equality which ought to exist among the disciples of Christ, and the right of private judgment, which has been secured to all the members of the family by the great head of the church. But such builders may daub with this untempered mortar as much as they please; they may weary themselves in attempting to weld the iron and clay, and incorporate their hay, wood, and stubble materials; but nothing but the pure gold will abide the fiery ordeal that must try all these builders' works of what sort it is.

Finally, there is but one building, and this building includes all genuine disciples, all the devoted followers of Jesus Christ. When the Christian church is spoken of collectively in the New Testament, it is always represented as a unity—one body, one kingdom, one building. No duty is more strongly enforced, no maxim more frequently inculcated, than the preservation of this unity. *By this shall all men know*, said our blessed Lord, *that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* It is by maintaining this spirit of love, that the unity is preserved. The present divided state of the Christian church into sects and parties, is wholly unauthorized by the law of the kingdom. Those who have fomented these divisions, have mangled the body of Christ, torn asunder his seamless garment, and set his disciples in hostile array against each other. And to maintain this state of things, every principle of the gospel is prostrated to the shrine of sectarian bigotry, and the example of Jesus is openly violated as unworthy of imitation. But we hope the day is rapidly advancing, when a new state of things will be introduced, when he shall reign whose right it is. Till that day shall arrive, let us console ourselves with the happy reflection, that the foundation stands sure; *having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.*



## DISCOURSE XXV.

*Christ the Great Physician.*

“But when he heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not the physician, but they that be sick.”—Matt. ix., 12.

The envious Jews ever sought occasion to reproach our Lord, condemn his conduct, and bring his character into suspicion. Being filled with a deadly hatred against him, and stung to the heart by his growing and increasing popularity, they left no means untried to cast a shade over his popular fame, to tarnish his glory, and to bring him into contempt among the common people. At one time he was accused of violating the Sabbath for healing a man of an infirmity on that day. From this charge our Lord successfully vindicated himself, by adverting to a long-established custom among them, of performing works of necessity on that day. *What man, said he, 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, then, is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day.* At another time, he was accused of performing his miracles by the agency of an evil spirit. To this charge our Lord replied, *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; every city or house divided against itself shall not stand; and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.* At another time they asserted that he could not be a good man, for he ate with publicans and sinners. This charge Jesus acknowledged, but denied the inference which they drew of his conduct. He justified himself on the common maxim, that a physician should be among his patients—that it was not common for a skilful physician to spend his time among the hale and hearty of mankind, but among the sick and infirm—that, as the restorer of public morals, it highly became him to mingle with all classes and conditions of society, but more especially among the profane and profligate, where he could exercise his personal influence in correcting iniquity at its very fountains. Thus our Lord exonerated himself from the charges which his enemies preferred against him.

I. In speaking from these words, we shall take occasion to observe, in the first place, that *sin is the disease of the soul*. There are diseases peculiar to the mind, as well as those which are peculiar to the body. Hence, the mind of man may become sickly and disordered as well as

the body. In tracing the effects of disease upon the mind, we shall do it by the way of analogy; by drawing a comparison with the effects of disease upon the body. Any disease of the body more or less affects the whole outward man. So sin disorders every power of the soul. It spreads darkness over the understanding, forgetfulness through the memory, rebellion and stubbornness over the will, disorder and turbulence over the affections, and guilt and pain over the conscience. Hence, when the mind of man is under the influence of sinful passions and perverted appetites, reason loses the helm of government, and this monster in human shape becomes resolutely bent on the execution of his infernal purposes. The force of evidence does not convince him, the power of eloquence does not persuade him; the man is *beside* himself. Sin has beclouded his mind, darkened his understanding, alienated his affections; in one word, it has transformed his soul into the image of the devil. It has robbed man of his innocence and peace, and infused its deadly poison into all the avenues of the heart. The once lovely form, covered with glory and grandeur, is now marred in all its features, and bereft of all its beauty.

2. Diseases of the body *enervate the whole system, produce weakness and inability, and render man incapable of attending to his usual avocations in life.* So sin paralyzes the energy of the soul, and disqualifies man to attend to moral and religious duties. In the same proportion as the corrupt passions and vicious appetites of man are excited by this moral malady, and strengthened by the indulgence of habit, in the same degree the moral powers and energies of the soul are all paralyzed. Hence we see with what ease and facility the vicious part of mankind are carried away by the seductions of vice, and hurried into the commission of one crime after another, until they become ripe for destruction. Such persons not unfrequently make resolutions for amendment. But, alas! their vows are generally prostrated before the first temptation. They very much resemble a man who attempts to stem a powerful current, who, after a few feeble efforts, perceives his weakness, becomes discouraged, and yields himself up to be carried away by its mighty force. Instance the man who has contracted the habit of intemperance; he perceives that the evil is dragging him along in a wretched course, and must, sooner or later, prove his utter ruin; he summons up his resolution to reform; but, alas! how feeble are all his efforts; his appetites continue to prey upon him and plead for indulgence; at length he yields to the most powerful impressions, and returns to his wonted course.

3. Diseases of the body produce a sense of *weariness and disgust, even in those pursuits and employments of life, in which, otherwise, we should take pleasure.* So sin is the bane of human happiness, the destroyer of the peace of mankind. It excites in the breast of man restless and ungovernable tempers. It calls into exercise the most hateful and vicious passions. These tempers and passions are con-

stantly rankling in the bosom of man—they dry up all the fountains of joy, and hurry man on in a road strewed with thorns and covered with brambles, in which he meets with repeated and perpetual difficulties. Disgusted and weary with life, he turns from one creature to another, seeking rest and finding none. Disappointed with the world, to get rid of its cares, he flies to amusements and intemperance, which aggravate his miseries and increase his calamities. In him the truth of God is exemplified, who says, *There is no peace to the wicked, for they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

4. Diseases of the body divest it of all its *comeliness and beauty*. O what ravages and devastations disease has made upon the fairest forms of earth. Mark its course; see in its advances how it turns that cheek pale, blushing with the beauty of the rose in all its freshness; how it quenches the fire in that eye, sparkling with the brightest lustre; how it has bereft that countenance of all the animation, with which it was lit up; and how it turns the fairest forms, animated with life, into a lump of obscene earth. And such are the ravages of sin upon the soul. It divests it of the moral image and likeness of God, and strips it of every grace and virtue which rendered it lovely in his sight. In the sight of God, nothing is so beautiful as holiness, and nothing so loathsome as sin.

5. Diseases of the body *destroy its appetite, so that, if the most sumptuous feast was set before the sick man, he would have no relish for any part of it.* Sin also destroys the appetite of the soul, in so much that it has no relish for the gospel feast, or for any part of it. While this sickness prevails, we have no heart to engage in the service of God—we feel no inclination to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling—we have no desire to enjoy communion with God—we cannot bear the thought of any religious exertion—even the ordinary means of grace are frequently neglected—the Bible and prayer, and Sabbaths and sermons, are shunned; for the sinner has no heart to enjoy them. They are to the sinner as so many idle tales, or so many lifeless forms, from which he turns away with weariness and disgust.

6. Diseases of the body, if not removed, *increase till they become incurable, and terminate in death.* Some diseases baffle the skill of the ablest physicians, and defy the power of all medicines. Sin, which is the disease of the soul, is certainly mortal, if Christ, the great Physician, does not interpose. Death was originally the penalty affixed to the divine law, to keep man from sinning. God said to Adam, *In the day thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt surely die*—and from the moment of his transgression he was brought under the dominion of death; and although he had a long reprieve, he at length returned to the dust from whence he came. The same God has declared, *the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* These words have been spoken by a God of truth, that cannot lie. As assuredly as the sentence of death has been executed upon the body

of the transgressors, just so surely will the sentence of death be executed upon the souls of the finally impenitent. O fellow-sinner, reflect that you are already under the sentence of death, and that the wrath of God abides upon you. You are bound with those chains, and held by those cords, which will finally drag your soul down to hell. Do you not tremble under these appalling representations? This is indeed a miserable state; but it would be far more so, if there was no remedy. Blessed be God, there is a balm in Gilead; there is a Physician who can cure all your moral maladies, and restore your soul to health. This is no less than Jesus, the Son of God.

II. We observe, in the second place, *That Jesus Christ is the great physician of the soul.*

1. Jesus Christ is our Physician *by the Father's appointment.* God beheld the human family languishing under the malady of sin, and was moved by his benevolence to send them a deliverer. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.* Hence, Jesus Christ was appointed of the Father to be the chief agent in the redemption of the world. Hence he declared, *I am come in my Father's name. I proceed forth, and came from God; neither came I of myself, but the Father sent me.* By the call and appointment of God, he entered upon his public ministry, and became the Teacher and Saviour of the world. He received no authority from man, nor aid from earthly potentates; but spoke and acted in the name and by the authority of God—the divinity of his mission was not admitted merely on the grounds of his own assertions; it was established by various and evident proofs. John the Baptist, who was a burning and shining light, and whom all the Jews regarded as a prophet, pointed him out as the greatest of the divine messengers to the world. The light of John only shone till this sun of righteousness arose, and filled the land with his brightness. God himself confirmed the mission of Jesus, by the miracles, and signs, and wonders, which he wrought by him—with his own almighty hand he sealed the authority of his messenger. The tone in which our Lord delivered his discourses, astonished the multitude; for he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes. They perceived that he spoke as one fully conscious of divine authority. Nicodemus was persuaded that no one but a Teacher sent from God could do the works that he did. The apostles believed, on the ground of what they saw and heard, that he came from God, and was clothed with divine power and authority. His resurrection from the dead, his glorious ascension at the right hand of God, his miraculous gifts which he communicated to the apostles, the accomplishment of his predictions in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, and the early triumphs of the gospel, completed the evidence of the divine appointment and mission of Jesus Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

2. Jesus Christ is our physician *by divine qualifications*. When he first commenced his public ministry, he opened it by declaring, *the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good things to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*. In such language did Jesus commence his public ministry, and in him are these divine predictions accomplished. *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace*. The divine fulness which dwells in Christ, by whom the spiritual wants of mankind are supplied, was originally communicated to him from the Father, as clearly stated by the apostle. It is by the gift of the Holy Spirit without measure, that Jesus Christ is thus enabled to supply these numerous and multiplied wants. *My God, says the apostle, shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. All the blessings of the gospel are divine favors, flowing from a divine source, through a divinely appointed medium, are superior to what can be derived from creatures, and designed to produce the divine image in man, and issue in the glory of God.

Thus Jesus Christ, acting under the influence of divine authority, and in the exercise of divine power, *is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him*. None need fear his power, or distrust his ability to save them, for *all power is given to him in heaven and earth. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses from all sin*; and this blood is as efficacious now as it ever was. Seeing, then, that we have such a great and able physician, let every soul diseased with sin apply to him without delay; for his excellencies are indescribable.

III. This leads us to observe, in the third place, that *He excels all other physicians*.

1. He excels all other physicians *in knowledge*. Physicians are ignorant, in a great measure, of the origin and nature of diseases, of the constitution and frame of man, and also of the properties and qualities of medicine. And, not unfrequently, patients are compelled to languish and die, for the want of an able and skilful physician, who is acquainted with the nature of his diseases. But not so with Jesus Christ—this great physician of souls. He knows what is in man, and is perfectly acquainted with the constitution, disorders, and all the circumstances of his patient. He also knows what will heal him and restore him to moral health. He is acquainted with the nature and efficacy of his medicine, and knows at what particular time to administer it, in order to render it efficacious in healing.

2. He excels all other physicians *in power*. Ordinary physicians, even when they know their patients' disorder, habit of body, and

nervous disposition, are often unable to heal them. Some diseases are incurable, and some others, perhaps, are of too long standing to be healed. But Jesus Christ is invested with power, as well as clothed with knowledge. *He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.* Although your sins are as scarlet, he can make them white as wool; although they be red like crimson, he can make them like snow. *The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses from all sin.* No disease so inveterate, but what he can cure it; no malady of so long standing, but what he can heal it. Yes,

“ His doctrine is almighty love ;  
 There is virtue in his name,  
 To turn a raven to a dove,  
 A lion to a lamb.”

3. He exceeds all other physicians, *in his compassion and tenderness.* In order that he might enter the more readily into the sensibilities of his patients, he had condescended to be clothed with a body like our own. That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, and have compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, he has been tempted in all points, as we are, yet without sin. He knows the weakness of our frames, the strength of our passions, and the power of temptations over us; and having himself been encompassed with the same infirmities, he is admirably qualified to sympathize with us in all the various stages of our diseases.

“ He knows what sore temptations mean,  
 For he has felt the same.”

So tender and sympathetic is this divine Saviour, that *a bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench*; neither will upbraid or reproach those with their past misdeeds, who seek to be cured by him, but will heal all their maladies, and forgive and forget all their follies. And after they are restored to moral soundness, he will not be ashamed to call them brethren, and to own them before the Father and the holy angels; and, finally, welcome them into the society of the blessed.

4. He excels all other physicians, *in being always at hand when wanted.* It is not unfrequently the case that physicians are at so great a distance, that they cannot be brought to the patient till it is too late. But not so with this heavenly physician; he is always at hand. *Wheresoever, said he, two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.* And, indeed, were we to take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, behold his presence and his power would be there to heal us. We have not got to ascend up to heaven to bring him down, nor to descend into the deep to bring him up, for the healing power of his

word is nigh us, even in our own mouths and in our own hearts. We have no distance of space to traverse to call this physician; it only requires an effort of the soul to call him to our aid. Whenever, and wherever the soul resigns itself to the holy requisitions of the gospel, then and there he imparts the balm of consolation to the wounded heart.

5. He excels all other physicians *in love and generosity*. Self-love, and the desire of gain, prompt the great body of the physicians to all their labors. But not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. Benevolence was the moving cause which animated the Saviour when he entered upon the glorious work of redemption, and it is the same heavenly principle which still animates him in the prosecution of the work. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.* But the love of Christ far excelled this; he loved us while we were his enemies, and died for us to redeem us from all iniquity. He became poor, that he might impart to us of his riches; he voluntarily submitted to degradation, that he might clothe us with honor; he submitted to a painful and ignominious death, that we might wear a crown of life; in one word, he yielded up his soul to the suffering of inexpressible agonies, and his body to death for the benefit of his patients. He has endured all these sufferings and privations, and imparts all these honors and benefits, without the hope of reward or desire of gain. O, what unbounded benevolence is here displayed! O, what unparalleled goodness is here exhibited! Be astonished at it, O ye heavens, and be amazed, O earth.

“For love like this, let rocks and hills,  
Their lasting silence break;  
And all harmonious human tongues  
Their Saviour’s praises speak.”

IV. Let us consider, in the fourth place, *what Jesus Christ prescribes*. In pursuing the figurative language of our text, we observe, first of all, that an emetic must be taken. We must be made so excessively sick of sin, that we shall loathe and abhor it, and cast it off. So long as our sinful appetites remain, and we take pleasure in unrighteousness, all efforts at reformation will be unsuccessful. We must be brought to perceive that sin is exceedingly sinful, and that it is highly offensive to God, and to all holy beings; that it is destructive and pernicious in its consequences, and, if persisted in, will prove the bane of our happiness and the ruin of our souls. We must be willing, from our very hearts, to renounce every sinful and vicious practice, and to turn from them with horror and disgust. In the anguish and bitterness of our souls, animated by the divine promises, we must seek for the healing efficacy of the gospel, and never give over the struggle till we obtain the balm of life. We must seek it by faith, by prayer, and in the use of all the means of grace. We must not merely seek, but

we must strive; strive with great earnestness and persevering energy, and never give over the struggle till we are made partakers of the divine nature, and drink of the living waters of life.

After our souls have been made alive to God, by the quickening energy of the Holy Spirit, and our hearts are healed of all their deadly maladies, we must shun every poisonous atmosphere, and reject all unwholesome food. The society of the wicked and ungodly should be carefully avoided; for their very breath, like the cadaverous mists of hades, blasts, soils, and poisons as it touches. You should chose for your companions, those who love and fear God, that all you pious resolutions may be strengthened by their chaste conversation and holy example. Our intimate associates, whether they be impure or virtuous, will have a very powerful influence over us, in moulding or forming our characters to virtue or to vice. We are very much the creatures of imitation and habit, and imperceptibly imbibe the spirit and copy the example of our associates. We must also avoid all unwholesome food, or, in other words, all pernicious doctrines; all doctrines that would give license to sin—that would encourage idleness and indolence—that would engender a censorious and uncharitable spirit—or that would lead us to distrust the goodness, the power, and faithfulness of God.

In looking over this congregation, I perceive that a large proportion of this assembly are among the number of those upon whom sin is committing its depredations. I see here, sinners of all ages and descriptions; from the man of gray hairs, whose locks have been whitened by the frost of fourscore years and ten, and whose tottering limbs are now trembling over the grave, down to the young transgressor of a day old. I behold the ravages of a desolating plague, defacing and deforming the fairest portion of God's creation, and conveying one after another to the gates of eternal death, and consigning their souls to the regions of darkness and blackness forever. O, sinner! are you sensible that this destructive malady has already seized upon your very vitals—that it is disseminating its poison through every avenue of the heart—that it is drying up all the fountains of moral life within you—that it has already conveyed you very near the shades of eternal death? When I reflect that the time is not far distant, when your mortal maladies will convey some of you to those dark abodes of wretchedness and misery, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; to those devouring elements where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; to those dreary caverns, where the groans of the damned shall reverberate through the prison of hell; to that land of mania, where the shrieks and cries of the despairing inhabitants shall fall upon the astonished ear, my soul is melted like wax within me, and I can but raise my cry to God, and plead with him to have mercy on a perishing world. O, ye mothers, do you consider that those daughters whom you have raised with so much care, and watched over with so much solici-



tude, have been poisoned with the breath of sin, are now pining and wasting away under its corroding maladies, and unless they are healed by Christ, the great physician of souls, will be numbered among the damned in hell! Have you no bowels of compassion to yearn over them? Have you no prayers to go up to heaven on their behalf? Have you no tears of love and pity to shed on their account? Yes! methinks you feel deeply anxious that their souls may be awakened this day, to perceive and to feel the deadly evils of sin.

Blessed be God, the sinner's heart does melt under the warming influences of divine love—it yields to the impressions of the Holy Spirit of God. O, fellow-sinner, your case, though awful, is not desperate. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, to which the dying Israelites looked and lived, so God this day lifts up in our midst the Son of Man, who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. O, look to him, that you may be healed of your maladies, and live forever. He is full of compassion, and mighty to redeem. Of however long standing may be your maladies, Jesus is able to eradicate them; how inveterate soever may be your diseases, he is able to heal them. None need despair of his power or willingness to save them. O, may you resign all into his hands now, for behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. You have often formed resolutions of amendment at some future period, but these have only proved as so many illusions, by which you have cheated and defrauded yourselves. Indulge in these vain delusive hopes no longer, but enter immediately upon the great work of salvation, and you shall be numbered among the precious sons of God, when Jesus Christ shall make up his jewels.

Here are some who have been healed by this great physician. Grateful acknowledgements are due to the glory of his name. Be not like some mentioned in the gospel, who, after they were healed, neglected to give glory to God. *Call upon your soul, and all that is within you, to bless his holy name, who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who hath redeemed thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindness, and tender mercy.* Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, who have thus been graciously restored from the moral malady of sin. *O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.* You must remember that there is danger of a relapse, and take the necessary precaution against it. You live in a contagious world, where noxious vapors infect the atmosphere we breathe; a world which sin has converted into a hospital, where all are diseased. Shun the dangers which surround you, and avoid the very appearance of evil. Study to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, and seek to preserve your spiritual health. Let him whose cure has been effected, remember to watch and pray, lest he enter into temptation.

## DISCOURSE XXVI.

*On Cultivating a Peaceful Disposition.*

“Let us, therefore, follow after the things that make for peace.”—Romans xiv., 19.

THE nature and tendency of the Christian religion, is altogether of a pacific character. It not only reconciles us to God by the blood of the cross, but it also inspires us with a peaceable and quiet disposition. St. James informs us, *That the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* It is by the exercise of this disposition that the spirit of lust, which excites divisions, contentions, strifes, wars, and the like, diffusing death through every vein of society, is to be subdued and overcome. A man of a peaceful disposition will avoid giving or taking offence, and stand aloof from the quarrels and tumults of the neighborhood; he will also, if possible, by a wise, temperate and friendly interference, heal them at an early stage. While a contentious man blows the coals of party strife, and excites a fiercer war, the true peace-maker will quench them by the application of soft words and friendly advice. A peace-maker is a great blessing to the church, to a neighborhood, or even to a nation. Christ, himself, pronounced a blessing upon such: *Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.* They are called the children of God, because they resemble him. He that seeks peace on pure and honorable principles is of God’s mind, acting on the same principles as God acts, in reconciling the world to himself through Jesus Christ.

There is scarcely any blessing more desirable, either in church or state, than peace—true and well-grounded peace. It is so intimately connected with prosperity, that the Hebrew word which is rendered *peace*, signifies also prosperity. *Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.* The Hebrew word is the same in both places. In this view of the subject, we shall attempt to explain and enforce the exhortation contained in the text; for if peace be with us, prosperity will follow as a matter of course.

II. proceed, then, in the first place, to explain the exhortation contained in the text. *Let us, therefore, follow after the things that make for peace.* The exhortation which is here given, is to be understood in a general, and not in a forced or strained sense. There are exceptions to all general maxims. It is not, then, to be understood, that we are to be so fond of peace as to sacrifice truth and principle to preserve it; for this would be uprooting the very foundations of peace. If the foundations of Christianity are de-

stroyed, what will the righteous do? They can only rest in a false peace, a refuge of lies, that will be surely swept away. If the pastor of a flock desert the truth, and teach for doctrine the commandments of men, his people ought to abandon him. Neither are we to maintain peace consisting in the neglect of discipline, and the passing over such evils as ought to be censured and exposed. It is the glory of a man to pass over an injury done to himself, but not to be pliable in matters that dishonor God, and obstruct the progress of Christianity. It is lamentable, however, that men are apt to resent with a bitter spirit personal insults and injuries, while those that are offered to God are little heeded. The rule of Scripture is, *First pure, then peaceable*. We, then, should make every sacrifice to secure peace which we consistently can, and preserve inviolate the true doctrine and precepts of the Christian religion; and we are not authorized to go further.

II. In order to secure the prosperity of the church, two things are to be considered—the conduct of its members towards their pastor, and their conduct towards one another.

*First*: Endeavor, by all means, to preserve a good understanding with your pastor. His peace of mind is essential to the happiness, prosperity, and edification of the church. If he become cramped or embarrassed in his mind, it will check the free operation of his mental powers, bind his spirit, damp his ardor, and paralyze his energies. He will resemble Samson shorn of his locks; all his efforts will be distinguished by weakness and languor. Filled with lassitude, dejection, and gloom, he will never be able to descend with his people upon the mount, or to inspire them with courage and confidence in the day of darkness and peril.

2. Let your attendance upon his ministrations, be *constant and regular*. If you frequently absent yourselves from meeting, or leave his ministrations to attend those of other ministers, or come to meeting late, it will necessarily affect his peace of mind. He will be left to suppose his labors are unacceptable, or that you have imbibed a personal prejudice against him. This state of things will become exceedingly painful to him, and will greatly embarrass his mind. It will serve continually to depress his spirits, and will diminish his confidence in his powers and usefulness. And these evil effects will be the most sensibly felt at the time of public service, when it is essentially important he should be free from embarrassments. And if you should discover any defects in his manner, or mistakes in his preaching, consider human frailty. Do not make them a matter of conversation with others, nor talk of them among yourselves; but talk to him respecting them, and that with modesty and tenderness. Every man has his defects, and ministers of the gospel with all others. These defects, are more or less prominent; some of them can be remedied and others cannot. Many of these defects are only noticed by a few, and if they are not made a matter of conversation by those who observe them, they

may do little harm. But if they are made a matter of conversation, the attention of the whole congregation will be uselessly drawn to them. At the same time, the only possible mode in which they can be corrected, is to state them to the minister himself, and give him an opportunity, if possible, of avoiding them in future.

3. Let the vigilance you exercise over his conduct, be marked with *tenderness and candor*. His enemies will watch for his halting; they will magnify his foibles into crimes; they will put a forced construction upon his words and actions; they will overlook his excellencies and dwell upon his failings; they will emblazon his imperfections before the eyes of the public; and he will be necessarily compelled to throw himself upon the protection of his friends. If this protection is denied—if his friends stand aloof in the hour of peril, or unite with his enemies in the general outcry against him, the best man will be sacrificed upon the altar of revenge or malice. For it should be remembered, that the greater the excellencies of a minister of the gospel, the wider the influence he exerts in the community, the more vehement will be the envy of his opponents. Under such circumstances, every pastor must rely upon the candor and good sense of his people. Suffer not, then, your confidence to be diminished in your pastor by any reports to his disadvantage especially if they come from his enemies. It will be sufficient time to credit evil reports, when the facts of the case have been fully elicited, and all the connecting circumstances properly and duly weighed. It will be found, on proper examination, in most cases, that vain and idle rumor is but the echo of some secret envy, or the poisoned dart of some hidden foe. Consider, then, that the public reputation of your pastor is, in a very great measure, committed to your care and preservation. May you ever prove worthy of the high trust reposed in you.

4. Let your exercise of discipline be prompt, and such as shall preserve him from *censure and reproach*. The discipline of the church must be maintained, or the peace and harmony of the body will be destroyed, and its glory will depart. In every church there is a greater or less proportion of *disorderly walkers*. These persons must be admonished, and, if possible, reclaimed; if this cannot be done, they must be separated from the body, lest the little leaven should leaven the whole lump. It is of great importance to the well-being of a church, that men are not wanting who will watch over one another in love, observe and counteract the symptoms of declension, heal differences at an early period, and nip disturbances in the bud. By such means there will be but few things of a disagreeable nature, which will require either the censure of the church or the interference of the pastor. But there are instances in which both the church and the pastor must interfere; and here it is of the utmost importance that they both preserve a right spirit, and act in concert. The church should always

act with the pastor, that he may not have to endure all the prejudice and odium consequent upon strict discipline. In many cases the leading members of the church may relieve the pastor altogether from the painful duty, and thus prevent his ministrations from being rejected. Take as much of this load off his shoulders as you can, *that the gospel of Christ may not be hindered.*

5. There is one other consideration to which I wish to call your attention ; it is a delicate but highly important subject ; I allude to *the support of the ministry.* Let your contributions for his support be distinguished, not only by their *liberality*, but also by the *cheerfulness* with which they are given. Those who are called to preach the gospel are required not to *entangle themselves in the affairs of this life*, but to give themselves *wholly to the work of the ministry.* They are therefore necessarily compelled to throw themselves upon the liberality of the church for a competent support ; and the gospel has made it the duty of the church to supply their temporal wants. By this wise and benevolent arrangement, the ministers of Christ are freed from the embarrassing and corroding cares of the world, as well as from the strife and contention of business operations, and are left at full liberty to devote their whole time and energies to the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, and to the prosperity and edification of the church. If this support be withheld, and ministers are compelled to engage in some worldly enterprise to obtain a livelihood for themselves and families, it will be the means of greatly diminishing their usefulness ; and will, in the end, prove ruinous and destructive to the church. The support of the ministry, then, should not be withheld ; it should be furnished to them regularly and cheerfully ; it should be the tribute of love. This consideration is highly important ; for it can be but exceedingly painful to a minister of a tender and delicate sensibility, to know that his support is yielded to him grudgingly. And where this state of things exist, the intercourse between the pastor and the people cannot be of the most friendly and happy character.

But do not suppose that your contributions, how liberal soever they may be, or how much soever they may be the tribute of love, entitle you to scrutinize and dictate in his family affairs. He is the master of his own house, and the management of his own affairs should be left to the direction of his own wisdom and discretion. His ministerial office does not annihilate his privilege as a man. Many ministers have strong feelings on this subject, and are rendered very unhappy by the constant intermeddling of officious church-members in their domestic arrangements. If one of you were to interfere with the domestic concerns of another, you would be told to attend to your own affairs, and not to intermeddle with his, seeing he did not come to you for what he has. But your minister could not reply in this language, how delicate soever he might feel on the subject. If he was a prudent man he would probably remain silent, let his views be what they might, and quietly

endure it as a burden. But you should study to impose upon him as few burdens of this kind as possible, considering that you have no more right to inspect his concerns, than he has to inspect yours.

These are some of the things, a proper attention to which would be the means of greatly contributing to the peace and happiness of a minister of the gospel, and, consequently, to the prosperity and edification of the church. They are matters too frequently overlooked, although they are the occasion of frequent embarrassment of both pastor and people. It is desirable that they receive that attention which they so justly deserve.

*Secondly* : In order that a church may prosper, it is of the highest importance that the members preserve peace *one with another*. Internal divisions in a church, and among its members, are not only destructive of its peace and happiness, but also of its prosperity. The peaceful and quiet spirit of the gospel will flee away from noise and strife. *Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

1. If you would preserve union and harmony one with another, above all things cherish towards each other a *spirit of love*. There is nothing more conducive to peace than this, *for love worketh no ill to his neighbor*. If we love our brethren with a pure heart fervently, we shall never intentionally do them any harm, but, on the contrary, shall always be ready to do them a favor. Love will never be the means of exciting in others a spirit of jealousy, or of calling forth expressions of anger and resentment. Let us, then, *provoke one another to love and good works*, and, at the same time, be cautious of stirring up a spirit of strife and contention. Let us be examples of love, striving to excel in acts of kindness and sympathy. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

2. We must also *avoid sin*, if we would preserve the union and prosperity of the church. There is nothing more opposed to Christian peace than this. Where this is nourished, both personal and social peace will be banished ; for the leaven of hypocrisy and wickedness, however private, will work, and will work mischief. Sin is an entering wedge, gradually widening the breach between God and the souls of the disobedient, and also between one another. When the spirit is separated from God by sin, and deprived of that peace so essential to its happiness, it becomes restless, peevish, fretful, dissatisfied, discontented, envious, and malicious ; it will be self-moved to stir up strife and to breed contention ; and it will be found impossible to preserve the peace of the church with such combustibles. A thousand incidents, however harmless in themselves, will become the occasion of collision and contention ; and as soon as the fire of strife is quenched in one place, it will break out in another. This is the order God has established in the moral world, and it will be found impossible to overthrow it. Holiness and peace dwell together, while sin and

strife walk hand in hand in the same path. Let us, then, above all things, secure the one and avoid the other, as this is the only way in which the peace and prosperity of the church can be secured.

3. If you would preserve the peace and prosperity of the church, *you must beware of a disputatious temper.* Debates may be productive of good, if they are properly managed, especially to a young and rising cause. The apostles and primitive Christians frequently engaged in them with good success. By this means the knowledge of Christianity became more generally diffused, and the evidences on which it rested more generally known. They were also employed with good success in the Reformation from Popery. These debates gave the advocates of reform a favorable opportunity to expose the corruptions of Catholicism, and to exhibit the true doctrine of the gospel. But debates seldom prove profitable in a church among its own members. They too frequently originate in captiousness and pride, and seldom lead to any happy result. They usually stir up strife and contention, and create divisions and parties in the church. The description which is given of them in the word of God is true to the letter: *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth forth strokes. If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doubting about questions and strife of words; whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth. From such withdraw thyself.* Here the evils of a proud, haughty, and disputatious spirit are clearly set forth; such a spirit is usually destructive of the peace of the church.

4. If you would not interrupt the harmony of the church, you must guard against a *quick, fiery, and touchy temper.* By a *touchy temper*, I mean a disposition of mind the opposite of meekness. By meekness, we understand that calm, serene temper of mind, which is not easily ruffled, or provoked to resentment. Where the great principles of Christianity have disciplined the soul, where the holy grace of meekness reigns, it subdues the impetuous disposition, and teaches it, trusting in God, both to submit and to forgive. It teaches us to govern our own anger whenever we are at any time provoked, and patiently to bear the anger of others, that it may not be a provocation to us. But, on the contrary, a fiery, quick, hasty spirit is soon ruffled, is easily disturbed. The minds of some people resemble a delicate piece of machinery, which is easily jostled out of tune. Approach them with all possible precaution, treat them in the most kind and tender manner, and yet, after all, some prejudice will be imbibed, some exceptions will be taken. You say too much or too little; you are too serious or too light; you are too free or too reserved; there is no pleasing them, do what you will. They seem to be haunted by some evil demon, who raises up in their minds a variety of suspicions, and gives to them all the

features of a reality. Such persons are extremely wretched, and manifest great folly. Solomon says of such—*He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.* How different is this *hasty spirit*, from that spirit of charity which suffereth long, and is not soon angry?

“For every trifle scorn to take offence,  
It either shows great pride or little sense.”

5. If you would preserve the peace of the church, you must avoid a *spirit of groundless jealousy*. Godly jealousy is necessary, considering what we are, and by what influences we are surrounded. But an ill opinion of others is the source of much mischief. By this suspicious disposition, words are misconstrued, and actions imputed to wrong motives. If this spirit is indulged, we shall be unable to believe one another, or to place confidence in the most implicit declarations. *Jealousy is as cruel as the grave!* It devours the happiness of those who cherish it, and renders them perfectly miserable. How opposed to the spirit of Christianity! Charity suspecteth no evil, hopeth the best, believeth the most favorable representations. It breathes universal candor and liberality of sentiment. It forms gentleness of temper, and dictates affability of manners. It teaches us to slight and despise no man. Charity is the comforter of the afflicted, the protector of the oppressed, the reconciler of differences, the intercessor of offenders. It is the sun that enlivens and cheers the abodes of men, regularly and orderly dispensing a benignant influence. But jealousy is the reverse of all this; it poisons, and withers, and blasts, whatever it touches. In general, a spirit of jealousy would seem to indicate a dishonest heart. Its possessors seem to know themselves to be bad, and, therefore, they regard and treat all others as such. Probably this made Satan so suspicious of Job's sincerity. Let us beware lest we imitate him! and lest our suspicions should originate in the same cause. Let us guard against indulging in this spirit, as we value our own peace and the peace of the church.

6. If you would preserve the union and harmony of the church, *you must beware of a spirit of envy*. Envy is a sensation of uneasiness and disquiet, arising from the excellencies and advantages which others are supposed to possess above us, accompanied with malignity towards those who possess them. Saul envied David for his superiority, when David *behaved himself wisely*. Now the members of a church resemble the stars. As one star excelleth another, so do the members of a church. Some excel in gifts and graces, and consequently obtain a great degree of esteem. Some exceed others in the possession of wealth, acquire more influence in the community, and, consequently, though not always deservedly,



are treated with more attention and respect. Some excel in the charms of personal beauty and accomplishments. Now there is great danger among the members of a church, of one class becoming inflated with pride, and of another class indulging a spirit of envy. Why should we take pride in external advantages? they will soon vanish away; and perhaps, while we enjoy them, they may be the occasion of as many enemies as friends. But beware of envy. Do not imagine that religion cancels the obligation to treat men according to their rank and station in society. Let not envy lead you to think much of every instance of respect shown to a superior; and to reflect, if I had been *rich*, he would have visited *me*. Certainly a minister should visit all his flock, and be faithful to all the souls of his people; but there may be reasons apart from outward circumstances, why one should be visited more than another. If we ourselves are animated with the true spirit of the gospel, we shall never yield ourselves up to a spirit of envy—*charity envieth not*.

7. If you would preserve the peace and harmony of the church, *you must repeat no grievances, especially after they have been settled*. While human nature remains what it is, it can hardly be expected that offences will entirely cease in any condition of society; the clashing interests and prejudices of men will sometimes, for a season, separate real friends. And the breach is frequently widened by repeating the occasion of the differences; for a matter is seldom repeated by an interested party, without giving to the circumstances of the case a different coloring from what the facts would justify. And the oftener a matter is repeated, and the wider it circulates, the greater will be the variety of shades it assumes, and the more it will irritate excited feelings. If small matters of difference between individuals were not made public, but suffered to slumber in silence, they would soon be forgotten, and consequently peace and harmony would be restored. Solomon says, *He that covereth transgression, seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter, separateth very friends*. When matters of difference have once been adjusted, they ought not to be repeated, but permitted to sink into oblivion. This is the only way in which breaches can be effectually healed. If, after they have been once settled, they are still made the subject of conversation, it will become the occasion of renewing the contest, and will be the means of giving the warfare a fiercer aspect. Where these things are practiced in a church, friendship cannot subsist long among its members; the best of friends will become separated; and it will be painfully difficult to reconcile contending parties. As we, therefore, value the blessings of friendship, let us be guarded on this subject; and when matters of difference are once settled, permit them to pass away among the things that are forgotten.

8. In order to preserve the peace of the church, *you must strive to heal differences, when they arise among its members*. It is truly

honorable to be a peace-maker. It is, indeed, a painful and difficult task; for *a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.* But if the work of reconciliation be painful and difficult, the greater honor will redound to him when it is effected. Do not, then, abandon the attempt for a few hard sayings. Those who enter into the contest usually receive a few hard blows from both sides. But never mind that; pray, and try again. Let the saying of our Lord, *Blessed are the peace-makers, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,* weigh more with you than a little temporary difficulty and discouragement. Having begun the good work, persevere in it, notwithstanding all the discouragements you may meet with from the obstinacy of those whom you attempt to reconcile. If you succeed in making peace, think what delight it will afford you. *The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.* It is not possible to engage much in such labors of love, without having our own souls refreshed and comforted with the heavenly employment. The sacred oil which you pour on the heads of others, will regale you with its odors; and the dews of divine grace, which, through your instrumentality, descend on others, shall enrich and fertilize your own souls.

9. If you would maintain the peace of the church, *you must not countenance tale-bearers.* Persons who make it their business, and feel it their delight, to go about telling secrets, to the disadvantage of their brethren, deserve the deepest marks of censure. Has a difficulty arisen between you and a friend? Mark the man, who, by his insinuations and innuendoes, would make the breach wider, and shun him. There are, indeed, cases in which, in our own vindications, we are compelled to speak to the disadvantage of others; but to blacken the character of another unnecessarily, and intentionally to widen the breach between friends, it is to be infernally wicked. If blessed are the peace-makers, cursed are those peace-breakers, and peace-preventers, who stir up strife and prolong contention. It may not be always expedient to shut our doors against such disturbers of the peace and harmony of society, but we can and ought to shut our ears against the tales they bring; and if we do this, we shall deprive them of their excitement and highest gratification. *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.* After the fire of strife is once kindled, the tale-receiver, and the tale-bearer are the principal agents in perpetuating the flame. They are both criminal; for if none received the slander in the first instance, it could not be propagated. Hence our proverb, *The receiver is as bad as the thief.* If you, then, would not encourage tale-bearing in others, you must neither give countenance to it by lending a listening ear, or by engaging in the practice yourself. If you hear one speak ill of another, do not go and tell him, unless, indeed, it affect his moral character and the cause of religion, and then you must

exercise prudence and discretion in the case. If you, as a church, would preserve peace among yourselves, you must cautiously guard against the propagation of evil reports respecting each other.

10. Once more: it will be of the utmost importance, in securing the happiness and prosperity of the church, *to cultivate a forgiving disposition*. Without the exercise of this heavenly temper, we cannot expect to live long in peace. There is a very mistaken notion of honor existing among men, as if it lay in not yielding, but in resenting an injury; but true honor consists in the very reverse. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression*. Our own interest requires this, for in some things we shall need the forgiveness of our brethren; and, what is of the greater consequence still, we all need the divine forgiveness. But Christ assured his disciples, *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses*. As we, then, hope to receive forgiveness from God, we should exercise a forgiving spirit towards others. God declares, *He shall have judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy*. If, then, you at any time receive an injury, instead of meditating revenge, say, "Now has my God given me an opportunity of recommending religion, and of glorifying his name: now has he called me to display the excellency of his gospel, and the efficacy of his grace." Such conduct would serve as an evidence to our own minds, that we are the Lord's, and would constrain others also to acknowledge that God is with us of a truth. Such a noble example could not fail of producing the most happy effect in allaying feelings of asperity, and of exciting a spirit of love and admiration.

III. Having explained the exhortation contained in the text, I shall now proceed, in the third place, *to enforce it*.

1. Consider *how great a blessing peace is—how invaluable to all who possess it*. Calmness, tranquillity, and serenity of mind, are the richest blessings which heaven ever bestowed upon mortal man; these alone render life desirable, and sweeten all its enjoyments. Indeed, without peace of mind, what are all the bounties of providence? what are all the good things of the present life? *A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses? for, without peace of mind, in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits*.

All are agreed in esteeming inward tranquillity of mind the richest of blessings, and earnestly desire to possess it; but the generality of mankind are lamentably mistaken with respect to the means by which it is to be obtained. Some hope to find it by dissipating all thoughts of the eternal world; some by silencing all the convictions of their consciences; some by abounding in the external duties of religion; and others by *healing their wounds slightly*, and saying, *Peace, peace, when there is no peace*. But true peace can only be obtained from Jesus, *the Prince of peace*. He has shed his blood to purchase this peace for lost and sinful men; and has

left it to them as his best legacy, saying, *Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you.* But though this peace is the gift of Christ, we must seek it in the use of those means he has appointed. We must humble ourselves before him for the multitude of our offences, and turn from our transgressions with an abhorrence against all sin. We must trust in Jesus alone with our whole hearts if we would obtain this peace ; and when he has *spoken peace to our souls,* we must never again turn to folly. Then we shall have that *peace which passeth all understanding,* and enjoy it *always,* in life, in death, and forever.

But the importance of peace to the church is, also *invaluable.* No church can prosper, for any length of time, in a state of discord. When the harmony of a church is interrupted, and party feuds arise, the energies of the body are wasted in a conflict worse than useless, and the confidence of the members are destroyed in each other. In such a conflict nothing is gained, but all is lost. The members of a church can never sacrifice too much to secure peace, unless they should be called upon to sacrifice some essential principle of Christianity : this they could not consistently do ; but it would be far better, under such circumstances, to peaceably withdraw from the church than to remain in contention. It is the interest of all the members of the church to forget, as far as possible, their individual concerns, and to conspire for the general good ; all using such means as are the most proper and suitable for its accomplishment. Is forbearance requisite ? or friendly rebukes ? or even the amputation of an offending member ? Every one should be ready to do his part, whatever it may be, and thus, by his individual exertion, promote to the utmost the peace and welfare of the body. As no means should be left untried for the extinction of flames that threatened the destruction of a city, so should none be omitted, that may secure from injury the union and happiness of the body ; for, surely, the most desirable of all blessings to any society whatever, and above all to the church of Christ, is peace. Let the members of the church *therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.* Let all of us, then, look to the *Lord of peace himself,* that, by the influence of his grace, these holy dispositions may be wrought within us : and that, through the mighty working of his Spirit, we may every one of us supply our part towards the compacting together all the members, in order that the whole body may be edified in love.

2. Consider that this peace was *the purchase of the blood of Christ.* When man revolted from the allegiance of heaven, he became an enemy to God by wicked works : his passions were not only disordered, but his affections alienated from the Father of mercies, and he consequently lost his peace of mind, and became unreconciled to all within and around him ; *there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.* Now, one of the great ends for which Jesus Christ came into the world, and for which he suffered and

died, was to restore to guilty man this forfeited peace, by slaying the enmity of his heart and reconciling him to his God. Hence, says the prophet, *the chastisement of our peace was upon him*. And to the same effect is the declaration of the Apostle Paul, *It pleased the Father, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself. But now in Christ Jesus ye, who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God, in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh*. This peace which Christ purchased with his blood, he bequeathed as his last legacy, when he ascended on high, to all of his followers; *Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you*. Since, then, this peace has been purchased by Christ at the expense of his *precious blood*, and given as a legacy to his followers, surely it becomes them to cultivate and cherish it; and he can be no true *disciple* who cherishes a spirit of strife, and kindles up the fires of contention among his brethren. If a blessing is pronounced upon the peace-maker, surely a curse must rest upon him who blows the coals of strife and excites a fierce war of contention in the church of the living God, where nought but peace and harmony should reign. Such a man defeats the great end for which Christ came into the world, and for which he also suffered and died, and is unworthy the Christian name.

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## DISCOURSE XXVII.

### *The Vision of the Olive-trees.*

“Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive-branches, which through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”—Zechariah iv., 11—14.

VISIONS, under the Old Testament dispensation, were like parables under the New: they gave a shadowy representation of some important truths. They are frequently very obscure; yet, there is almost invariably, a clue given us, by which we may discover their real import; and not unfrequently, an explanation of them is given by God himself. As in the parables, there will be sometimes

found circumstances, the precise drift of which, is not easy to be explained ; but an attention to the main scope of the whole, will keep us from ever deviating far from the true interpretation.

The vision which we are about to consider, is certainly not very obvious at the first sight ; and it requires to be investigated with diligence and great sobriety of mind. But, when it is truly and properly understood, it will richly repay the care we have used in the investigation of this intricate subject. The prophet's solicitude to understand it, shows the propriety of inquiring into it with care and attention.

1. In speaking from this subject, we shall, in the first place, *explain the import of the vision.* Then answered I, and said unto him, *What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?* And I answered again, and said unto him, *What be these two olive-branches, which through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves?* And he answered me, and said, *Knowest thou not what these be?* And I said, *No, my Lord.* Then said he, *These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*

The great scope of this vision is declared by God himself. The prophet Zechariah, was commissioned to encourage Zerubbable and Joshua to proceed with the rebuilding of the temple, which had been long neglected. The Jews, who had returned from Babylon, were poor and feeble ; whilst their adversaries were numerous and powerful. Hence, they despaired of accomplishing, under such unfavorable circumstances, so great a work. But in this vision, they are taught to look to God for direction and support, and who, if they confided in him and obeyed his word, would crown their labors with success. With the all sustaining and supporting arm of Jehovah on their side, they needed neither to regret the want of power in themselves, nor to dread the existence of it in their adversaries, since he was Almighty and all-sufficient for them. This was the construction which the prophet himself was taught to put upon the vision : *Knowest thou not what these be?* said the angel to him, *And I said, No, my Lord.* Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, *This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbable, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of host.* That is, Zerubbable was not to rebuild the temple by his own energy, or by the authority of others, but by the authority, energy, and power, of the Most High, as displayed in that wonderful providence which superintended all their operations. In this way shall the temple be built, in this way shall my church be raised and preserved. No secular arm, no human prudence, no legal power, shall ever be used for the founding, extension, or preservation of my church. It is by spiritual means, and by spiritual means only, that this great work is to be accomplished.

The particular parts of this vision will be found to illustrate this great truth with much beauty and exactness. In the second and

third verses, we have the vision recorded: *What seest thou? And I said, I have lookod, and beheld a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof; and two olive-trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl, and the other on the left side thereof.* In our text, there is an additional circumstance mentioned; namely, that *The olive-branches empty out of themselves golden oil through the golden pipes.* What the import of all this was, the prophet was very anxious to know; and, therefore, repeated his inquiries with a kind of holy impatience; and the answer given him was, *The two olive-trees are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.* From this answer, we may gather both the literal and mystical interpretation of the whole.

The literal import then, was this: Zerubbable and Joshua were the two persons anointed of God to superintend, the one the civil, and the other the ecclesiastical affairs of the Jews at that time. They had but little power in themselves, yet were they ordained of God to accomplish great things; and God engaged, through them, to impart unto the people, such supplies of wisdom and strength, as should enable the whole nation to shine with their former splendor. However weak, therefore, they were in themselves, they must not despair; for every mountain should, before Zerubbable, become a plain. The most formidable obstacles, by the sovereign power of God, shall be removed out of the way, and all shall be plain and smoothe for the accomplishment of the divine purpose. How encouraging, how invigorating this vision must have been to the discouraged and dispirited Jews on their return from Babylon; and with what energy it must have enabled them to enter upon the great work assigned them in rebuilding the temple, and in restoring the civil and religious polity of their ancestors.

In the mystical interpretation, we must be more minute in our explanation. It should ever be remembered, that the whole Jewish dispensation was typical. The return of the Jews from Babylon, and the restoration of their civil and religious polity, were typical of the deliverance of sinners from their spiritual bondage, and the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. Bearing this in mind, we shall see how this vision illustrates the purposes of God, in relation to the church of Christ. The *lamps* are emblems of his church, which shines as a light in a dark place, and holds forth the light of life to a world sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. The *pipes* are the institutions of the Christian religion, by means of which, continual supplies of oil are imparted to the sincere followers of Christ, that their light may never be extinguished. The *bowl* is the gospel which abounds with blessings for all, according to their several necessities. The *oil* is the Holy Spirit, by whom alone, the light which has been set up can be kept alive. And the *two olive-trees*, from whence that oil spon-

taneously flows into the bowl, are the kingly and priestly offices of Jesus Christ, who, like Zerubbabel and Joshua, is appointed of God to establish Jerusalem, and build the spiritual temple of the Lord. He is exalted at the right hand of God, and *stands by the Lord of the whole earth*, that he may carry on everything in conformity to the divine will, and accomplish, in due season, the work that has been committed to his charge. He, himself, as the Christ, is the anointed of God, for the Christ means anointed; and from him flows *the unction of the Holy One*, by which all spiritual life and light are communicated to the church.

II. Having explained the import of the vision, we shall proceed, in the second place, to consider *the instruction we are to derive from it*. In order that we may derive instruction from this subject, we must bear in mind the scope of the vision; for, if we forget that, the whole interpretation of it may be thought fanciful; but, if we duly regard that, the whole instruction derived from the vision will appear sober, just, and pertinent.

I. We are taught by this subject that Christ is, by his offices, qualified *to support and perfect his church*. The offices filled by Zerubbabel and Joshua both unite in Jesus Christ. He is the High Priest of his church; and in that capacity he is now officiating at the right hand of God. He offered himself a sacrifice for us at the appointed time, and he is now entered by a new and living way into the Holy of Holies, to plead the merit of his blood, and to make intercession for us before the mercy-seat of Jehovah. Hence he is called the Apostle and High Priest of our profession; and it is from the consideration that we have an High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, that we are encouraged to hold fast our profession. Having passed through temptations himself, he knows how to succour the tempted, and to impart such inward strength as the condition of his disciples demands. Moreover, he is a king; God has set him as king upon the holy hill of Zion. And to this the Apostle Peter bore witness on the day of Pentecost, saying, *God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*. From the union of these two offices in him arises his ability to build his church. Were either of them wanting, he would fail; but, by the concentration of spotless purity, and of infinite energy, he is fully qualified for the work assigned him. This is particularly marked by Zechariah in a following chapter, where he says, *Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both*. Thus, standing by the Lord of the whole earth, and sustaining in himself the united offices of Zerubbabel and Joshua, he is really to the church what they were in



shadow, the source of all that is necessary for her spiritual edification.

2. We are also instructed, in this vision, that the fulness which is in him is expressly committed to him, *for the use and benefit of his church*. We are informed by the apostle, *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*. But for whose sake is it committed to him? His own? No; but for ours. He appears in heaven, not in a private, but in a public capacity, even as the head of the church. At his ascension thither he received gifts; and received them for the express purpose of imparting them to rebellious man. He ascended on high that he might fill all things. He is the head, and the church is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. He lives in us, and we live by him, and without him are unable to think a good thought, or perform a good work. Hence we find, that when the Holy Spirit was poured forth on the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter confidently traced the gift to *him*, even to that very Jesus who had so recently been crucified as a malefactor. *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses: therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and HAVING RECEIVED of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, HE HATH SHED FORTH this which ye now see and hear*. And to the same effect St. Paul also says, that *God saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of THE HOLY GHOST which he SHED ON US ABUNDANTLY through Jesus Christ our Saviour*. These passages reflect great light upon the text, inasmuch as they show that Christ is the true source of all spiritual blessings to the church; and that the Holy Spirit, with all its gifts, graces, and consolations, flows from him according to the will of the Father, just as the oil in the vision dropped from the olive-trees into the bowl, for the continual supply of the lamps dependent on it.

3. We are furthermore taught by this vision, that in the proper use of the institutions of the Christian religion, *we may expect to receive supplies adequate to our wants through all the varying and changing scenes in life*. It was through the pipes only that the lamps received the oil, and it is only through the medium of the appointed institutions of the gospel, that we can receive supplies of the Spirit from Jesus. God will be enquired of for all he has promised. Hence we are directed to *ask*, to *seek*, and to *knock*, with assurances that all our wants shall be supplied. But if we ask not, we shall receive nothing at the hand of the Lord. We must wait upon him in private, reading his word, meditating upon it, and praying over it. We must also wait upon him in public, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but expecting more particular manifestations of his love, and richer communications of his grace, through the medium of a preached gospel. Where two or three are assembled together in his name, there he sheds forth his Spirit in the most copious effusions. Verily, if we watch unto prayer, and abound therein with thanksgiving, we shall never be

disappointed of our hope. We shall have just reason to say, *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* The hungry he will fill with good things, and never send the needy away empty; it is only the rich and self-sufficient he sends empty away. The diligent soul shall be made fat with good things.

And here let me observe, that, in the vision, *the lamps, the pipes, the bowl, and the oil were all of gold.* By this we are to understand that those who wait upon the Lord in sincerity and in truth, are in themselves as superior to unregenerate men, as gold is to the baser metals. And what is there of such value as the grace of which they have been made the partakers? In comparison of it, all else is but dross. And are there not in the gospel *unsearchable riches?* And may we not well say, that under the institutions of Christianity, whether private or public, we have enjoyed many *golden opportunities?* Yes, indeed; and if we be careful and diligent to keep up the communication between Christ and our own souls, we shall have all our wants abundantly supplied, and the salvation administered shall be as a lamp that burneth.

4. *Finally*, we are taught by this vision, that however low our state may be, or however numerous and powerful our enemies, *his grace shall be sufficient for us.* This assurance was given to Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the event corresponded with the vision. Of this, too, may we be assured; for to us no less than to St. Paul, does the Lord Jesus say, *My grace is sufficient for you.* Is that grace at present imparted in but low degrees? Still God says to us, *Who has despised the day of small things?* I do not; and, therefore, let not any of you do it. Are our enemies exceedingly powerful? God teaches us again to say, *Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.* Have we an evidence in ourselves that the Lord Jesus Christ has begun a good work of grace within us? God again teaches us to say, *The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.* If it should be thought that these passages relate to that particular occasion, by looking into the New Testament we shall find the same assurances and triumphs. Here we are told, that *He who has been the author, will also be the finisher of our faith.* Here we have also assurances given to us, that *He who has begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* And even now, whilst conflicting with our enemies, we may say, *If God be for us, who can be against us. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that shall condemn? Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No; I am persuaded, that neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* The plummet is in the hands of our Zerubbabel, with those seven

attendant spirits, who are the eyes of the Lord, and run to and fro through the whole earth; and he will see that the work is performed in us according to his will.

Look, then, my brethren, to our adorable Lord and Saviour, and let nothing interrupt your communication with him. It is your privilege to be daily and hourly receiving out of his fulness, grace, according to the grace that is in him, and sufficient for all your necessities. Do you feel your need of repentance, or pardon, or any blessing whatever! Remember that *he is exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.* And though you are not to expect the Holy Spirit imparted to you in his miraculous powers, yet you may in his gracious influences: yes, you shall receive the Holy Spirit, *For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to as many as are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* And though you may still have many conflicts, the time is not far distant, when, the work being completed in you, *The head stone thereof shall be brought forth with shoutings;* and to all eternity you shall cry, *Grace, grace unto it.*

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## DISCOURSE XXVIII.

### *Christians the Light of the World.*

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid: neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. v., 14—16.

HAD we not been authorized by God himself, we should never have presumed to designate the saints by such honorable appellations, as are unreservedly given to them in the Scriptures. Of all the objects in the visible creation, the sun is the most glorious and magnificent. It has attracted the universal attention of mankind in all ages and in every nation, and has been the wonder of the most refined and polished, as well as the most rude and barbarous. Every plant, every tree, and every living creature upon this terraquious globe, and all the celestial luminaries in the firmament of heaven, partake of its benign influence; yet, even to that are the saints compared; *Ye are the light of the world.* Under the Mosaic dispensation, *the light of the world* was a title applied to the most eminent Rabbins, but under the gospel age, Jesus Christ transferred it to his disciples, who, under God, were to be the means of diffusing *the light of life* throughout the universe.

I. We propose, in the first place, in illustrating these words, to

consider *the office to which God has destined his people. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.* Strictly speaking, neither prophets nor apostles could arrogate to themselves the honor which is here, in a subordinate sense, conferred upon the followers of Christ: it belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is *the Sun of Righteousness*; and who says of himself, *I am the light of the world.* St. John, speaking of the Baptist, who was the greatest of all the prophets, expressly declares, that *he was not that light; but that Christ was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* Taking this view of the subject, the name of *stars* would be much more applicable to us, for we shine only with a borrowed lustre; reflecting merely the rays which we have received from the Lord Jesus. But God has been pleased to dignify us with that more honorable appellation, *the light of the world*; for the saints exhibit to the world all the true light that is in it. He has sent his people to fulfil that office in the *moral*, which the sun performs in the *natural* world.

In the first place, he has *qualified* them to sustain this relation to mankind. By the energy of the Holy Spirit, he has quickened them from the death of sin, and imparted to their souls the light of life; this cannot be imparted by reason or philosophy, and no man can possess it, unless it be given him from above. This sentiment has been clearly and fully expressed by the Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, but he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* This is that mystery which was hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints, according to the commandment of the everlasting God. The meanest of his people are, in this respect, wiser than the wisest of unenlightened men, because *they are all taught of God. They have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.* We are aware that this is an offensive truth, and that the learned will ever reply, in the language of the offended Pharisees, *Are we blind also?* The knowledge of which we speak is not acquired by the exercise of reason, or by the use of books; it is the knowledge of experience. It must be sought and obtained from God, and from him alone. It is no less a truth at this day, than it was in former ages, that *God has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes; even so, for so it seemeth good in his sight.*

Now this divine illumination qualifies his people to instruct others. They may, indeed, be unlearned and ignorant men in other things, but of these things *they have the witness in themselves*, and, therefore, are enabled to speak of them with the same confidence they do of the things about which they are daily conversant. They

may not speak scientifically about their bodily feelings and religious exercises; they may use broken sentences, and misplace their words; indeed, they may use a very bad choice of words; but when they tell you of their wants and supplies, or of the diseases and the remedies which they have found effectual to remove them, they know whereof they affirm. Thus respecting the great truth of the gospel, they are enabled to speak from their own experience; and the greatest philosopher in the universe may sit at their feet and learn these humble lessons of divine wisdom and knowledge.

Again, God has *ordained* them to sustain this relation to mankind. With many it is a favorite idea that they are to be religious, but that their religion is not to be seen. Under the pretence of hating ostentation, they conform to every practice of the world, and are in no respect distinguishable from the more decent moralist. But such persons are laboring under a fatal delusion. They only deceive their own souls, when they think a man may serve God faithfully, and yet avoid the notice of those around him.

For, in the first place, *they cannot do it if they would.* A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. The Christian life is a high and sublime attainment, an attainment at which no man can arrive without great pains and persevering efforts; and if he *walks after the Spirit*, and confines himself to *the narrow way that leadeth unto life*, he must necessarily attract the gaze of public notice. What a wide contrast between a devout Christian and a man of the world, who is *living after the flesh*, and *walking in the broad road that leadeth to destruction!* The whole temper, and spirit, and conduct of a Christian, differ from such a man's, as much as light from darkness. Indeed, let us suppose his light is but small, and if exhibited before the meridian sun, it might easily be overlooked; yet the smallest taper attracts notice when shining in the midst of darkness: and this is precisely the case with every Christian: the splendor of his conduct may not be such as of itself to command admiration; yet it cannot but be seen, by reason of the surrounding darkness. A humble, devout, and engaged Christian, who lives godly in Christ Jesus, cannot escape public notice; his holy conversation, his pious deportment, his unblamable life, his upright conduct, will attract the attention of all acquainted with him.

In the next place, *they ought not to do it if they could.* Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. In like manner, God does not bring his people out of darkness into his marvellous light solely for their own good, but that they may show forth the praises of him that hath called them, and diffuse the light which they have received. They are bound, therefore, by every tie of duty and gratitude, to make him known to others, and to advance, as much as possible, his glory in the world. And he who does not do this to the best of his ability, is highly criminal in the sight of God. Moreover, their fellow-creatures have also a claim upon them. Who that should

see a house in flames, and know its inmates were asleep, would not feel himself bound to alarm them of their danger, and account himself guilty of murderous cruelty towards them, if they should perish in the flames through his neglect? If, then, we should feel it to be our duty to give them the advantage of our superior light and knowledge in relation to their bodily welfare, how much more ought we to do it in relation to their souls! The command which God has given to every enlightened soul, is, *arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* Every true Christian ought to be deeply impressed with these sentiments, and feel himself laid under the most solemn obligation to use all his powers and faculties, the whole weight of his influence in the community, to promote the glory of God and the well being of man; and this cannot be done unless he takes a firm, decided, and public stand in favor of the Christian religion, and brings forth, in his daily walk and conversation, the fruits of righteousness.

II. We shall now proceed, in the second place, to speak of *the duty resulting from it.* *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.* That we are not to do any thing from ostentation and vain-glory, is certain: whatever proceeds from such a principle is altogether hateful in the sight of God. They who seek the applause of men, must expect no other reward. But we ought not to be so restrained by these considerations, as to decline that course of action which will bring glory to God, and good to our fellow beings. On the contrary, we should live such holy and blameless lives; we should walk so orderly, and so circumspectly before the world—in one word, we should *make our light so shine before men,* as to compel all who behold it to *glorify our Father which is in heaven.*

But, it may be asked, How can any conduct of ours accomplish this? I answer, first, *it may show men the unreasonableness of their prejudices.* All manner of prejudices are entertained against the gospel; and all that can be *said* is insufficient to remove them. A prejudiced mind will resist the most conclusive reasoning, will reject the clearest demonstration. The testimony of a thousand witnesses would have no more effect upon a mind under the control of sinful prejudice, than upon a brute. Of this, the royal Psalmist was fully sensible, when he declared that some men are so foolish and ignorant, that they are like *beasts before you.* Reason, persuade, preach, censure, terrify, thunder, open the treasures of heaven, and the abysses of hell, and such men remain unmoved. But what we *do* frequently, has a very powerful effect. When reason and persuasion fail, a virtuous and holy life will often *put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,* and make them *ashamed who falsely accuse our good conversation in Christ.* Nothing is so powerful to silence opposition and to remove prejudice from the minds of men, as virtuous conduct. If we love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and do good to them that hate us and despitefully use us—if we are

constant in the discharge of all the relative and social duties of our holy religion—if we are honest in our dealings and trustworthy in whatever is committed to our care, we shall certainly silence the opposition of gainsayers, and probably remove their prejudice against the gospel. None are so blind as not to perceive the contrast between light and darkness, good and evil. And it is always humiliating to be found engaged in evil, while others are doing good; to be groping in darkness, while others are walking in the light.

It may, also, *be the means of inducing them to embrace the gospel.* The apostle speaks of husbands, who would never have attended to the written or preached word, being won by the good conversation of their wives. And that heart must be hard indeed, that can reject the holy influences of Christianity, when its divine attractions are displayed in the daily conversation of his best friend on earth; when he daily sees before his eyes a luminous body, that is drawing him *with the cords of love, and the bands of a man.* From the history of the church in all ages, we know that there are many who owe their first impressions of religion to the consistent conduct of some eminent saint, some devout Christian; nor can we doubt but that if the dispositions and character of religious people more uniformly corresponded with their holy profession, *the word would have a freer course,* and would be much sooner glorified in evangelizing the world; reformation would succeed reformation, till the light and salvation of the gospel, like a tide of glory, would sweep over the whole earth, and mankind would be brought to the saving knowledge of the truth from the rising of the sun to its going down. This is the mode in which God designed that the truth should work its way to the hearts and consciences of men, for in this way the gospel proves a universal blessing to mankind. When it ceases to make men virtuous and honest, it ceases to be a blessing.

Finally, *it cannot fail of stimulating many to increasing activity.* The force of example is exceeding great. Many, very many, for the want of associates in well doing, are discouraged and attempt but little, because they think but little can be accomplished. But, when they see a person more abundant in labors than themselves, they are stirred up to a holy emulation; they blush at the view of their own unprofitableness, and whilst they are thankful to God who has given such grace unto men, they strive with redoubled ardor to serve and glorify their God. The age in which we live is characterised by great diligence and activity in the cause of God, and the march of truth is onward. It is hoped, and confidently believed, that the active zeal which has been kindled in modern times in the Christian church, will be the means of exciting holy emulation generally among professors of religion, and that they all will come up in one solid column to the help of the Lord against the mighty. What an astonishing influence would be exerted were this to be realized! What a mighty change would be effected in the world!

It would be the ushering in of the millennial glory ! It would be the occasion of a new song in the celestial choir.

1. In the conclusion of our remarks on this subject, we will endeavor to show *how you may become lights of the world*. On this subject many entertain erroneous views, and, consequently, labour with little or no success. They teach men who are immersed in sin and sensuality to become the lights of the world by *living* pious and godly lives : in other words, they place the candle upon the candlestick, to give light before it is lit up. But we are informed by our Saviour, that the candle must first be lit : *Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick ; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.* A candle may as well be under a bushel, as on a candlestick, before it is lit ; the candle must first be lit, before it can give light to others : so we ourselves must become *the children of light*, before we can give light to the world. In order to become the children of light, we must *believe* in the light. Hence, said our Lord, *Believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* Jesus Christ opened his mission by preaching the doctrine of repentance and of faith. And this doctrine is everywhere insisted upon in the New Testament as a prerequisite to the gospel salvation. The Apostle Paul informs us that he was sent to the Gentles, *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Indeed, nothing can be more evident than this truth, that we ourselves must first be *called out of darkness into God's marvellous light*, before we can become the lights of the world ; and this change is wrought in none but penitent believers. To believe in the light, is not to be understood as though a bare assent to any truths whatever would sanctify the soul : it is to be understood as directing us to the gospel, and to the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in it. It is to look for salvation entirely through him, whom God has sanctified and sent into the world for the redemption of mankind ; it is to live by faith on him, and to make him our *all in all*. This living faith unites us to Christ, renders our union with him productive, and leads to our perfect renovation after the divine image. It is by this faith that we are justified ; and through this faith we are sanctified by the truth of God. To every true believer, God, therefore, imparts the light of life. Hence it is believers, and believers only, who enjoy the power of living faith, that are the *lights of the world*. *They are the children of the light, and should walk in the light as he is in the light, and all who walk in the light, will shine indeed as lights in a dark world ; and God himself will be glorified in them.*

2. Those of you who have obtained the honor of becoming the *lights of the world, should let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Remember, my dear friends, that the eyes of all are upon



you, and that God's glory in the world is very greatly effected by your conduct. Any fault in you will be readily seen and noticed by the world. They who pay but little attention to the stars that shine in their orbits, will yet be observant enough of a falling star: and, in like manner, they who overlook the radiance of ten thousand saints, will mark with triumph the fall of a professor, and derive from it an argument against all serious religion. You should, therefore, be on your guard against every thing which may either eclipse your light, or cause it to shine with diminished splendor. Avoid, in your intercourse with mankind, the appearance of evil, and give no offence to either saint or sinner. Maintain that seriousness and gravity in your deportment, that becomes an heir of the grace of life. Put away from among yourselves all foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, and let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ. In maintaining this character, you must submit to some labor, and expect to be exposed to some inconvenience and danger from those who cannot bear the light; but neither indifference nor fear ought to prevent you from discharging a duty which the great Father of lights has imposed upon all his children. Has God furnished you with talents, or placed you in circumstances which has enabled you to acquire juster notions of religion than what are possessed by other men; endeavor to communicate your superior knowledge to your brethren, by every fair and honorable method in your power, and at every season when you are likely to be heard. Say not the work belongs to others—I have no call to engage in it—I leave it to those who are better qualified. Providence, which has given you more light, has, at the same time, given you a call to distribute it to all who are in darkness; if you keep it under a bushel, you make an ungrateful return to that Being from whom it was derived; you defeat the purpose for which it was bestowed, and adopt the maxim of that corrupt church, which thinks it for the happiness of mankind to keep the world in ignorance.

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## DISCOURSE XXIX.

### *On the Knowledge of Time.*

“Knowing the time.”—Romans, xiii. 11.

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.* Such is the declaration of the wisest of men—a declaration worthy the highest consideration of all who would become useful to their fellow-creatures. There are many states and conditions in the course of human life, which call for instruction and reproof, conso-

lation and support. He who would be a useful minister of the gospel, should not only be qualified to meet the moral wants of individuals, in the various conditions of life, but should also be possessed of wisdom to afford assistance when it is needed. Childhood and youth are periods of great and sacred importance—periods which should be eagerly grasped by parents and guardians, instructors and teachers of youth, to store the unfolding mind with the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Instructions which are communicated and received at this age of life, leave a more lasting and abiding impression upon the mind, than at any subsequent period. Children should be taught to govern their passions and chasten their appetites, to subdue their tempers, and resist the temptations of a delusive and fascinating world, to cultivate piety, and cherish religion, and to reverence, adore, and worship the Majesty of Heaven. Much depends upon the moral and religious instruction of the rising generation. *Train up a child, says Solomon, in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* All who have the care of youth, should know the time, this important, this critical time of life, and *not let it slip* unimproved.

There is a time when the attention of the community is alive to the subject of religion, to the welfare of the soul, and to the cause of God; when the vast concerns of eternity, and their future well-being, press with tremendous weight upon the anxious and solicitous mind; when, in the deepest compunction of heart, the penitent soul earnestly inquires, *what must I do to be saved?* This time, this favorable time for religious instruction, should be eagerly sought and diligently improved by every minister of the gospel; for, at such a time as this, his instructions will be heeded, and his counsels, admonitions, and reproofs, will be attended with a salutary effect. It is then that the attention is arrested, the sensibility alive, and the heart prepared to receive an indelible impression.

But, as man stands constantly connected with time, and as every moment of time is big with important events, perhaps we cannot more profitably employ the present hour, than by offering a few suggestions on this important subject, for our present meditation, and future reflection and improvement.

I. In the first place, then, we shall notice: *That knowledge of time, which we should be so solicitous to secure.*

1. We should know time *in its signification.* Various are the definitions which have been given of time. It has been defined by one to be “a fragment of eternity broken off at both ends.” By another, “finite and successive duration, distinguished by the past, present, and future; and measured by the revolution of the heavenly bodies, which God has appointed for the end.” The description of a third is—

“From old eternity’s mysterious orb,  
Was time cut off, and cast beneath the skies.”

Time, in its nature, is *fleeting*—ever on the wing. Like the revolution of the heavenly bodies, it knows no rest, neither does it seek any. It moves onward in majesty and triumph; its course cannot be arrested, nor its power abated. It will march onward in splendor and triumph, till all are conquered by its invincible hand, and levelled with the dust. *Uncertain*—Its future page is sealed; its tales of wo and joy are all unknown. *Who can tell what a day will bring forth? what a night will disclose?* *Important*—As the future page of time is unfolded, it will reveal important events—events deeply interesting to us all. “It is pregnant with all eternity can give.”

2. We should know time *in its use*. Time is a blessing, and is bestowed upon man for an important end; not to waste in idleness, or consume in folly. But, alas! what multitudes squander away their precious hours, and waste their golden moments in idle pursuits, or in sinful pleasures; and thus the duties of life are neglected, and no preparation is made for the eternal world, till a voice is heard speaking to the soul, *time shall be no longer*. Every moment of time has its duties. By performing these duties, we secure important blessings, and by misimproving time we neglect these duties, and by neglecting these duties we lose important and distinguished blessings. The path of duty is the path of safety, and the ways of wisdom are pleasant, and all her paths are paths of peace. Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. In keeping the commandments of God there is great reward. When time grows heavy, and we invent means to kill and destroy it, we may rest assured that some important duty is neglected, and some distinguished blessing will be lost. Let us make the anxious inquiry, whether our time is properly filled up with activity and usefulness; whether our precious moments are employed in doing or receiving good.

3. We should know time *in its value*. But, alas! who can estimate the value of time? By what rule shall we measure it? or in what scales shall we weigh it? There are various ways by which men reckon the value of worldly goods. (1.) Sometimes by their *scarcity*. Of such are gems, pearls, and precious stones; and even the articles of life become more or less valuable, according to their plentifulness or scarcity. If we reckon by this rule, time must be exceedingly valuable; for there is but one single moment in the world at once, and another is not given till this is taken away. The clock strikes not to inform us that we have so much time, but that so much of our time is irrecoverably gone; for this reason the poet calls it “The knell of a departed hour,” which rings but for the death of another portion of our time. Many of the bounties of nature are poured upon us in such rich abundance, that we may hoard them up; but time is dealt out in particles, or in drops, like some precious invaluable oils, that not one of them might be wasted. (2.) Sometimes we deem a thing to be valuable, in proportion as

we may derive important advantages from its possession. Of this kind is silver and gold. They are rendered valuable, because they are the medium of the exchange of merchandize; by these we may purchase goods, houses, lands, the necessaries of life, and extend our influence in society. If we judge by this rule, time will be exceedingly valuable. Time is given us for the acquisition of knowledge, for the cultivation of the mind, and to secure the common blessings of life; but, above all, to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, and secure a crown of life that shall never fade away. (3.) At other times we value a thing by the shortness of the period we are to have it in our possession, and the impossibility of recovering it when lost. If we judge by this rule, time will also appear exceedingly valuable. How short is time: to many individuals it is but a hand's-breadth, a point. And to us, whose life is more extended, it is but as a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then passeth away. The moments which are gliding by us, how swift, how rapid! How soon will our days be numbered, and our course finished! The moments that are fled, are gone forever; they are numbered with the days beyond the flood, and can never be recalled.

It is said that the celebrated John Wesley, whose long life was filled up with activity and usefulness, cultivated such a sense of the value of time, that on one occasion, when, through the negligence of a servant, he was detained from prosecuting his journey, he took out his watch, and counted the moments he was detained, when on the return of the servant, he exclaimed, "See here, by your negligence ten minutes are gone, gone forever; lost, entirely lost." But, alas! how many of us have lost, not merely minutes, but hours, and days, and weeks, and months, and years. How important that we should redeem the time which has thus been wasted, that we should double our diligence to occupy every fleeting moment, and not suffer one to be lost—not suffer one to escape unimproved.

4. We should know time *in its management*. God has given to every man sufficient time, if properly managed, to attend to all the duties of life. He makes no unreasonable demands; he lays no requisitions without giving sufficient time for their performance. If time is rightly divided, and our efforts properly directed, we shall never be hurried; we shall have no waste time, no idle moments. Many persons complain that they have no time to attend to this or that duty, in the midst of a multiplicity of cares. The fact is, such persons either aim at doing too much, or they devote too much time to one branch of business to the neglect of others; or else a portion of their time has been wasted in idleness. In order rightly to manage our time, it should be divided into periods, and to each period should be assigned its proper duties; for instance, such a portion to sleep, such to labor, such to refreshment, such to religious duties, and such to the cultivation of the mind. By a just proportionment of our time, much more can be accom-

plished in the same number of days; because, by this mode of procedure, the different powers of the body and mind are brought into active exercise. All are stimulated, and none exhausted; all are cultivated and improved, and none left dormant. Besides, by this method we cultivate a taste, create an appetite, and form habits, all of which are highly advantageous in the various pursuits of life. One great reason why so much of our time is suffered to run to waste is, because in the early part of life it was improperly managed. We brought little to pass, we suffered the powers of the mind to lay dormant, and never so much as acquired a thirst for knowledge: hence, the hours unemployed in our regular business, during a long life, are suffered to run to waste, or occupied in improper pursuits. Dr. Priestly, by a judicious management of time, was enabled to accomplish more, during the same number of years, than any other man of his age. It was his method to make a wise and judicious arrangement of his time, and to each period assign the objects he was desirous of accomplishing. Having laid out his work before him, during each day he performed his labor, so that at the completion of every quarter his ends were attained. In this way he spent his life, always diligent, but never hurried; always occupied, but never drove. When a friend called upon him, he was happy to see him, and to devote to him a portion of his time.

5. We shall know time *in its termination*. Time will end at the final consummation of all things. At the day of judgment, that great day for which all other days were made, the wheel of time will be struck off its axis, and everlasting close up the scene. Then shall we be rewarded or punished, as we have improved or abused time. Then shall we give an account of our stewardship, and answer for the deeds done in the body. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. The righteous hath hope in his death, but the wicked shall be driven away in their wickedness, and turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.*

II. We pass, secondly, to describe the *effect which this knowledge of time is calculated to produce.*

1. *Unfeigned gratitude to God.* Our time is in his hands; he distributes to us our golden seasons, those precious opportunities of receiving instruction, acquiring knowledge, doing good, and securing the most important blessings with which we have been favored. Thousands have been cut off in the vigor of youth and prime of life, but in the midst of the shafts of death, our lives have been prolonged. Some of the buds of being but just began to unfold the flowers of life, when they were nipped by the frost of death; but we have arrived to manhood, and are permitted to live in a most interesting age, the best of countries, and the happiest of days. Oh! what a debt of gratitude we owe to God! Who that knows the time, and feels the obligations under which this time has laid him, can but call upon his soul, and all that is within him to bless the Lord.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, and forget not all his benefits. He visiteth the earth, and watereth it; he prepares the corn when he hath so provided for it; he blesseth the springing of the earth; he crowneth the year with his goodness, and his paths drop fatness; the little hills rejoice on every side; the pastures are clothed with flocks; the vallies are also covered with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.*

2. *Deep contrition of soul.* A knowledge of time will never fail to remind us how much we have misimproved it; how much of our time has been spent in unnecessary sleep, in idle pursuits, in unprofitable conversation, in useless amusements, and in reiterated acts of sin. How many opportunities of acquiring knowledge have been lost, how many seasons, in which important blessings might have been secured, have been wasted. How many favorable opportunities of doing good have been permitted to pass unimproved, and in consequence of our sloth and indifference, many of our fellow-creatures are still in a suffering state, and perishing for lack of knowledge. Should not a view of these things humble our souls in the dust, and cover us with shame and confusion? O, Lord! we take shame and confusion to ourselves; we will hide our heads in darkness, and mourn in secret places.

3. *A fervent application to the throne of grace.* By knowing the time, we shall be made acquainted with our need of an interest in the divine mercy. Our murdered moments have carried the report of our follies and crimes into the eternal world, where they might have borne more pleasing news, and more welcome intelligence. But, alas! our crimes are committed, and our follies have been marked by the recording angel. The only source of refuge which is left for us, is the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel. To this refuge we are invited to come by the most endearing invitations. By fleeing to Christ, we have the strongest assurances that we shall find mercy, and obtain grace to help in time of need. Let us lose no time in fleeing to this refuge, and throwing ourselves into the arms of divine mercy. Let us fly without delay, for time is uncertain. Let us remember that delays are dangerous, and that eternal considerations hang on the slender thread of a moment.

4. *Sincere desires to live more to the glory of God.* A knowledge of time will teach us its *brevity*—the shortness of its duration. These considerations should teach us the importance of redeeming, as far as possible, our wasted moments, and of dedicating ourselves unreservedly to God. May we arise, and with an increasing zeal and growing activity, devote ourselves to the great and important duties of life. With a holy resignation to the divine will, may we be enabled to say, *whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.* But to conclude.

1. By a diligent improvement of time, and a proper cultivation of

the means of acquiring knowledge, which are placed within our reach, to what an *elevation of rank and usefulness many of the youth, who hear me this day, may attain*. Many of you are endowed with high and extensive gifts in nature—gifts which, if duly cultivated, will place you among the most eminent of the age. But remember, the richest soil, if left uncultivated, will only produce wild and pestiferous plants; while the most sterile soil, by proper cultivation, may be rendered highly prolific. It is not the brightest genius who always soars the highest; but by a proper and diligent improvement of time, men of ordinary gifts in nature may attain great eminence. You should also remember, that you are forming characters, not merely for time, but also for eternity. We, who are but worms of earth, are destined to become immortal. But death will make in us no moral change. We shall enter upon a future state of existence with the same moral character we leave this. Seeing, then, that by a proper improvement of time, we are fitted for endless felicity, to dwell in the presence of God, *where there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore*, it highly becomes us all properly to improve every precious moment.

2. What ravages the *hand of time will make in this congeation!* I look forward to that period, when the hand of time will cut every tender cord that binds the social circle together; when it will level us all with the dust. This is a humiliating thought, but it is not less humiliating than true. It is the event we must all meet. And are we prepared to meet it? May God impress these solemn truths upon our minds, and may they duly affect our hearts. We deceive ourselves by delusive appearances, by false hopes, and by vain expectations. We see others around us sinking into the dust, yet we are not affected by it; we imagine that we have shot an eternal root into the earth, and shall live forever. These expectations are vain, and time will prove them delusive. But God grant that we may not indulge in them too long; may we awake from our delusive dreams, improve the moments as they are flying, and be prepared for our great and last change.

3. Finally, I look forward to that period, when *every man shall give an account to God of his stewardship*. Oh! how awful and solemn will be that day; awful to those who have misimproved time, who have neglected duty, and who are unprepared to meet their Judge. Oh! how fearful will be their doom; how dreadful their condition! My soul trembles at the thought, and my spirit dies within me. Will this be the unhappy condition of any who hear my voice, who now sit under the salubrious sound of the gospel? If there are any who hear me at this time, unprepared to meet their God, may the terrors of the Lord get hold of them, and may they find no rest until they obtain it in the Lord Jesus. But this will be a joyful day to the saints of God. May the bright

prospect of endless felicity animate all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, to be faithful unto death, that they may receive a crown of life, and be made pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out.

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## DISCOURSE XXX.

### *Genuine Religion Illustrated.*

“Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”—2 Thess. i., 11, 12.

THE passions are the chief springs of that activity which appears every where among moral and accountable beings. Of these, hope and fear, as they awaken desire, or produce concern, and in either case excite uneasiness, are among the principal causes that determine the various pursuits of mankind. Do worldly enjoyments charm us? How much more inviting, an inheritance, *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*; where we shall enjoy angelic company; and where there will be *fulness of joy and pleasure forevermore*. Do earthly things alarm us? The day approaches when we shall see “a God in grandeur, and a world on fire.” For the *Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*. In reference to this revelation, and its important issues, the apostle says: *Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ*. In this passage the apostle directs our attention to pure religion, in its nature, source, producing and sustaining principle, end, and measure.

I. Religion in its nature—a *worthiness*. *That our God would count you worthy of his calling*. That is, the glorification mentioned in the tenth verse. While we guard against self-righteousness, we should be equally watchful that we do not fall into the opposite error, which, under the guise of humility, would lead us to abolish some of the most essential distinctions between the sinner



and the saint. The Scriptures assure us that the wicked are dead in trespasses and sins ; that they have pleasure in unrighteousness ; and that although they may believe in the existence of a God, yet in works they deny him. But, on the other hand, they declare that the saints have been quickened from the death of sin ; that they are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, in which he hath before ordained that they should walk. Such is the character of his saints in whom he shall be glorified. This expresses,

1. Their previous *worthiness of condition*. They are in this life sanctified : that is, set apart from *common* uses, from worldliness, as well as from wickedness, to the sacred service of God. Hence, the apostle says, speaking of them, *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light : which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God : which had not obtained mercy, but have now obtained mercy*. Therefore, they are exhorted by the mercies of the living God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service. Nay, they are adopted into the divine family, and by a heavenly birth become the sons of God ; and if sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And having been honorably related, and so consistently employed, they are counted worthy to be approved and exalted to a higher state of dignity and glory. The Lord Jesus will say unto them in that day, *Well done good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*.

2. Again, these words express their *previous worthiness of disposition, their meekness for glory*. The word *saint*, is derived from the Latin word *sanctus*, and means chaste, divine, heavenly, as well as sacred. Such are the qualifications of true and genuine Christianity, as felt and displayed in the heart. Hence, the apostle calls it *circumcision of the heart* ; a transformation by the *renewing of the mind* ; and a participation of the *divine nature*. It is, in its own nature, *pure, peaceable, gentle, and easily to be entreated* ; and in its operations, *full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*. Hence the apostle says, *Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this : To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world*.

What a mighty contrast between the holy and benevolent principle of religion, and that degraded and degrading principle of sin, by which wicked and worldly men are governed ? They are as opposite as light and darkness, and as distant from each other as heaven and hell. And what are all the forms, and ceremonies, and creeds of men when compared to this true principle of love to God and good-will to mankind ? They are all empty and vain, and

worse than useless, without this true principle of godliness in the heart; because by them the formalist is not unfrequently deceived in relation to his true character. Nothing but this spirit of purity and holiness can ever qualify the soul for the enjoyment of heaven. Who, then, can reflect on the solemnities of that day; who can reflect upon the discoveries which will then be brought to light, and the unexpected sentences that will then be awarded, and not earnestly desire, both for himself and for all who are dear to him, that the sentence which God shall pass on them may be one of approbation? I pray you, brethren, lay to heart this infinitely important subject; and never cease to pour out your souls before God, that you and yours may attain this meetness for heaven, and be accepted of him in that day.

II. Religion in its source; *the goodness of God; his free spontaneous favor.* *That he would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness.* The salvation of the soul originated in the *goodness* of God, and is carried on by his *good pleasure*. The goodness of God, his own innate and eternal kindness, has led him to provide the means of salvation. It is the goodness of God that leads sinners to repentance, and disposes them to accept of his proffered mercy. It is the goodness of God that consummates the work of salvation, when it is once commenced in the heart. It is his good pleasure that all should embrace the salvation freely offered to them in the gospel; this he has amply proved, by sending his Son to die for them, the greatest gift he could bestow on the human family. In all this the good pleasure of his goodness is astonishingly manifested. And to them who are faithful to his grace, he will *fulfil*, completely accomplish, all the good pleasure of his goodness in them. Thus the salvation of a sinner is all of grace from the beginning to the end. It is grace that commences, continues, and consummates the work. It is in this way, and this way alone, that the divine life is imparted, carried on, and perfected in the soul.

III. It is necessary, however, on the part of the creature that he exercise *faith*; for the word preached does not profit except it be *mixed with faith in them that hear*. It is through faith that the soul begins to live: it is by the exercise of that faith, that the soul is enabled to do and suffer what God requires: and it is by the augmentation of that faith that the soul is perfected after the divine image. It is faith which realizes the things that are invisible to mortal eyes, and gives to futurity a present existence. It is the one principle in the soul, by which all its energies are called forth, and all its efforts are made effectual. The whole eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews proves and illustrates this position, and shows with what wisdom, as well as piety, the apostle poured out his supplication before God.

Thus faith is the producing principle of religious affections and practice. It is by the exercise of faith that we are led to fear and obey God. Faith is also the sustaining principle of experience and

practice. It is this which sustains the soul under threats and sufferings; it is this which sustains the believer against the smiles and allurements of the world. It works by love, by peace, by joy, by patience, and by hope, rising above every obstacle, surmounting every difficulty, and pressing through every danger. In short, it attaches the heart to him who is *the author and finisher of our faith*; and, at times, wafts the soul to the upper regions, where it breathes a purer air, dwells amidst brighter prospects, and hears the hallelujahs of the blessed; so that its return to earth is felt as a return to pilgrimage and banishment, which the same faith, nevertheless, enables it patiently to bear.

IV. Religion *in its end*. *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and ye in him*. Our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in his saints even here in this world, as he himself has expressly declared. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them*. His love appears glorious in interesting himself about his saints; his wisdom in instructing them; his holiness in bringing them to the saving knowledge of the truth; his power in preserving and protecting them; his faithfulness in fulfilling all his engagements. In this way the glory of the Redeemer is magnified in his people, and they proclaim his power and his holiness to the world. But the apostle has respect more particularly to that day, when Christ will *come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*. Indeed, he will then be glorified in them. In what bright colors will then the whole assembled universe see the virtue of his death, the efficacy of his grace, and his fidelity to all his promises; of all those who have been faithful unto death, not one will be lost; not one will be found to have been ever plucked out of his hands. What hosannas will resound to him from all the hosts of the redeemed, all singing, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen*.

Then will the saints also be glorified *in him*. Indeed, they already, as members, participate in the glory of their head: *In him they are all united in one body; and with him they are raised up to sit together in heavenly places*. They are the light of the world—the salt of the earth—the city set on a hill. But, in that day, their glory will be complete; for they shall be *like him*. Their vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Their minds, purified from every stain and from every error, will shine in all the perfection of beauty. They will be acknowledged by Jesus Christ, in the presence of his Father and the holy angels, as his peculiar people—the purchase of his blood, the fruit of his travail, and the jewels of his crown. Then shall what is his, be theirs: his crown, his throne, his kingdom, his glory, all will be theirs—their inalienable property, their everlasting possession.

V. But, finally, consider religion in its *measure, or rule of dispen-*

sation: According to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. This, my brethren, exactly and fully meets our case; for we are poor, insolvent, destitute of good. The grace of God is free to the very chief of sinners. And this view of the subject is in accordance with the testimony of the apostle: *For we ourselves, says he, also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But that after the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards men appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Are we guilty and vile? Yet there is a foundation laid for our hope, in the riches of his grace. Hence, the apostle says: *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 in Christ; 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 show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us in Jesus Christ.*

Are we weak and ignorant? Yet the grace of God is adapted to our condition. Hence, the prophet says: *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead them that are with young.* He has, also, erected a throne of grace, which is continually accessible, where we may come, and *obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* And this grace is bestowed in such liberal measures as to be sufficient to sustain the weakest soul, under the severest trials and heaviest afflictions.

Are any still doubtful and distressed? This grace operates the same now as in former ages. It has subdued the heart of David, Manasseh, Paul, and many others, who had much forgiven, and were greatly blessed.

Thus we see that Christianity is adapted to the wants, conditions, and circumstances of all mankind. Here all may come, and of the fulness which is treasured up in Christ, receive grace, according to the measure of grace which he has received of the Father, to supply their wants.

1. In concluding our remarks, permit me to make a few observations to those of you who know nothing of these things, *by experience.* And what a multitude there are of this class, who, at this moment, are ignorant of the work of faith, and of that divine power with which it operates in the soul! How many are altogether strangers to the idea of Christ being glorified in them, or their being glorified in him; or of the purposes of God's grace being displayed in them! Little, indeed, have such persons known of true

religion: they even *need to be taught the very first principles of the oracles of God*. I can assure you, my dear friends, that the gospel is not such a meagre thing as you have probably imagined. It is a wonderful display of God's mercy and grace, in the redemption of a ruined world; and wherever it is received aright, it will fill the soul with such views and such desires as are expressed in our text. Do not, I beseech you, continue ignorant of these things; for, if you know them not, or feel not their influence, how shall you stand accepted at the judgment-seat of Christ? It will be too late to commence your inquiries then: they must be begun now. Yea, you must now glorify Christ, by a life of faith in this world, if you are ever to be glorified with him in the world to come.

2. But I trust there are some, who are present on this occasion, whose prayers and intercessions accord with those of the holy apostle. Yes, there are many here, whose hearts go forth with the petitions in our text, and who shall ultimately experience all our text unfolds. But in order to obtain this desirable end, we recommend to all to consider the strictness of the scrutiny in that day. Verily, the Judge, as he himself tells us, has *eyes like a flame of fire*, and he tries the very hearts and reins, in order to give to every man according to his works. It will be to little purpose to be accounted worthy by your fellow-creatures, if you be not so accounted by your God: and it must not be forgotten, that there are many who have a name to live, while yet, in reality, they are dead. O, dread lest this should prove to be your state at last; and be earnest with God in prayer, that he will *fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power*. Be satisfied with nothing short of this. Aspire after the highest possible attainments, that the Lord Jesus Christ may even now be glorified in you, and that your meetness for his glory may be conspicuous in the eyes of all. So shall your intercessions prevail for others also; and in that great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, you shall shine forth as the sun in the firmament for ever and ever.

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## DISCOURSE XXXI.

### *The Glory that followed the Sufferings of Christ.*

“When it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”—1 Peter, i., 11.

It appears from several parts of the sacred Scriptures, that the prophets did not, in a variety of instances, fully understand their own predictions. They, doubtless, had a general view of God's designs and gracious purposes, but of particular circumstances,

connected with those great events which they foretold, they seem to have known very little; God reserving the explanation of all particulars to the time of the fulfilment of all such prophecies. It appears, however, they were in the habit of inquiring and diligently searching after their true meaning. It is highly probable, that they consulted the prophecies which had already been committed to writing, and were frequently in the habit of conversing with those who were under the same divine inspiration as themselves. They furthermore besought God, in prayer, to give them more enlarged views of the great and important events that were revealed to them, and that he would also make known unto them the time, the season, and the circumstances of their fulfilment; but God gave them to understand it was not for themselves, but for us that they did minister the things which are now reported unto us by the preaching of the gospel. This was all the satisfaction they received, as the result of their anxious and diligent inquiry; and this was sufficient to repress all their needless curiosity, and to induce them to rest satisfied that *the judge of all the earth will do right*.

We, at the present day, stand upon the heads of all the patriarchs and prophets; for we not only have their prophecies to consult, but have seen the fulfilment and accomplishment of many of them, with all the attending circumstances. They simply foresaw the fact of the sufferings of Christ, and had some conceptions of the glory that should follow; but we have been made acquainted with all the connecting events—the time, the place, and the hands by which the bloody deed was executed. And we have not only witnessed the glory that was to follow, but have been made the happy partakers of it; and humbly hope to come into the possession of greater measures of it, when we shall enter upon that inheritance which *is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*.

I. In addressing you from these words, we shall, in the first place, call your attention *to the sufferings of Christ*. If we trace the history of our Saviour from the cradle to the cross, we shall find his whole life was one continued scene of crucifixion. His life was a passive action, and his death an active passion. He endured all the sufferings incident to human life; and he met some of them in their most terrific forms, in their most appalling aspects. But we intend, on the present occasion, to confine our remarks to the sufferings of Christ at the close of his life, and to the events with which those sufferings were intimately connected; the Scriptures take notice of three eminent circumstances which belong to his death—the ignominy, the curse, and the misery of it.

And let us, in the first place, contemplate the *ignominy of his crucifixion*. We have been so long accustomed to contemplate the crucifixion of Christ, surrounded with that radiance of glory with which his resurrection invested him, that we entirely overlook the ignominy of it. But the crucifixion of the Saviour previous to his resurrection, appeared under very different circumstances; and, in

order to contemplate the ignominy of it, in all its blackness and darkness, we should transport ourselves back to that period when the tragic scene transpired—we should divest ourselves of all those ideas of grandeur, of greatness, and of innocence, with which we are wont to contemplate our Lord upon the cross.

The Jews pursued every measure and adopted every means, which their wisdom and malice could invent, to overwhelm the Saviour in eternal disgrace, when they imbrued their hands in his innocent blood. He was scorned in every one of his offices. To bring the regal power and authority, which he claimed, into disgrace, he was sceptered with a reed, and crowned with thorns. To ridicule his pretensions as a prophet, they blindfolded him, and bade him prophesy who smote him. To mock him as a pretended priest, they clothed him with a long robe, which was an emblem of that office. Invested with these tokens of contempt and ridicule, he was exhibited to the multitude in the midst of taunts, and hisses, and vulgar abuse. Such was the overwhelming disgrace into which he was suddenly plunged, that his principal friends forsook him, and left him to sink covered with shame and infamy.

But the ignominy of our Saviour's sufferings respects the kind of death he died, the place of his death, and the companions of his death. As it respects the kind of death he died, it was hanging upon a cross; a death that rendered the person and showed the fact to be abominable. The death of the cross was the most dreadful of all others, both as it regards the shame and the pain of it. It was so scandalous, that it was inflicted as the last mark of detestation upon the vilest of people. It was the punishment of robbers and murderers, provided that they were slaves; but if they were free, and had the privilege of the city of Rome, it was then thought a prostitution of that honor, and too infamous a punishment of such a one, let his enemies be what they would. This mode of punishment was not practiced among the Jews. Hence it seems a remarkable incident of divine providence in the disposal of events, so that Jesus should suffer the death of the cross. For had he been put to death by the Jews, he would not have been crucified; or had he have been a Roman citizen, his death would have been of some other kind. Hence it appears that his enemies seized upon every possible event to tarnish the glory of his fame, and to heighten the ignominy of his death. As it regards the place of his death, he was not crucified in a corner, but upon the top of Mount Calvary; so that he was fully exposed to the scoffing gaze of the deriding multitude. As it respects the companions of his death, they were the very dregs of mankind, thieves and robbers. By associating the innocent with the guilty, the enemies of Jesus, doubtless, intended to cover him with additional shame and reproach. Thus we see that our dear Redeemer, who was the glory of heaven, was made the shame of earth; and he who was the Lord of angels, became the scorn of sinful wretches.

Another circumstance which the Evangelists have noticed, as connected with the history of his crucifixion, is *the curse of his death*. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree.* The apostle here refers to the ceremonial curse of hanging on a tree, or cross. The custom of the Jews was this : upon any notorious fact, the malefactor was first put to death by stoning or the like, and then his body was hanged up before the sun. So that the hanging of a person was a kind of second death ; and this Jesus also endured. He was treated as a malefactor, justly liable to the curse of the law, by being executed as he was. By dying the death which the law of Moses regarded as accursed, he has freed us from all obligation to seek justification by that law.

A third circumstance in the history of Christ's death, to which the Scriptures refer, is *the misery of it*. The cross upon which Jesus was crucified, was made of two pieces of wood, placed cross-wise with right angles at the top, like the letter T. That the cross upon which our Saviour was crucified was of this kind, is evident, by its being thus represented on all ancient monuments, coins, and crosses. The death of the cross was exceedingly painful and distressing. The naked body of the criminal was fastened to the upright beam by nailing the feet to it, and on the transverse beam by nailing the hands to it. The parts through which the nails pass, and by which the weight of the body is suspended, being the instruments of motion and action, are provided by nature with a much greater quantity of nerves than other parts of the human system ; and since all sensation is performed by the spirit contained in the nerves, it will follow that wherever they abound, the sense of pain must needs be proportionably quick and tender. Besides, the instruments of death were transfixed in the extremities—those parts that are the most distant from vitality, which, although producing a quick torment, ends in a lingering death. Hence the death of the cross was an extended torture. And how keen and sensible must be the pain, after the nerves become irritated, and the strength and power of the system exhausted ?

There is one other circumstance worthy of observation in the history of crucifixion ; and that is, the criminal was usually scourged with small cords before he was crucified. Sometimes little bones, or pieces of bones, were tied to these scourges, so that the condemned person might suffer the more severely. It was also a custom, that he who was to be crucified, should bear his own cross to the place of execution. To both of these customs Jesus was compelled to submit. How many lashes he received, the Scriptures do not inform us ; but it is highly probable he was scourged with great severity. We also find, that Jesus was compelled to bear his own cross ; and as he sunk under the weight of it, Simon, a Cyprian, was compelled to bear it after him.

Let us contemplate, for a few moments, the sufferings of our Sa-



viour at the close of his life. They are numerous and complicated, arising from a variety of sources, and all concentrating to pierce him through and through with many sorrows. Go to the garden of Gethsemane, and there behold the blood issuing from every opening pore, and falling in great clots upon the cold ground! Ah, see him embracing the very dust in his humiliation! How distressing must be that anguish which wrings the blood from his very heart! How piercing that agony which bows his soul in such deep humility! To heighten the poignancy of his grief, Judas, a professed friend, betrays him with a kiss; and the rude soldiers seize him, and hurry him away to a corrupt, profligate, and revengeful court. Hear his mock trial. Behold him insulted with every kind of indignity that malice and wickedness can invent. They spit in his face, smite him with the palms of their hands, and make long furrows upon his back with the cruel scourge. A crown of thorns is put upon his head, with the sharp points inward, piercing his tender temples, till the blood falls in every direction. Lacerated with the stripes and bruises he had received, faint with the loss of blood, his spirits exhausted by the cruel insults and blows that were given him, when they invested him with robes of mock royalty, he is compelled to take up his cross and proceed to the place of execution. Mark the dear Redeemer as he proceeds slowly along, through languor, lassitude, and faintness, surrounded by a scoffing, deriding, and unfeeling rabble, who make themselves merry with his sufferings and the reproaches they heap upon him. The rude soldiers urge him along the road, till he sinks under the incumbent weight of the cross, when he is relieved, merely that he may be dragged to the fatal spot. Upon his arrival at Calvary, he is stripped, but refuses the stupifying draught which is offered him to drink, it being his fixed resolution to meet death in all its horrors, even this death of crucifixion, with all its attendant circumstances. He is now stretched upon the cross which is laying upon the ground, and four soldiers nail his hands and feet to the rugged wood. O, hear the clanking sound of those hammers, which deeply rivet these nails in the wood. The cross is now raised up, with the agonizing Jesus upon it, and, in order to fix it the more firmly and securely in the earth, they let it violently fall into the cavity they had dug to receive it. This vehement precipitation of the cross gives the Saviour, who is nailed to it, a most dreadful convulsive shock, and agitates his whole frame in a dire and most excruciating manner. Behold the Lord of life and glory suspended upon the cross between the heavens and the earth, as though he was fit for neither, a spectacle to angels, to devils, and to men. See the blood gushing from his perforated hands and feet. Mark him writhing in anguish, and fainting, and languishing, and dying! All nature is shocked at the sight, and, in convulsive agony, trembles to her centre. The rocks rend—the mountains start back with horror—the sun hides his lovely face, and refuses to witness the heart-rending scene—the

light vanishes, and a dark and death-like gloom covers the whole land of Judea. The voice of Jesus, faltering in the agonies of death, is heard reverberating through the thick and dreary gloom, crying, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!* After receiving a little vinegar from a sponge, by which his parched and burning lips were moistened, Jesus cried with a loud voice, and uttered with all the vehemence he could exert, that comprehensive word, on which a volume might be written, *It is finished*; after which he reclined his head upon his bosom, and dismissed his spirit.

“He dies, the friend of sinners dies!”

Come ye, who mourn over the death of a lovely child, a tender parent, or an affectionate companion, and drop a sympathetic tear over a wounded, a mangled, and a crucified Saviour. But is he dead? O yes! see, a soldier pierces his side with a spear, and straightway comes out water and blood; but no signs of life appear. The cross is taken down, and the rude nails are extracted from his hands and feet. O, see how they are mangled and torn—see how he is covered with gore and blood. All his charms and all his beauties are fled. How cold is that hand which wrought so many shining miracles—how inactive those feet that went about doing good—and those lips, that spake as man never spake, are now sealed with the seal of death—that eye, which beamed with benevolence, is now closed—and that countenance, which was lit up with the light of heaven, has lost all its animation. Jesus is washed from his blood and gore, wrapped up in fine linen, and laid away in the tomb. The powers of darkness seem to triumph, and while the friends of Jesus are mourning, the enemies of the cross are rejoicing in his overthrow.

And why all this reproach, and all these indignities, and all these agonizing pains? It was because we had sinned, and because Jesus loved us—sin was the occasion of his sufferings, and love prompted him to lay down his life for rebel man. How great an evil, then, is sin, and how strong and ardent must have been the love of the Saviour. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, but Jesus laid down his life for his enemies.* O my soul, for thee, for thee Jesus died! Let the thought sink deeply into my heart—let it melt my soul into tenderness—let it warm within me that love which shall never die, and kindle that zeal in his cause which shall never grow cold.

II. We pass, in the second place, to consider the *glory that is to follow*. But what glory can follow a scene so dark, so gloomy, and so dismal as that which we have been rehearsing? Can light spring out of darkness? Can joy arise out of sorrow? Can glory burst forth from shame? Yes, my brethren, the dying hopes of man revive. *He who was dead is alive, and behold he liveth for evermore.* Come, then, approach the tomb of your dear Redeemer, no more to

lament his death, no more to embalm his sacred body, which has not been suffered to see corruption, but to shout for joy at his resurrection. *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is heard in the tabernacle of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiently.*

1. The first ray of light that sprung up after the crucifixion of the Lord of life and glory, *was his resurrection from the dead.* Jesus Christ could not have been raised from the dead, had he not have first died; and had his death been private, the fact of his resurrection would have been less certain than what it now is; for could his death be called inquisition, it would lessen the certainty of his resurrection. But his having been put to death in so public a manner, and by his enemies, too, has set this question forever at rest. Jesus, then, is risen indeed. By submitting to death, he conquered the king of terrors, and rose a mighty conqueror from the grave. *O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.* The enemies of Christ, when they put him to death, vainly imagined that they had successfully accomplished their plan for his destruction. They believed that they had entirely scattered the small party of his followers, and blotted out the honor of his name forever. But, how shallow is the policy of the wicked! How vain are the councils and designs of the ungodly! Little did they imagine, that their badges of mock royalty, with which they invested him, were to be converted into the signals of absolute dominion, and the instruments of irresistible power! The reed which they put into his hand became *a rod of iron*, with which he was to *break in pieces his enemies*; a sceptre, with which he was to rule the universe in righteousness. The cross, which they thought would cover him with reproach and infamy, became the ensign of renown. Instead of being the reproach of his followers, it was to be their boast and their glory, and to shine upon palaces and churches throughout the world. It was to be assumed as the distinction of the most powerful monarchs, and wave in the banners of the most victorious armies, when the memory of Pilate and Herod should be accursed; when Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, and the Jews be vagabonds over all the earth.

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the honor of his name is vindicated from the reproaches with which his enemies covered it, and his innocency is established as clear as the morning light—the long list of prophecies, which foretold his sufferings and glorious resurrections from the dead, are fulfilled—his claims to divinity and inspiration are established, the truth of his doctrine confirmed, and a future state of immortality proved. The resurrection of Jesus, then, is a ground of faith, the basis of hope, and a source of consolation and joy. Let us, then, my brethren, celebrate the praise of the author of our redemption—let us call earth and heaven to witness our gratitude—let an increase of zeal accompany this part of our devotion—let a double portion of fire from heaven

kindle our sacrifice—and with a heart penetrated with the liveliest gratitude, and inflamed with the most ardent love, let us exclaim: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

2. The next event that reflected glory upon the name of Jesus Christ, was his *ascension into heaven*. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a preparatory and necessary step to his glorious ascension. We are informed in the sacred oracles, that it was not until forty days after his resurrection from the grave that this event took place. During this space of time he had *shown himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being often seen by his disciples, and conversing with them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God*. Having finished his work upon the earth, and having fully instructed his apostles in the part they were henceforth to act, he *led them forth out of the city as far as Bethany*. With the utmost propriety was this place selected for the scene of his ascension. Near Bethany was the mount of Olives, to which our Lord was wont so often to retire for the exercise of private devotion; and there also was the garden of Gethsemane, where his sufferings commenced with that agony, in which his *soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death*. At the spot where his generous sufferings on our account began, there also was his glory to commence; and those fields which so often had been his favorite retreat, and so often consecrated by him to meditation and prayer, were now to be dignified with his last parting steps towards heaven;—there, we are told, he lifted up his hands, and blessed his disciples; and while he blessed them, he was parted from them. In what an interesting attitude do we here behold our departing Lord? How well does his conduct on this occasion suit the rest of his life: *Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end*. While he lived, he went about doing good; when he died, he prayed for his enemies; and at his ascension into heaven, he lifted up his hands and blessed his friends, like a dying parent giving his last benediction to his children and his family. While our Saviour was thus employed, *he was parted from his disciples, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and he was carried up to heaven*. Under former dispensations, supernatural appearances had been accompanied with majesty of a terrible kind. The law was given in the midst of lightnings and thunders. Elijah was caught up into heaven in a fiery chariot. But here are no whirlwinds, no thunder, no chariot of fire. The Saviour of the world was gently received up in a cloud, with that sort of grandeur, and meekness, and calm magnificence, which bespeaks the peaceful genius of the gospel and its author—angels also assisted at this solemnity. They rejoiced at his birth, were present at his resurrection from the dead, and accompanied his triumphant ascension into heaven. When he was parted from his disciples, he ascended in glory, in majesty, and in grandeur, attended by a convoy of angels, who conducted

him through the parted sky, with songs of praise, and shouts of victory, to the portal of heaven; when, with united voice, they exclaim, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and let the king of glory in.* Such were the circumstances which accompanied that grand and signal event of the glorious ascension of Christ into heaven; all of them solemn and striking, and calculated to leave a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of his disciples.

3. In the further prosecution of our subject, we proceed to notice *the glory of his exaltation.* The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is the fruit of his humiliation and sufferings. Little did his enemies imagine, when they were heaping so many indignities upon the blessed Saviour, that they were sowing the seed which was to yield such a rich and glorious harvest; that they were covering him with infamy and shame, that the glory and honor of his exaltation might be rendered the more conspicuous. But such has been the result; for the Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ has been *exalted at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honor,* as a merited recompense for his obedience unto death: because *he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; and being in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.* In this constitution of Divine Providence, an illustrious testimony was designed to be given of God's regard and love to eminent righteousness. In the exaltation of Jesus Christ, we see signal pre-eminence made the reward of signal condescension for the sake of mankind; and self-abasement and humiliation made the road to glory. We are taught, in this instance of the divine procedure, that God never deserts his own cause, nor leaves worth and piety to be finally oppressed; though, for a while, he may allow trials and hardships to be undergone by the greatest and the best of men. No person could appear more neglected and forsaken of God, than our Saviour was, for a season, when in the hands of his foes. During that season, important purposes were carried on by Divine Providence for the benefit of mankind; but when these purposes were accomplished, God came forth in support of truth and righteousness, and by the high honors conferred upon Christ, established his eternal triumph over all his foes. Yes, that lovely Jesus, who endured fatigue and hunger, who was torn with scourges and pierced with nails, who agonized in the garden and expired upon the cross, is now removed beyond the rage of his enemies; is exalted at the right hand of God, in the highest seat of dignity and honor—angels, authorities, and principalities, being made subject to him. He is now the very joy and glory of heaven, the brightest effulgence of the Deity, the sun that illuminates the regions of the blessed. And

who does not rejoice that the Saviour has been thus glorified? Who does not even leap for joy at the thought, that he, who loved us unto death, has been thus exalted far above all principalities and powers? Surely, independent of the interest which we ourselves have in his advancement, we ought to be exceeding glad that our greatest friend and benefactor should be thus gloriously rewarded.

4. The exaltation of Jesus Christ prepared the way for the glorious *effusion of the Holy Spirit*. Our blessed Lord promised his disciples that, when he was glorified, he would send down the Holy Spirit: *It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you*. The Holy Spirit would not have been given, if Jesus had not been glorified: it was necessary that he should go into heaven, that he might send the Spirit down from thence. Agreeable to the promise of the Saviour, the Holy Spirit was poured out at the appointed time, both in his miraculous and saving influences. By the influence of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were enabled to preach the gospel in a great diversity of languages, which they had never learned; and to work many shining and stupendous miracles, in confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion. They were also empowered, by the imposition of hands, to communicate the Holy Spirit to others. The Holy Spirit, furthermore, brought all things to their remembrance, and assisted them in their ordinary ministrations. It qualified them for the regular discharge of every moral and religious duty.

But the operations of the Spirit are far from being confined to the apostles, or to the apostolic age. There is the same necessity now, for the operations of the Holy Spirit for the ordinary purposes of conviction, conversion, and sanctification, as in the first ages of Christianity. Human nature possesses, in every age, the same tendencies to sin, the same obstinacy of unbelief, and the same enmity of heart against God and holiness. It was, therefore, ordained of God, as an essential part of the gospel scheme of salvation, that the Holy Spirit should *reprove the world of sin*. It is by the law that we have the knowledge of sin. By the law we understand the written word that was engraven upon the tables of stone, and given to man as a rule of life, every deviation from which is a moral offence. This law extends, not only to outward actions, but also to every inward desire. The Spirit, in reproofing the world of sin, reveals to the mind the spirituality of the law by which sin is made to abound; or, in other words, by this act of the Spirit, the understanding is enabled to see our sins in a clearer and stronger light. By this act of the Spirit, also, we more clearly discover the strength and vehemence of our sinful passions and appetites. This is what St. Paul meant when he said, *Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*. Thus, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, we see in a strong and clear light the corruptions of the human heart, the number and

aggravation of our offences, and are led to regard sin as exceeding sinful. The Holy Spirit, then, in reproving the world of sin, gives to the mind a more deep and vivid impression of these great truths, than it could possibly receive if no such energy had been imparted by God. It is under the influence of this conviction, the sinner exclaims: *Wo is me! I am undone: behold, I am vile; I repent, and abhor myself in dust and ashes.* Under these impressions, the spirit of man becomes *broken and contrite*, and such a spirit *God will not despise.*

The Holy Spirit also imparts to penitent believers a new life, and he is, therefore, called a *life-giving Spirit.* Consequently, all true Christians become *the habitation of God through the Spirit*; he dwells in them, and operates in them effectually for all the ends and purposes of their salvation, producing in them all *the fruits of goodness, and righteousness, and truth.* His motions may not unfitly be compared to the operations of the soul of man in the human body. Without the soul, the body cannot perform any vital functions whatever; but when that spiritual inhabitant is present with us, and discharges her proper offices, we show, by the various exercises of the mind and body, that she really dwells in us. Now, the Spirit of God performs in the soul an office somewhat analogous to this. The soul, by itself, has respect only to things visible and temporal; but, when filled by the Spirit of God, it becomes deeply occupied about things spiritual and eternal. And precisely as the body needs the presence and operation of the soul for the discharge of the offices in relation to this world, so does the soul need the influences of the Holy Spirit for the discharge of its duties in reference to the world to come. This exactly corresponds with what St. Paul says: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me.* And again, he says, *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* Hence, true religion, as said an eminent minister of the gospel, *is the life of God in the soul.*

5. The gift of the Holy Spirit, which rendered the glorious dispensation of the gospel complete, furnished the means of effecting *a great civil, moral, and religious change in the condition of the world, by a preached gospel.* The prophets had foretold the great and surprising change which was to take place, under the influence of the Christian religion—they had employed the most beautiful and sublime imagery, to describe this change to their countrymen, and to future posterity. They had declared that, *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be reeds and rushes.* Conceive of large tracts of country, perfectly sterile, consisting only of burning sands, in which nothing will grow; and these infested with all kinds of noxious

animals; how wonderful and surprising to behold these desert tracts, by the almighty power of God, filled at once with springs and rivers of water, and covered with verdant hills and valleys; freed from all its venomous inhabitants, and filled with flocks and herds for the use of man; and then you will have some idea of that great change which is wrought by the gospel, wherever it is established! And such is the change which the prophets foretold should be wrought upon the heathen world by the power and influence of Christianity; and the history of the progress of the gospel justifies these representations.

Wherever the missionaries of the cross have gone, and have succeeded in establishing the Christian religion, the most barbarous heathen nations have become civilized. Some of them were cannibals; others worshipped their swords as gods: and all of them offered human victims to their idols. The ferocious became mild; those who prowled about for plunder acquired settled property, as well as a relish for domestic happiness; persons who dwelt in caves or huts learned from the missionaries the art of building; they who fed on raw flesh, applied to agriculture; men who had been clothed in skins, and were strangers to manufactures, enjoyed the comforts of apparel; and the violent and rapacious renounced their rapine and plunder. Along with the introduction of civilization, was also introduced a knowledge of letters. Christianity being contained in books, the use of letters became necessary to its teachers; nor could learning have been entirely lost, while there was an order of men who were obliged to possess a moderate share of it to qualify them for the priesthood. The most polished nations now in existence, are indebted to Christianity for the preservation and diffusion of literature, and the elegant art of painting, statuary, architecture, and music. Christians have furnished the world with grammars, dictionaries, a knowledge of antiquities, sacred and secular, chronology, the continuation of history through many centuries, rational systems of morality and natural religion, improvements in natural philosophy, metaphysical researches, and the rules of jurisprudence and political knowledge, for settling the rights of subjects, both civil and religious, upon a proper foundation. Indeed, the world is indebted to Christians for the improvements, ancient and modern, in all the arts and sciences, and, especially, for the modern improvements in agriculture, in manufactures, in machinery, in shipbuilding, in steamboats, in railroads, and in every branch of mechanics; and, consequently, the world is indebted to them for the beneficial and happy results of these improvements.

6. But Christianity not only promotes the present happiness of mankind; it promises to all who embrace it, and render a cheerful and sincere obedience to its holy and just requisitions, *everlasting felicity in a future state of existence*; and thus the glorious plan of the gospel will be consummated *in the eternal salvation of all the true followers of Christ.*













