





A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED

BEFORE THE CONVENTION

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

AT RICHMOND, IN VIRGINIA,

MAY 3d, 1792.

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Rector of Bath Parish, Dinwiddie County.

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A D D R E S S .



To the Right Reverend the Bishop, the Rev. the Clergy, and the Lay-Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the State of Virginia.

MY BRETHREN,

IF we consider the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as a complete system of religion, devised by infinite wisdom and goodness, for the recovery of lost mankind to the favour and image of God, we shall discover a fitness therein, every way adapted to answer the end designed ; and that, in this view, the gospel is consistent with the highest reason.

But if we consider it merely as a system of morals, the Gospel becomes a riddle of absurdities, and leaves us in the dark how to account for the thousandth part of its sacred contents.

Whoever adverts to the tenour of the holy scriptures, will find that they uniformly represent mankind, by nature, as fallen from God ;—fallen into sin, and under guilt and condemnation ;—as having lost the divine favour and their own innocency, and all that original rectitude and primitive purity, which they possessed, when they first came out of the plastic hand of their CREATOR. On this foundation the whole scheme of salvation, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, standeth. Accordingly the gospel takes into consideration the nature of God, as a Being, holy, just and pure, as well as good, merciful and compassionate ; and the nature and circumstances of man, as fallen, guilty and depraved ; and makes adequate provisions for reconciling God to man, by the propitiatory sacrifice of the Redeemer ; and man to God, by renovating and refining degenerate nature, by divine grace. And thus it is, that sinners, guilty and

defiled, are restored both to the favour and image of **God** ; not only pardoned and delivered from condemnation, but regenerated and made fit subjects for **GOD** to take pleasure in. The glorious gospel, when viewed in this light, must certainly appear to accord with the eternal reason and nature of things, and most justly to challenge universal veneration and esteem.

It must also be observed, by every attentive reader, that the blessings or benefits of the gospel are held forth and offered to men, not in a jumbled or promiscuous manner, but in such certain order and connection, that one benefit precedes, or goes before another, with the utmost propriety and regularity. This, if duly observed, would naturally point out to a considerate mind the order and connexion, in which the doctrines of christianity ought to be preached.

But though this is a matter of very great consequence to the proper discharge of the ministry, and the success of our labours, yet it is greatly to be feared, that it too seldom enters into the heads or hearts of many ministers. They may take care that their sermons shall be adorned with fine language, and contain nothing but what is true in itself ; but whether the matter be truly evangelical, and suitable to the present stage of religion, in the congregation, to which they preach, perhaps, may make no part of the inquiry.

I may be told, that they preach up the purest morality, and bear their "testimony against all the reigning vices of the times." I acknowledge morality to be a lovely, precious and ornamental jewel ; and that vice is odious, abominable and destructive. But true morality can never spring forth from an unrenewed heart, whatever specious appearances there may be ; nor can vice be rooted out, by inveighing against it, in the most severe and pointed terms ; or by satyrizing it, with the utmost keenness and asperity.

If my historical knowledge does not fail me, I can venture to affirm, that the vices of the Roman empire never grew faster, or more rank, than after Perseus, Juvenal and Horace adopted the satyrical method of reformation. And he must have little knowledge of the human heart, who can suppose that its vices can be removed by such methods. They have struck their vile roots too deep to be eradicated by any thing less, than the power and grace of **God**, which

the gospel supplies. If we wish or expect to do any thing effectual to their extirpation, let us strike at the root of the disease; for all our labours will be to no purpose, while we direct our strokes merely at the branches.

But after all that can be said, I am fully convinced, that no man is likely to make an able and useful minister of the new testament, who has not had a proper introduction to the gospel ministry. I mean, that he, who would preach with order, propriety and success to others, must be experimentally acquainted with the order, in which, he himself has actually received the blessings of the gospel to the saving conviction and conversion of his own soul.

Such an introduction to the ministry will let a man in at the right door, and the sheep will hear his voice. For that minister who has himself been truly awakened to a just sight and sense of his own lost and helpless state—has been deeply conscious of his absolute need of a saviour—has been enabled, by divine aid, to come to God, as a poor miserable sinner; and has obtained pardon and peace with his offended Sovereign, by faith in the blood of Christ—that minister, I say, will be best qualified, *cæteris paribus*, to teach others, not only the right way, but the right order, in which the benefits of the new covenant are to be looked for and expected. He will also speak feelingly, because he himself has felt, and does feel: he will speak alarmingly, because he has been alarmed, and he will speak comfortably to such as stand in need, or are duly prepared for the reception of comfort, because he himself has been comforted, by the consolation of Jesus Christ.

O that it may please the eternal God to furnish our church with a rich supply of such experienced Pastors. Then may we expect to see the present gloomy aspect of our religious affairs wonderfully changed for the better: vital piety will then spring up and flourish among us, and our church become the glory of the land. But till this shall be the case I cannot entertain the least hope or expectation of ever seeing any other change, but from bad to worse.

In the following discourse I have endeavoured to lay down some of the leading truths of the gospel, and to point out the order and connection in which they should be preached. At the request of the clerical and lay deputies, in con-

vention yesterday, I have sent it to the press, without any apology for its being destitute of the flowers of rhetoric and the ornaments of speech. "My one design was to speak plain truth," in such terms as might be easily comprehended, by every class of my hearers, then present, and which, I trust, will be understood by all my readers.

That the Lord may accompany with his abundant blessing, what is here laid before the public, is the sincere prayer of,

GENTLEMEN,

Your real Friend and humble Servant,

In the pure Gospel of Christ,

DEVEREUX JARRATT.

RICHMOND, MAY 5, 1792.

A SERMON.

1st TIMOTHY—4th and 16th.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine ; continue in them ; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that bear thee.

THE office of a gospel Minister is, of all others, the most sacred, weighty and important ; and the condition on which it is held, very awful and tremendous. It is therefore the duty and interest of all those who are invested with it, seriously to reflect on, and frequently to revolve in their minds, the greatness of the trust, in them reposed ; and also to consider, with the utmost solemnity and concern, in what manner they ought to conduct themselves in their vocation and ministry, so as to deliver their own souls from death, and be a Saviour of life unto life, to as many of their hearers as possible. To effect these salutary purposes, the Apostle Paul gave this solemn charge and pertinent advice contained in my text. *Take heed unto thyself ;* have a particular regard to thine own temper and conduct ; let this be thy first and greatest care ; *and to thy doctrine,* not only to the matter, but also to the manner of thy preaching ; and *continue in them,* give up thyself wholly to this business and persevere therein to the end of thy days : and to animate and support thee under all the fatigues, trials, and sufferings, which thou mayest meet with, in the faithful discharge of thy office, still keep the prize in view, the happy consequences of such a conduct ; *for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that bear thee.*

As these words are equally applicable to us, as they were to Timothy, I shall, without any farther exposition, proceed to consider the several particulars contained in them. These are the four following :

I. That it is the primary duty of gospel Ministers to *take heed to themselves.*

II. *To their doctrine.*

III. That they must *continue in them*, and persevere to the end : and

IV. The happy consequences resulting from so doing : *for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.*

As the province of addressing you, on this occasion, was assigned me, by the last convention, I shall not take up any of your time in making the customary apologies, about *slenderness* of abilities for addressing such a respectable and learned audience, or *unfitness* to assume the province of your instructor. I consider myself as *a debtor both to the wise, and to the unwise* : and while I address myself, both to clergy and laity, in the name, and by the authority of my adorable Lord and Master, my one concern is, not to please the taste or tickle the fancy, but to speak plain truth, in such a manner, as may be most acceptable in *his* sight.—And may the eternal God enable me so to preach, and you to hear, that his name may be glorified, and you edified, for Christ's sake.

I. *Take heed to yourselves.* This is the first particular in the text ; and it is truly the first and most essential qualification in a gospel minister. He that does not take good heed to himself, is not likely to take good heed to the souls of others ; or indeed to do any thing else, belonging to his sacred office, in a becoming manner.

Many things are supposed to be implied, in this injunction. But I am verily persuaded, that the main thing intended by the Apostle, is *personal religion*. Ministers are as intimately concerned, in the weighty truths, they deliver, as any of their hearers. And when their own hearts are duly impressed with them, it is reasonable to suppose, that this impression, as by a happy contagion, will, more or less, diffuse and spread itself from them to the people. By *personal religion* I mean not a blameless life and conversation only ; but an experimental acquaintance with the transforming

power of the gospel, on the inward man of the heart; whence all true religion takes its rise. This, I say, is the first, the most essential qualification of a gospel Minister; the want of which, all other acquisitions of Greek, Latin, Philosophy, Rhetorick, and such like, can never supply; though they are useful in their places.*

The study of pulpit eloquence has been warmly recommended to us; and to deny its utility, would argue both want of taste and judgement. But as art can never vie with nature, so all the cold rules laid down in books, though *learned and conn'd by rote*, and digested in the most perfect manner, can never, in reality, make a pulpit orator, without the saving, vivifying grace of God ruling and inspiring the heart and soul of the speaker. All would appear but as the bold strokes and nice touches of the pencil, on canvass, when compared to the active warmth and glowing features of the living man. Art can smooth our periods and add lustre to our sentiments: but all the art in the world can never reach that natural, spontaneous force and pathos, which is the genuine offspring of vital piety, and *the love of God shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost*. For my part, I see not how it is possible for any man to inculcate the great truths of the gospel, and distinguishing doctrines of christianity, with any suitable degree of ardour and propriety, who has never known their saving power on his own soul. For instance, how can a preacher enforce, with spirit and confidence, the necessity of spiritual regeneration on others, who has no experimental knowledge of that great, that heaven-

* *It is far from my intention to depreciate human learning; or to insinuate that the knowledge of Greek and Latin, and of the arts and sciences, is of little or no account. I am fully persuaded that the knowledge of these is of great service to a preacher of the gospel, as it tends to adorn the mind, enlarge the faculties, improve the understanding, and habituate a man to close thinking and just reasoning. Nay, I may venture to say, that, when under proper direction, it may prepare the heart for higher attainments even in religion. But the knowledge of these, of themselves, would be very insufficient to qualify a man for the gospel ministry. "For (to use the words of a fine writer) a priest that is not clothed with righteousness, though otherwise richly adorned with all the ornaments of human and divine literature, and those gilded over with the rays, of seraphick prudence and sagacity, is yet but a naked, despicable creature, of no authority, no interest, no use or service in the church of God."*

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born change on his own heart? My brethren, let us take heed to ourselves that we rest not in any outward form of godliness, without the inward power thereof; and that we never deal "*in the false commerce of a truth unselt.*"

'Tis as absolutely necessary to salvation, for the Laity, as well as for the Clergy, to be possess'd of the life and power of religion; for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* But there is an additional obligation on us, who are Ministers, because the honour of God and the prosperity of the Church depend more on us than other men.—The rapid declension of the Church,* to which we belong, and the decadence of religion among us, have been mentioned on former occasions. This indeed has been matter of grief and complaint to all her real friends. A number of things may have contributed towards it; but, as has been hinted before to day, I am verily persuaded, nothing has been more prejudicial than the misconduct of some, and lukewarmness of others belonging to our own body. Can it be doubted, but the house of God may and will be deserted; and that men will *abhor the offerings of the Lord*, now, as well as in the days of *Eli*, if similar causes abound?—'Tis not a secret sentiment, or a mere conjecture, but the avowed profession of multitudes, that the main reason why numbers have fallen away from our church, is not only the want of preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical, but also the want of that gravity and sobriety, fervency of spirit and holiness of life and conversation in her ministers, which they know to be absolutely necessary, not only to distinguish the Clergyman, but every real Christian. I doubt not but our church is founded on principles as pure and apostolick as any church in Christendom. But the laity, in general, are not so capable of judging, in those points of controversy, which respect the different modes and constitutions of different churches, but they are very capable of judging and distinguishing between those Ministers who are grave in their deportment, strict and holy in their lives, warm and animated in their

* *What is here and elsewhere said on this head had respect, no doubt, to the peculiar state of the Church in Virginia and parts adjacent. But the cause assigned for this declension merits the attention of every Minister of Jesus Christ. Such a sermon as this can never, in any state, or christian country, be unseasonable.*

preaching, and diligent and laborious in their vocations ; and those, who are cold and languid, slothful and vicious. And on this distinction they often decide, in favour of this or that community.

My brethren, tis in vain to dissemble the matter, the greatest share of that which has reduced our Church to her truly mortifying and humiliating state, is justly chargeable on ourselves : and we may flatter ourselves as much as we please ; yet, be assured of this, till the Altar be purged, the sacrifice will be contemptible.—I speak this, with the more assurance, from my long and extensive acquaintance, with the language and sentiments of the people, in many parts of the state.—And I must confess, with the aspiring youth mentioned by the Poet, I have often been put to silence by their observations and reflections ; because, as he said,

———pudet hæc opprobria nobis

Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.

But as this is a subject which may require to be touched with a more tender and delicate hand, than falls to my share, I shall not enlarge upon it, lest, by attempting to heal, I should exasperate the sore. However, I have said enough to show how absolutely necessary it is, that Ministers should *take heed to themselves*.—I pass on to the

II. Particular. *Take heed to thy doctrine.*

This injunction comprehends these two things.

1. Take heed to the matter ; and,
 2. Take heed to the manner, of teaching.
1. The matter.

I am sensible that this subject is too comprehensive to have justice done it, within the limits of one Sermon. I shall therefore say, in a word, “ the subject-matter and substance of all gospel doctrine is Christ.” This may be easily evinced from the writings of Saint Paul. In his epistles to the Corinthians, he says, *we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. I determined not to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* And writing to the Colossians, concerning the glorious mystery, which had been hid from ages, but was then made known to the Gentiles ; he informs them, that it is *Christ in you, the hope of glory ; whom we preach.* This endearing object occupied his whole time, and drew all his attention and studies after it. This

was his joy, his treasure, and his boast: *God forbid, says he that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* No consideration could divert him from his favourite and important theme. When the Jews sought after signs and the Greeks for wisdom, he would gratify neither the one nor the other; though it might cost him his reputation for Philosophy and other arts and sciences. Instead of this, he persisted to preach a crucified Saviour, as being of more value than all the fine arts in the world. *We preach Christ crucified*, though a stumbling block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness. To preach *Christ crucified* comprehends the whole *credenda* and *agenda* of christianity; all things necessary to faith and practice.

Were we the disciples of some of the renowned sages of Pagan antiquity, we might think it sufficient to amuse our hearers with some spruce subjects of morality. But as we profess to be the disciples of a crucified Jesus, and to receive our lessons from him, and those Apostles who were immediately commissioned by him, what have we to do with your Plato's, Seneca's, Socrates, and such like, who were utter strangers to that glorious gospel which we are commissioned to preach? At proper times, I grant, it is our indispensable duty to explain and enforce the great duties of morality. But to dwell on moral duties, before we have laid a proper foundation for the due and acceptable discharge of them, on evangelical principles, is not proper; because this is to begin at the wrong end of our work, and, of consequence, we are not likely to effect any good purpose.

Now, in preaching Christ crucified, we shall observe certain evangelical truths, which immediately break forth from him, in that capacity, as their source and centre, just as the rays of light break forth from the meridian Sun.—These truths are such as follow. To wit. The fallen and miserable state of man, on which the whole gospel scheme of Salvation is founded; the necessity of an *atonement*, through a mediator; the *sufferings* of Christ, *for that purpose*; the dignity of his person and the infinite merit of his death and passion; the free forgiveness of sins, through his blood and righteousness; the necessity of regeneration, and the influence of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten our understanding, renew our will, sanctify our affections, shed abroad the love of

God in our hearts, comfort our souls, and support us, in all our trials, temptations, and difficulties. These are the doctrines, which are most intimately connected with a dying Saviour, and the whole scheme of redemption, through him. They are of such importance, that we should never lose sight of them, let the subject of our discourse be what it will; and when we preach *these* we preach *Christ*. And as these are the doctrines, which ever have been, so they ever will be, the most effectual and successful means of *converting sinners from the error of their ways, and saving souls from death*. They ought, therefore, to be clearly explained, frequently repeated, and strongly enforced.—I come,

2. To treat of the manner, in which the doctrines of the gospel ought to be preached.

And, 1. They should be preached in their proper order and connection.

2. With ardour, zeal, and affection: and,

3. With a close application.

1. The doctrines of the gospel ought to be preached in their proper order and connection; and not in a jumbled and promiscuous manner.

Now, as the whole scheme of redemption, through Christ, is founded on the fallen and ruined state of mankind, then the first thing necessary to effect their recovery from ruin, is to make our hearers sensible, deeply sensible, that this is their state, in particular. Till this is done, we may preach against this vice and that vice, to no purpose; and we may preach morality till we preach it all out of the world. I firmly believe there never was, and never will be, one soul brought to take one right step, in the way to heaven, by merely preaching morality.* Christ is the way, and the only way pointed out in the gospel. And if ever we bring sinners to Christ, as the *way*, and to close with him, on gospel terms, we must so preach as to make them feel extreme need of him. For, *they that are whole, need not the Physician, but they that are sick*.

We must, therefore, labour, by all means, to expose, in the most alarming colours, the entire *depravity* and univer-

* I speak of such as are under the gospel. The Heathens I leave in the hands of their Creator: For what have I to do with those that are without? They that are without God judgeth.

fal *corruption* of human nature ; and place before the eyes of our hearers their guilt, and danger of perishing, as being under the wrath and curse of God, and liable every moment, to the strokes of vindictive justice.

However unwelcome, or unpleasing such a conviction might be to any of you, my hearers, yet it cannot be dispensed with. 'Tis of the utmost necessity, that you should not only *bear* but *feel* that *you are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked* : and that there is indeed, “ no health in you.” The very meaning of the Greek word, which is translated *Gospel*, signifies “ good news, or glad tidings.”—But you will never be able to apprehend the propriety and significancy of this word, or rightly understand why it is so called, till you feel the deadly wounds which sin has given you, and are painfully sensible of the woeful destruction it hath wrought on your precious souls.

Should any of our hearers deny the doctrine of original sin, or that human nature is so degenerate and corrupt, we can easily prove that it is so, both from scripture, and matters of fact. The scriptures assure us, *That we are shapen in wickedness and conceived in sin* : that *we are dead in trespasses and sins* ; and are, by nature, *children of wrath* :—that *in our flesh dwelleth no good thing* ; and that *by the offence of one, judgement came upon all men to condemnation*.—And if we look round us, and survey the conduct of the generality, evidences of this universal degeneracy and depravity of mankind, from matters of fact, will glare upon us from every quarter. See ! whole families ! See thousands, of all ranks and degrees, living in the neglect of God and his reasonable service.—See every species of wickedness and profaneness abounding and overspreading the land, like a rapid torrent, or a sweeping inundation. And whence do all these foul streams originate, but from the polluted fountain of a corrupted heart ?

But men should not only be convicted of original, but of their actual sins against God ; and the imminent dangers to which they are exposed, on account of their multiplied transgressions of his holy law. And, *as by the law is the knowledge of sin*, this renders it necessary for Ministers to preach the law, in all its spirituality and broad extent : and that so pointedly, that the hearers may duly apprehend their own particular concern, in what is delivered. Impenitent

sinners must be faithfully warned that *the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*: that tribulation and wrath, indignation and anguish is the certain doom of the Christless and unconverted sinner; whether high or low, rich or poor.

These, and such like alarming declarations, when pronounced in their proper place, and pointed at the conscience, with a solemnity becoming their dread importance, and divine authority, will not fail, by the blessing of Heaven, of having their salutary effects, upon some of the most secure and careless. *Sinners in Zion will be afraid, and fearfulness will surprize the hypocrites.* They start alarmed from their carnal slumbers, and behold the gloomy clouds of vengeance, hanging over their guilty and defenceless heads, big with thunder, fire and storm; while, far beneath, the flaming gulf gapes wide to receive them at their coming.

By such just views of their guilt and danger, sinners begin, in good earnest, to strive to flee the wrath to come.—Now they quit their jovial companions: the ball room and card table are no longer frequented: they break off every species of vice, and betake themselves to reading, hearing, and praying, with a solemnity unknown before.—They now plainly see that life, their eternal life, is at stake, and there is no time left for trifling and delay. Their anxious hearts, wounded by the pungent terrors of the divine law, and oppressed with loads of guilt, vent themselves in many a sigh and groan, in sorrowful retirement. In a word, as their duty is, so they now make use of all the means of grace, with constancy, vigor, and exertion.

By this time, a very great reformation and visible change have taken place in such, and they may begin to flatter themselves, that they are out of danger now, and all is well.—But this is a fatal mistake; for there is still a greater danger, though of a different kind than before. Before they were in danger of perishing, from their out breaking sins and criminal neglect of religious duties: but now, they are in danger of resting in an outward reformation, and of making a Saviour of their duties. Thus like the Jews, in St. Paul's day, *being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they may never submit themselves to the*

righteousness of Christ, by which alone they can be justified in the sight of God.

Therefore, when sinners are ready to sing a *requiem* to their souls, reposing themselves, on their external change, and resting in the works of their own hands, the ministers of Christ must alarm them, with fresh discoveries of their danger; chase them out of their safe hiding places; dislodge them from all their refuges of lies; and make use of the heaviest artillery of law, to demolish the flattering intrenchment of their own self-righteousness. In short, they must be closely pursued, till, from a full conviction of their own inability to relieve themselves, by any thing they can either do or suffer, they are made heartily willing to submit themselves to the righteousness of Christ, and, in humble self-despair, cheerfully accept of pardon and salvation, as they are freely offered in the gospel. Now, when we have so successfully convicted sinners of their guilt and danger, and reduced them to despair of any help in themselves, then, and not till then, is the way properly opened for the proclamation of deliverance, through the riches of free, gospel grace.

Here it is, that we are called forth to the most sweet and pleasing part of our work: I mean, that now is the time for us to exhibit the Lord Jesus, in all his mediatorial glories, and in all the offices which he, as the great Redeemer of a fallen race, sustains and executes. Now we must open and display the plan of salvation through him: how, as our substitute and surety, he fulfilled the precept of the law or covenant of works, and bore the curse for us, or in our stead. *That having magnified the law and made it honourable, by his active obedience, and satisfied the rigid demands of justice by his passive obedience; God may now be just and the justifier of him, who believeth in Jesus.* We may therefore invite the weary and heavy laden, with a burden of guilt, to come to him for rest. We may give them the strongest assurance of his willingness to receive all repenting and returning prodigals, from his kind invitations, indefinite calls and gracious promises.

We must also point out and explain the method by which sinners obtain a saving interest, in the justifying righteousness of Christ. And this, I apprehend, must be by *imputation*. This important truth we are taught, by St. Paul,

in several places ; but no where more clearly and explicitly than in his second epistle to the Corinthians, V. chap. 21st verse, *For he was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* As if he had said—Christ Jesus, who had no sin, but by *Imputation*, was made sin, or a sin-offering for us ; that we, who have no righteousness of our own, might be made the righteousness of God in him. Or in other words ; as our sins were so charged to his account, as our surety, that he suffered for them ; so must his righteousness, consisting in his active and passive obedience, be imputed to us, or placed to our account, that by this righteousness, we may be justified in the sight of God, and saved from wrath through him. But the condition, on our part, whereby we become intitled to the benefits, procured by our Redeemer's righteousness, is *Faith*. Faith is the grand condition of the gospel. This is exceedingly evident from the writings of the Apostle Paul, especially his epistles to the Romans and Galatians. And we also find, that when the trembling jailor asked that important question : *Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?*—The answer is, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* But we read so frequently of being justified *by Faith in Christ*, by *believing in Christ*, and by *faith in his blood*, that it is needless to enlarge. To mention only one instance ; you will observe (in Acts 20) that St. Paul, in his solemn and affectionate farewell to the Churches of Ephesus, reminds them of his own fidelity, in declaring to them the whole *counsel of God*, and that he had kept back nothing that was profitable to them, or to their salvation ; and, in the 21st verse, he sums up the substance of what he had taught them publicly, and from house to house ; namely, *Testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* This was the sum of his preaching ; and, indeed, it is the sum and substance of all gospel doctrine. And how exactly this accords, with the order of preaching I have just now laid before you, must strike every attentive mind.—We are first to preach *Repentance toward God*. But this cannot so effectually be done, in any other way, as by exposing the degeneracy and corruption of mankind ; and pointing out the horrid deformity, dangerous nature, and destructive consequences of sin. And when

this has produced the designed effects, then we naturally proceed to exhibit the Lord Jesus, as the all-sufficient Saviour, and to preach faith, in him, as the only condition of justification through him.*

From the same source, the corruption of human nature, we likewise proceed to evince the absolute necessity of regeneration, or the New-Birth. *Marvel not*, says our Lord, *that I said unto thee, ye must be born again*. If we only consider our Saviour's reason, for this *declaration*, mentioned in the preceding verse, *that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh*, i. e. carnal and corrupt, there can be no cause to marvel at it. But on the other hand, there would be great cause for wonder and amazement, should any assert, that an internal change was unnecessary. If mankind be justly depicted, in Rom. iii. 10 verse and downward—if we are *shapen in wickedness and conceived in sin*—if, by nature, *we are earthly, sensual, and devilish*, and have no relish for the refined pleasures of devotion. Would it not shock all common sense, to affirm, that such creatures, without an entire change of heart and affections, are capable of the enjoyment of God, the company of Saints and Angels, and all that extatic bliss of Heaven, consisting in the worship and praises of God, and the perfection of holiness?

The absolute necessity of regeneration, must be strenuously insisted on, and its nature and author held forth, in a clear light. By *doing this*, our hearers will be convinced, not only that they cannot be happy without it, but also, that no work, good and acceptable, in the sight of God, can be done, by them, till they are *renewed in the spirit of their mind*, and have put on the new man, which, *after the image of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness*.

Should any object to this, as if it were a *new fangled*

* *How clearly do the articles of our old church point out to us this order and manner of preaching? After laying down what her sons are to believe respecting God and the Three Persons, in Trinity and Unity, the canonical Scriptures, and the Creeds, she proceeds, in article the ninth, to speak of original sin and the depravity of human nature: in the tenth, she sets forth the helpless state of man; and in the eleventh, she teaches how we are to be justified, or made righteous and restored to the favour of God. Her words are, "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deserving. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort."*

doctrine, we may readily prove to the contrary, by showing how consonant these sentiments are to the Liturgy and Articles of the old Church. The 13th article expressly declares, that “works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasing to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace.—Yea rather for that they are not done, as *God*, hath willed *and* required them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.” And let all my hearers be assured, that no external reformation of life or manners, nor a submission to baptism, or any other outward rights of the Church, will amount to this change.—Nothing less than a renovation of the whole man is the change intended. The apostle calls it a *new creation*. *If any man be in Christ, savingly he is a new creature*; or, “there is a new creation; (as the Greek word *ktisis* might more properly be rendered).—And again, *for in Christ Jesus*, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation *kaince ktisis*.

And be it known unto you all, that it is not enough to acknowledge the necessity of such a change, but you yourselves must be the subjects of it; you must be acquainted with the transforming power of it, on your own hearts; or where God is, there you can never come.

You must also be deeply conscious, that a change so great, so noble and divine, cannot be effected by any human power or ability. It is God alone, the fountain of divine influence, who is able to repair the ruins of degenerate nature. Hence it is said, that we must be *born of the Spirit—born of God*. To God therefore must you look: to him must you frequently and fervently pray, that, according to *his great and precious promises*, you may be made partakers of the divine nature.

O Sirs, were we all but truly sensible how excellent and indispensable this renovation is, and how insufficient we are of ourselves to effect it, we should discover a beauty and property, in our truly excellent and comprehensive Liturgy, we never saw before. And, O, with what fervour should we join in praying, that Almighty God “would cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of his holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name.” A subject of greater importance than this, never engaged the attention and concern of mankind; but, as time

will not admit of enlargement at present, I shall conclude, with reminding the Laity, that it is the Spirit of God alone, that can work in you this spiritual and internal change, which is so absolutely necessary to prepare you for the mansions above, and inspire you with that Heaven-born religion which will grow and thrive and ripen for eternal glory : and with cautioning the Clergy *to take heed*, that you never intimate that any man can enter into the kingdom of Heaven without this change, or pass through it, and yet remain insensible of it. A mere hint of this nature, from a Minister, may be attended with very pernicious consequences to many souls.

And now, my brethren, on supposition that any of our dear hearers, in our respective congregations, have been brought to see and lament their lost and wretched state--have repented and sought the Lord, with all their hearts and have obtained pardon for all their sins, by faith in the righteousness of Christ ; and have been regenerated and made alive to God, by the cleansing and quickening powers of the eternal Spirit, the way is now opened for inculcating all moral duties ; all the good works of piety and mercy, enjoined in the moral law of liberty.

In preaching morality, in this order and connection, we tread on safe ground ; because herein we follow the best patterns and examples. Saint Paul, in his letter to Titus, having reminded him of the free grace of God, in the salvation of men : that they were saved, not by any works which they had done, but merely through the mercy of the Lord, *by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost* being justified by his grace, and made heirs of eternal life, through Jesus Christ—proceeds to admonish Titus of the necessity of inculcating the practice of good works on believers. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God, may be careful to maintain good works*—The doctrine of justification, by faith only, is so far from discharging us from the necessity of good works, that, as it lays a proper foundation for the due & acceptable performance of them, so it strongly enforces them, from considerations & motives, the most cogent, weighty, & powerful. Indeed it is the only doctrine that is likely to produce the strictest morals and the holiest practice. *The love of Christ* says the Apostle *constraineth us ; while we thus judge, that if one died for all,*

then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they who live, in consequence of his death, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him, who died and rose again.

But though it be our duty to enforce the purest morals, yet, at the same time, let us *take heed* to do this, not as Hea-then moralists, but as Ministers of the Gospel. As such, be our subject what it will, we must always place Jesus Christ in the centre of the plan, so that we may point our hearers continually to him, from whom all ability, both to will and to do, is derived ; and through whom alone all our works, as well as our persons, can find acceptance with God. In vain do we attempt to make men active, lively, and uniform Christians, in any other way, than by teaching them, “ to live a life of faith, in the Son of God, who has so loved them, “ as to give himself for them.” This consideration, that *Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me*, is the main spring of all Christian virtues, and most powerful stimulus to obedience.

Talk they of morals ! O thou bleeding love !

Thou maker of new morals to mankind :

The grand morality, is love to thee.

But the tree must be made good, before the fruit can be so, in reality. Good works, says the 12th article, are the fruits of faith, and follow after “ justification.” Observe *they follow after justification*, as the fruit of that faith by which we are justified. But notwithstanding it is impossible for our good works, at any time, to merit the pardon of sin, or a title to Heaven ; yet *such as do spring from a lively faith, are pleasing to God*, and answer many valuable purposes.—They are a debt of gratitude to our Redeemer ; the brightest evidence of the truth of our faith, and the reality of an inward change of heart : they perfect our faith, and through their instrumentality, we grow in grace and meekness for the celestial kingdom. In short, professing Christians not only ought to be holy, but they must be holy in heart and life. For let a man profess ever so great a regard for Christ, and faith in the Gospel, yet, if he live in the practice of any known sin, or in the omission of any known duty, his profession is vain, his faith is dead, and Christ will profit him nothing.

Having pointed out the order and connection in which

the truths of the Gospel ought to be preached, I come,

II. To speak of that ardour, zeal, and affection, with which they should be preached.

It is neither commendable nor becoming, in a Minister, who is to *speak the words of truth and soberness*, to put on the wild airs of fanaticism, or the extravagant rage and fury of a frantic reveree.— And it is equally unbecoming to speak of the Lord Christ, and the weighty truths of the Bible, with coldness, languour, and air of unconcern. If Ministers are to be *burning and shining lights* then it should be our endeavour, not only to speak truth with clearness and propriety of diction, but with such fervency of spirit, and ardent zeal, as may at once convey light and heat to the souls of hearers. Thus shall we both inform the judgment, and engage the passions on the side of truth.

When we ascend the sacred desk, and cast our eyes round on the audience, we often behold multitudes of souls, on the very brink of everlasting ruin. Multitudes of impenitent and unconverted sinners, who must repent and fly to the arms of Jesus, and that soon, or be forever miserable. And yet, perhaps they are as full of pride, levity, and unconcern, as, if they were in no danger; or as if they had no God to obey, no soul to save, no heaven to gain, no hell to shun. Now we know, or ought to know, the deplorable, dangerous state that such poor, thoughtless and wretched mortals are in. That there is *but a step between them and death*; and should they die in their present state, they must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. In such circumstances, what a betraying of our own trust, and of the souls of men, would it be in us, if, instead of exerting ourselves to the utmost of our power, & using every motive to awaken them to an awful sense of their extreme danger, or rousing them with a voice of thunder to flee the wrath to come, we should entertain them with some languid harangue on the beauties of virtue; or amuse them with an affected display of our own abilities, to catch their applause?— Or, suppose the preacher should treat on a subject more evangelical, yet, if this be done in a spiritless manner, no good effects can reasonably be expected from it; because the speaker does not appear to be in earnest in what he says. Almost every body is so well acquainted with the constitution of human nature, as to know, that a man cannot but *speak in earnest*, when he is *in earnest*.

My brethren, if your hearts were suitably warmed with the generous love of God and the souls of men ; if we feel the power of divine truth in our own breasts, we cannot but speak with some suitable degree of animation and pathos : devout passions will enliven and adorn our periods and apparent indications of affectionate concern for the salvation of immortal souls, will command attention and solemnity, and bear home the truth, with mighty force and energy, on the minds and consciences of our hearers.—I have to add, on this head,

III. That we should close our discourses with a pointed application.

Many a good sermon has proved abortive, for want of a proper application. I have intimated already, that men must be brought to know themselves, or they will never suitably prize the Saviour. But we are not very likely to help them to this self-knowledge by merely dealing in generals, or speaking in a distant, abstract manner, as if we were talking of some third persons, and not speaking to those who are present. We must apply our doctrines to the particular cases and circumstances of the souls present. And then shall we be workmen, who need not be ashamed, when we *separate the precious from the vile* rightly dividing the word of truth, and *give to every one*, whether saint or sinner, *his proper portion in due season*. This interesting particular would admit of great enlargement—but I am hurried on to the

III. Particular, contained in the text.

Here I am lead to speak of ministerial assiduity and perseverance. *Continue in them*.

If there was any necessity for St. Paul, to charge his son Timothy, who, from a child had known the holy scriptures, *to give attendance to reading* and meditation ; and to devote himself wholly to the work of the ministry, *that his profiting*, his increasing proficiency, *might appear unto all his hearers* ; there is certainly as much necessity for this charge to be enforced upon and strictly observed by the Ministers in our age and time. If we duly consider the importance of our office, and the awful account we must render to the Lord of our stewardship, and the souls committed to our care, we shall easily discover that we have no time to waste in idle visits and trifling conversation ; much less to encourage, by our pres-

ence, if not by example, those vain, time-wasting and soul-destroying pleasures and amusements, so much in vogue among the gay, the giddy, the thoughtless and irreligious majority of mankind. Might not a Minister, if seen in the ball-room, at the card-table, or in the race-field justly meet with, at least, that mild, but pertinent rebuke, which the Lord gave the timorous Prophet, when out of his place of duty and usefulness—*What dost thou here, Elijah?* Let a Domitian descend from his imperial throne to the childish employment of catching flies—let a Nero drop the reins of government, and turn all his attention to a fiddle; but, as one immortal soul is of more value than the vast Roman Empire, in all its height of grandeur and extent of territory, let not those, who have the awful charge of souls, act a still more shocking and incongruous part, by giving themselves up to an over eager pursuit of this world; to trifling leveties, or wasting their time in vanity, idleness, and unprofitable conversation. All the time we have to spare, from our publick labours & those avocations, which are connected with our office, is little enough to spend in useful studies to furnish ourselves with divine knowledge, and wrestling with God, in prayer and supplication, for the growth of grace, in our own hearts, for a blessing on our labours, and for the salvation of the people.

But it is not enough to make a good beginning, or to flourish and blaze for a while: we must continue *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*—When we read, *Say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it,* we should make the application to ourselves. The dying charge of Paul the aged to his son Timothy, we should also frequently call to mind—*Watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry.—Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.* Perseverance must crown our labours: *Fidelity unto death ensures the crown of life.* Difficulties and sore trials we may expect to meet with; but the happy consequences of fidelity and perseverance, if duly reflected on, may abundantly support us under all. *For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee,* and this leads me to the.

IV. And last particular contained in the text.

It is possible for us to conceive of, or wish for any thing greater, and more desirable, than the salvation of our own souls, & the souls of others?—Blessed be God, his faithful servants are not doomed to drudge in this world forever. Death is fast approaching, as a friendly messenger, to put a period to all their toils & labours, in the Church militant here on earth. And, O what strong consolation must it afford a faithful Minister, in his last moments, to be conscious to himself that he is *pure from the blood of all men*. That, with zeal and unwearied diligence, he has declared *the whole council of God*; and approved himself as the Minister of Christ, *in much patience, in necessities, in distresses, in labours, in watchings, in fastings: by pureness, by knowledge, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, and by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left*.—That he has spent his life and exhausted his strength, in striving to save immortal souls from death. See, how serene & placid he lies on the confines of the grave; with what fortitude he faces the King of Terrors, with all his ghastly train.—How does he triumph in the prospect of a happy immortality, while he expires under the smiles of Heaven, and transporting expectations of being immediately admitted to the bosom of his beloved Lord and Saviour.—And surely it must greatly augment his comfort and happiness, that he has not *laboured in vain, nor spent his strength for nought*. That his condescending master has so honored him as to make him an instrument, in his hand, of turning *many to righteousness*, who will be his crown of rejoicing, in the day of the Lord: that God has made him the father of many spiritual children, dearer than sons and daughters; and who, as they have joined with him, in sweet communion and fellowship, in the humbler forms of worship here below, will shortly meet him again in the glorious realms of light, and join together, in the noble services of the celestial temple above. O, transporting thought!—Enough to fire our souls, and inspire the most timorous breast to encounter difficulties, brave dangers, and break through all oppositions.

These my brethren, are not matters of doubtful import: they are not merely ideal.—They are substantial realities, of which we have the most indubitable assurance. For what says my text—“Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine;

continue in them : for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

Having dispatched the doctrine, I cannot conclude, consistently with my own plan, without some

APPLICATION.

As every application should naturally arise from the doctrine, so,

I. You will recollect, that I have mentioned something of the fall and ruin of mankind, and a great necessity that men should be sensible of this, that they may suitably prize the Saviour. The question then, which I solemnly put to your consciences, is—Have you ever been so deeply conscious that this case was your own, as to be alarmed with such a sense of your danger, by reason of sin, that you have betaken yourselves to constant and fervent prayer to God, for mercy and deliverance. You could not rest as you had done, because you saw your soul lying under the corruption and guilt of sin, and every moment exposed to the sentence of the broken law, and the strokes of incensed justice. My hearers, Clergy and Laity, do you know any thing of these matters, by your own heart-felt experience? Do you—or do you not? If not, you are certainly strangers to vital religion; and have never taken one right step in the way to Heaven, in all your life, though you may have attended constantly, on all the outward forms of religion, ever since you can remember. To know ourselves, and to be feelingly sensible of our ruined, helpless state, is, undoubtedly, the first step towards our recovery by Christ, and consequently the first step heavenward. And if we have never taken this first step, it is not probable that we have taken a second. You have, therefore, great reason to conclude, that you are yet in your sins, and stand exposed to all the maledictions denounced against them. O that you would admit the conviction now, lest you see the truth of these things, when it is too late.

II. I observed, that when sinners are properly awakened to a sense of their danger, they reform their lives, and diligently attend on all the duties of religion and means of grace.—But yet there was danger, lest they should take up with the means instead of the end; and stop short of an interest in Christ's righteousness, by making a Saviour of, or trusting in, their reformation, and performance of moral and religious

duties. Then it was necessary to drive them out of all dependance in their own righteousness, and bring them to despair of meriting the pardon of one sin, or the favour of God, by any thing they could either do or suffer. This is the second step towards closing with Christ on gospel terms. And have you, my dear hearers, ever been brought to this?—When—and where?—Let conscience answer. If you are ignorant of this, your cause is very unpromising indeed. You do not appear ever to have seen, as you ought, your need of the Physician, or of that Saviour, who came to seek and to save the lost, the helpless, and the desperate.

III. I observed further, that when souls are happily reduced to the state last mentioned, that is, to despair of all help in themselves, then was the time for displaying the free grace of the gospel, and pointing the guilty and the helpless to the Lord Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient and willing Saviour. Dying souls are called to look unto him, by faith, and live; and the weary and heavy laden are invited to come to him for rest, with a promise that they should find it—And have you ever, in such circumstances, actually obeyed these calls and invitations?—Do you know what it is to find rest for your souls, in Jesus Christ?—Rest from a burden of sin and guilt?—Perhaps these close interrogatories may pinch some of my audience, and you might be ready to ask—“What sort of preaching is this?” I answer—this is preaching with an application, that every one of you may examine yourselves, and know what your present state is; whether a Saint or a sinner. But you might ask further—“Does not this talk about feeling the burthen of guilt, and feeling the need of a Saviour,” and such like, favour too much of enthusiasm, and the wild notions of Fanaticks?—No, sirs; tis the very language of our own mother Church. You can't be unacquainted with the confession she puts into the mouths of all who come to her solemn feasts. “The remembrance of our sins is greivous unto us; the *burthen* of them is intolerable.” And she directs the Minister, when he visits the sick, to pray, that the sick person may not only know, but “*feel* that there is no other name, through whom he may receive salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Have you been made to feel this? And have you been enabled, by divine assistance, to cast your souls with all their

load of guilt on the righteousness of the Redeemer? Have you, by faith, suspended your eternal all on his merits, expecting pardon of sin, the love and favour of God, and a title to Heaven, as the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord?—If so, then are ye true believers, and must know what it is to have joy and peace, in believing. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But if you have not the happy experience of such a faith, and its blessed effects, you are not believers, in a Gospel sense, but are still liable to all the miseries of a sinner out of Christ.

IV. I was led to mention the necessity of regeneration, and that this change was not merely external, but internal, Have you been the subjects of this change?—I do not ask you, Whether you believe this change to be necessary?—The necessity of it is demonstrable, both from reason and scripture. Nor do I ask the Clergy, whether you sometimes preach up the necessity of it? This we may do, and yet know nothing of it by experience. We may preach *a truth unselt*. But I ask you all, whether you have indeed experienced this great, this radical, this universal change on your hearts, so as to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, in righteousness and true holiness?—If you have not good reason to conclude, that this change has been wrought in you, how can you enjoy any rest or peace till it be effected?—Do you not remember the solemn, the reiterated declaration of our blessed Lord, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*.

Finally. If those who have believed, must be careful to maintain good works: if good works are the fruits of a saving faith, and the brightest evidence of our being in a state of grace; then I ask, in the presence of God, Is your conversation such as becometh the Gospel of Christ? Do you live a life of self denial, and take up the cross daily? Have you abandoned every known sin? Are there no swearers, drunkards, liars, and such like, within the sound of my voice; Do you conscientiously discharge the several duties you owe to God, your neighbour, and yourselves? Do you gladly attend all the ordinances of religion? Do you, at all opportunities, partake of the supper of the Lord? Do you pray in your families, morning and evening? Do you instruct your children in the

principles of our holy religion, and endeavour to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Can you answer these questions, in a manner satisfactory to yourselves?—If not—what shall I say to you? To call you Christians, would be a cruel deception.—And can you hope you are in the favour of God, and that you should be happy, if you die in your present case; Alas sirs, where is your warrant for such a hope? I beg and intreat you not to deceive yourselves: *God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Let me then beseech you all to lay these solemn truths to heart.—Don't let them flow out of your mind. You must have discovered, by this time, what your present condition is; and whether you belong to the class of Saints, or sinners. If to the *former*, then rejoice in your happy lot: let your mouths be full of the praises of God, and ever abound in the works of faith, and the labours of love.—But if to the *latter*, then for God's sake, and your own souls sake, rest not in such an awfully dangerous condition. Be up and doing. Seek the Lord with your whole heart. Break off every sin, without delay. Quit the company of the vain, the giddy, and the profligate; and cease not to watch, and pray, and seek and strive, till you have experienced, in your own souls, what it is to be born of the Spirit: and have obtained pardon of sin and peace with God, by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Power, Majesty and Dominion, both now and ever. AMEN.





