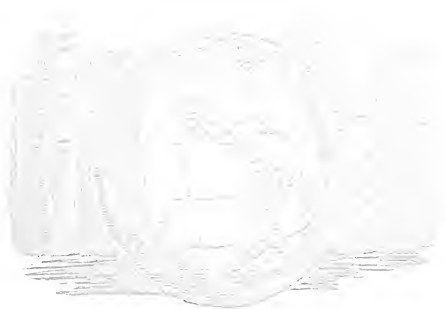


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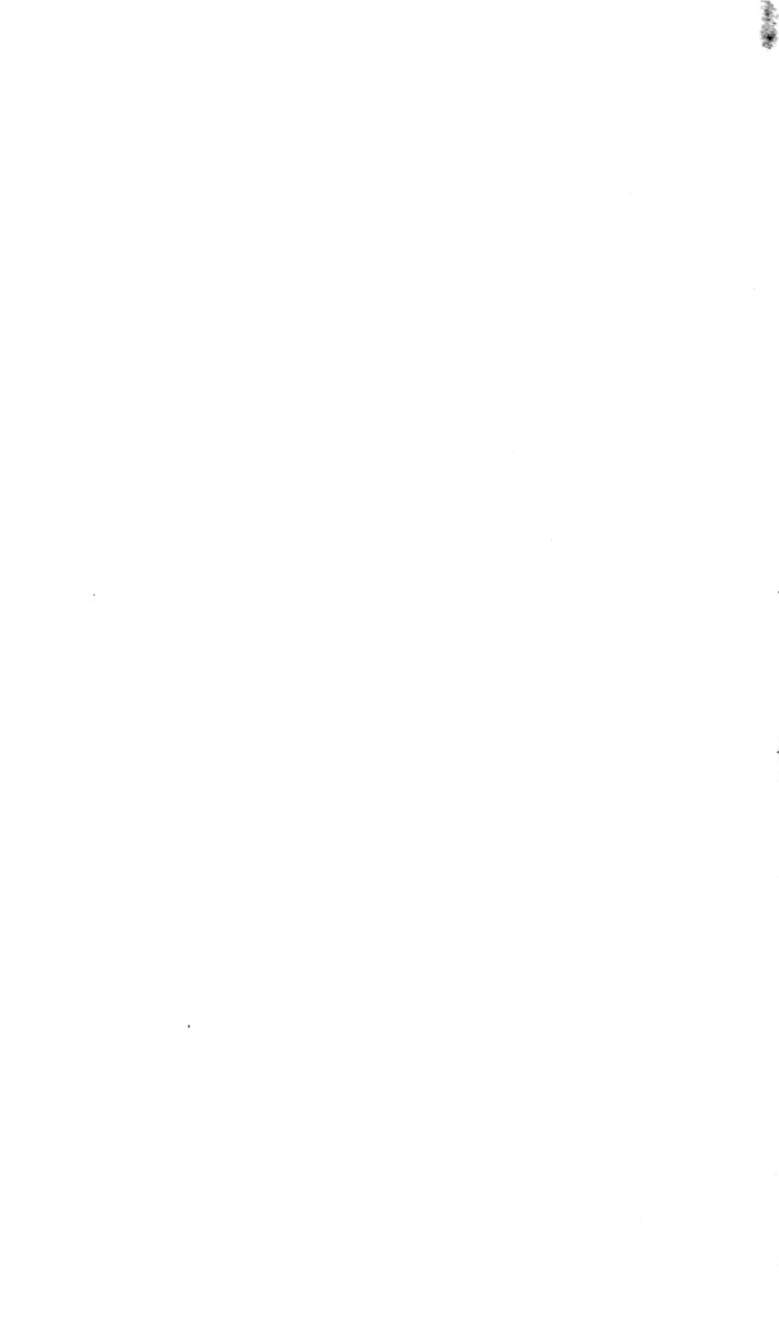
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SERMONS,

BY THE LATE

REV. DAVID MERRILL,

PEACHAM, VT.

WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

WINDSOR, VT.

PRINTED AT THE VERMONT CHRONICLE PRESS.

1855.

1854
Merrill

1854

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P R E F A C E .

IMMEDIATELY after Mr. Merrill's death, his numerous friends and admirers, both at the East and at the West, expressed a very earnest desire that a volume of his sermons might be published. Various hinderances arose ; but the lapse of time caused an increase rather than a diminution of the desire mentioned.

The difficulties attendant upon the preparation of this volume have been even greater than is usually the case in regard to posthumous publications. Mr. Merrill's hand-writing is exceedingly obscure, so that nothing could be printed until copied ; and of many minor matters, demanding attention in preparing copy for the press, he was remarkable regardless.

More than half the sermons were selected by Samuel Merrill, Esq., and several of the others were inserted by special request.

The portrait accompanying the volume was engraved after a daguerreotype of Mr. Merrill in his fifty-first year.

THOMAS SCOTT PEARSON.

PEACHAM, VT., 30 Dec., 1854.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF REV. DAVID MERRILL.*

BY THOMAS SCOTT PEARSON, A. M.

Genealogy—Family of his Grandfather—Family of his Father—His Youth—Conversion—Education—First Fields of Labor—Residence in Urbana, O.—Ecclesiastical Relations—Settlement in Peacham, Vt.—Position and Influence in Peacham—Sickness and Death—Action of Caledonia Association of Congregational Ministers—His Family—Publications—History of the "Ox Sermon"—Statistics—His Elocution—Traits of Character—General View of his character, by Rev. Mr. Hubbard.

DAVID MERRILL is said to have descended from Nathaniel Merrill, who settled in Ipswich, Mass., in 1638, and married Susannah Jourdan. Their son Daniel was born 2 August, 1642, and married Sarah Clough. Their son Moses was born in 1683, and married Mary ——. Their son Samuel was born 20 July, 1711, married Ruth Eaton, and settled in Haverhill, Mass. Their son Samuel was born 7 Dec., 1737, and married Abigail Eaton. Their second son, Jesse, was born 8 Oct., 1762, and David was the son of Jesse.

Tradition saith that Samuel Merrill, David's grandfather, was early left an orphan, and very poor. But he had a great deal of Yankee energy and *tact*,—that is, power to *create means*. For instance, while quite young, being unable to pur-

* The writer of this sketch had no personal acquaintance with its subject. And as Mr. Merrill utterly despised "a strictly private journal kept for the public eye," very little aid was to be obtained from his writings, except from a letter, giving the most important facts in his history, which he wrote, but did not forward, to Rev. B. B. Edwards. Beside this letter, public records, and verbal communications from his relatives and parishioners, our information has been derived chiefly from communications from the following gentlemen, viz: Rev. Amos Blanchard, Rev. Wm. B. Bond, Rev. Asaph Boutelle, J. W. Brinkerhoff, Rev. Rufus Case, Charles C. Chase, A. M., Rev. John S. Galloway, Rev. John H. Gurney, Rev. Austin O. Hubbard, Rev. Thomas E. Hughs, John H. Kimball, Esq., Rev. Jacob Little, Rev. Ora Pearson, Rev. Heman Rood, Joshua Saxton, Esq., Rev. Joseph Stevenson, Rev. James P. Stone, Rev. Charles White, D. D., P. B. Wilcox, Esq., Rev. John K. Young.

chase or hire laboring animals, he trained a yoke of wethers and made them do a good deal of business,—among the rest, draw the stone for quite a strip of stone wall, some of which is still standing on the old farm in Haverhill. By farming and lumbering he acquired a handsome property. When Burgoyne's invasion was heard of at Haverhill, he raised a company, and, as their Captain, went to assist in the capture of the proud boaster. He died 29 Dec., 1801,—his wife, 22 May, 1816, æt. 79.

Their children were nine sons, viz: Samuel, became a farmer in Methuen, Mass.; Jesse, (see hereafter); James, drowned while rafting on the Merrimack, at about the age of 23; David, a farmer in Peacham, Vt., and Haverhill, N. H.; Evan, a farmer in Haverhill, Mass.; Jonathan, a farmer in Methuen, Mass.; William, the *seventh son*, was intended for a physician, but became a farmer and occupied the homestead in Haverhill, which is now occupied by his son William; John was a merchant, etc., in Pembroke, N. H.; Horatio lived in Goffstown, N. H., and afterwards in Lowell, Mass.

Jesse Merrill married Priscilla Kimball, of Haverhill, Mass., (daughter of Richard Kimball and Sarah* his wife.) They became residents of Peacham, Vt., in March, 1789. Mr. Merrill was a farmer. He represented the town of Peacham in the General Assembly of the State of Vermont in 1811, '12, '18, '19, and held numerous town offices. He died 8 Oct., 1840, æt. exactly 78. Mrs. Merrill was born in Haverhill, Mass., 4 July, 1768, and died in Peacham, 5 Dec., 1854.

Their children, all born in Peacham, were ten sons and three daughters, viz: James, born 8 May, 1790, graduated Dartmouth College, 1812, became a lawyer in New Berlin, Penn., was a prominent and influential member of the Constitutional Convention of Penn. in 1838, an elder in the Presbyterian Church, died 29 Oct., 1841; Samuel, b. 29 Oct., 1792, belonged to the class of 1817, Dart. Coll., was a lawyer in Vevay, Ind., a few years, has since resided in Indianapolis. He was State Treasurer of Indiana, from Dec., 1822, to Feb.,

* Mrs. K. having buried her husband and married ——— Eaton, died in Peacham, Vt., 16 Nov., 1797, æt. 66. Her grave stone says:

“Far distant from my native place,
While visiting a daughter dear,
Thy call sweet Jesus I embrace;
Let my remains be buried here.”

1834, then President of the State Bank till 1844. He is an elder in the Presbyterian Church, a corporate member of the A. B. C. F. M., and author of a Gazetteer of Indiana, etc. He is now a book publisher and seller. Jesse, b. 1 Aug., 1794, received the degree of M. D. at Dart. Coll., 1819, has practiced in Franklin, N. H., and other places,—now resides in Hopkinton, Mass. Hazen, a farmer on the old homestead in Peacham; David, (see hereafter); Betsey, b. 29 Nov., 1800, married Leonard Johnson of Peacham; Franklin, b. 24 May, 1805, a merchant in Covington, Ind., some years, now a farmer near Indianapolis, Ind.; Priscilla, b. 4 April, 1808, died 26 Aug., 1814; John, b. May, 1810, d. Feb., 1812. The other three sons and one daughter died in infancy.

DAVID MERRILL, of the seventh generation from Nathaniel, was born in Peacham, Vt., 8 Sept., 1798. His youth showed no peculiar promise except a most voracious fondness for reading. Addison's "Spectator" was his favorite work. He was early taught that "to obey at home and at school was the first principle,—to keep the Sabbath and attend public worship the second." The instructions of his worthy pastor, Rev. Leonard Worcester, to which he listened in the sanctuary, doubtless had considerable influence in moulding both his mind and heart.

In his early years, his notion of religion was, that it would do well enough for the aged and infirm. Beyond this he thought scarcely any thing about it, except when he felt an undefined fear. In his fourteenth year there was some religious excitement, and he was greatly agitated. He commenced praying morning and evening, regarding prayer as an indispensable but hateful duty. Associating religion with prayer, he disliked the two equally; yet, while the excitement lasted, he entertained a hope. When the excitement ceased, he ceased praying and hoping. Looking back upon *his* religion, he saw that it was only fear. Assuming that the religion of others was nothing different from his own, he concluded that there was no God, or if there was, that he had very little to do with men. His skepticism maintained its supremacy in his mind until his final surrender of himself to Christ.

In 1817 commenced the first great revival in Peacham, as the result of which two hundred and twenty-five came into the church by profession. At the commencement of the work, he, who was afterwards the pastor of many of its subjects, hated it

most intensely, and ridiculed it wherever it was safe. His father, becoming pious, commenced family worship, at which he was violently enraged, and to absent himself from the exercise, he manufactured all sorts of pretexts. He and a companion of about his own age, were accustomed to spend their Sabbath noons together, and together go to and return from meeting, occupying themselves in ridiculing the work of grace and fortifying each other against personal conviction. Returning home from meeting, one sacrament day, he commenced a humorous tirade on the exercises, when, to his utter confusion, instead of having his remarks received with laughter and continued in the same strain, he received a solemn exhortation from his awakened friend. He was immediately deeply distressed, insomuch that he was obliged to discontinue his studies. For a long time he was in thick darkness—darkness that could be felt. Finally a gradual change came over his feelings. Prayer, from being hateful, became agreeable. He enjoyed religious meetings. Yet he was unable to fix any precise time when there was a great change in his feelings. In company with sixty-nine others, he joined the church 7 Dec., 1817.

Having fitted at Caledonia County Grammar School, in Peacham, he entered Dartmouth College somewhat in advance and graduated there 22 Aug., 1821. His standing in College, as a recitation room scholar, though respectable, was not remarkably high. But his good humor rendered it impossible that he should not be popular, and his good sense rendered it equally impossible that he should not be influential. Influence makes the man, practically, and a more correct estimate of the relative position a student will occupy in after-life can generally be formed by knowing his relative position as to influence among his fellows, than by knowing his relative "marks" at recitation. For the same qualities which enable the student to influence students, will enable the man to influence men. It by no means rarely occurs that he of strong common sense and large general information, who thereby sways the minds of his fellows more than his more "learned" classmate, retains through life his vantage ground. Mr. Merrill had the common sense and general information requisite to give him prominence. His classmates felt that "he would make a MAN." At one time they manifested their regard for him by electing him a prize speaker. With characteristic

shrewdness he declined the honor, on the ground that their friendly partiality had over-rated his ability.

In his studies, the general principle was all he aimed at, being neglectful of minor details. This habit gave him the power of clearly expressing general principles, without a tediously prolix enumeration of subordinate truths somewhat connected therewith, and doubtless was a benefit to him in forming his style of thinking and writing; but it prevented his standing high either as a scholar or a teacher.

The year subsequent to his graduation, from the fall of 1821 to that of 1822, he was employed as preceptor of Caledonia County Grammar School in Peacham. He then joined Andover Theological Seminary, where he completed the regular course of study and graduated in 1825. At Andover he maintained a higher rank as a student in the regular course than at Dartmouth. But even there he spent much of his time in general reading, so that he left the institution by no means so thoroughly master of technical theology as many of his classmates. "Yet few, if any," says one of the class, "carried away more rich and varied mental furniture."

His license to preach was given by the Haverhill Association, 9 Aug., 1825,—Rev. Jona. Allen, Moderator, Rev. John H. Church, Scribe. He soon commenced preaching in Cohasset, Mass., where he remained about seven months. Part, if not all of this time, he was in the service of the Mass. Missionary Society. He then preached in Byfield, Mass., about two months, and at Lamphrey River, N. H., about three months. During the winter of 1826-27, he preached in various places in Indiana and Illinois.

In June, 1827, he commenced preaching in Urbana, Champaign Co., Ohio, where he remained fourteen years. He was ordained in April, 1828; was formally installed by the Presbytery, Pastor of the church in Urbana, 26 May, 1835. When Mr. Merrill went to the West there were comparatively few educated ministers there, and he naturally assumed a prominent and influential position among the clergy, besides being universally popular among the people. An eminent literary gentleman at the West says,—“Mr. Merrill maintained a high standing among the clergy in Ohio during all his residence there. As an intellectual and effective preacher, it may be doubted whether any surpassed him.”

His labors were abundant and useful. Most of the time he preached stately in two places, Urbana and Buck Creek, about six miles apart. Beside his Sabbath preaching, he performed a vast amount of other labor;—pastoral visiting, attending funerals, week-day lectures, protracted meetings, temperance meetings, etc., both in his own and other towns, the importance of which cannot be very exactly estimated, and the results of which will not be fully known till the great day of final account. Beside frequently witnessing instances of the conversion of individuals, he enjoyed, at Urbana, two seasons of special revival. As the result of his labors at the West, nearly three hundred persons were received to the churches under his care. His interest was not confined to the spiritual affairs of his people. He often participated in the debates of the Mechanics Institute, and delivered frequent lectures before that body. He always lent a helping hand to any enterprise which he thought would be useful to the community. In labor of all kinds he was “instant in season, out of season.” He was respected and beloved as a man, a citizen, and a clergyman.

The preliminary misunderstandings which eventuated in the division of the Presbyterian Church in Old and New Schools, had their rise, progress and consummation, during Mr. Merrill’s residence at Urbana. He was considerably involved in them, and was regarded rather with suspicion by his Old School brethren. When he was examined for installation, in 1835, his trial sermon was objected to as unsound in doctrine. After a free conversation between him and the Presbytery, it was seen that their difference was verbal rather than real. Yet he was requested to read a second sermon upon an assigned subject. This proving satisfactory, Presbytery installed him. In February, 1840, he was expelled from his Presbytery on account of his New School predilections. However, on account of the informality of the proceedings against him, he was restored when the case came before the Synod. His church remained Old School without division, which is conclusive evidence of his remarkable temperance and wisdom, for his personal popularity would very easily have availed to draw off a considerable portion of the members into a New School church. His position was necessarily an uncomfortable one. A New School pastor of an Old School church, his sympathies and

ecclesiastical connections were continually in conflict. His usefulness could not be as great as with a church of vision upon all subjects similar to his own. Hence, should Providence open for him a new field of labor, he was willing to enter upon it.

The Congregational church in Peacham, Vt., from which he had never transferred his membership, just at this time, was seeking a colleague for its venerable shepherd, Rev. Leonard Worcester, whose advanced age and increasing infirmities caused him to ask a release from the performance of farther pastoral service. At an unusually full meeting of the church, 23 June, 1840, a unanimous call was given Mr. Merrill to take the position above indicated. The Society concurred in the call, 25 June, 1840. Mr. Merrill's letter of acceptance, in which he agreed to move as early in the spring as the weather and roads will permit, is dated 28 Dec., 1840. He moved to Peacham in June, 1841, and commenced preaching the last Sabbath of that month. He was installed 9 Sept., 1841.*

He was now in no enviable position,—a prophet “in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” That, under such circumstances, he was able honorably to maintain the responsible position of pastor, proves conclusively that he was possessed of qualities very much above mere literary talent,—that he had the good sense to perceive, and the self-control to observe these nice proprieties of intercourse which give to their observer not only a charm but a power, not only popularity but influence. He “understood human nature,” as few do. The perfect understanding between himself and his senior colleague, exhibits them both in a very amiable light. Mr. Merrill did not regard Mr. Worcester as

* The following is the Council that installed him: From *Meriden, N. H.*, Rev. Amos Blanchard; *Danville*, Rev. Richard C. Hand, Dea. Israel P. Dana; *Cabot*, Rev. Levi H. Stone, Marcus O. Fisher; *St. Johnsbury 1st*, Rev. Josiah Morse, J. Morse; *St. Johnsbury 2d*, Rev. John H. Worcester, Joseph P. Fairbanks, Esq.; *Waterford*, Rev. Thomas Hall, T. Stockwell; *Littleton, N. H.*, Rev. Isaac R. Worcester, Dea. John Merrill; *Hardwick*, Rev. Austin O. Hubbard, Dea. Daniel French; *Barton*, Rev. Ora Pearson, (not at meeting of Council,) John H. Kimball, Esq. Rev. Messrs. Jona. Greenleaf, Blodgett, and Jacob N. Loomis, were invited to sit as members, and “Brothers Sewell and Carpenter,” as corresponding members. The parts were performed as follows: Invocation and Reading Scripture, I. R. Worcester; Introductory Prayer, A. O. Hubbard; Sermon, A. Blanchard, from 1 Cor. ii. 2; Consecrating Prayer, T. Hall; Charge to the Pastor, R. C. Hand; Right Hand of Fellowship, J. H. Worcester; Address to the People, J. Morse; Concluding Prayer, J. Greenleaf.

officially dead, neither on the other hand did Mr. Worcester regard Mr. Merrill as merely his curate.

In 1842 the church in Peacham enjoyed a revival, as the result of which a large number of new members joined the church, some of whom are now among its most useful and influential members.

His influence in Peacham was controlling. What it was his business to attend to, he took hold of "with his might." Thus he rarely failed of accomplishing his purpose, and that speedily. What was none of his business, he just *let entirely alone*. Thus he saved many bickerings and undignified retreats to which the more inquisitive and meddling are subject. All wished and expected that for many years more he should "go in and go out before them, and break unto them the bread of life." But it was not so ordered.

April 22, 1850, he left home for a visit to the West, and after a very agreeable stay, during which he preached every Sabbath but one, returned home June 8, and preached in his own pulpit till July 14. "Coming events cast their shadows before," and it really seems as though in the selection of the subjects of his last three sermons, he must have been guided by a presentiment that his end was near. In the forenoon of the last Sabbath that he preached, he attended a funeral, at which the Methodist clergyman officiated. The text of his afternoon sermon (Sermon XVIII. in this Vol.) was, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. ix. 27. The other sermon which he had prepared for that day was from Heb. ix. 28. Before the next Thursday he wrote another sermon (Serm. XIX. in this Vol.) from John xiii. 7, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Most appropriate "last words," as they literally were. Thursday forenoon, July 18, he was violently attacked with what afterwards proved to be erysipelas. He was in great physical suffering and his mind was somewhat stupified, but he showed no signs of delirium until Sabbath afternoon, after which, as the result of medicine, he was wandering part of the time. While wandering, he thought himself away from home, and expressed great anxiety to return thither. Being told, in such a manner that he could not mistake the solemn meaning intended, that he *was* "going home, and almost there," he instantly manifested a full comprehension of

his situation, and said, "Going home and almost there! and I didn't know it. It is too late now. If I was to attempt to say any thing, I might say some foolish things." This was the only remark concerning his personal feelings that he made during his sickness. He died about one o'clock Monday morning, 22 July, 1850.

His funeral was attended on Tuesday, 23 July, Rev Rufus Case, of St. Johnsbury East, preaching from Rev. xiv. 13, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." A vast crowd attended the exercises, and the deepest sorrow was manifested by all classes.*

Mr. Merrill's death produced a general seriousness in the town, which, in November and December, under the labors of Rev. James Gallaher of Missouri, developed itself in a revival, the result of which was an addition to the church of about forty members. So they "which he slew at his death, were" many, though not "more than they which he slew in his life."

The Caledonia Association of Congregational ministers, at its meeting 13 August, speak of Mr. Merrill as "a brother highly esteemed for his talents, integrity, and efficiency in the various departments of ministerial labor," and "Resolved that they consider his death a severe bereavement, not only to his family and the people of his charge, but also to this ministerial Association and the Commonwealth." Also, "Resolved, that the brethren of this Association will supply the pulpit made vacant by the death of Bro. Merrill, at least one Sabbath each, for the benefit of his afflicted family." This supply was faithfully performed.

Mr. Merrill was married in Urbana, O., 23 April, 1828, to Miss Mary Amy Hughs, daughter of Rev. James Hughs.†

* Mr. Merrill's remains repose in the Peacham grave yard, only a few feet from those of his predecessor, Rev. Leonard Worcester. Upon a granite monument is inscribed

DAVID MERRILL,
SECOND PASTOR of CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH IN PEACHAM,
Died July 22 1850, Æ. 51 Years.
"I have fought a good fight."

† Rev. James Hughs was born in Maryland, 22 Feb., 1766; educated at Jefferson College, Penn.; read theology with Rev. Joseph Smith, Washington Co., Penn.; was pastor of a Presbyterian church in West Liberty, Va., twen-

Mrs. Merrill was born in West Liberty, Va., 5 Jan., 1807. She had five children,* and died 21 May, 1836. Mr. Merrill was again married in Urbana, 12 Sept., 1837, to Miss Mary Grandin Hunt, daughter of Dr. Benjamin Vancleve Hunt.† Mrs. Merrill was born in Lebanon, Hunterdon Co., N. J., 8 Dec., 1805. She has six children.‡

Mr. Merrill wrote a great number of articles for the Ohio Temperance Advocate, published at Columbus. He and Rev. Mr. Hamline, afterwards Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, were appointed corresponding editors, by the Executive Committee of the Ohio State Temperance Society. The resident editor was P. B. Wilcox, Esq. Mr. Merrill was also in the habit of writing frequently for other papers, both secular and religious. His newspaper articles were distinguished for a terse and conclusive style of argument which is as much admired as it is seldom attained.

His published discourses were three, viz :

1. The "Ox Sermon," (see hereafter.) (Serm. I. in this Vol.)

2. The "Mate to the Ox," a sermon from 1 Tim. v. 22, delivered before the Champaign Co. Temperance Society, 26 February, 1833. Very large 8vo, Urbana, O., 1833, pp. 8. (Serm. XVI. in this Vol.)

3. An Address before the Mechanics' Institute and the teachers and scholars of the Sabbath Schools in Urbana, 4 July, 1838. 8vo, Urbana, O., pp. 14.

The history of the "Ox Sermon," is briefly this. It was written for a temperance meeting in Urbana, and delivered to an audience of less than a hundred persons. Its first publica-

ty-five years; in Urbana, O., 1815-18; principal of Miami University, Oxford, O., till his death, 2 May, 1821.

* William Ward, b. 24 Mar., 1829; James, b. 7 Jan., 1831; Mary Priscilla, b. 1 Oct., 1832, married to John D. Reck, Urbana, O., 28 Oct., 1854; Fidelia Boutelle, b. 12 Aug., 1834; Mary Amy, b. 12 May, 1836, died 28 Sept., 1836. All born in Urbana, O.

† Doctor Benj. V. Hunt was born in Hunterdon County, N. J., 9 April, 1783; was a member of New Jersey College, two years; read medicine with Dr. Canfield, Morristown, N. J.; attended lectures at Philadelphia; practiced medicine in Lebanon, N. J., till 1818; resided in Clermont Co., O., till 1822; in Clark Co., O., till 1835; in Urbana, O., till 1845; in Cincinnati, O., till his death, 1 Jan., 1849.

‡ Elizabeth Hunt, b. 6 Aug., 1838; Sarah Jane, b. 18 Feb., 1840; David, b. 24 Nov., 1841; Benjamin Van Cleve, b. 31 July, 1843; Augusta Brooks, b. 10 Dec., 1846; Mina Cartharine, b. 3 July, 1843. Two oldest born in Urbana, O.; the others in Peacham, Vt.

tion was in the Urbana weekly paper. A copy of this paper, sent to Samuel Merrill, Esq., of Indianapolis, Ind., fell into the hands of John H. Farnham, Esq., who caused a pamphlet edition of 500 copies to be printed at Salem, Ind. Rev. M. H. Wilder, a Tract Agent, sent a copy of this edition to the American Tract Society, by which it was handed over to the Temperance Society. It was then published as the "Temperance Recorder, extra," for circulation in every family in the United States. The edition numbered 2,200,000 copies. Numerous editions have been published since,—one in Canada East, of, I think, 10,000 copies. The American Tract Society adopted it about 1845, as No. 475 of their series of tracts, and have published 104,000 copies. The Tract Society has also published 100,000 copies of an abridgement of it, under the title, "Is it right?" It has been published in many newspapers of extensive circulation. It is undoubtedly safe to say that its circulation has been between two and a half and three millions of copies. What other *Sermon* has ever had a circulation equal to this?

A person tolerably well informed in regard to the arguments used by temperance men at the present day, who reads the *Ox Sermon* for the first time, will think its positions and illustrations quite common-place, and wonder why any body ever attributed to it any originality or shrewdness. But twenty-five years have wrought great changes in the popular sentiment upon the subject of temperance, and positions, which are now admitted almost as readily as the axioms in mathematics, when broached in that sermon were regarded as "violently new-school," "dangerously radical," "impracticably ultra." Whoever originates an idea which becomes influential over the belief and actions of men, commences a work which will go on increasing in efficiency long after his own generation shall have passed away. The author of the "*Ox Sermon*," even during his own life, had the satisfaction of knowing that many by reading that discourse were so convicted in their consciences that even at great pecuniary sacrifice they gave up the traffic in ardent spirit, and that many more from being enemies or lukewarm friends, became earnest advocates of the temperance reformation.

"*The Mate to the Ox*" was prepared with far greater care than the "*Ox Sermon*," and by their author was considered

much the better of the two. At the West it had considerable circulation, and was very highly esteemed.

Mr. Merrill received to the church 393 persons, of whom 89 were received by letter, leaving over 300 received on profession, almost all of whom were seals of his own ministry. As he was in the ministry not quite 25 years, the average number that he received to the churches annually was about 16. He administered the ordinance of baptism to 80 adults. Of the baptisms of infants he kept no record. He solemnized 143 marriages. He left over 650 MS. sermons, and in addition to these there is an immense number of skeletons.

While delivering his sermons, Mr. Merrill stood almost motionless and read quite rapidly, yet with great distinctness, uttering each syllable so that by itself it was distinctly heard. By judicious peculiarities of emphasis, inflection and pauses, he made the "same words mean twice or thrice as much in his mouth as in that of other men." His voice "was never so elevated as to be offensive, nor so low as to be inaudible." His only visible symptom of earnestness was a slight, quick motion of the head, and a compression of the lips. The chief charm of his discourses lay not in their delivery, but in their admirable adaptedness to the precise circumstances of his hearers, who would often hear their own very thoughts and motives expressed with startling distinctness, and brought unflinchingly to the unerring standard of divine revelation for approval or condemnation.

On ordinary occasions and common place topics he was not what would be called a sociable man, yet, without saying much himself, he made others (adults) feel easy in his presence. As for personal conversation on religious subjects, he had less confidence in his own ability, and less satisfaction in his own performance, than in any other part of his official duty.

His style of conversation and extemporaneous speaking was remarkably laconic,—even more so than that of his writing. Never tarrying for mollifying modifiers, he was often *exceedingly* blunt. But he was not offended by the same plainness of speech in others. In regard to his own opinions and habits, he was "armed so strong in honesty" of purpose and completeness of conviction, that he was not in the least moved by opposition. As for frightening or coaxing him from his position by a display of mere authorities, one might as well have

stopped the revolution of the earth by reading to it the decision of the tribunal which condemned Galileo.

Wit was an integral part of his original nature,—not necessarily of the depraved part, either, we humbly opine. He held that some foolish practices were beneath argument, and against such on proper occasions he would use the keen weapons of ridicule with tremendous effect. But nothing like levity was ever allowed to creep into his Sabbath performances.

The two last paragraphs may explain why strangers sometimes supposed that he “sacrificed serious earnestness to smartness.” Those intimately acquainted with him and knowing his utter abhorrence of *cant* (i. e. assumed earnestness or goodness) in every form, will be surprised at the suggestion; but it should be remembered that our first impressions of many persons are far from confirmed by subsequent acquaintance.

Punctuality was among his most prominent traits of character. His appointments were never made conditional on the state of the weather or of his own feelings, and when once made, he never failed of meeting them. He has been known to go considerable distance on foot to meet appointments, when the traveling was so bad that he could not go safely with a horse.

For a *general view* of his character, we can by no means otherwise do at all so well as to employ the elegant language of our respected correspondent, Rev. A. O. Hubbard:

“That Mr. Merrill was a man of no ordinary intellectual powers, is sufficiently evident from what he said and did, and the fact was *felt* by all who had any considerable acquaintance with him. His more prominent mental traits were, undoubtedly, such as *comprehensiveness, originality, energy, &c.* Whatever subjects he investigated, he took hold of them with a strong grasp; he looked at them in their various relations, and in a manner that was peculiarly his own. He had a power of originating and combining ideas, an ability to elaborate, as it were, thoughts within himself, that reminded one of the prolific and vigorous intellects of an earlier and more favored generation. He had, too, a kind of intuitive perception of the propriety and fitness of things—of the bearing one action has upon another—of what is adapted to affect men in different circumstances.

From what has been said, it would naturally be inferred that Mr. M. must have excelled as a *scholar*. I am not however aware that, after he completed his academical and theological course, he directed his attention very particularly to any one branch of literature or science. In respect to what is called literary taste, he was, it must be admitted, somewhat deficient; at least, if I judge correctly, he was not so much inclined to look at the minutiae either of mere literary or scientific matters, as to grasp great principles. His forte was less in books than in men. Even his theological reading was not so much exegetical as miscellaneous, or, what might more properly be called *philosophically practical*.

As a *preacher* Mr. Merrill possessed, as it appears to me, considerably more than common merit. He would not, perhaps, in the somewhat usual acceptation of the word, have been called eloquent. Plain as a man, he was plain in the pulpit. He used but little action, and his voice, though not unmusical, was hardly susceptible of great variety as to pitch and intonation. Still, he may, in the true and proper meaning of the term, have been styled an eloquent preacher. His was the eloquence of solid thought, clothed in appropriate language, and uttered with a sincerity, an earnestness that made his hearers feel. He was moved himself, and he moved others. I have seldom known a speaker who would make a more marked impression on the minds either of a stated congregation, or on those of a mixed, extempore assembly, than would the subject of your notice. In debate he had unusual tact and force; a circumstance which is doubtless to be attributed, in part, to his reliance upon his own powers, and to a kind of promptness or off-handedness of manner—qualities which may have had some little connection with his general influence. We remember the sentiment, "They can excel because they think they can."

In speaking of Mr. M. as a sermonizer, I must again refer to his intellectual character. Among his mental traits, *originality* and *energy* were mentioned. How, amid numerous parochial duties, the cares of a family, and "that which cometh from without," he could write so much as he did, and write it, at least, so far as the sentiment is concerned, so well, appears somewhat remarkable. Not to mention quite a number of miscellaneous articles, such as essays, reviews, &c., he composed several hundreds of sermons,—all of them, one may suppose,

bearing marks of his own vigorous and fertile mind, and many of them, however void of literary ornament, being not unworthy of publication. His manner of sermonizing, if he had any, was his own, and that of no one else. He "only wrote right on." Sometimes he commenced by stating some truism, some axiom in theology or morals, or by proving some proposition which was to be used as a truth. This prepared the way for another; that for a third, and so on, till near the close; the whole discourse growing, as it were, out of itself, and presenting a continuous chain of argument and practical remark. Of this kind of discourse the "Ox Sermon" might be cited as something like a specimen.*

It is hardly necessary to remark, that the truths which Mr. M. investigated and uttered were incorporated in his own experience, that they were the food on which he lived. If he studied much, there is reason to believe that he also prayed much. If, in his stated ministrations, he "brought forth things" that made glad the hearts of the saints, and carried terror to the consciences of evil doers, we are permitted to express the assurance, that much of his ability to do so was the direct result of "an unction from the Holy One." And here it is proper to refer briefly to Mr. M.'s Christian character. While his piety was, as might naturally be supposed, rather of the active than of the contemplative kind, it was still scriptural and deep seated, being alike removed from enthusiasm on the one hand, and from coldness and formality on the other. It was not developed in the same manner as that of Payson, or McCheyne, or even that of his predecessor,—for he was as different from either of these individuals as they were different from one another. We cannot compare men in their peculiar spiritual traits any more than we can in their physical. It was manifest that Mr. M.'s heart was set on the great object of honoring God and serving his generation. Many can bear witness not only to the intense interest which he felt in "the perfecting of the saints," and the conversion of the impenitent in his own neighborhood, but also to his deep sympathy with whatever related to the reformation of our country, and the spread of the gospel in foreign lands. "In doctrine he showed uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity;" "he was not self-willed, not

* It might be mentioned that the "Ox Sermon" is now circulated in Great Britain along with such books as Beecher's Six Sermons on Intemperance.

soon angry ;” “ he ruled well his own house ;” “ he was a lover of hospitality ;” “ he was an example of the believers in word, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

The fact that Mr. M. was efficient and useful as a *pastor*, has been already anticipated. Possessing, in addition to the traits that have been specified, an affectionate and cheerful disposition, he was peculiarly formed for social intercourse, and he was never more at home than when visiting among his people. He was not, of course, a *visiting* minister in such a sense as to satisfy every vain and unreasonable hearer ; had he attempted to do this, he must have failed, as others have failed before him. It might be mentioned that he was able, by his frank and off-hand manner, to reach certain classes that are frequently—perhaps too frequently—regarded as inaccessible. It was, confessedly, an exception to a general principle, that he should have been called to the ministry in his native town, and that among those who had been his playmates and schoolmates, as well as those to whom he looked up as fathers and mothers in Israel, he should have moved with continued and even increasing acceptance and effect.

In sentiment, Mr. M. was a moderate Calvinist,—holding, in its essential features, the system of truth received by the primitive churches of New England. While he had a preference for his own and kindred denominations, his mind and heart were too large to allow him to be either a bigot or a sectarian. He loved the good of every name, and in few things was he more favored than in securing the confidence and esteem of those whose views were different from his own.

Such, Dear Sir, is an outline—an imperfect one, I am aware—of the character of Mr. Merrill. If you ask, “ Wherein, in my view, lay the power by which he exerted the influence he did ? ” I could hardly answer the question more definitely than I have attempted to do already. *How* an individual influences others—*how* he directs and shapes the views, not only of his more intimate associates, but of neighborhoods and communities, is, I apprehend, a problem not easy to be solved. We know what he does, but the power by which he does it—that *something* which lies back of what we see, and hear, and feel—who can investigate this ? It might be said or rather repeated here, that whatever Mr. M.’s influence was, he never sought to accomplish an object by improper or doubtful means.

He was always open hearted, and to every thing like craft or crookedness, whether in ecclesiastical, social, or secular matters, he was from his inmost soul opposed. He was too sincere to deceive, too upright to temporize. If he had his imperfections, they were such as are inseparable from humanity. It appears to me that his character, viewed as a whole, was one of peculiar interest and excellence. While I might have differed from him in respect to some shades of Christian doctrine, and in regard to a few other minor points to which it is unnecessary to refer, it yet occurred to me that this very diversity, so far from diminishing, served rather to increase the pleasure of an acquaintance the remembrance of which I shall cherish till the latest period of my life. It affords me unfeigned satisfaction that I am permitted to add my humble testimony to the worth of one whom I regarded as a truly gifted and good man. Such Mr. M. undoubtedly was. Though removed in the midst of his days, he left on the community around him an impress that has been left by few. While he still lives and will long live in the hearts of many, it may be that, out of the circle of his family connections, his decease has been felt more deeply by no one than myself. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Ever precious to me will be the dwelling in which I used to meet his pleasant smile, and to receive the cordial grasp of his hand. May the God of the widow and the fatherless, the God of all grace and consolation, still abide there, to sustain, to comfort and to bless!

Truly yours,

A. O. HUBBARD.

Mr. THOS. S. PEARSON."

REV. D. MERRILL'S
S E R M O N S .

SERMON I.

THE OX SERMON.

If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox WERE WONT TO PUSH with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. EXODUS XXI. 28, 29.

THE principle of this law is all that we are concerned with, at present. And it is a very plain one—and a very broad one—brought out here in a specific case, but extending to ten thousand others. It is this: Every man is responsible to God for the evils which result from his selfishness, or his indifference to the welfare of others.

“If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die, then the ox shall be surely stoned, but the owner of the ox shall be quit.” The design in stoning the ox, was to produce an effect upon men—to show them how highly the lawgiver valued human life. The very beast that destroyed it shall be cast forth as an abomination.

God says to Noah: “Your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the

hand of man." A stigma shall be fixed upon man or beast that shall destroy him who is made after the similitude of God. But why is the owner in this case quit, or guiltless? Simply because the death is not in any way the result of his carelessness, or of his selfishness. From any thing within his knowledge, he had no reason to expect such a result. But if the ox hath been wont to push with his horns, and he knew it, he shall be responsible for the consequences, whatever they may be; for he had every reason to expect that mischief would be done, and took no measures to prevent it. And if the ox kill a man or woman, the owner hath done the murder—he shall be put to death. Why? The death was the result of his selfishness, or of his indifference to the lives of others. And according to the law of God, his life shall go for it. The principle of this law, is a principle of common sense.

You see a fellow creature struggling in the water. You know that he can never deliver himself. And you know that a very little assistance, such as you can render, will rescue him from a watery grave. You look on and pass by. True, you did not thrust him in; but he dies by your neglect. His blood will be upon your head. At the bar of God, and at the bar of conscience, you are his murderer. Why? You did not kill him. Neither did the owner of the ox lift a hand. *But he shall surely be put to death.* You had no malice; neither had he. You did not intend his death. At the very worst, you did not care. This is just his crime; he did not care. He turned loose a wild, fiery, ill-tempered, ungovernable animal, knowing him to be such; and what mischief that animal might do, or what suffering he might cause, *he did not care.* But God held him responsible.

Take another case upon the same principle. Your dog has

gone mad. You hate to kill him, for he *has* or *had* some good qualities. You hate to tie him up, for it is too much trouble ; and you hate, worst of all, to believe that he is mad. It has been testified to you that many have died of his bite, already raving mad ; and that many more, in different stages of the disease, are coming to the same miserable death. But still you will neither shoot nor shut up the cause of this wretchedness. You affect to doubt whether any one of them had the real hydrophobia, or whether the bite will produce the same effects again, and so you leave him loose among your neighbors and your neighbors' children. Is it not a dictate of common sense that you ought to be responsible for the result? And you are. All that perish by means of this animal, are virtually slain by your hand. They owe their death to your carelessness, or your selfishness, and it is in vain for you to say,—I had no malice, I did *not set the dog on*—they might have kept out of the way ; and if he was mad, it was none of my concern—let every one look out for himself. Would not this be adding insult to injury? and, instead of proving your innocence, prove you a wretch, past feeling?

But what has all this to do with the object of this address? Much, every way. We wish to act upon established principles. We have endeavored to establish one principle, viz., that every man is responsible for evils which result from his own selfishness, or indifference to the lives of men. In other words,—to make a man responsible for results, it is not necessary to prove that he has malice, or that he intended the results. The highwayman has no malice against him he robs and murders ; nor does he desire his death, but his money ; and if he can get the money, he does not care. And he robs and murders because he loves himself, and does not care for oth-

ers,—acting in a different way, but on the same selfish principle with the owner of the ox, and of the mad dog; and on the very same principle is held responsible.

In the trial of the owner of the ox, the only questions to be asked, were these two. Was the *ox wont to push* with his horn in time past? Did the *owner know it*, when he let him loose? If both these questions were answered in the affirmative, the owner was responsible for all the consequences. This is a rule which God himself has established; and it applies directly to the object of this address.

Let us consider,—

I. IS ARDENT SPIRIT WONT TO PRODUCE MISERY, AND WRETCHEDNESS, AND DEATH?

II. HAS THIS BEEN TESTIFIED TO THOSE WHO DEAL IN IT, i. e., MAKERS AND RETAILERS?

If these two things can be established, the inference is inevitable—they are responsible, on a principle perfectly intelligible,—a principle recognized and proclaimed and acted upon by God himself. It is possible that some may startle at this conclusion, and look around for some way to escape it. What! is a man responsible to God for the effects produced by all the spirit which he makes and sells? This is a most fearful responsibility. Indeed it is. But if these two things are true, every retailer and maker must bear it. And can either of these be disputed?

Upon the first point, let me refresh your recollection, and bring vividly before you, the hopes which ardent spirit has blasted, and the tears it has caused to flow. Most of us can remember many a shocking scene which spirit has produced. Let any one of us sit down and count up the number of its victims which we have known—consider their character and

standing in society, their prospects and happy families, and what a change a few years' use of ardent spirit has caused, and what they and their families are now. What a catalogue of wretchedness might any one of us make out. Very few but could remember twenty, thirty, fifty, or one hundred families ruined in this way—some of them once our most intimate friends; and their story is soon told.

They were once promising—excited high expectations—were high spirited—despised every thing mean, and had a special contempt for a drunkard; and had a prophet proclaimed that they themselves should be all that they despised, they would have repelled it as a thing impossible. “Is thy servant a dog,” as said Hazaël, “that he should do this thing?” But they could drink occasionally, just for a *spree*, for the sake of company. In this way the taste was acquired, and habits of dissipation formed. They became idle, and of course uneasy; and they drank, partly to gratify taste, and partly to quiet conscience. They saw that the tide was coming in upon them, and for a time, perhaps, made some earnest but irregular struggles against it. But it gained upon them. Every flow of the tide drove in some barrier—the resistance became weaker and weaker—by and by the struggle is ended, and they float with the current. And where are they? One has been found by the temperance reformation, a mere wreck—in property, character, body and mind, a mere wreck—and, O miracle! reclaimed. After years of dissipation, after causing unspeakable misery, he is saved, yet so as by fire. Another is dead: his constitution could not bear such a continued course of dissipation. Another died in a fit. Another was found by the road-side, one cold morning, a stiffened corpse. Another was thrown from his horse, and is a cripple for life; but still can

contrive means to pay a daily visit to the grocery. Another is a mere vagabond, unprincipled and shameless—wandering from grocery to grocery—fit companion for the lowest company,—drinking upon their bounty, yea, drinking their leavings, the mere rinsings of the glasses—a nuisance to society, and a curse to his kindred. Another is in the penitentiary, for a crime which he committed in a drunken frolic.

Go into the crowded court-house, and you may see another ; his countenance haggard and ghastly, and his eye wildly rolling in despair. What has he done? One night after spending all his money for drink, and loitering about till all the shops were closed, he returned to his miserable habitation. He found a few coals on the hearth, and his wife and children sitting by them. He threw one child this way, and another that, for he was cold. His wife remonstrated, and withal told him that what little fire there was, was none of his providing. With many a horrid oath he declared he would not be scolded after that sort. He would let her know who should govern, and by way of supporting his authority, beat her brains out with the last remaining stick of wood. He did not mean to kill her. Her dying struggles brought him to his senses, and he stood horror-struck. He would give almost any thing that the deed were not done. If that could restore her to life, he would be almost ready to give a pledge never to taste ardent spirit again. Now look at the wretchedness of this family. For years he has made very little provision for them ; for they have lived as they could, half naked and half starved, and not educated at all—with a most wretched example before their eyes. What encouragement had the wife and children to attempt any thing—to make any exertion. The children are abused and trampled on at home, and they grow up without self-respect, with-

out shame and without principle. Can any thing respectable be expected of them? And if they do rise, it must be through a world of difficulty.

How many thousand families have been ruined in some such way as this! The father was a drunkard, and the mother—what could she do? She endured, hoping against hope; and for the children's sake bore up against the current, and many a time disguised a sad, despairing heart under a joyful countenance, till at length she died of a broken heart; or died at the hands of him who had sworn to protect her!

These, and things like these, are the effects of ardent spirit—not casual, accidental, but common, natural effects, seen every where, in every town, in every neighborhood, and in every connection. Look which way we will, we see some of these effects. The greatest wretchedness which human nature in this world is called to endure, is connected with the use of ardent spirit. There is nothing else that degrades and debases man like it—nothing so mean that a drunkard will not stoop to it—nothing too base for him to do, to obtain his favorite drink. Nothing else so sinks the whole man—so completely destroys, not only all moral principle, but all self-respect, all regard to character, all shame, all human feeling. The drunkard can break out from every kind of endearing connection, and break over every kind of restraint; so completely extinct is human feeling, that he can be drunk at the funeral of his dearest relative, and call for drink in the last accents of expiring nature.

Now look at a human being, whom God has made for noble purposes, and endowed with noble faculties, degraded, disgraced, polluted, unfit for heaven, and a nuisance on earth. He is the centre of a circle. Count up his influence in his family and his neighborhood—the wretchedness he endures, the

wretchedness he causes—count up the tears of a wretched wife, who curses the day of her espousals, and of wretched children who curse the day of their birth. To all this positive evil which ardent spirit has caused, add the happiness which, but for it, this family might have enjoyed and communicated. Go through a neighborhood or a town in this way, count up all the misery which follows in the train of ardent spirit, and you will be ready to ask,—Can the regions of eternal death send forth any thing more deadly? Wherever it goes, the same cry may be heard—lamentation and mourning and woe; and whatsoever things are pure, or lovely, or venerable, or of good report, fall before it. These are the effects—and I need not say more upon this point. Can any man deny that “the ox is wont to push with the horns?”

II. HATH THIS BEEN TESTIFIED TO THE OWNER?—or, are the makers and retailers aware of its effects? The effects are manifest; and they have eyes, ears and understandings, as well as others. They know that whatever profit they make, is at the expense of human life or comfort; and that the tide which is swelled by their unhallowed merchandize, sweeps ten thousand yearly to temporal and eternal ruin. But this is not all. The attention of the public has of late been strongly turned to this subject. The minds of men have been enlightened, and their responsibility pressed home upon them. The subject has been presented to them in a new light, and men cannot but see the absurdity of reprobating the tempted, while the tempter is honored—of blaming drunkards, and holding in reputation those whose business it is to make drunkards. But are the makers of ardent spirit aware of its effects? Look at the neighborhood of a distillery. An influence goes forth from that spot which reaches miles around—a kind of constraining influence,

that brings in the poor and the wretched, and thirsty, and vicious. Those who have money, bring it—those who have none, bring corn—those who have neither, bring household furniture—those who have nothing, bring themselves, and pay in labor. Now, the maker knows all these men, and knows their temperament, and probably knows their families. He can calculate effects; and he sends them off, one to die by the way, another to abuse his family, and others just ready for any deed of wickedness. Will he say that he is not responsible, and, like Cain, ask, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” He knew what might be the result, and for a mere pittance of gain, was willing to risk it. Whether this man should abuse his family, or that man die by the way, so his purpose was answered, he did not care. The ox was wont to push with his horn, and he knew it; and for a little paltry gain he let him loose; and God will support his law in all its extent, by holding him responsible for all the consequences.

But a common excuse is, that “very little of our manufacture is used in the neighborhood; we send it off.” Are its effects any less deadly? In this way you avoid *seeing* the effects, and poison strangers instead of neighbors. What would you say to a man who traded in clothes, infected with the small pox, or cholera, and who should say, by way of apology, that he sent them off—he did not sell any in the neighborhood. Good man! he is willing to send disease and death all abroad! but he is too kind-hearted to expose his neighbors. Would you not say to him,—you may send them off, but you cannot send off the responsibility. The eye of God goes with them, and all the misery which they cause will be charged to you. So we say to the man who sends his spirit off.

“But if I do not make it, somebody else will.” What sin

or crime cannot be excused in this way? I know of a plot to rob my neighbor; if I do not go and plunder him, somebody else will. Is it a privilege to bear the responsibility of sending abroad pestilence, and misery, and death? "Our cause is going down," said Judas, "and a price is set upon the head of our master; and if I do not betray him, somebody else will. And why may not I as well pocket the money as another?" If you consider it a privilege to pocket the wages of unrighteousness, do so. But do not pretend to be the friend of God or man, while you count it a privilege to insult the one and ruin the other.

This is the most common excuse for retailing. "I wish it were banished from the earth. But then what can I do?" What can you do? You can keep one man clear; you can wash your hands of this wretched business. And if you are not willing to do that, very little reliance can be placed on your good wishes. He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. I can hardly conceive any thing more inconsistent with every generous feeling, every noble principle, than retailing ardent spirit at the present day. The days of ignorance on this subject have passed by; every man acts with his eyes open. Look at the shop and company of the retailer. His principal furniture is a barrel, two or three bottles, and a half dozen glasses. He has a few other things, just for a show,—brooms, earthen-ware, tobacco, &c. The inventory is soon made. I say he has a few other things, for even he is ashamed to appear as a dealer in spirit only. His shop needs no sign—every drunkard knows it as it were by instinct. And even the the blind might discover it by infallible tokens, and the company is a combination of all the shameless and abandoned. And there stands the retailer in the midst of dissipation, and human

nature, in its last stages of earthly wretchedness, in all its degraded forms and filthy appearances, surrounding him. And his whole business is to kindle strife, to encourage profanity, to excite every evil passion, to destroy all salutary fears, to remove every restraint, and to produce a recklessness that regards neither God nor man. And how often in the providence of God is he given over to drink his own poison, and to become the most wretched of this wretched company. Who can behold an instance of this kind without feeling that God is just to him. "He sunk down into the pit which he made, in the net which he hid is his own foot taken." When we think of the years he has spent in this service, the quantity he has scattered abroad, and the misery he has caused, who can calculate the responsibility? And who would envy him, even though he had accumulated a fortune; or who would take his gains, burdened with all this responsibility?

But some one will say, I neither make nor sell it. But you drink it occasionally, and your example goes to support the use of it. You see its tremendous effects, and yet you receive it into your house, and bid it God-speed. As far as your influence supports it and gives it currency, so far are you a partaker of its evil deeds. If you lend your influence to make the path of ruin respectable, or will not help to affix disgrace to that path, God will not hold you guiltless. You cannot innocently stand aside and do nothing. A deadly poison is circulating over the land, carrying disease, and desolation, and death in its course. The alarm has been given; a hue and cry has been raised against it. Its deadly effects have been described, seen and felt. Its victims are of every class; and however wide the difference in fortune, education, intellect, it brings them to the same dead level. An effort has been made to stay

the plague, and a success surpassing all expectations has crowned the effort. Still the plague rages to an immense extent. What will every good citizen do? Will he not clear his house, his shop, his premises of it? Will he not take every precaution to defend himself against it, and use his influence and his exertions to diminish its circulation, and thus diminish human misery? If he fears God, or regards man, can he stop short of this? Can he, in the plenitude of his selfishness, stand up and say, "I'll make no promises—I'll not be bound—I am in no danger?" If he can say this, and stand aloof, shall we count him a good citizen? I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say.

SERMON II.

THE LOVE OF LIFE, A DUTY.

Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. ISALAH XXXVIII. 3.

HEZEKIAH was not willing to die even when a message came to him from the Lord, saying, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." The message was in form absolute and unchangable,—“Thou shalt die, and not live.” But then, he did not so understand it, and the result shows that it was not designed to be thus understood. It was no more, in fact, than that his disease in its own nature was mortal, and of itself must terminate fatally. Whether God would interfere and arrest the disease, and restore him to health, was another matter entirely. This question he had no means of deciding with absolute certainty. He knew that diseases were under the control of Him that sent them—that they went and came at His bidding, and that nothing was too hard for the Lord. There was a natural desire to live, and in this case special reasons to confirm and increase that desire. The possibility of restored health and continued life, laid the foundation of hope. For, in the uncertainty, he hoped the best—viewed the bright rather than the dark side, and thought more of the power of God, than the power of the disease. And hope encouraged prayer. God had given him life, and that life still remained; and it was his business to live while God should let him live, and to use all appropriate means to that effect; and

the appropriate means, in his case, were prayers and tears. And there was no submission to death, or giving up to die, while there was a possibility of life. His life was given him in charge to keep, and he was anxious to keep it, and used all appropriate means to keep it, till he who gave it should recall the gift. He was not sick of life, and therefore anxious to throw off its duties, and burdens, and responsibilities. Nor was he so charmed by that which comes after, as to make this world seem a fleeting show, or a dreary wilderness. His desire and prayer to God was, that he might live. But was not this his weakness and infirmity, and so recorded for our warning and not for our example? This certainly is an important question, and deserves careful consideration; for even the pious have not always done or felt right, nor is it safe in all cases to imitate their example—to do or feel as they have done or felt. Job was a pious man, and yet he had an over-anxiety to die; and Hezekiah was a pious man, and why might he not have had an over-anxiety to live? Mere human nature certainly is capable of both these extremes, and the latter, perhaps, is far more common than the former. Was this desire to live his infirmity and weakness, or was it right in the sight of God—such as God approved? This question must be determined by the circumstances of the case, viz., his prayer and the answer to his prayer.

His prayer was founded upon the fact that he had employed life in the service of God, and for the benefit of his fellow-men. "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." He does not build upon this as his righteousness, by which he is to be justified before God, but pleads it as an evidence of his interest in the great

salvation. He does not demand life as a reward for his services, but yet in his extremity pleads a gracious remembrance of these services. He had reformed the kingdom, taken away the high places, cleansed the temple, and revived neglected ordinances, and what was better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices, he had approved himself to God with a single eye and an honest heart ; not only in these outward things, but in a regular course of holy living. I have walked before thee in truth and sincerity, and with a perfect and upright heart—for uprightness is a perfection, the only perfection man knows on earth—and have done that which is good in thy sight.

It is worthy of remark that his plea was founded upon what he had been and had done, and not, as is too often the case, upon what he intended to be or to do. He avows no intentions, makes no promises for the future. He leaves that whole matter to be inferred or supplied. There is a kind of consistency in all beings, and it might be expected that he who had walked in truth and done right in the sight of the Lord, if life were spared, would still do so. The answer to his petition surely would not make him less a friend of God, or less devoted to his service. His first instance of loving kindness would be a new incentive to holiness of heart and purity of life ; a new inducement to serve his generation according to the will of God. But he makes no mention of this. His plea is founded, not upon fair promises and good intentions, but upon a heart upright and good already done ; upon what *was*, and not upon what was *to be*. And the Lord hearkened and heard him, and thus confirmed the truth of his plea ; and the same prophet that was sent with a warning to prepare for death, was sent with the promise of recovery. “ I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears ; behold, I will add unto thy

days fifteen years." His anxiety to live, then, was not his infirmity or weakness. It was the legitimate product of his piety. God approved it, and gave him his desire; and the granting the request was a token of divine approbation. Indeed we may say, perhaps, that the whole object of this visitation was to bring out the real spirit of the man—the right spirit that possessed him. Therefore a disease, in its own nature mortal, and a warning to set his house in order, was sent. Did he value life so little that he could give it up without a struggle? Did he dread pain so much that he could seek a shelter from it even in the grave? And to make the trial complete, death must be brought very near and all hope of averting it removed, except from the interposition of God. To say that he might die, would not answer the purpose; for that, as far as any one can know, may be true of any man at any time. The whole circumstances must be such that he shall be made to see that death is near, even at the door. And to make the trial complete, a prophet announces from the Lord, "Thou shalt die, and not live." He has the full possession of his powers, for all this has come suddenly, and not by lingering disease. Now, what are his feelings? What is his heart's desire? It is to live. But why? Is he not prepared to die? There is no question of that—he had no question of it. "I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." Why not willing to die, then? Is he afraid of death? He had no cause to fear it—there is not a particle of evidence that he did fear it. Has not God said, "Thou shalt die, and not live," and ought he not to submit to the will of God? And has not God said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and ought not every soul that has sinned to submit to everlasting death? The saying,

“Thou shalt die, and not live,” showed the natural result of the mortal disease ; as the saying, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” shows the natural result of sin ; for “the wages of sin is death.” But the latter does not make the death of the sinner inevitable ; there is a condition, often expressed and always implied, and millions who have sinned have been saved from that threatened death. So in this case. The declaration, “Thou shalt die, and not live,” though in form absolute, was not so in fact. To the question, Ought he not to submit to the will of God, and die ? it may be answered, he does not know that his death of this disease is the will of God, and he has no means of knowing it. God is able to restore him. The very language that announces his death, implies a condition. At least, so he understood it ; and the result showed that it was designed to be thus understood. There was then ground of hope, and hope inspired the prayer. But what if he had not prayed ? What if he had taken it for granted that it was the will of God that he should die, and so just resigned himself to death ? Why, he would have died. Just as in this case : Two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, and Jesus drew near and went with them. But when they drew near to Emmaus he made as though he would have gone farther. “But they constrained him, saying, abide with us ; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.” Now, what if they had not invited him ? He would have gone farther. He would not thrust himself upon them, but gave them an opportunity to invite him ; and while it was proper and right to give them his company and share their hospitality, upon invitation, it was neither, without it. So it was proper and right to give Hezekiah restored health and continued life upon his petition, when

certainly the same end would not have been answered without it; nor, perhaps, would it have been proper or right without it. But why did Hezekiah desire to live? Why this strong and earnest petition for life? He did not fear death; at any rate had no cause to fear it. He was at peace with God, and prepared to die; and coming so near the gates of death, it was as painful a process to return as to go through. Why should he desire to return—to go the whole length through the same sad scenes again—to return from the very borders of heaven to earth again? No man, as a matter of fact, lives to himself or dies to himself. No pious man desires or designs thus to live or die. What might be desirable to man alone, on a desert island, is not desirable to man in the midst of society. He is interested in all that interests his fellow-men, and in all that promotes the glory of God. And this world is not merely a scene of trial, it is a field of usefulness. There is need and room enough for all. And seeing what, by the grace of God, he had done, and what, if life were spared, he might still expect to accomplish, it was the part of piety to desire to live rather than die—to live and take part in the good work, rather than die and leave it to others, or leave it undone.

So felt Hezekiah. “The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee. They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day. The father to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me.”

This subject contains instruction of deep interest to us all.

I. IT SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE.

There is a natural love of life, and yet how few understand its value, or the purpose for which it was given. How few feel that a whole eternity depends upon it. Days and years

are wasted in those things that cannot profit. The great mass seem to have no proper medium, but go to the extremes of presumption and despair. It is wasted as if it could have no end and could not be exhausted, or it is suffered to rust out in idleness, as if it had no object and no proper use. But, whether men are aware of it or not, life has a determined object; an object that cannot be accomplished without effort. There is much to endure—there is much, very much, to be done. And what our hands find to do, we are to do with our might. We must enter heartily into all the appropriate business of life. We form characters for eternity. We sow seed whose fruit of good or evil, according to the seed, we shall reap forever. Here we receive that hue of righteousness or wickedness which fits for heaven or hell, which all eternity will but deepen. How important, then, this present life! And how foolish to dream it away in idle fancies, or merely to be busy here and there! The beasts have their appropriate object in existence, and it is answered without their concurrence or consent. And with appetites satisfied they sink to rest, remembering no evil past, anticipating none future. And shall man live and die like them? Eat and drink, and sink to rest, or rise up to play? Or spend all his strength, and labor, and thought, about those things which perish with the using,—laying up treasures on earth and none in heaven? Immortal interests are involved in this present life. It is the most important field that men can occupy.

II. THERE IS ALWAYS A LEGITIMATE MOTIVE TO LIVE.

Life is not too long, at longest, to answer life's great end. There is "something still to do, or bear." No human being on earth ought, through depression of spirits, or false views of life, to make himself useless. All cannot serve their genera-

tion in the same way, nor is the same kind of service needed from all ; but each according to his several ability, or the circumstances in which the providence of God has placed him. An example of faith and patience in the midst of severe and protracted affliction is not lost upon the world, nor is cheerful resignation in extreme poverty and age. The world needs such examples ; and they are among the most useful that can be presented. They teach, experimentally and practically, lessons of the utmost importance and deepest interest. Those that cannot labor for Christ, may suffer for him ; and those that have no power of language to speak for him, may yet exhibit in real life the power of his grace, and exhibit it with a force and vividness that no language can equal. And then, who shall calculate the influence of their prayers, who are princes in disguise, and have power with God, and prevail ? There is a great and grievous mistake upon this subject, arising from very partial and limited views.

A man who can no longer labor at his vocation or do business to his own advantage, is too often deemed useless ; and in spite of himself, perhaps, in measure partakes of the same feeling. " I am this day fourscore years old," as said Barzillai ; " can thy servant taste what I eat, or what I drink ? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men or singing women ? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord, the king." This was a good reason why he should not go to court, since age had unfitted him for its duties. But was Barzillai, though fourscore years old, useless ? In a time of trouble and rebellion, his influence in favor of the right was better than a thousand fighting men. There is always a legitimate motive to live.

III. WE ARE NOT TO GIVE UP TO DIE, TILL ALL MEANS OF SAVING LIFE ARE EXHAUSTED.

Why should we be willing to die, when, for aught we know, it is the will of God that we should live? How long it may be his will to continue life we cannot know. No man knoweth the day of his death. But there are means to be used to preserve life, or neglected to hasten death. And these means will never be used efficiently, while there is an indifference about the result. He that is willing or anxious to die, may use means to live, from a cold sense of duty, or to save appearances. But can he use them as he could or would if he were desirous to live? The very idea of using means to effect an object, implies an interest in the object. Without this, the means may be used in form, but not in fact; and even means which others use to effect an object for us, may fail through our want of interest in the object. We see this continually in the preaching of the gospel. It is the means to save souls from death. That is the object. But it fails through the hearer's want of interest in the object. And why may not medicine administered to save the body from death, fail in the same way, through the patient's want of interest in life, or from his willingness or anxiety to die? He has made up his mind to die—it would be a disappointment not to die. Now, humanly speaking, will he be as likely to recover as one who, like Hezekiah, is desirous to live? Judge ye. If not, he has not used the appropriate means to live. He has given himself up to die before the proper means of saving life are exhausted. Is this right? On the contrary, is it not a kind of suicide, resulting from limited views and imperfect instruction? But ought he not to be willing to die? Surely, when the will of God to that effect is clearly manifest, he ought; when all ap-

propriate means of saving life are exhausted in vain. Not till then, for not till then is the will of God that he should die and not live, clearly manifested. He ought to be prepared to die. This is duty now, always, at all times. But that is a very different matter from being willing to die now ; as men are often willing who are not prepared, while those prepared, like Hezekiah, are not willing.

We ought to learn from experience and observation ; therefore I may mention a case that occurred many years ago, from which an important lesson was learned. It was at the commencement of a new and small church, where every individual counted. But some members, from various causes, were more prominent and seemed more important than others. So small a church at its commencement could not afford to lose one, least of all a prominent one. But one of the most prominent was taken sick—a married woman in the prime of life—the only one of a large family connection that made any profession of piety. They loved her, and *endured* her religion. She was perfectly resigned, according to the usual meaning of that phrase—willing to die, and anxious to die. Of course she was visited often both by the doctor and the minister, and though their prescriptions were different, there was no opposition—there never need be any. Prayer was made of the church for her, and she lived on, beyond general expectation. At length the doctor said to the minister, “ Our patient ought to get well, and she might if she had not made up her mind to die. The trouble is in your practice, and not in mine.” It was a new idea, not taught in the schools, and it changed the course of that minister’s practice ever after. And having learned himself, he taught her the way of God more perfectly—not merely submission to live, but a desire to live, and a using

means to live, with an interest in the result. Now, if we are not to give up ourselves to die till all means of saving life are exhausted, are we to give up others, and prophesy death, and prepare the way for the fulfilment of our own prophecies?

IV. THE POWER OF PRAYER.

His life was granted at his request. "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years." If he had not prayed, he would have died. A boon not esteemed worth asking for, could not have been properly appreciated, and in this case would not have been bestowed. He is spared on his petition. He prayed with strong crying and tears, and God gave him his request. "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." It did avail. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."

Finally, THE PLEA IN PRAYER.

"I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." This was not the beginning of his serving God, nor was this the commencement of his praying. He had served God in health and prosperity, and when all earthly things went well with him, and now he finds the special benefit of it in his extremity. There is a God and Father, to hear and save. "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight."

"Thy years are one eternal day,
And must thy children die so soon?"

"I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years."

How different all this from those who visit God only in

trouble, and pour out a prayer only when his chastenings are upon them! This extremity will sooner or later be yours and mine, and we shall pray. Hearts that never prayed before, will pray then. And what shall be the plea? Promises and good intentions for the future? To flatter him with our lips and to lie to him with our tongues? And will the answer be, "I have heard thy prayer?" Will it not rather be, "I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded?" "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall ye call upon me, but I will not answer."

EXTRACT FROM ANOTHER SERMON ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. 2 Cor. i. 10.

There was one age in the church when there were martyrs not a few, and the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. But no man sought the crown of martyrdom or desired to escape from life. Persecuted in one city, they fled to another; and left everywhere permanent fruits of their labors. And that they might labor, they used all fair means to preserve life. Thus they showed their trust in God. Yet the great object was not to live. Life was the means, not the end,—the means of accomplishing an inconceivably more glorious and noble end. They counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might finish their course; and they did count their lives dear to them, that they might finish their course. And in the midst of dangers and enemies, and often, seemingly, with but

a step between them and death, some of them lived to old age. They fell one by one, and most of them by violence ; but they never rushed on death, or sought death,—never needlessly exposed themselves to suffering or death. The only apparent departure from this was Paul's last visit to Jerusalem. And this he made by special direction. "Behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." He knew the character and spirit of his countrymen, and could well anticipate what to expect from them ; and, in general, bonds and afflictions awaited him, though the particulars could not be foreseen or avoided. But it was different in this case. When he came to Cesarea, on his way to Jerusalem, a prophet named Agabus "took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we," Luke says, "heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem." In other cases, with similar warning, he would not have gone. But he went up now by special direction ; and means lawful to escape suffering in other cases, were not lawful now. But while he went up by express command, there was no unnecessary exposure of himself—no courting suffering, or tame surrender into the hands of his enemies, or readiness to let them do what they would. He claimed protection against them as a Roman citizen, made his case known to the Roman governor, and finally appealed to Cæsar.

That age of the church is properly called the golden age,

when men strove to live, and lived to labor. But another age of a different spirit succeeded that,—an age when men courted the crown of martyrdom, and tempted and dared their enemies to kill them, and in a spirit of bravado exposed themselves in every way. They scorned to claim their lawful privilege, or to plead their cause before the tribunal. When persecuted in one city, they scorned to flee to another. It was their highest ambition to die by violence, and when the heathen were willing to let them go, they would not be let go, but used even taunts and reproaches to quicken and excite them to murder. And he that had escaped by night, or as Paul did, by being let down from the wall in a basket, would have been ashamed to tell it. So prevalent was this feeling that such an act would have been deemed evidence of a craven spirit. They had lost, in great measure, a sense of the value of life, and of the object of life ; though restrained by some kind of principle from direct acts of violence upon themselves, they were anxious to die. The great object seemed to be to get clear of life as soon as possible—to die by violence, as many of the apostles and first Christians did, and to die recklessly and needlessly, as the apostles and first Christians *did not*.

The age of sober, earnest matter-of-fact, gave place to an age of romance ; and something of that kind has remained with the church in all ages since,—far less now than in former centuries. But there is reason to fear that something of this kind extends through almost all the ranks of Christian life—perhaps most among those who are otherwise the most pious—as they are nearest to heaven, and have the clearest view of its glories. And this would naturally be the case with them, unless with the clearest view of heaven they also had the clearest view of the importance of life, and of the necessity and power of piety

on earth. But let them look abroad over the earth and see how much is to be done, and how much by the grace of God may be done, and how necessary to earth are those who are fast ripening for heaven, and at least all anxiety to depart will vanish, and they will cheerfully wait their threescore years and ten.

Whitefield, with all his piety, was not without his defects upon this subject, and sometimes expressed his weariness of life and desire to depart and be at rest, in strong language. And perhaps few have had greater cause to wish to live or die, as few have lived so near to heaven, or been so extensively useful on earth. Knowing that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, it might seem natural that he should be anxious to receive it—the sooner the better. These feelings of weariness of life and longing to depart, were once expressed strongly to his fellow-laborer, Tennent, closing with the inquiry, “Well, brother Tennent, you are the oldest man among us, do you not rejoice that your reward is so near at hand?” Mr. T. bluntly replied, “No, sir, it is no pleasure to me at all; and if you knew your duty, it would be none to you. I have nothing to do with death; my business is to live as long as I can—as well as I can—and to serve my Lord as faithfully as I can, until he shall think proper to call me home. I hired a man and sent him into the field to labor; and passing by that way in the afternoon, I found him standing and looking at the sun, and saying to himself, ‘It seems as though the sun never would go down—I wish it was night—I am tired of this working all day long—nothing but work, work, work.’ Now he might, while bending to his work, have looked up occasionally at the sun to note its position, and to leave his work in proper shape when the sun went down. But if he

had felt a real interest in the work, would not the sun have gone down and night come soon enough?"

Many of our sayings that pass current are founded upon a false view of the value of life; as, "The fairest flowers soonest wither." "Death loves a shining mark." "His life is near its close, for he is fast ripening for heaven, and wont be spared to us long;" or, "He is too good for this world." "It is better to wear out than rust out," which conveys the idea that to avoid the rusting out it is necessary to wear out soon. The saying is true enough, but makes a false impression. And who can tell how much influence these sayings have in producing their own fulfilment? There were times in our colleges when full health and a ruddy countenance were evidences of poor scholarship—the countenance must be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." And who can tell but there have been martyrs, not to scholarship, but to this false idea, as there have been martyrs in the church to ideas equally false? In whose hand is "length of days?"—Prov. iii. 16. To whom is it said, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation?"—Ps. xci. 16. There are those of whom the world is not worthy, and for that very reason the world needs them the more; and he that is fittest for heaven is the greatest blessing on earth. What would be the effect if every pious man, the hour he became pious, were taken from the earth? It might be said, as is sometimes said in cases somewhat similar, "That life is long which answers life's great end." And one great end of life certainly is, to secure an inheritance among them that are sanctified. And to a pious man dying in an hour after he has reached the city of refuge, that inheritance is secure—that great end of life is answered. Has life no other end or object but this?

Why has God made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth, but that they might feel like kindred and act like kindred ; and, as kindred souls, seek each other's welfare, temporal and eternal ? And is it not one great object of life to do this ? Now, while it may be true that one man may do it more effectually in a short life than another in a long one, is it true that *he* may do it more effectually in a short life than in a long one ? In individual cases it may possibly be so, as Samson slew more by his death than by his life. But these cases are of rare occurrence ; for ordinarily the business of life is not comprised in one signal act, nor is an impression for their good made upon the world in this way, but by a continued course of devoted service.

There is always something worth living for ; and no man has done so much but with continued life he might do more, and with the spirit of piety rejoice in all his labors. And while to live is not the great object, it is an essential means of accomplishing the great objects for which life is given. It is true that God may raise up others to supply the place of those who are taken away. But is this any rule of duty to them, or any justification for seeking a removal ? There is a right way of leaving this work to God. There is also such a thing as deserting it. We may fairly leave that to God over which we have no control. When all lawful means to preserve life are exhausted, we may leave the interests of piety on earth and the salvation of men with him, and die in peace. The Lord will provide. Till then, he *has provided* in all those matters which devolve upon us. And why should he raise up others to perform a work which we are raised up to perform, and with proper views of life might live to perform ? We are to trust in God by doing what is right in the case, be the case as it

will. And this is not giving too much importance to life, or making too much of ourselves, as a false humility or timid shrinking spirit might suggest. It is taking and maintaining the position in which God has placed us, and serving him and our generation according to his will as manifest in the Scriptures. It has pleased him to employ human beings to carry on his work and establish his kingdom on earth. And to be thus employed is an honor and privilege to be desired above all others. There may be higher enjoyment elsewhere when the work is done and the conflict over. But we have no conception of higher privileges than to live and labor for God. There is a salvation so as by fire, with works destroyed. There is a salvation, with works following. There is an entrance into the haven of rest—a wreck, scarcely saved. There is an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Covet earnestly the best.

SERMON III.

THE LOVE OF MONEY.

The love of money is the root of all evil. 1 TIMOTHY vi. 10.

GOD is the natural sovereign of human beings, and the natural object of human affection ; and while he sits upon the throne of the heart, all the powers and faculties of man are in harmony, and man is happy. But since he has been deposed, every usurper has laid claim to the vacant throne, and the human heart is a field of contention and scene of disorder. The design of the gospel is to banish every usurper, and restore God to his throne in the heart. And God is the supreme object of affection wherever the gospel produces its legitimate effect. But he has competitors who have occupied his seat, and claim it still, and are continually struggling to regain their authority. Against these the apostle wrote to warn the disciples, especially against those from which he apprehended the most danger. Multitudes have been ruined by the love of pre-eminence, and multitudes more by the love of pleasure ; but the love of money is, in a manner, the root of *all* evil. Not but that other sources send forth their evils too, but the evils which spring from this source are so many and so aggravated, that the mind is overwhelmed in the contemplation. This is, as it were, the origin of all evils.

Let us consider, First, the *dangers*, and Secondly, the *effects* of the love of money.

I. IT IS DANGEROUS.

1. *It is dangerous from its disguises.* An enemy in the

camp is a thousand times more formidable than one in the open field. In the one case we are taken unawares, in the other we can prepare to resist or flee. Satan is never more successful than when he appears disguised as an angel of light. When he goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, his character and designs are manifest. But it is in the dress and under the name of friend, that he allures men to destruction. The love of money is disguised in a thousand ways, and never appears to the lover himself in its true character.

One of the most common disguises is, a *change of name*. This is a common device to diminish the bitterness of reproach and take off the edge of criminality. We all know something of the power of words, and how the baseness of crime may be lost in the softened terms that are employed to describe it. The same spirit which is called avarice, or love of money, appears very different under the name of economy, or good management, and the delusion is encouraged by the impossibility of drawing an exact line between them,—telling where economy ends and love of money begins. The territories of the two are divided by a line so indistinct, that it is very easy to draw over the name of the one for a covering to the spirit and deeds of the other. How often is this done where the real state of the case is doubtful to the world. The man says it is economy, and it may be so. He is so near the dividing line, that a judgment upon his case cannot be pronounced with confidence. How often is this done when there is *no* doubt. The deluded man himself talks of economy when the whole world pronounces it downright avarice. He commenced upon what the world calls doubtful ground, and as he was deceived at the outset, the deception continued after his conduct had dissipated the last remains of doubt from every other mind. This is one

of the most successful disguises of avarice. Without changing its nature, it has taken shelter under a good name. Those who would scorn it under its true name, receive it with open arms when it comes as economy, prudence, good management.

Another disguise is found in the *design*. While a degree of parsimony and eagerness for money is acknowledged, his station in society, his relations in life, yea, even religion, require it. He is but making a comfortable provision for his family, and "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." How often has providing for a family been made a cloak for the love of money. While avarice stretched its desires and arms abroad

"To grasp in all the shore,"

it was excusable,—yea, praiseworthy,—for the sole object was to provide for the family. Every being but the deluded man himself sees that there is no special regard for the comfort of the family, and no particular readiness to part with money for their accommodation; but every plea of charity, and every call of benevolence, is rendered abortive by the claims of the family. This is a standing apology for the love of money,—an omnipresent excuse for seeking it with insatiable eagerness, and holding on to it with the grasp of death. The disguise is barely sufficient to deceive themselves—as if providing for their own were the sum and substance of Christian duty.

Providing for old age, is another disguise; and a man goes on providing for old age to the last hour of his life. With thousands already in store, and but a day to live, his anxiety for gain is not in the least diminished. Poor man! He is but providing for old age! and while he withholds relief from

the miserable, and exacts his legal due at the expense of mercy, he is but providing for old age! And can you blame him? Who would be willing to be cast, in his last days, upon the charity of the world? And this is the disguise of the most insatiable avarice. The love of money, then, is peculiarly dangerous from its disguises. It is easily concealed under false names and false pretences. The very vice which excludes from the kingdom of heaven, is called by virtue's name, and dressed in virtue's robes.

2. *The love of money is dangerous from its respectability.* Every society, however corrupt, imposes some restraint upon the conduct of its members, and there are certain bounds beyond which indulgence cannot be given. To transgress these bounds, is to lose character and standing in society. If the transgressor does not forfeit his life, he is avoided as a nuisance.

The rules of a society are strict or loose according to the character of its members. Pirates have their rules, but they are not so strict as those of civil society. The very conduct which would destroy character in one, would be a recommendation to the other. Civil society has its rules, but they are not so strict as those of a church. A church has its rules, but they are not so strict as those in the kingdom above. A man may forfeit his character in heaven, and yet be in good standing in the church. He may forfeit his character in the church, and yet be in good standing in civil society, and so on. The love of money forfeits character in heaven, and sometimes in the church; while in civil society, unless it be carried to a great extreme, it is a recommendation. "Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself." The love of money is counted an excellence—an improvement of character. The extreme sometimes brings disgrace, while the thing itself is a

high recommendation. It is associated with industry and enterprise, and worldly prosperity, and he that runs all risks to obtain money, takes the shortest road to secure the respect of men. While he employs others to his own advantage, and turns everything into a channel that suits his purposes and advances his interest, he is sure of commendation, and all honorable epithets are applied to him. His name is above reproach, and his company is everywhere acceptable; while the virtue opposite to the love of money, contentment, is held in general contempt, and the direction of God, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," is trampled under foot. How many have regained character and blotted out the remembrance of their youthful vices, by turning from dissipation to the love of money. They have secured respectability by exchanging one vice for another, and thousands have satisfied their fears and their consciences by the change. Here is the great danger to the professor of religion. If he rob, or steal, or defraud, or lie, he forfeits his standing in the church, and his character among men. He is restrained from these vices not merely by the fear of God, but by a regard to reputation. Yet he may love money, and forfeit the favor of heaven, but still secure a more extensive respect on earth. It deserves to be considered, whether the Christian professor has not peculiar temptations to the love of money. He cannot mingle in the dissipation and revelry of the world, without giving the lie to his profession. He cannot give a loose rein to his appetites and passions, as others can, without open disgrace; but he can love money, and yet pass as a very respectable man in the world, and a very good Christian in the church. He can love money, and never suspect the genuineness of his piety, or fear a single reproach. He can love money, and live and die in

the church, and so deceive its members that they shall think him gone to the rewards of the blessed. How often has "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" been said over the bones of the lovers of money. His profession restrained him from many vices in which others might indulge, and he made reprisals by indulging more largely in the love of money.

3. *The love of money is dangerous from its insatiableness.* Dissipation and licentiousness have a bound which nature itself has fixed. The power is soon exhausted, and the constitution is broken down; and necessity enforces an outward reformation. All sensual indulgences are, from their very nature, short-lived; and when a ruined constitution presents the effects of vice before the mind of its victim, and sickness and pain dissipate the delusion of the world, and afford opportunity for reflection, there is hope that the reformation may extend inward, and that the most dissipated and licentious may be brought to "abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes." But what bound is there to the love of money, or at what point will it rest satisfied? Who that loved it, ever had enough? Many have fancied that they should be satisfied when they arrived at a certain point of acquisition. But the desires always increase with greater rapidity than the possessions. It is still true, and always will be, that "He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase." Even in old age it flourishes in green luxuriance amid the decay and wreck of nature. After all other passions have subsided or decayed, the love of money still lives in all the vigor and freshness of youth. It has gained strength from universal decay, and reigns sole lord of the heart. In middle life it was restrained by the love of pleasure, or a sense of shame—by a respect for character or friends—occasionally by

a generous emotion. But it has outlived all these restraints, and the wretched victim of avarice, as he stands with whitened locks and withered limbs, on the borders of the grave, is a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men. The love of money has blighted every hope of heaven, and dried up every fountain of feeling in his bosom. Its very insatiableness and its immense increase in age, flourishing amidst universal desolation and death, show the danger of the love of money.

II. THE EFFECTS.

The language of the apostle is exceedingly forcible—"the root of all evil." This is a strong expression. No man who is acquainted with the real evils which have originated from this source, can count it extravagant. Let me point out a few of the evils.

1. *It stops the progress of the kingdom of God.* How often has it defeated the best laid plans, while it insinuated itself into the counsels of the godly, and covered with confusion the armies of the Lord of hosts. When Joshua led the hosts of Israel into the land of Canaan, no enemy was able to stand before them. The walls of Jericho fell down at their approach, and their enemies were subdued or fled in the utmost terror. But their course of victory was suddenly interrupted. Joshua could stop the sun in his course, but he could not stay the hand of avarice. The love of money gave them a defeat which all their enemies could not give. Achan took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred sheckles of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty sheckels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent." Poor wretch! He was going with a

victorious company to take possession of the glory of all lands, and for this miserable pittance forfeited his inheritance and brought disgrace and defeat upon his company. And how many Achans has the camp of the Lord included in every age! distracting the counsels and defeating the efforts of the pious! How many enterprises which promised great good, have been opposed by the professedly religious! How many have no sympathy with any scheme of benevolence—it costs so much! The pretended ground of opposition is various. The real ground is the love of money.

The love of money has been the strongest barrier to the success of the gospel. What but this, induces men to give in such stinted measure to spread it? This most frequently quenches the light or sullies the brightness of a Christian profession. The wickedness in professors which causes the way of truth to be evil spoken of, for the most part originates from the love of money. It is also the most effectual means of excluding religion from the heart. How many who have gone so far as to inquire what they should do to inherit eternal life, have failed of the inheritance through love of money. Like the young man who came to Christ with that inquiry, they have gone away sorrowful, and remained unsanctified and unsaved. The love of the world has held possession of their hearts, and kept out the love of the Father. “The God of this world has blinded their eyes . . . lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” The light of life shed its lustre all about them, but they were not enlightened, for the windows of their souls were darkened by the love of money. Thus it stops the progress of the kingdom of God, as it prevents that devotion of time and property to God, by which the interests of that

kingdom are advanced—as it destroys or cripples the influence of the church, which is the channel of heavenly blessings, and the grand instrument of subduing the world to Christ—and as it shuts the hearts of men against eternal things.

2. *It is the principal cause of apostacies.* Many professors in the time of our Savior and the apostles continued but for a season. This large class is presented in the parable of the sower, as the seed sown among thorns. The fallow ground had never been fairly broken up. They “hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.” They withdrew by little and little from the influence of the gospel, and finally settled down mere worldly people. They perhaps never withdrew from the church, and never so far exposed themselves as to justify exclusion. Dead to all the realities of religion, they have a mere name among the living, and when circumstances allow a preference, they give it to that society which imposes the least restraint and requires the least sacrifice.

Others, having professed religion for a time, have renounced it in all its forms, and appear unblushing candidates at Mammon’s court. Whether they have renounced all connection with religion forever, or not, the cares of the world at present have thrust it all aside. Others, emigrating, have carried with them the love of money, but left their religion in the land of their nativity; and their new acquaintances, after several years, are surprised to learn that they were reputed pious in former days. The whole land exhibits thousands who, like Demas, have forsaken Christ, “having loved this present world,”—thousands of every grade of character, in human estimation, from the most respectable to the most abandoned. Differing

in a thousand other things, they agree in this,—being lovers of money more than lovers of God.

Of the three great temptations of Satan, this, to the Christian community, is far the most alluring and the most fatal. Ambition, and the love of pleasure, have slain their thousands, but the love of money its ten thousands. Pleasure and ambition both have sunk away before the love of money.

3. *The love of money is the great fountain of crime.* Every species of wickedness which has disgraced our nature, here finds a motive for its perpetration. The blackest crimes, and the meanest, have this common origin. From the murderer down to the robber, the thief, the gambler, the usurer, the extortioner, the cheat, the fraudulent dealer, love of money is the inspiring motive—modified in different individuals by a variety of circumstances—but the main principle is the same in all. All to some extent dread the *guilt*, but all are anxious to be partakers of the *gain* of ungodliness. The murderer would willingly spare the shedding of blood, but he must have money, and presents his pistol with the alternative,—“Your money or your life.” The thief has no malicious joy in injuring a fellow-man, but he must have money. The gambler turns his victim out to despair and death; he would relieve him, but he can't spare the money. The usurer who takes advantage of the necessity of his neighbor to exact exorbitant interest, is influenced by the same feeling with the robber and the thief; and so on, down to the petty crimes which are so frequently mingled in with common business. The crime has no charms, it is the gain of it that is so attractive. The love of money is at the bottom of the whole.

Balaam had no special hostility to Israel, but he “loved the wages of unrighteousness,” and for money, like a dishonest

lawyer for his fee, he gave that hellish counsel which enabled their enemies to send mourning and desolation and death through the whole camp. Judas had no revenge to gratify in betraying the Savior of men. He only loved money more than truth and justice, and is this by any means uncommon? Turn where you will, the great fountain of crime is the love of money. This has induced men to desert all principles and all parties; has separated the dearest friends and broken up the closest intimacies. It has divided hearts that seemed knit together by the strongest ties.

4. *The love of money closes the gates of heaven.* That which is highly esteemed among men, is often an abomination in the sight of God. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The love of God has no place in mercenary bosoms. The soul that dotes on glittering dust, has no title to an unfading inheritance—no fitness for the pure enjoyments of heaven. "He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth," has declared that covetousness is idolatry. And the great judge of the living and the dead, has warned all men beforehand, not to be deceived, for neither "idolaters, . . . nor thieves, nor covetous, . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God." He who is under the influence of the love of money, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He may not be a miser, but he is a lover of money. He may not be an extortioner, but he is a lover of money. He may not be fraudulent, but he is a lover of money. He shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The praise of earth may rest upon him, but he is attended by the blast of heaven. "He has his day and his object, but he shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. He may accumulate large earthly possessions, but he does not seek first the kingdom of God, and he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He loves the world, and he shall perish

with the world. In vain at last is he aghast at his former madness. In vain does he detest the idol which he worshipped. He has bartered his soul for money, and the gate of salvation is closed against him." Here is the legitimate fruit of the love of money—everlasting death. And is it too much to call it the root of all evil? It stays the progress of God's glorious kingdom. It causes numberless apostacies from the church. It is the great fountain of crime on earth, and finishes its dreadful work by shutting the soul out of the paradise of God.

Such is but a faint outline of the dangers and evils of the love of money. We live in the midst of these dangers, and are exposed to all these evils, and the exposure is a common one. I know that it is frequently thought that the poor, or those in moderate circumstances, have little interest in this subject, and it is sometimes said that they are very little exposed, as they handle very little money. But what is it that is the root of all evil? Is it the possession of money, or the legitimate use of money? No. It is the *love* of money. And may not the poorest man on earth love it, and long for it as heartily as the richest? Let no man be deceived on this subject—as though his peculiar circumstances exempted him from danger. The greatest danger of all, is an unconsciousness of danger. The experience is a common one. When Christ said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! . . . It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,"—if he had given no explanation, it might have been applied merely to the rich. But he explained the same idea in different language,—“How hard is it for them that *trust* in riches to enter into the kingdom of God,”—including all who seek earthly things as the greatest good. The ex-

posure is common, and so is the way of safety ; and the very first step in that way is serious consideration. Think. Let fancies and day-dreams vanish, and summon up the mind to contemplate realities—the shortness of life—the uncertainty of earthly things—how much the soul needs which money cannot buy—and what it shall “profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.”

Think, too, of the better portion fitted to the nature of the soul, and lasting as its immortality. Never hope to banish the love of money by a direct effort. The mind cannot be vacant. One affection can be expelled only by introducing another and a stronger. The love of God alone can banish the idolatry of covetousness, and the treasures of heaven are brought near to lead us away from all unhallowed attachments of earth. If you would banish the love of money, or secure yourselves against it, you must set your affections on things above. Seek durable riches and righteousness, “a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not.” Believe on Jesus Christ. Become united by faith to him. Be a living branch in the living vine. For “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.” All others, having no anchor to their souls, shall be swept away by the current of this world, while he that believeth shall be saved. He shall be conqueror, and more than conqueror, through the blood of the Lamb ; and “he that overcometh shall inherit all things.” A belief in Jesus overcomes the world by presenting to the view the glories of heaven, and this world, glorious as it is, has no glory “by reason of the glory that excelleth.” “Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world ; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

SERMON IV.

SECRET PRAYER.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. MATTHEW vi. 6.

THE design of the sermon on the mount is, to explain and illustrate Christian character, so that no man might mistake the nature of Christianity, or the spirit of Christ's kingdom. After his temptation Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." This immense multitude needed some certain information as to the nature of this kingdom, and the character of its subjects. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and the natural inquiry was, What sort of a kingdom is it? The sermon on the mount is the answer to this inquiry. In these three chapters, Jesus has shown the nature of that kingdom, and the spirit and temper of its subjects; and so plain that "the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." All its subjects are poor in spirit, and meek, and pure, and peaceable; reviled, they revile not again; persecuted, they suffer it. The law of God is in their heart—a law which requires purity of motive as well as propriety of conduct. They are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, as their conduct is the acting out of that love which is the fulfilling of the law. Devotion to God is combined with kindness to those who are

made after the similitude of God. There was no command to give alms; this was a duty which nature itself taught, and which all acknowledged, and, as to the outward form, many regarded. His command is, not to enforce the act, but to regulate the manner and the motive. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." The trumpet was sounded professedly to call the people together, to give notice to the needy that distribution was to be made. But it answered the purpose also of proclaiming their generosity. They saved the trouble of seeking out the distressed and purchased the credit of liberality at a cheap rate.

So with regard to prayer, it is taken for granted that all pray, or at least acknowledge the obligation; he says nothing, therefore, to enforce the duty, but only to regulate the manner and spirit of prayer. When thou doest alms, let it not be to gain the credit of liberality, or to appear generous to men. If that be your object, you have your reward. It is done to men, and in their praise and approbation you have your reward—you can expect nothing of God. When thou prayest, let it not be to gain the credit of talents, or sanctity, or of deep experience, or deep humility. Such an exhibition men may praise, and exclaim, "How devout," "how humble," or "how heavenly," but God abhors it. Men may call it an ele-

gant prayer, while it is a smoke in his nostrils. This is not designed to forbid public alms-giving, or public prayer, but ostentation and display. What is good in deed, ought to be good in manner and good in motive. The disciples publicly sold their possessions, and laid the money at the apostles' feet; and distribution was publicly made as every man had need. So contributions were publicly made for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Paul prayed publicly by the seashore, and gave thanks in presence of a ship's company. The object of Jesus was, not to appoint the place or posture of prayer, but to expose vanity and ostentation, and to urge his followers to seek the favor of God rather than men; and what they did, to do to God, and not to men. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." This is not all the prayer that we are required to offer. It is only one part, but still a very important part. As each is a distinct individual, and must give an account of himself to God, it is manifestly his duty and interest to plead his own cause before the throne of grace.

As a *preparation for secret prayer*, "Enter into thy closet, and shut the door." We find some preparation necessary to appear in the presence of those who are high in honor or in office on earth—of those whom we respect, and whose approbation we desire to gain or secure. Desiring their favor, we take pains to remove all that is offensive, that there may be nothing on our part to interrupt the harmony. If this is but respectful to a being like ourselves, shall we rush into the presence of God? Even nature itself teaches that some preparation is necessary—time to collect the thoughts and calm the spirits—to reflect upon the character and claims of God, and our stand-

ing in his sight. Enter thy closet, and shut the door. Exclude all company. Be literally alone. This is necessary to collectedness and self-possession. We are influenced by those about us. Their presence is a restraint upon freedom—affecting our feelings, and modifying our expressions. Besides there are confessions to be made, which need not, and ought not to meet the ear of a human being. Our most secret thoughts are to be laid open and reviewed in the presence of God—the motives by which we have been actuated—the great ends which we have in view. No good ends can be answered by revealing all these particulars to men, and there is no law that requires it. But nothing should be kept back, when we deal with the Searcher of Hearts. The confession will not be free and full in the presence of others, neither will the petition. We have wants and temptations, as well as sins, peculiar to ourselves; for the general likeness of human beings does not destroy the distinctions of independent character. Every one is a complete person by himself, having his own wants, and sins, and temptations, and responsibilities. Shut the door, then. Exclude all company, that the whole may be a matter simply between your souls and God.

Exclude also the world. We are connected with earth as well as heaven, and the appropriate business of life is part of our training for the world to come, and we are counted worthy to inherit the true riches, only as we have been faithful in the unrighteous mammon. We cannot think of God and heaven every moment of time, any more than a man on his journey home, can think every moment of home. What he does he must do with his might, and he does it with his might only as his mind is interested in it and fixed upon it. But his mind constantly fixed upon the far distant end must overlook present

duty. We are in the world, and must perform the appropriate duties of the world ; and we can do so only as we think of the world. But we need seasons of retirement and reflection, lest the world get an advantage over us, and from a servant become our master. Enter thy closet and shut the door. Exclude things temporal, that the mind may be fully impressed with things eternal. The world is a scene of trial as well as of duty. Arm thyself for the trial by immediate and direct communion with God. Reflect upon his glorious character—his plan of salvation—the weakness and wickedness of man.

Thus prepared, pray to *thy Father in secret*, with no eye to see but God's, and no ear to hear but God's. Here, perhaps, is the best trial of the reality of our piety. In the congregation and the prayer meeting, and even in the family, the presence of others produces excitement and affectation, and if not the presence of God, at least *their* presence produces some degree of earnestness. We may have no faith to make real the presence of God, but the presence of men excites and animates. Alone, if we have no faith in God, it is literally speaking into the air. We may have a set form, and go through its regular round regularly, but it is nothing but a form, and the dullest of all forms, and the most unmeaning. Without faith, secret prayer is a mere form—is nothing. The spirits sink, the heart faints, the thoughts wander, and even the tongue seems almost to lose all power of utterance. The Father is in secret, and with no faith to give evidence of things unseen, there is nothing to excite feeling and concentrate thought. Faith seems to be essential even to the external performance. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him ;" and when faith is lacking, or vanishing, it is first of all manifest here. The closet has no

attractions for secret prayer—has no meaning. With many there may be zeal and earnestness to speak and to pray in public, but when they retire from the excitement of the public gaze, the spirit flags—and the higher the excitement in public, the greater the depression in private. There is nothing they dread so much as to be alone, for they find nothing so insipid. They have what may be called a social religion, and if human beings were to be saved in companies or in masses, their prospects of heaven might be fair. But if, as the fact is, salvation is personal, depending upon individual belief and individual character, it is greatly to be feared that they have no part nor lot in the matter; as they have nothing to excite or animate in private—no communion with God in solitude. The individual is lost in the crowd and lives in public. In his repentance he does not “sit alone, and keep silence, because he hath borne it upon him,”—his faith leads to no communion with God in private. Forgetting his individuality, he is just carried with the current. He lives upon meetings, and ordinances, and excitement, and when these fail, all thought of religion and hope of heaven fail with them. Here is the origin, and progress, and end of a popular religion. When there is no communion with the Father who is in secret, the heart is not right in the sight of God; for there is no faith to give evidence of things unseen, or to realize the presence of God. Nothing but faith can give interest to private prayer, or secure its continuance. “Pray to thy Father which is in secret,” and pray in faith; for without faith it is impossible to please him. “He that cometh to God,” then, “must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” for in this world he can come to God in no other way but by faith. He cannot see him. “No man hath seen God at any

time," and he is real to us, only as we believe the revelation which he has made of himself.

But a prayer in faith will also be a prayer in *humility and reverence*. He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold he puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly." The very heavens are not clean in his sight. How polluted, then, "is man, which drinketh iniquity like water!" His infinite exaltation and glory require the deepest reverence, while his purity, contrasted with our pollution, should bring down every high thought of ourselves. "I saw," says Isaiah, "the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up,"—and *he* saw him only by a strong and lively faith, which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,"—"and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." Here is the image of angelic worship. With what reverence and holy awe do they worship! How then should a sinner appear! If they who have never sinned thus adore the majesty on high, what reverence and humility become us! Can we trifle with the name of God, or rush into his presence with coarse familiarity or impudent boldness?

Yet we are to pray *in confidence*, "For he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "He giveth liberally and upbraideth not." Through Jesus we have access by one spirit unto the Father, and depending upon the merits of his sacrifice, we enter into the holiest of all, by the faith of him. The very

name of Father encourages confidence, while the sacrifice he has made, and the invitations he has given, allure our hearts. He that cometh shall in no wise be cast out ; we are to come emboldened by his promises and expecting their fulfilment—remembering there is something to be accomplished by every prayer. It is not merely a duty to be done, and done with. “He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint ; saying, there was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while ; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith, And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them ? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ?” A cold and tame petition is asking a denial ; for, expecting nothing, we are seldom disappointed. “I will not let thee go,” said the patriarch, “except thou bless me.”

Nor should private prayer be *left to depend upon circumstances*, or to any time that may be found convenient. It is far better to have fixed times and regular seasons for prayer, and instead of leaving so important a matter to circumstances, as far as possible to control the circumstances. There may be extraordinary seasons, when much time may be requisite. On one occasion Jacob spent all night in prayer. So did the Savior ; and Paul once preached till midnight. But these extraordinary seasons come only at remote intervals. They are

not matters of calculation. The circumstances made the necessity. But the ordinary seasons may be matters of calculation, and ought to be. He that makes private prayer a matter of conscience, will not leave the time uncertain. He will delight himself in the Almighty, and always call upon him.

Pray to thy Father which *seeth in secret*. Unknown to men, it is all known to him, and it cannot be overlooked or forgotten. He knows our down-sitting and our up-rising, and every prayer is registered in his book; and even that which has not assumed form and body, has a real existence with him. We are sometimes brought into straits, so that we know not what to pray for as we ought. But "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. . . . "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit."

"Our secret groanings reach his ear."

There is no language—there is no audible or visible manifestation, but it reaches the eye and the ear of God; for he is present with the heart, and knows all its workings.

Thy Father shall *reward thee*. This reward is given in various ways and forms in the present life, for it is not a vain thing to serve God, nor is prayer without profit. No man can hold habitual communion with God without experiencing its benefits. It gives him clearer views of the truth. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." If "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise," how much more shall he that holds habitual communion with God? The corrupt affections are worn away by the power of prayer; and, beholding the glory of God, he is changed into his image. He is saved from grievous mistakes

in judgment, and fatal errors in practice. There is an extent of information upon religious subjects, and a fixedness of principle, which give a symmetry and consistency to his character. We sometimes find men of very limited powers, and limited information upon other subjects, with a knowledge and tact in religious things that is astonishing. They have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; and they owe their knowledge and their aptness in religious things to habitual communion with God. They are not only wise unto salvation, but have a peculiar tact at communicating that wisdom. As they have power with God and prevail, so they are fitted to prevail with men, and they turn many to righteousness. Showing forth the praise of Him who has called them to glory and virtue, they are rewarded in being made an eminent blessing to their fellow men. They are rewarded in still higher and higher enjoyment. "We are saved by hope," and by habitual communion with God, that hope becomes as an "anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast," and an earnest of the heavenly inheritance; for to them that ask, it shall be given, and they that seek shall find.

"He shall reward thee *openly*." The prayer is in secret, and the reward here on earth is partly so, for praying people are God's hidden ones. The world know them not, as they know not their Master. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Jesus, in the days of his flesh, offered up supplications and prayers with strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save him from death; and he is crowned with glory and honor and immortality, and so shall they be. He has entered heaven as the Apostle and High Priest of their

profession, and he is but their forerunner. His entrance is an assurance of theirs. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." Let no man say, "It is vain to serve God," or, "What profit shall we have, if we pray unto him." Here is a service which insures an abundant recompense. "Enter into thy closet and shut the door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father that seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." It is a reward, though it is of grace, not of debt; for what merit can there be in asking? and what goodness can there be equal to this,—to give what we ask, and even more than we ask, and even to reward the asking itself? How blessed to serve a being who places prayers in the number of services! and reckons to the account of his servants their very trust and confidence in asking all things of him! What is done in secret is openly acknowledged and recompensed. Here, then, is a resource at all times and under all circumstances. Art thou tempted? Enter thy closet and pray to thy Father which is in secret, and you shall not be tempted above that which you are able to bear, but he will provide a way of escape, or strength to resist it. Art thou in want? Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and he shall supply all your wants out of his abundant fulness. Do fears and sins, prevailing, rise? He knows your frame. He remembers you are but dust. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Do depression and gloom cover your mind? "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord." "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who

giveth liberally to all men and upbraideth not." He is more ready to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. "Enter into thy closet and shut the door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret;" "then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily," yea, "thy light shall rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday." In every season of doubt and perplexity, and in every season of danger and distress, pray to thy Father that is in secret. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower." "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

Shall we wait till perplexities arise, and dangers threaten? Is it not far better by prayer to anticipate the evil, and seek and secure the protection of God when all things go well with us? that when the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow,—as at one time or another they will,—we may have a permanent shelter and protection? And yet, how many never pray; or, at best, make no conscience of prayer! In some distressing emergency a prayer is forced from them, but they have no regular seasons of prayer, and month after month passes away without communion with God. For a great portion of their lives they cast off fear and restrain prayer. They acknowledge the duty, perhaps, and yet never, or scarcely ever attempt to perform it. They forsake their own mercies, and count themselves unworthy of eternal life; for if they have no communion with God here, how shall they behold his glory or rejoice in his presence hereafter? Every situation in life, the circumstances of every day, demand continual application to the Father of mercies, and all the objections which ever were or can be brought against frequent and fervent prayer, are included in one great fact—estrangement of heart from the

source of all good. We love to think, and talk, and have intercourse with objects, just in proportion as they are objects of interest and affection. Prayer is insipid or repulsive only to those who have said in their hearts, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." He who never prays, whatever else he may do, needs no other evidence that he is still in a state of condemnation; and he who prays but seldom, can have no satisfactory evidence that he is reconciled to God. It is said of the Israelites, "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned, and inquired 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." There was no delight in God. They prayed as the heathen offer sacrifices to the evil spirit—from fear; or as the prophet says, "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them."

There is nothing more necessary, and nothing that commends itself more strongly to every man's conscience, than prayer. And how will you answer to God, if it be neglected? He has said, "Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly," and you had no confidence in his word, and you would not pray. He has said, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved," and you would not, and did not call upon his name. He has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive," and you received not because you asked not. The noblest privileges, the richest blessings were to be had for the asking, and you did not ask. A price was put into your hands to get wisdom, but you had no heart to it.

SERMON V.

UNSUCCESSFUL SEEKING FOR HEAVEN.

For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.
LUKE xiii. 24.

IN the constitution and government of the world, God has given no encouragement to idleness. If any man would be rich, or honored, or intelligent, he does not become so by merely wishing; his present exertions are necessary. And so if he would be wise unto salvation, he must strive for that wisdom; or rich toward God, or honored in the presence of his holy angels, he must do something more than wish. He must put forth his wishes into living, visible action. When we talk of the things of this world, and tell you they are not yours without your exertions, you understand perfectly what we mean, and your own hearts respond to it. We are met everywhere by a ready and joyous assent; but when we talk of the glories of the future world, and tell you on what conditions they may be yours, we receive indeed your assent—a cold, sleepy assent. No eye looks bright, no countenance sparkles with joy at the prospect. None show by look or by deed, the resolution—these glories shall be ours. When we say, too, that the man of a thousand purposes, forever resolving and yet never fixed, makes no advance with his forces scattered and weakened in proportion to the wideness of their dispersion—that, with forces powerful if concentrated on any one object, he is the weakest of the weak as it is, and warn you to shun his example, you

feel the force of the warning; for you see that though he has the powers of a giant, they are yet so scattered that a child may overcome him.

But when we apply this case to yourselves, and tell you that while your affections and your exertions have no fixed, definite object, but are scattered here and there, you can accomplish nothing—you are the weakest of the weak—you perhaps agree to it in word, but have no feeling of its truth. With your weakness demonstrated before you, and how you may become strong, you go on exhibiting proof after proof of weakness and imbecility. You love heaven a little, and are perhaps willing to make some little exertion to get there. But then, you love a great many other things, which are not merely independent of the love of heaven, but inconsistent with it. You love yourselves, the praise of men, pleasure, money, ease, earthly good things. You make exertions to obtain all these. You would go to heaven full-handed—take all of gratification you can find here, and then take the remainder in heaven; so that though heaven has some place in your affections, it stands last on the list. And I appeal to you whether you do not make abundantly more exertions to obtain any of these things, than to obtain heaven. Shall ye then enter heaven? What! with all these scattered affections, with all these earthly desires and earthly hopes, and after all this striving for earthly things? To make it any heaven to you, all these things which you love must be there—men to praise you—pleasure to revel in—or money to lay up—or beds for ease—or earthly good things to seek after. Verily, if you are found with affections fixed upon such objects, you may “seek to enter in, but shall not be able.” Christ commands you to strive to enter in at the strait gate. There is something worth striving for, and there is also

some real difficulty in the case,—enough to call for our utmost exertion.

Our Savior, for our admonition, has forewarned us that many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able. Who are these, and why will they not be able to enter? Our Savior has told us that there are many such—not merely here and there one, but *many*. And he has pictured before us in some measure the awfulness of their disappointment—for they confidently expected that they should be able to enter—had good hopes of themselves—and were sure that whoever might be excluded, they should enter, without question or difficulty. Who are they? Our Savior has given us some clue to their character, and has also told us to what they owe their exclusion—*want of exertion—ill-directed exertion, or ill-timed exertion*. They did not strive enough, or they did not strive in the proper manner, or at the allotted time, and this last seems to have been the principal cause of their ruin. They began to feel strongly, and to exert themselves much when it was too late—after the day was past, and the door of hope shut.

Probably every living man has some kind of an expectation that it will be well with him after death—that he either is safe already, or that he will arrange that matter before he dies. No man expects to go to hell, or, what is the same thing, to be excluded from heaven. But a great many will be excluded, of whom it can hardly be said that they ever sought to enter, for seeking implies some kind of exertion; and how many have lived and died without making any exertions to get there, and whose frail hope of heaven was built on something which they *were to do*, but never *did*. Such will not be condemned by this text.

This text condemns those who have actually done *something*,

but *not enough*; and I must think it refers particularly to *professors of religion*. For who are so likely to use some exertion as they, and who but they should feel so safe, or speak so confidently? A man who has never come out from the world and joined a Christian society, may make some exertion and feel confident of his good state; but having never acknowledged his Savior before men, it seems hardly possible that he should have the assurance to come up to the door with anything like a confident expectation of admittance. But the plea of those mentioned in the text seems to imply that they had been numbered among the avowed, open followers of the Lord Jesus. Many who have sought and actually obtained entrance into the kingdom of God on earth, or into the visible church, shall seek to enter heaven and shall not be able. Weighed in the balances, they shall be found wanting. They do not strive enough. There are a great many professors of religion. The church is a kind of net which encloses all sorts. Though in general some kind of attention is paid to keeping out the worst characters, they will find an entrance almost whenever they choose. By an outward reformation, or an appearance of zeal, or a thousand hypocritical pretences, they impose upon men. Men may call them good Christians, and eminently pious, when God sees in them nothing but rottenness and corruption. Men take it for granted that they are pious, because they are professors of religion; and the good opinion of men casts out doubts and fears, confirms their assurance, and they too take it for granted that they are fair candidates for heaven. They know they indulge habitually in some sins, but they are not of the disreputable kind. They habitually neglect some duties, but it is not generally known. The outside is somewhat spotted, but then, there are spots on the sun. They are to a

considerable extent free from outbreking vices, and exhibit occasionally a few flashes of zeal. And this is about the sum and substance of their religion. It is not enough. We will not inquire how they became members of the church—how they felt, or how they thought they felt at that time ; for it is not our design to charge this large class of dead professors with wilful hypocrisy—with pretending to feel what they at the same time knew they never felt, and taking vows which they never meant to perform. But we will look at them as professors of religion,—no matter how they became such,—judge of the tree as it stands, by its fruit. There are so many of this kind, so much alike and yet so different, that I hardly know which kind of character to hold up before you.

Some are very *accommodating*—in Rome do as Romans—men in whom there is nothing fixed—neither principle nor feeling of religion—whose character assumes its hue from surrounding objects. In the company of the pious, they are very pious ; in the world, they are of the world. They become “ all things to all men,”—not, like Paul, to save some,—but to gain the good opinion of all. When religion is in repute, they are very religious,—none more zealous, none more devoted, none willing to go greater lengths in the outside of religion. They can with much rejoicing follow Christ through good report. But let iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold, and the cause of religion appears to wane, and they float with the tide. The stream of this world carries them on, and zeal for religion is gone. They can see its ordinances neglected, its holy day profaned, its life and its beauty fade away, and shed no tear over its ruin, and offer no prayer for its revival. There is no consistency in their exertions, no permanency in their zeal, no life and power in their religious feeling. They are regularly

revived in every revival, and decline in every declension. The heaven which they seek is no fixed, definite object; it is a flickering blaze, which seems bright when religious prospects are bright, and dim when religious prospects are dim. They seek they know not what. For had they any foretaste of the object—did they credit the Bible's report of heaven—could they feel the same languor, the same drowsiness? could they be satisfied with consenting to all that is good, and doing next to nothing that is good? Verily, they must seek to enter into heaven with more ardor, or they will hardly make men believe that they have any intention of going there; and if you cannot even impose upon men in this matter, how will you stand before the Searcher of hearts?

But besides these who exhibit no ardor except when all is ardent about them, who are warm or cold, they know not why, there is another class who it would seem are on principle *opposed to all ardor*, to all zealous, earnest striving to enter into heaven—a cold, calculating race of speculating men, who have carried knowledge far beyond practice, or rather, whose speculative knowledge has given a death blow to all zeal, except it be a zeal for rigid doctrine. They will hardly allow a man to be zealously affected even in a good thing, or rather, I would say, will hardly admit any thing to be a good thing that is out of the pale of their order—heads thoroughly orthodox, and hearts stone—so afraid of wild fire as to cast out all fire. Zeal is enthusiasm, and exulting hope is frenzy, and a trembling in view of the wrath of God is a causeless terror. They have refined and refined, till all spirit is gone, and nothing remains but a well-proportioned form. But they must do something more than speculate, something more than hold fast a form of

sound words, "for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

There are a great many *sticklers for forms*, who, beyond all question, are Congregationalists, or Methodists, or Baptists, but who leave it very doubtful whether they are Christians. Now, if any of these names were the pass-word, they would be safe enough; but as it is, there is great danger that such, however confident they may be, "shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." For what have they done to honor the name of the Lord Jesus, or to show forth the glory of his grace? Who has taken knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, and before whose eyes have they exhibited the power of religion? Their exertions are *ill directed*. And this is the ruin of many—zeal without knowledge. This is indeed wild fire. It is a zeal *about* religion, but unaccompanied by an enlightened understanding and a heart to know the truth; it is a zeal about they know not what—names or forms. They mistake almost everything; light and darkness, good and evil, bitter and sweet are commingled. Like the man whose eyes Jesus partially opened, they see everything indistinctly—men, as trees, walking. And in spiritual things they can hardly tell a man from a tree. The information which God has given us in his word has never found a lodgment in their understandings. They want a guide—a light to their feet and a lamp to their path. Without this their zeal will waste itself in the air, and leave them exhausted, or be like the madman's casting abroad fire-brands, arrows and death. Zeal, unless directed to the proper object, will be unprofitable and injurious to themselves. They strive hard enough, but it is not to enter in at the strait gate, for without some knowledge they cannot tell where the strait gate is, or how they can enter—what they must believe of it,

or what life they must lead in their way to it. They have zeal enough. Zeal for what? They cannot tell. They have seen something, but they cannot describe it; they have heard something, but they have no definite idea of it—a vague, uncertain rumor. Zeal enough; but it has no knowledge to direct it, and no definite conceptions to support it; no wonder it is as useless as it is short-lived. Zeal enough to take the kingdom of heaven by force, if it was enlightened enough to know where and how to make the attack.

Much as we deprecate zeal without knowledge (and we must declare it to be utterly unprofitable) we do equally lift up our voice against *knowledge without zeal*; and declare it to be more utterly without the shadow of reason, than zeal without knowledge. Both are unprofitable. But the knowledge without zeal is utterly inexcusable; a more high-handed rebellion, a more heaven-daring insult than the other can be. What! Shall a man know all, and acknowledge all, and feel nothing? Shall he read the Bible as he would any other book, merely for information, and talk about it as if he had nothing to do with it but talk about it? Are its doctrines and its precepts nothing to him? Or has he nothing to do but to *know* his Master's will? And knows he not what the end will be of those who know and do not?

There is, or there may be, zeal enough. There is no man who is not capable of being excited to the proper pitch. But an enlightened, well-directed zeal, which alone is of use, where shall it be found? It must be found, or no man will enter heaven? Every man has zeal—zeal for a particular doctrine, zeal in a particular cause, zeal for his party, zeal against zeal. The Jews were zealous for forms and ceremonies. Saul of Tarsus was zealous in opposing Christianity. Many a man

now is zealous to be rich, or to gain success to his party, or to put down those who oppose it, or to advance his particular sentiments. But who is zealous to enter in at the strait gate? Who is zealous to secure his soul's everlasting salvation, and for that purpose makes a rigid application of the appointed means? Lives with heaven in his view, and for the sake of a better world has abjured this—crucified the world, with its affections and lusts, and looks upon heaven as his home? Who looks upon the cause of Christ as the noblest of all causes, and proves it by a diligent seeking of those things that are above? How much labor is spent, and how much zeal is wasted upon things that cannot profit! And how hardly shall those to whom heaven has evidently been but a secondary object in this world, enter into it at last, when at best they have had a thousand objects of delight independent of heaven, and have never made a serious effort to disencumber themselves. “Lay aside every weight,” was the direction of Paul to those who were setting out for heaven, and yet how many are loading themselves with a heavier and heavier burden, weakening their powers and wearing out their strength, so that they must to all human appearance fall to rise no more, long before they have arrived at the goal. And should they arrive there with all their burden, it is a strait gate they cannot enter, and this is the ruin of many. They were zealous for heaven, but also zealous for other things. They were not satisfied with saving their souls, they must save their possessions, and save their sins. They would save too much. They would not give up enough. They sought to enter in but were not able, for the gate was too narrow to admit them. Had they used their efforts to disentangle themselves from the world, had their zeal been to cast off, rather than put on, they might have entered safely.

But in their ardor for saving, they lost all. They might have known all this before. Christ has forewarned us, "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it." He has told us the effects of the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, and has warned us not to be careful and troubled about many things—that one thing is needful. But they learned it not until it was too late. Alas! how many have been deceived in this way, and like Balaam perish at last in their own corruptions. Their hope of heaven was once fair and bright, but they have sunk from a heaven in hope to a hell in reality. They added house to house, field to field, pleasure to pleasure and honor to honor, till they were too heavy laden.

As many shall fail for want of exertion, and many more for want of well-directed exertion, so many shall fail for want of *well-timed exertion*. A professor of religion has some inducements to listlessness peculiar to himself. A man who is out of the pale of the church is looked upon and looks upon himself as yet in an unsafe state. He knows, when he thinks at all, that there is something yet to be done—some change must be wrought in him before he can have a serious consciousness of perfect security, and when he is addressed from the pulpit as a sinner, he cannot but know that he is meant, and when he reads the fate of sinners in the Bible, he can hardly help thinking sometimes that it is the fate of just such as himself. But the professor of religion has already passed over all this matter. The change has been effected, and when sinners are called to repentance it is nothing to him, he has repented already. The arrows of conviction strike him not; he has a shield and a defence. He reads of the vengeance coming upon the ungodly; it is nothing to him, he is not of the company. He is within the ark, and let the floods come—asleep or awake, idle or busy,

he is equally secure. That something like this is the feeling of many professors of religion, there is too much reason to fear. They have been through a course of what they are pleased to call conviction and conversion. They have felt horror, and then they have felt joy. They are now on board, their passage paid, and doing or not doing the vessel goes on, bearing them with it to a better world. O, fools and blind! know ye not that many shall seek to enter into heaven, and shall not be able? And who so likely to be of that number, as you who make your very experience an encouragement to disobedience, and shout "grace, grace," over cherished iniquity? You are safe, and so have leisure to be wicked. He that loveth God "purifieth himself even as he is pure." "Not as though I had already attained," is the language of the great apostle. He was not satisfied. He did not sit down, counting over old experiences. He looked at what was to be done, and set about it; and if you would imitate him now, in season, you would find the advantage of it at another day. Exertion you will make, but it may be at too late a day, after the door of hope is shut and your destiny irrevocably fixed, and the voice of him who now tells you to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and warns you that many, through their own remissness, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able; that voice shall then speak in other tones. You may approach into his presence with all the confidence of children. You may come with perfect assurance of a kind reception, and knock at the door, and cry as to your familiar friend, "Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are." This will be a day of agony, for it will be a day of unprofitable striving to enter in—striving as agonizing as useless. And many a tongue that has said "Lord, Lord," on earth, shall

that day be speechless ; and many a heart that has trusted in a noisy show of religion shall be rent asunder ; and many a cold calculator whose zeal was frozen on earth, shall feel as he never felt before—terror and anguish joined in their extremes. They will come up with an easy air of familiarity, as to their home, expecting a ready entrance. They will set forth their claims,—“ We have eaten and drunk in thy presence,”—claims founded upon privileges which they enjoyed and abused. “ Thou hast taught in our streets.” True, but did ye hear, believe, obey ? Here they can give no answer, and they hear their sentence repeated,—“ I tell you I know you not, whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” To be excluded in the face of such high hopes of admission is awful. But there is a bitterness added which gives keenness to the agony ;—not to be known by him they had called “ Master,”—not to be known when they had expected to be received with joy—not to be known at their home, as they had fondly thought it—and to be branded at last as workers of iniquity. And many shall be cast off in this same way. Many “ will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” They loved and sought other things beside heaven. Heaven was not their hope, their all. And heaven is not theirs. They sought it in a smoother road than the way of holiness, and for a while rejoiced in it, but the end was exclusion from the kingdom. And oh ! what a wailing shall arise from this host of disappointed, disheartened beings ! What a weeping and wailing there shall be, when they see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out. And such we are assured by the Scriptures there shall be, an agony of grief, and shrieks of despair—a calling upon the mountains to fall on them and the rocks to hide them.

And who shall be able to abide that day, or stand when it appears? Being a Christian is considered a light matter now, but it will not be so considered in that day. Many who were called such in this world, will fall forever; for they will then be thoroughly sifted—hunted out of every hiding place, their hopes tried, their desires exposed, their lives examined. Have you ever examined yourselves, whether ye shall be able to stand? To be a Christian in deed and in truth is a great thing. I must think much greater than most men are aware of. When I read the Bible and find out who shall be excluded from heaven—how one sin indulged works ruin—how deceitful the human heart is; and, looking either at home or abroad, find it to be very truth, that we are inclined to indulge false hopes and ready to help on our own deception; I am ready to say, if this sentence go forth, it will sweep the earth clean. Not a man will be left. And on the other hand, when I look at the character of the Christian as God has given it in the Bible, I see indeed, not a perfect character, but a striving after it. I see all the virtues and all the graces of the Spirit united—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. I see a man rising from the dust, casting off his weights and the sins that beset him, and looking steadfastly to Jesus. I see a man with the Spirit of God dwelling in him, breaking from his bondage, loosing one after another the ties that bind him to earth, and looking to heaven as his home. In short, I see a man sincere, plain-hearted, kind, using the world as not abusing it, and living well that he may die well. With such living witnesses of its power, religion would spread rapidly; and if none are to be saved but those in whom all these qualities are centred, I tremble for myself, and I tremble for all,—even those whose hopes are highest, and whose joys are greatest.

SERMON VI.

WISDOM TOWARD THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT.

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.—*COLOSSIANS* iv. 5.

GOD has given to the world a revelation of his will. The great object of this revelation is to bring glory to God in the salvation of men. But it can be the means of their salvation only as it commends itself to their understandings and their hearts. They must in some way be brought to think well of it before they will ever heartily receive it. There are but two ways in which they can be brought to think well of it—by examining its principles, and by seeing those principles exhibited in real life. By examining its principles, they may see that it is fitted to the nature of man—to remove his guilt, to quiet his fears, to purify his heart and make him happy. Its very fitness to the nature and necessities of man, shows that the Maker of man is its author, and that it is both “a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.”

But few are found willing to examine in this way the volume of revelation. The great mass look not so much at principles as actual effects; and study religion less in the Bible than in the lives of the professedly religious. Does it remove guilt and guilty fears, and purify the heart, and make men happy? They look for its power and efficacy in the lives of the religious, and on this account it is all-important that they should exhibit its true spirit and character. They are witnesses for God, and let them see to it that they bear a true testimony.

It is on this ground that Christians are exhorted to shape their conduct with special reference to those that are without, with a view of influencing them to come within. Says Jesus,—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Says Paul,—“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.” Again he exhorts “that ye study to be quiet and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, . . . that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without.”

It is the duty of every Christian to recommend religion to those who are without. To do this

I. HIS RELIGION MUST BE FOUNDED ON PRINCIPLE.

To maintain a decent form of religion, he must necessarily differ in many respects from others—he cannot run to the same excess of riot with them, he cannot enter into all their schemes to kill time, he cannot be partaker of all their amusements, he cannot sympathize with all their worldly plans. Yet all this difference in outward conduct may spring from no principle of religion. It may be the result of caprice, or love of singularity, or of selfishness, or of a sour and morose disposition; and while there is any plausible pretext for imputing it to these causes, he necessarily fails to commend religion. There is no great difficulty, ordinarily, in discerning the motives by which men are influenced. If, from religious principle, they are induced to come out from the world and be separate, it will, in no long time, be manifest to the world. They may suffer from the imputation of bad motives for a season, but there is a power in established principle, which commends itself to every man.

When Daniel continued to pray as usual, notwithstanding the king's commandment, was it from religious principle, or wilfulness? His very enemies had no doubt of his integrity.

“We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.” When the three worthies stood erect and alone amidst the thousands that bowed down before the image, could any man for a moment think it mere obstinacy—we won’t because we won’t? When the apostles were commanded by the council not to teach or preach any more in the name of Jesus, and they answered, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye,” and continued their preaching in the face of the commandment, was there any doubt about the motives? So now religious principle shines out with a lustre of its own. True, religion has its counterfeits, and religious scruples are sometimes a mere pretense. But few are deceived. The real motive is sometimes apparent from the very effort to conceal it. One man, for instance, furnishes no spirit to his workmen. He is convinced that it is wrong and ruinous, and he is principled against it. Another has made a calculation of the annual expense, and has discovered that banishing the spirit from his fields is a money-saving process, and he is interested against it, while every workman knows that he cares more for interest than principle. There may be a mistake in the first instance, but it is rarely of long continuance. A drunkard respects the man who from principle refuses to furnish him the means of ruin.

An officer in the last war was challenged to fight a duel. He had been a member of a church for many years, and was principled against duelling, but if he refused the challenge he would be posted for a coward, and his reputation in the army ruined. His very friends urged him to fight, as the only means of saving his character. But he refused, and his name was handed round with the common epithets of disgrace. Two

days after, the enemy appeared, and he redeemed his character on the field of battle. To those who were but slightly acquainted with him, the cause of his refusal might have been mistaken—a coward might seek shelter under the pretense of principle. But there was another occasion in which there could be no mistake.

Particular acts of a Christian may be imputed to bad motives—whim, oddity, moroseness, selfishness. But he has a thousand opportunities of vindicating his character, by showing forth honesty of heart and purity of principle. If he “walks in wisdom toward them that are without,” he will abound in those acts that are least subject to misapprehension, and when he is constrained to differ from others, make it manifest that he differs not from a perverse disposition or narrowness of mind, but from principle and conscience. Every good man is bound to take pains that his “good be not evil spoken of,”—that the good principle which actuates him shine out in the act. Let it appear that his religion is founded on principle.

II. To commend religion to those who are without, it **MUST BE CONSISTENT**—not an affair of times and seasons—of Sundays and special occasions. “It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.” There is no truth more manifest than that religion should be the ruling principle of life—the great spring of action in a Christian. It should appear in all his business, in all his intercourse with men. It should be manifest that there is nothing temporary or trivial about it—that it has the same authority at all times and in all places. This principle is frequently overlooked. Many who are religious in the morning, seem to forget their religion all the day. Its exercise is suspended till the evening, as if the business of the world could not be conducted on religious principles, and when

their work is done it is resumed again. Many look upon the business of the world as a *coming down* from religion, while they lay an improper stress upon what are called religious duties. But if worldly business be pursued from religious motives, it is as much a religious duty, and as acceptable to God, as prayer and public worship. Every Christian should be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Others may be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the world. But a vein of religion should run through all his conduct—all the business in which his hands engage.

While some are inconsistent by confining their religion too much to times and places, others are inconsistent by confining their attention to a part of its requirements. They are strict and particular in some things, and as if to make reprisals, are equally loose in other things. Those matters in which they are most strict are not necessarily of the most importance—a form, a ceremony, perhaps, is exalted to a high place, while the vitals of religion receive very little attention. The generation that tithed mint and anise and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, has not yet entirely passed away. A part of the Christian graces shine out in full glory, while there is a notorious lack of the remainder. Thus some who are not so particular about the demands of justice, are abundantly liberal; while others, who are strictly honest and just, almost never do a generous deed. Some have little control over their own spirit—some have a tongue that runs to much at random. Some go to the extreme of levity, and some to the extreme of austerity and gloom. In a great portion of the religious, there are some flagrant defects joined in with their excellencies, which destroy the beauty of Christian character. They seem hardly to have contemplated religion in all the ex-

tent of its requirements. Their characters are inconsistent. One part is not of a piece with another. How shall they with their manifest defects recommend religion to those who are without? Their defects are not a *foil* to set off their virtues, but an extinguisher of them. Those who are without, fasten upon their defects, and find in them an excuse for their irreligion. There is an injustice in this which ought to make every thinking man ashamed. Such, however, is too frequently the fact, and the religious should be aware of it, and take special pains to remedy their defects by adding to their faith all the other Christian graces, that all being in them and abounding, they may “walk in wisdom toward them that are without.” Let him who is liberal but thoughtless of honest debts, become just; and let him who is just but not generous, become liberal; and let those whose hasty spirits or random tongues deform all the rest of their characters, set a double guard here. Then shall their religion shine out with a clear and steady brightness. “Then shall I not be ashamed,” says the Psalmist, “when I have respect unto *all* thy commandments.”

III. To commend religion to those who are without, it must **APPEAR AMIABLE**. That true religion is amiable, all who learn it from the Bible must admit. Nothing can be conceived more amiable and lovely than the character of its holy Author, and he exhibited in himself just what he required of others. Jesus Christ is the model of Christianity. The design of it is to mould into his image all who receive it, that the same “mind may be in them which was also in Christ Jesus.” This is the amount of all the apostolic exhortations to Christians—that they should “put on Jesus Christ,” while the end of their election and of their calling is, that they should “be conformed

to the image" of Jesus Christ. Look at the glorious Redeemer, going about doing good both to soul and body. Love brought him from heaven. Love was the all-animating principle of his life, while he condescended to all weakness, sympathized with all sorrow, bore with patience the contradictions of sinners against himself, and used all means to bring saving truth to human hearts. Love sustained amidst the agonies of the cross, and with a love stronger than death he breathed out his life; with the last breath exclaiming,—“Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Can imagination conceive anything more amiable and lovely? With such a character in the Master, can the sour, or the bitter, or the morose be the prevailing qualities in the disciples? Can he have no sympathy in human joy or sorrow when the Master had so much? Can he bestow nothing but in a constrained and half-hearted way, when the Master gave his very heart's blood so liberally? Can he be sudden or quick in quarrels, or implacable in resentments, who has before him the meekness and gentleness of Christ? Yet the amiable in religion is sometimes overlooked. The apostle commends to Christians “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.” In some cases the things that are lovely and of good report have not had the fair proportion of regard. Men have held the true and the honest, and the just, and the pure, with a stiffness and a rigidity which excluded or reduced to a subordinate station things lovely and of good report. True, rigidity and sourness are sometimes imputed to the righteous without cause. With some all restraint is rigidity, and all serious reflection, austerity and sourness. Yet perhaps few religious

people have paid sufficient attention to that which is lovely and of good report. The substantial parts of religion have gained their attention, but that which is ornamental, that which *adorns* the doctrine of God our Savior has not been sufficiently cultivated. If we would gain those that are without, religion must be presented in an attractive form. Zion must put on her beautiful garments, before she will ever become the joy of the whole earth.

IV. To commend religion to those that are without, it must be a manifest source of comfort and joy. "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Every Christian should make the impression upon others, that he is happier for his religion. To make this impression, his religion must sit easy upon him—never appear forced and unnatural. When the queen of Sheba visited Solomon, and saw his wisdom in the arrangements of his house, and of the house of God, and of his kingdom, she pronounced his servants happy. "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee." Every citizen of Zion should produce the same conviction in the mind of every beholder, that his connection with the Savior is the ground of his rejoicing in the house of his pilgrimage. This he may show in afflictions, or when under disappointments, or when exposed to danger. When human help fails and earthly comforts vanish, then let it appear that his treasure is in heaven and his record is on high. Not only in times of peril and severe trial, but on all common occasions he should manifest a

confidence in God, a mind free from the cares and vexations and solitudes which agitate the world. The Christian, of all men, has the least cause to be "careful and troubled about many things." Casting his cares upon Him that careth for him, and confident that He will do all things well, every ground of perplexing anxiety is swept away. Why should his mind be a troubled sea, like the minds of those that know not God? Yet a mistake on this subject is not uncommon, and religion suffers from the manifest unhappiness of the religious. Some are not aware of the extent of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and are in partial subjection to the spirit of bondage. Some, under the garb of religion attempt to trim between it and the world, enjoying the pleasures of neither. Some are naturally of a melancholy turn,—it is their nature to look at the dark side of things,—but they who are melancholy with religion, would have been ten times more so without it.

“ The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.”

“ Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry!
We're marching through Emmanuel's ground,
To fairer worlds on high.”

To commend religion to those that are without, it must be presented as a source of enjoyment; and those whose countenances are never lit up with a cheerful smile, or those who overflow with cares and anxieties about the future, or those who sink into despair under their trials and afflictions, are not aware

of the reproach which they cast upon religion. What do they but exhibit it in a repulsive form, a thing to be endured !

Finally, to commend religion to those that are without, it MUST REGARD APPEARANCES. "I was ashamed," says Ezra, "to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way ; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of the Lord is upon all them for good that seek him ; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him." He was jealous for the honor of his religion. There is no inconsistency, surely, between trusting in God and taking proper measures for self-defence, and he might have required a band of soldiers to protect them and the immense treasure which they were carrying back to Jerusalem. But he had said to the king, "The Lord will be our defence," and requiring a band of soldiers would have appeared to the king like a contradiction ; and to avoid the appearance of evil, he set forth unprotected. "I was ashamed to require a band of soldiers, because I had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of the Lord is upon all them for good that seek him." The thing itself was right and proper, but the appearance was bad.

No Christian is licensed to disregard appearances. He is required to keep a conscience void of offence towards men as well as towards God, to provide things honest in the sight of all men. He has no liberty to say, I will do what I think is right, and I do not care what others think. He ought to care. He is bound to shun every *appearance* of evil. He may be a good man, but how shall he be useful, while his light is hid under a bushel ? or while his conduct is of so doubtful a character as to subject him to universal suspicion ? No man has a right to claim independence of his fellow men, or set public

opinion at defiance. If his calling, or his conduct, or the means by which he has his wealth is suspicious, his influence for good is destroyed. This part of "wisdom toward them that are without" is too frequently overlooked. Whether from consciousness of integrity or not, men too often disregard appearances.

A Christian is found pursuing his journey on the Sabbath day. We all know that there are circumstances which will justify him in so doing. Works of necessity and mercy are to be done on every day of the week. But the presumption is against him, and the appearance is always bad. Of those who know that he has travelled on the Sabbath, not one in ten will ever know that he has a good Christian reason for it; and if, like Ezra, he is jealous for the honor of religion, nothing but the extremest necessity will ever induce him to do what may appear a violation of the Sabbath.

A Christian is frequently absent from the house of God, especially when the weather is a little uncomfortable, or the roads unpleasant, or he is hurried through the week. He may have his reasons, but if he knew the impression which his negligence made upon those who are without, and like Ezra were jealous for the honor of religion, would such reasons keep him from the sanctuary? Or he may be regularly present himself, while his children and dependents are almost always absent, scattered he knows not where. Whatever may be the real reason of this, the appearance is always bad.

There is a religious meeting and a visiting party on the same evening, and a Christian is found at the latter. Now this is not necessarily wrong in itself. There may have been special reasons in its favor. But what is the appearance to those who are without? There are a thousand cases of similar character,

where the action is not necessarily wrong in itself, but the appearance is bad, and every Christian is bound to consult appearance as well as reality—to enjoy his privileges and use his liberty so as not to lay a stumbling block or occasion to fall in his brother's way, or in the way of those without.

To “walk in wisdom toward them that are without,” then, religion must be evidently founded on principle—it must be consistent, it must be amiable, it must be a manifest source of comfort and joy, it must regard appearances; and where religion is thus exhibited, in its own glorious form, it cannot be in vain. It is a fire to melt down the opposition of human hearts, and a light to lure the wanderer to the haven of rest. A church composed of such members cannot fail to prosper. They are an epistle of commendation to the gospel, seen and read of all men. They force upon every man the conviction that God is with them of a truth, and Jesus, looking down from heaven, says, I am glorified in them. Their honest, consistent, amiable and joyful course of life, gives glory to God, and brings the highest good to men. My brethren, in this new connection formed to-day, you wish to prosper,—to see this church built up and enlarged, and this entire population brought under the influence of the gospel. You know that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is in its own nature aggressive—every step in advance is a preparation for another. You are not satisfied that things remain as they are, merely growing no worse, nor would you knowingly settle a man who would be contented simply to keep garrison. You look for advance, and with such a leader you expect advance. As a man, he has all the anxiety to succeed in his calling that any other man has in his. It is painful for him to spend his strength for nought, or merely to save the church from utter

ruin. The spirit of manhood prompts him to aspire to victory, in increase and enlargement. And just suppose him to be what he professes, a sinner saved, seeking the salvation of his fellow-sinners, how is his anxiety increased when he thinks that success is their salvation, and that men perish just in proportion as his exertions are defeated and his hopes disappointed. And he cannot succeed to any considerable extent without your consent and concurrence, even though he should preach with the tongues of men and of angels. For whereunto would serve his preaching, with your lives a living contradiction to it? You wish to prosper, and you wish him to succeed in his great business of saving souls from death and opening blind eyes. The way is a very plain one, and the part you have to act is very manifest—"walk in wisdom toward them that are without."

How blessed to hold forth the word of life, and to reflect the light of heaven upon our fellow men! "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn (allure) many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way (allures him to forsake it) shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins." What a powerful motive to induce every Christian to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without." Think of the value of the soul, the awfulness of the death that threatens it, the excellency and glory of salvation, and can a nobler object be presented before a mortal or immortal being?

Brethren, this object is set before you. Like the father of the faithful, you are blessed that you may be a blessing. You are not pardoned and sanctified merely that you may be saved, nor merely that God may be glorified in your salvation; but

also that you may "hold forth the word of life ; that you may rejoice, in the day of Christ, that you have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

They are in darkness, and know not at what they stumble. "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord ; walk as children of light." Men do not "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."

If religion is not thus manifested as springing from the heart, and consistent, and amiable, and joyful, you have still a great work to do for yourself, and you should begin it with the prayer of the Psalmist, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free Spirit." Let us all begin with this prayer, that we may "walk in wisdom toward them that are without." "Then shall our light break forth as the morning and thy health shall spring forth speedily," and our hearts rejoice in the assurance that "the time, yea, the set time to favor Zion is come."

SERMON VII.

DANGERS OF YOUTH.

Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 TIMOTHY ii. 22.

As the season of youth is unspeakably important, so it is exposed to peculiar dangers. Indeed, every period of life has its own trials and temptations, and while it is no crime to be tried or tempted, it is the highest honor to sustain the trial and resist the temptation—to trust in the Lord and do right in all the various conditions of life. And as this is a world of probation, it would be strange if there were not trials suited to every age and condition of life. For what is virtue that has never been tried, or that cannot endure a trial. A fine uniform, and measured step, and well-scoured armor do not make a soldier. All these may be well enough in their place, but the test of soldiership is the field of battle. There skill and enterprise and manly daring are brought to the proof. So the test of virtue is the field of trial and temptation. There it is strengthened and confirmed, and shines out in all its glory; and there every counterfeit is detected and exposed. The saints who have obtained the prize of their high calling, were all subject to trial. After they had patiently endured, they obtained the promised reward. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.” We are not to court temptation or recklessly run into it; enough will meet us in our own pathway. We ought to know our peculiar dangers that we may be pre-

pared to meet them. Every point of exposure should be noted, that no enemy may come upon us unawares. Let us turn our attention, then, to the PECULIAR DANGERS OF YOUTH.

The apostle brings before us one class of these, and he points out the only method of escape. "Flee youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." In other cases the direction is different. Resist. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." There is no one medicine that will suit every disease; so there is no one method of defence that will ensure safety in every time of danger. The defence must be varied to suit the nature of the assault; and a knowledge of the danger will ordinarily suggest the best means of safety.

{ Youth is peculiarly exposed FROM THOUGHTLESSNESS. Life, and all its scenes are new. The attractions of the world are presented in their gayest, brightest colors. The day passes merrily along, and "to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Theirs is a season of feeling and excitement, while the world is all before them, where to choose their place of rest. There is little experience to temper the gaiety of hope, or strip temptation of its borrowed charms. All is fair and bright and joyous, and though there is an instinctive apprehension that things are not what they seem, that every flower conceals a thorn, there is still an instinctive dread of the discovery. Sober reality seems tame and heartless; serious reflection is close allied with dullness. There is no inspiration in solid truth, no genius in cold matter of fact to charm their gay hearts, or restrain their roving fancies. And the principal evils of life originate from this source. In this world, a want of thought is a far more common cause of misery than positive depravity. The laws of nature are fixed and unchang-

able, and we can enjoy their benefits only while we conform ourselves to them. A poison is no less deadly because it is taken thoughtlessly, and not with an express design to destroy life. A disease hastens to a fatal termination, whether we carelessly neglect the remedy, or wilfully and wickedly spurn it away. No man expects to reap a joyous harvest merely because he forgot to sow, or in his ignorance did not even know that sowing was necessary. The laws of nature are fixed and manifest, and he that violates them must expect to suffer the penalty. He that sets forth upon a voyage in a leaky vessel, is not saved from shipwreck by any plea of ignorance, or goodness of intention. He violates a physical law, and he suffers a physical penalty. It is with moral laws as with physical. They may be violated through neglect, or through an inexcusable ignorance, as well as through positive direct intention, and far more frequently are thus violated. A temptation to wrong spreads its allurements—at the moment of temptation it is not seen to be wrong, or if seen to be wrong it seems a very small and a very pardonable offence. Does that alter the nature of the law or deliver the offender from its penalty? Ignorance, or delusion, or temporary thoughtlessness, have no power to free the offender from the penalty. In this respect there is a striking analogy between physical laws and moral; and the one, of which no man complains, helps to explain and justify the other. There is an identity of operation which proves that they are established by the same authority, and administered by the same power. A careless, thoughtless ignorance in violation of either, is no bar against suffering the penalty. A wrong course in either case leads to ruin, whether that course be taken carelessly or wilfully. As the constitution may be ruined and health destroyed by thoughtless indulgence or dissipation, so

may the soul. Why do so many youth disappoint the fondest expectations of their friends, and fail to realize all their own gay visions of eminence or distinction? Because in ordinary cases, through lightness of mind or instability of purpose, they have wasted the best season for improvement. Visions and day-dreams have usurped the place of serious thoughts and sober reflection. The foundation of good principles has never been laid, and in mature life they are "like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed," unfit for the business of life, and unprepared to resist its temptations. All this is the result, not of determined wickedness, but of thoughtless, careless neglect. They are no thieves, or robbers, or murderers,—perhaps not immoral; but they are unfit for all the great purposes of life. And the same neglect that has cast a blight upon their fair prospects in this world, has blasted all their hopes for eternity. The sentence of the world against them now, and the sentence of God at last, will rest upon the same foundation. A price was put into their hands to get wisdom, but it was wasted in thoughtlessness and neglect. The same spirit that neglected all the great purposes of life and brought down the condemnation of men, neglected the great salvation, and brought down the condemnation of heaven. And the foundation of the sentence is not what they have done so much as what they have *not* done. Our Creator has endowed us with powers of thought and reflection, and to be any thing in this world, or the world to come, these powers must be brought into action. Neglect and thoughtlessness are no more a guarantee against the evils of the future world, than against the evils of this. Here, we all see that they are no defense. A man may be as utterly and as irretrievably ruined by neglect and carelessness as by the most determined wickedness, and with all the wickedness

of the world this is far more frequently the case. The desperately wicked are few in comparison with the rest, yet "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat," and the unthinking pass the gate and crowd the path. Here the young are in special danger, and the more danger from the fact that want of thought is often considered very pardonable in them. Look at its results in all after life, and is it a small matter to bury the noblest faculties of our nature—faculties which distinguish us from brutes, and assimilate us to angels? It cannot be. That a desperate course of depravity is worse, is surely no apology. The results of mere thoughtlessness are sufficiently appalling.

Another source of danger is, BAD EXAMPLE. We are influenced to an immense extent by our associates. This is manifest in all history and in all experience. It is a common proverb, that "a man is known by the company he keeps." Whatever he may be in the outset, his character will gradually become assimilated to theirs. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." On this principle his character will rise or sink to the common standard of character among his chosen companions. It requires a watchfulness and independence, a depth of principle that is rarely found, to associate with the corrupt and yet escape contagion. The most that is left for every man is to choose his companions, and having made the choice, he must abide the result; for the result is as sure as the laws of nature. I would I could fix it upon every man's mind, that he might see how far his character depends upon his own choice. He can choose or refuse the company of the wicked, but having chosen their company, he cannot expect to arrest their influence. He has thrown himself into a current which carries him

along in spite of himself. Lot was not only a man of correct moral principles, but of piety; and when he pitched his tent upon the plains of Sodom, he was not perhaps fully aware of the character of its inhabitants. But by settling in their neighborhood he had thrown himself within their influence, and though the process went on so gradually as to excite little alarm, that influence ever warred upon his principles and wore away his piety. His household were all infected with the spirit of the place, and shared in its destruction, and he himself was only saved so as by fire. His piety was so frittered away by constant contact with pollution that scarcely a single good thing remained in him toward the Lord his God. If the company of the wicked so influenced a man of piety and of mature years, what bounds can be set to its influence upon those who have no such safeguard? The first appearance of abandoned wickedness is usually disgusting. There is a meanness and shamefulness about it which is abhorrent to a young and unsophisticated mind. There is also an apprehension of the immediate danger of the criminal, and a readiness to ask, where is the God of vengeance; and many a young man has shrunk back with horror, when casually thrown into the company of the impious and profane. But familiarity reconciles him to all this, and what at first seemed a presumptuous trifling with God, becomes in the end bravery and manly daring—a freedom from superstitious fears—a proof of independence.

Well has the poet said,—

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

The mind and conscience are defiled by familiarity with the vicious, and if ready wit and pleasing manners are joined to their vices, they become the more alluring, and deck with new charms the way to death. Impiety drops as the rain, and distils as the dew. One such man, of fascinating manners and a knack at story-telling, may insinuate all that is vile in himself into a hundred minds. Minds that shrink from contact with the low, vulgar, and vicious, are here ensnared to their own everlasting ruin. Familiarity with such saps the foundation of all moral principle, while all that is pure and lovely and of good report vanishes before it.

Let no young man who associates with the wicked, say to himself, thus far will I go, but no farther. He mistakes their influence and miscalculates his own strength. Every day's familiarity is weakening his power of resistance, and weaving stronger bonds; and if he has now no heart to resist, how shall he have when wasted powers and the accumulated current shall increase his danger a hundred fold? Beware of familiarity with the vicious and unprincipled. "Their steps take hold on hell," "going down to the chambers of death," and "evil communications corrupt good manners." "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." But may you not mingle in their company in the hope of alluring them back to virtue? Yes, as you would mingle with inmates of a hospital. You may visit the abodes of misery, but you would never make your home with disease and contagion, nor select the wrecks of humanity as your chosen companions.

Another source of danger to youth is, **LOOSE AND PARTIAL VIEWS.** A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. The first

period of our existence is governed wholly by authority, and though the government is in many respects defective, that season is for the most part a period of safety. God has invested parents with an authority from which in our early years there is no appeal, and children naturally look up to their parents as their best, almost their only friends. Their instruction is received with the utmost confidence, and their decision is final; and it is only after children have been repeatedly deceived, that they become at all suspicious. Nature teaches them to trust, while nothing but experience teaches them to doubt, and a large stock of confidence still remains after the experience of a thousand deceptions. The great object of government should be to teach men to govern themselves; and the government by mere authority should vanish in proportion to the increase of knowledge and the maturity of reason. While the authority of the parent at first is absolute, it becomes gradually less and less so, as the child becomes more capable of self-government. The authority of the parent is not broken up at once, but it gradually vanishes as the necessity for it ceases. Advice is still given as occasion may seem to require, but it is no longer law. Now in childhood there is no particular danger from a little knowledge, because the child is not cast upon his own resources. While he speaks as a child, understands as a child, thinks as a child, Providence has made provision for him as a child. He is supported, directed, encouraged and restrained by a knowledge not his own. All that is deficient in him is made up in another quarter. But when, by reason of years, he deems himself capable of self-government, *then* is a little knowledge a dangerous thing. A man in age and a child still in understanding, with knowledge enough to spurn the control of mere authority, and too little for self-direction. This state of

transition from parental authority to self-control is the most dangerous period of human life, and this dangerous pass is occupied by the young. The conduct of a few years ordinarily settles their destiny for time and for eternity. The guardian care of others has brought them thus far on the journey of life. Others have ministered to their wants, and restrained their wandering footsteps, and others still feel the deepest interest in their welfare. But henceforth they must be left to the guidance of their own minds. They may be followed still by advice and entreaties as they depart from the parental roof, but parental authority has ceased. They are a law unto themselves, and self-conceit is usually in proportion to their want of knowledge. Without a little knowledge, they might, as children, be directed by others; but with a little, they spurn all control. How many young men have thus set forth, ignorant of the real business of life, like a vessel without a rudder or a compass, at the mercy of every wind and every wave. If here and there an individual has escaped destruction, it is, as far as he is concerned, the merest chance; but the great mass have been swallowed up and lost. They set up business on their own wisdom, and failed for want of stock. A little knowledge is a foundation on which self-conceit rears a mighty superstructure. It blinds the mind to real danger, and encourages the most visionary hopes. If such is the danger of loose and partial views, how earnestly should every individual seek an increase of knowledge, especially of that knowledge which shall be as a "lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path." This alone is real wisdom.

Loose and partial views of things are rendered still more dangerous by passion; for an enlightened mind is passion's strongest curb. I mean a mind that can look beyond present

gratification, to the misery that follows it. There is a transient pleasure in every indulgence—a pleasure that is often followed by years of sorrow. The great mass of capital crimes, which have called forth the vengeance of human justice, are the result of unrestrained passion, and passion grown to such a height as shuts out all view of consequences.

The vindictive feelings have been strongly excited by real or fancied injury, and the mind broods upon the sweetness of revenge. No higher gratification can be conceived than the destruction of the hated object; but no sooner is the work of revenge accomplished, than the whole scene is changed. Passion subsides, and the mind shrinks back in terror. The excitement which has urged on to the deed, gives place to fear and shame and unavailing regret. What would the murderer give, if the victim of his heated passion were but alive again, and the record of his crime could be blotted from his conscience. What years of sorrow await him while haunted by the constant reflection that the deed can never be undone. Have you never dreamed of mingling in the strife? While fancy pictured the exciting scene—the provocation and the deep revenge, and the blood-stained victim, and you have awaked in an agony of horror and an unavailing effort at flight—and as you looked back upon the dark scene, what joy to find it was all a dream. You would not have it reality for worlds. Where passion is unrestrained, subject to every temptation, and exposed to every excitement, any day may see it a reality.

There is danger from passions of another kind; and to these, perhaps, the apostle more particularly refers—*THE SENSUAL, LICENTIOUS DESIRES*. In this matter the customs of society have made a very unequal and unjust distribution of guilt. The seducer may rise again—the seduced, never. One false step

forever blasts her fame. The victim sinks to rise no more—her own sex being the judges. Nor is this sentence too severe. The importance of the interest at stake, and the strength of temptation, and the extent of exposure, demands the most powerful safeguards, and the victim is set forth as a beacon to warn others from wretchedness and woe. But is not the same safeguard equally and even more strongly demanded on the other side, where the exposure is greater and the temptations more numerous? Why then this partial and unjust judgment in favor of the greater criminal? But though the customs of society may deal out disgrace with an unequal hand, the judgment of God makes no distinctions. Nor can the criminal himself efface the memorials of his guilt, and the higher he rises in society, the more extensively does it spread abroad the evidence of his shame. Instances are not wanting at the present day, of men who have obtained the highest political distinction, whose elevation has served but to herald abroad the sins of their youth. But the judgment of others is comparatively a small matter. There is a judge within, and a Judge above, from whose decision there is no appeal. Besides, the direct effect of licentious passion gratified is awful. Says the apostle, it “wars against the soul.” There is no gratification that is purchased at so high a price, for there is no other that puts in such peril the interests of the undying soul. It wars against the purity of the soul, staining all its powers and faculties. It wars against the dignity of the soul, taking that which in its nature is fitted for companionship with angels, and debasing it to the lowest purposes, and covering it with everlasting shame. It wars against the peace of the soul, introducing confusion and unutterable woe. It wars against the liberty of the soul, bringing it into bondage to the basest passions and appetites. It wars

against the very life of the soul, as its whole tendency is to extinguish the light of the mind, in the grossness of the flesh. It is a crime against the body as well as the soul, and it offers both on the altar of sensuality, a living sacrifice to the Devil. Says a keen observer of human nature, Paley, "However it may be accounted for, it corrupts and depraves the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatever. That ready perception of guilt, that prompt and decisive resolution against it which constitute a virtuous character, is seldom found in persons addicted to these indulgencies. They prepare an easy admission to every sin that seeks it. They are in low life usually the first stage in men's progress to the most desperate villainies, and in high life to that lamented dissoluteness of principle which manifests itself in a profligacy of public conduct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and moral probity." Add to this, that habits of libertinism incapacitate and indispose the mind for intellectual, moral, or religious duties or pleasures. Thus their war is against every principle of right, and every element of permanent enjoyment.

Such are some of the dangers to which youth thrown out upon the world are specially exposed, and against which they should guard with sleepless vigilance. All these dangers may be avoided or overcome. No individual is compelled to banish reflection or to be led away by corrupt example, or to take loose and one-sided views of men and things, or to give way to the reign of passion. All these are temptations which may be resisted, and virtue and moral principle acquire strength by the resistance.

But the rights of virtue and piety must be asserted soon. All delay is dangerous, as every day's hesitation increases the power of the enemy, and prepares the soul to be led captive at

his will. Wishes, however good, will not avail. A few fleeting resolutions will not answer the exigencies of the case. There must be a determined purpose. Nor will that alone avail. Human resolution form but a slight barrier against the current of human depravity. They may turn it aside to the right or left, or for a season apparently turn it back. But this affords no perfect safety, and there *is* no safety but with the fixed mind and determined purpose to call in the aid of a higher power; and that aid was never invoked in vain. The God whose power can do more than our thoughts and wishes and knowledge, has said, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find." "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." "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." And there is special encouragement to seek in youth that wisdom which is "profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

SERMON VIII.

TENDENCY OF THE YOUNG TO INFIDELITY.

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
PSALM ii. 3.

GOD has cast the young afloat upon the current of life, but they are not ~~compelled to float on in darkness~~ or at the mere will of another. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." But if this spirit is loose from all restraint, and this understanding darkened through the deceitfulness of sin, all hope of a happy voyage and a joyous haven has vanished. A wreck is inevitable. For no human being thus loose and unfurnished can weather the storms of life. But the inspiration of the Almighty has furnished aliment for this spirit and light for this understanding, and no man can safely neglect or shut out this light that shines upon him from heaven. The volume of God is given to be "a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path," and he is safe only while he gives heed to it "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

He must take heed to his ways according to its directions, and yet there is a tendency, especially in youth, to count it a cunningly devised fable—a scheme invented and sustained by the few to keep the many in awe. It has often been thus represented, and there is something in this representation that strikes favorably the youthful mind. Fancy paints in high colors the joys of unrestrained freedom, while conscience and

religion seem stationed, like the ancient cherubim, to exclude them from these joys. Passion and appetite prompt to indulgences which the book of God forbids. Is it strange that they should count that their enemy which seems so to interfere with their enjoyment?—that they should wish it untrue, and eagerly listen to any breath of suspicion against its divine origin?

My subject is, the TENDENCY OF YOUTH TO INFIDELITY. To the religious, this tendency can be very easily accounted for. It is the bias of corrupt nature against God. It is the result of the carnal mind which does “not like to retain God in its knowledge.” “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Of course it is utterly disinclined to credit his revelation. The evidence may be clear enough, but the whole case is prejudged. The mind is unprepared to weigh the evidence impartially, or submit to its authority. This is sufficient as a general explanation, and cannot fail to satisfy all those who are sensible of the real condition of human nature. But under this general explanation, other and particular reasons may be given, whose force to some extent every man must feel. And these are necessary to answer the inquiry, Why are youth especially prone to infidelity? I answer,

1. *From their limited views.* A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, as it too often encourages self-conceit, and lays the foundation for many a hasty conclusion. A slight and imperfect view of the subject is taken as the whole. Judgment is rendered without even hearing the evidence. A few second-hand objections are suffered to cover the whole ground. And these owe their influence, not to their native strength, but to the solitary view which is taken of them. They stand out alone. Were they seen in their connection, in many cases they

would cease to be objections, and in other cases the answer would be manifest. It is said that a man who had a brick house to sell, carried round a brick, taken from the wall, as a specimen. The same wisdom has taken many a doctrine or fact from the Bible, and exhibited it as a specimen in the same way. It is truly taken from the Bible, just as the brick was taken from the wall; but, out of its connection, is it any specimen? Yet how many have condemned the whole Bible from just such specimens!

“It is true,” says Bacon, “that a little philosophy inclineth man’s mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men’s minds back to religion;—for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no farther; but when it beholdeth the chain of them, confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to providence and Deity.” While only here and there a link in the chain of evidence is discovered, it may lead to infidelity, and thousands have been infidels because their knowledge has borne no proportion to their self-conceit. They saw a very small part, and hastily concluded that they had seen the whole, and that it was unworthy of God. The only remedy, in this case, is an increase of knowledge;—a *little* philosophy must give place to something like depth.

2. In close connection with this, is *defective training*. In the religious education of youth, the principal things have not always been made prominent. The religious world has long been divided into sects. The common salvation and the peculiarities of the sect have been taught together, as resting upon the same foundation—equally true and equally important. The youth perhaps knows no other Christianity than that which belongs to his own denomination. And a single defect discov-

ered there, throws suspicion upon the whole. He has been taught that both rest upon the same authority,—are equally true,—and must be received or rejected together. In his mind, then, a single defect in either, saps the foundation of the whole.

This is placing Christianity in a most unfavorable light, as it brings it to a test which its author never established. It is placing the young, who are just beginning to inquire for themselves, in most unfavorable circumstances. If they cannot receive the whole, the only alternative is the rejection of the whole. How many have been made infidels in this way. They have been trained in all the extreme peculiarities of the strictest sect. Many of these peculiarities, which at best are of doubtful truth, have been inculcated with more earnestness on that account. And, though they were ever so true, they have assumed a prominence to which they have no just claim. They are taught as part and parcel of Christianity, and a discovery of the slightness of their foundation shakes the whole system. It is said that in Roman Catholic countries the educated class are mostly infidels. The whole round of ceremonies which are so diligently taught as Christianity, is absurd, and they are allowed to know no other. Their teachers have left no alternative but to receive Christianity as they teach it, or be infidels. The same course is pursued to no small extent among Protestants, and produces the same results. Some idle ceremony, or some doubtful tenet, has been inculcated with all the solemnity of religion and all the sanctions of eternity. While it retains its influence, the result is a narrow-minded, bitter bigotry. When the charm is broken, and its influence destroyed, the mind, left loose, too often swings at once to infidelity. The trial of the system was made to depend upon this

one point, and it has failed. Thousands, that are now infidels, were once bigoted sectarians. Such is often the result where truth and error are inculcated as supported by the same authority and resting upon the same foundation. A discovery of the error throws the whole weight of suspicion upon the truth.

The training is often defective in another way. That the mind may be free from unfounded prejudices and sectarian predilections, nothing is taught. To escape one evil, they run into another and more fatal one. The native soil brings forth thorns and briars. The most favorable season of life is left wholly to the control of Satan. Tares are sown, and grow up without restraint. The mind is suffered to be fully occupied before the high claims of religion are presented. Satan is there with all his train and strongly fortified, and it is not reason or reasoning that can dispossess him. The heart thus suffered to grow up in wildness, is essentially infidel, though for various reasons there may be no avowal of infidelity or even a decent respect for religion. This is a very common source of infidelity. The truths of God and the inventions of men are twisted together and inculcated as resting upon the same authority. The discovery that a part is false, throws suspicion upon the whole. In this way, strict sectarianism in every age has been the handmaid of infidelity. Nor is the result any more favorable when the mind is left a wilderness—a waste land—not sown nor tilled.

3. Another source of infidelity is, *the conduct of too many called Christians*. The name Christian, signifies a follower of Christ; one who receives his instruction, embraces his spirit, and submits to his authority. But it has been bestowed with a most unfortunate and lavish liberality. It is a geographical term, a badge of national distinction. It is a garment whose

ample folds cover all classes and all characters. And as the original signification is in a great measure lost, no wonder it is often a name of reproach. A Turk, suspected of dishonesty and double dealing, repelled the suspicion with scorn. "Do you take me for a Christian?" said he. He judged of Christianity by the conduct of those who passed under its name, and deemed it a reproach. How many judge in the same way, even in a land of Bibles and religious books. They look on the reputed followers of the Savior. They see high pretensions to superior sanctity and high hopes of heaven,—great zeal for particular doctrines, and great, even unaccountable strictness in particular things, accompanied by as great laxness in other things of equal importance and more practical, every-day use. They see faith exalted at the expense of morals—the obligations to God made an excuse for neglecting the duties to man—the first table of the law arrayed against the second. They see the contention of sect with sect,—how important an insignificant atom becomes, when connected with the interest of a party—with what zeal division walls are built up and with what pertinacity defended—how watchfully Christians guard against each other—how those who are nearest together in principle are often widest asunder in feeling. They follow them into the shades of private life, and mark their business transactions. Are they more honest in their dealings, more faithful to their promises, more liberal of their substance, than other men? Are they above taking advantage of the ignorance or necessities of their neighbors? In their families are they patterns of all the domestic virtues, controlling their own spirits and ruling their own households well? O Lord, enter not into judgment with us! Yet men judge by all this, and religion is approved or condemned as the conduct of the religious shall

meet their approbation or disapprobation. How often do they exclaim, in view of the evils which they behold, if these are the religious, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor be not thou united." The conduct of professors has been a most fruitful source of infidelity. The religion which they disobeyed, or failed to exhibit, has been condemned for their disobedience. Is it a just condemnation? Would any man pretend to justify it in any other case? Those who have sought occasion against religion have, unhappily, too often found it here, and they have found it by overlooking in a great measure the true Israel, and fixing their attention upon the mixed multitude that have followed the camp.

4. Another source of infidelity is an *uneasiness of restraint*. "Man is born like a wild ass's colt." The spirit of wildness and willfulness is manifest in the first dawn of intellect. The earliest period of childhood shows restlessness and hatred of restraint. And unless its spirit has been previously subdued, the first words which the infant learns to utter, show forth the same hatred of restraint. The words which body forth this spirit are, "No," and "I won't." The child is often familiar with these long before it can articulate another syllable. The whole system of training, from the cradle to the grave, is a system of restraint; yet how imperfectly is the work accomplished, after all. The strength and variety of the restraints, and the frequent overleaping all restraints, show the strength of innate willfulness and wildness—the extreme difficulty of taming a human being. There is first the family. Even if the parents have no interest in the welfare of the children, their own peace and quietness require them to impose a strong restraint, else their house is converted into a Babel. Thus their very self-love is made to yield good fruit, as it quickens them

to the performance of their duty. Where a better spirit prevails, and the welfare of the child has a prominent place, restraint is enforced on purpose to subdue this wildness, to form and strengthen habits of self-control. Then the school is a restraint upon the vagrant liberty of the body and the wild wanderings of the mind. The necessity of labor, the laws of the land, the rules of civility and politeness, are all a still further restraint—all tend to prevent the development of this wildness and willfulness, and *so far* to subdue them. But there is an internal struggle against all these, until habit, by confirming their authority, has given ease under them. How often does the child burn with indignation against the parent when some unlawful pleasure is prohibited. He dares not disobey, or even give utterance to his feelings, but his heart is ready to burst within him with wrath and vexation. He sees no necessity for such a restraint, and would be almost willing to die that he might vex them for imposing it. Indeed, I heard a man whose passion and willfulness in manhood were in no respects peculiar, once say that in his boyhood, when his parents had forbidden some pleasure upon which his heart was set, he had gone and laid down under the fence and *tried to die*, because he knew his death would vex them. He pleased himself with thinking how grieved and sorry they would be when they found him dead.

But all these restraints reach only that which is external—the liberty of speech and of action. And if they are resisted, much more will that be which seeks to lay a restraint upon the heart; which looks through all externals, and commands or forbids thoughts and feelings and emotions of the mind, and enforces its authority by the most tremendous sanctions, by appeals that reach the most secret recesses, and vibrate through

every nerve and fibre of the frame. The stoutest spirit quails and the purest heart shrinks from so close and accurate an inspection. Here is a restraint which lays hold of the elements of our being. It "holds the mirror up to nature, to show sin her own features, and scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time her form and pressure." And will there be no anxiety to throw off such a restraint, and turn away the gaze from such objects? Is there no present relief in the thought that all this is a dream—the delusion of a wandering fancy. Infidelity will blind the mind and stupify the conscience, and thus enable us to breathe freely and hold up our heads boldly. Thousands are infidels because they dread the inspection of God and hate the restraints of religion. Their lives require just such an opiate to their fears. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." But even this does not always suffice. For they may laugh at hell, yet cry, "O how charming if there is no such place." The stanchest professors of unbelief are not without fearful apprehensions that their foundation is in the dust. Their hearts often quail under the possibility that the most fearful forebodings may be realized. But they abhor restraint, and infidelity gives all the latitude that heart can desire.

5. Another source of infidelity is, *a love of distinction*—an ambition to appear above the vulgar. Young men and even boys affect infidelity for the same reason that they learn to swear, or to chew tobacco. It gives an air of spirit and independence that spurns old traditions and vulgar prejudices. The world has been under age till they appeared, and the minds of the wisest have been enveloped in darkness; but their

lofty intellect has brushed away the cloud. "I don't believe the Bible," said a boy to his associates—standing on tiptoe and looking very wise and big and fierce. Now what feeling was at work there? The very same which has inspired the whole host of infidels from Voltaire to Paine or Fanny Wright—an affectation of superior intelligence and an anxiety to gain distinction. And they have gained a notoriety in this way which such talent could acquire in no other. The fact is, very moderate capacity is sufficient to form objections to any thing. On this ground Swift has based a humorous argument against abolishing Christianity. Who would have suspected these men for men of talents, if they had not had Christianity to attack? Had they written in its defence, their writings, so inferior to those of a host of Christian writers, would never have been read. Had they written on any other subject, their books would have sunk into oblivion. But having Christianity to attack, they have gained an astonishing notoriety. It is the notoriety, however, of a robber, or murderer, who is ushered to his last account with more pomp and parade than the noblest patriot or the purest saint. This itching desire for distinction has been a fruitful source of infidelity. Men who could rise and gain adherents in no path of virtue, as infidels are "damned to everlasting fame." They are remembered as an inundation or tornado is remembered—for the desolation it has caused. Their names are heralded like the names of assassins. Their talents shine like the exploits of a desperado. Is it a distinction worth the sacrifice, to be remembered as an execration and a curse?

There are other causes continually at work. Some are infidels *in self-defense*. They were once, perhaps, not far from the kingdom of God—it may be, deemed themselves citizens of

that kingdom. But the world spread its charms before them. By degrees their attention was withdrawn from heavenly things and their hopes from heavenly objects, and, like Demas, they have forsaken God, "having loved this present world." And they have sought and found shelter from scorn and reproach in blank infidelity. With their habits and course of conduct, it is the only shelter they can find. This class often overact their part, and, by way of quieting their fears and justifying their course, manifest a special opposition to religion. Of all classes they are the most hopeless, as the falsity of religion is claimed to be, with them, not the result of argument so much as a matter of experience. They have tried it, and found its nothingness.

Now combine all these causes which are continually at work, and is it wonderful that in the face of all the light of truth there should still be infidels? Is it not rather, on the contrary, wonderful that their influence should be so limited and their company so small? What but the manifest light and mighty power of truth could keep infidelity so much in check, and keep up in such a world, and against such opposition, so much even of the semblance of religion? The very existence of Christianity in the face of such causes working for its ruin, is itself little short of a miracle. There are limited views, encouraging self-conceit and hasty conclusions:—there is loose training, the mind long left to barrenness or burdened with human inventions incorporated with religion:—there is the unworthy conduct of multitudes that range under its banner;—a universal uneasiness of restraint;—an anxiety to obtain distinction by any means; and the zeal of apostates who claim experience in proof of its emptiness. Had it been a cunningly devised fable, would it so long have imposed upon the credulity of the world? Had it been of human origin, it would long

since have been swept away, leaving not a wreck behind. Had its foundation been in the dust, it would long ago have returned to dust. It exists now, and will always exist, merely because truth is eternal. You may question its authority, resist its influence, and defy its sanctions. You may say, like those of old, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." And as of old, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." What man could do, has been done already. The dungeon and the sword and the burning pile have been tried in vain. Argument and satire, ridicule and invective, have long since been exhausted. Even a new jest at its expense has not been invented for hundreds of years. Some are occasionally revived that are new to us, but they were invented in ages past. The foundation was laid by God himself, and the power of man to destroy the foundation and arrest the progress of the building has been spent in vain.

"What though the gates of hell withstood,
Yet must this building rise:
'Tis thine own work, Almighty God,
And wondrous in our eyes."

SERMON IX.

ON THE DEATH OF REV. L. WORCESTER.*

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. HEBREWS VI. 12.

GOD has never left himself without witness. His mercy and grace have been manifested in every age, through a hundred generations. His people have been scattered along the whole track of time. In the darkest season they have been far more numerous than is generally apprehended. The great mass of them have "served their generation by the will of God," and died unknown to the world. Having performed the duties of their appointed station, they finished their course and slept in peace. Their memorial has perished with them from the earth, but their record is on high. Of those whose names are remembered, a great portion are known only by the things which they endured. They also were passing quietly through life, but persecution and affliction dragged them into fame. The people of God have been placed in every variety of circumstances, and have endured all conceivable suffering. And the "trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it were tried with fire, was found unto praise, and honor, and glory." After they had patiently en-

* When Mr. Worcester died, Mr. Merrill was absent on a journey to the West; and the sermon at the funeral was preached by Rev. David Sutherland, of Bath, N. H. The following discourse and biographical sketch were delivered on Sunday, June 14, 1846. The facts concerning Mr. W. were communicated by himself some time before his death, expressly for use in this sermon.

T. S. P.

dured, they obtained the promises. The pathway through earth to heaven, then, is no new or untrodden path. It has been traveled in every age, from the first martyr downward. Numbers without number have in this way ascended to heaven. Christianity presents no new or unattempted enterprise. We are not allured by hopes which can never be realized, or dazzled by a glory which can never be reached. The appeal is not to imagination or fancy, to draw us on to a desperate enterprise. On the contrary, it appeals to facts,—what man has done,—and from what has been done to what may be done. It presents us not merely the enemies, the difficulties and the glory; but the enemies overcome, the difficulties surmounted, the glory attained. It requires of us only what millions of our race have done before us. It points to the saints who have obtained the prize. You see what they were, how they overcame, what they are now, how glorious their elevation, how high their enjoyment. Be ye followers of them.

Yet their example too often fails of its proper influence. We look upon them as a kind of superior beings. We stand at a reverent distance and admire, but feel that it would be almost presumption to think of imitating. We class ourselves with prophets, and apostles, and ancient saints,—we tread in their footsteps and aspire to a participation of their glory! What are we, miserable mortals, that ever such thoughts should enter our hearts? We can hardly persuade ourselves that they were mere human beings, just as we are. And while, in fancy, we exalt them to a superior rank, we lose the benefit of their example; for it seems no longer the example of mere men, and so no longer a specimen or an evidence of what man can be, or do, or reach. We thus, by a false modesty, deprive ourselves of the encouragement which their example is recorded on purpose to give,

and perhaps excuse ourselves from ever seeking the elevation and glory which they have reached. Freed from the frailties of humanity, and with a kind of angelic nature, well might they aspire high, and reach the object of their high aspiring, too. If their characters had been drawn in angelic colors, there might have been some foundation for all this. But the writers of their history never adopted the old motto, and as absurd as it is old, "speak nothing of the dead but good." Their history is so written as to identify them with humanity. For it was well understood that just in proportion as they seemed not to be human, just in that proportion would human beings find an excuse for being unlike them. Their example would benefit and attract human beings, only as they were described and felt to be human. This, by the way, is one great reason why their frailties and sins as well as their holiness and devotion are put on record;—to show us that they were human beings, and nothing more. Their conflict and final triumph was the conflict and triumph of human nature—of men, not of superior beings in human shape.

This matter is worthy of more particular attention, as, after all, we can hardly persuade ourselves that they had not greatly the advantage of us. Let us make the examination, and we can hardly fail to see that the advantages are with us, rather than with them.

I. They were PARTAKERS OF THE SAME NATURE WITH US. Their bodies and their souls were constituted like ours. They were by nature, as well as we, children of wrath, being children of disobedience—born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Their natural perverseness in many cases was strengthened by years of evil practice. Of Elijah it was said, he was "subject to like passions as we are,"—that is, just a man, as we are.

The apostles claimed to be nothing more. "We also are men of like passions with you." They had not merely the shapes of men, but the feelings, the sympathies, the infirmities, the weaknesses of men. In this respect they stand upon the same level with us—no higher nature—no nobler faculties—encompassed with the same body of sin and death.

II. They were EXPOSED TO THE SAME TEMPTATIONS,—the world, the flesh, the Devil. These three beset them in every form, and they were tried in all points as we are. The world spread its charms to allure them from God. Its pleasures courted them as they do us. The Mammon of unrighteousness showed his hoards of wealth, and the distinctions of earth appealed to their affections and ambition as they do now to ours. In the service of God they went against the current, they came out and were separate from the world. They contended "not against flesh and blood" merely, but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." All that has been brought to bear against our religion in these latter days, their enemies understood and employed against theirs. There hath no temptation taken us, but such as was common to them. On the contrary, we are happily free from much that was common to them,—“mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” But we dwell in quiet habitations, with none to molest or make us afraid.

Then frequently how solitary was their religion. We come with the multitude that keep holy day, and hand joins hand in the service of God. We are encouraged by the example of

others, and their presence keeps us in countenance. But Abraham built his altar alone, and worshipped in solitude, with none to sustain him beyond the range of his own family. The country where he dwelt a stranger, was full of people. But there was none to join with his worship, or sympathize with his religion. How solitary the worship and how desolate the feeling of Elijah, when he said, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away." We are made for society. We rejoice in the company of men of like sentiments and feelings—and the more, the higher our enjoyment. How severe the trial of solitude—how difficult to be faithful among the faithless. We are sometimes tried severely. We feel that "our feet are almost gone, our steps have well nigh slipped." But we have never had the trial of raising a solitary standard for God. It has been ours simply to gather round a standard already raised and supported by ten thousand times ten thousand. In the common calamities of life,—pain, sickness, poverty, bereavement,—the ancient worthies shared with us. While exempt from none of the trials that assail us, they suffered others, many and severe. Whatever advantage there may be in point of exemption from trial, it is with us, not with them.

The same may be said of light and knowledge. For the plan of God has been gradually unfolded and his character gradually revealed. His light shines more and more. But few and scattered rays, comparatively, fell upon those distant early ages. It is true God held communion with some of them by dreams and visions, and with some of the most highly favored, talked face to face. But this was only at distant and uncertain intervals, leaving long tracts between, where they must live on the remembrance of the past. For the most part, "the word of the Lord was precious (i. e. scarce) in those

days ; there was no open vision." Their means of information in the things of religion were very limited in comparison with ours. What was then set forth in types and figures is now plainly declared. What they had in hints, we have in full, explicit terms. What they saw afar off, and of course indistinctly, we have near at hand. For the gospel "hath brought life and immortality to light." The light that shone in scattered rays upon generations past, is combined and centered upon us in the finished revelation of God to men. We have what they had not, the complete word of God, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This has raised us to an elevation of privilege which saints in the early ages could not reach. Have you not read what the apostle says, "these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise ; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The Savior says to the same amount : "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist : notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he." The least in the kingdom has greater privileges and a more extensive knowledge of the truth than John the Baptist, and therefore may be brought into a closer alliance with heaven and connection with God.

III. They had NO GREATER ASSISTANCE THAN IS PROFFERED TO US. Here is a frequent ground of mistake—supposing that the Spirit was given to them in larger measures than to us. They had the promise, which we have, "ask and it shall be given you." They had the assurance, which we have, "if then ye, 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." They were told, as we

are, that he is able to supply all their needs out of his abundant fulness. Perhaps they prayed more and more earnestly, and with more confidence, and as their hearts were enlarged with desire and expectation, they received more. But the same promises which sustained them are left on record for us. And in addition, we have the fulfilment of those promises to them. God was their arm every morning, and their salvation every moment. Is he not as ready to be ours? Indeed, the assistance granted them was for our support, "that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." For they were assisted, and defended, and brought off conquerers, "that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward them." They are evidences of the greatness of his love, and specimens of the influence of his grace, and the power of his spirit. What he did for them, he is able and ready to do for us. His "hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear." The same assistance which brought them off conquerers, and the same grace which made them so holy, is proffered to us. He did for them nothing more than he is ready to do for each of us. We have the same God and Savior, and the same promises. We depend upon the same Spirit, who can do for us as he did for them, "exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think." For the Spirit of God is not straitened in these latter days. They had no more assistance than is proffered to us. The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob still reigns, and his promises to us, as to them, are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him." God's host which Jacob saw, and the chariots of fire and the horses of fire which surrounded

Elisha, what are they? "Are they not all ministering spirits," and are they not *now* "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

IV. They HAD NO GREATER SUPPORT THAN WE HAVE, OR MAY HAVE,—FAITH AND PATIENCE. They were never so happy on earth that there was nothing in present or in prospect to endure, and so no need of patience. They were not rapt up into the third heaven, so that they saw all things clearly with the natural eye and there was no need of faith. They walked by faith and not by sight. The trial of their faith wrought patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. To all the assaults of their enemies they opposed the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Their confidence in God bore them through honor and dishonor, through good report and evil report. Their own experience confirmed their confidence and made assurance doubly sure. Amid all the trials of life coming from a thousand sources, faith and patience sustained them. Against foes without and foes within, faith and patience presented an impenetrable barrier. "Through faith, they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Patience gave fortitude in suffering, and "after they had patiently endured, they obtained the promise." They overcame "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." They "were more than conquerors through him that loved them." Having lived by the faith of the Son of God, and endured the trials incident to their condition in life, they died in the same faith. Their faith was sometimes so strong, and the impression of

things unseen and eternal so clear and vivid, that they seemed to see them. This was the case frequently near or at the close of life, especially when life went out by violence. There was uncommon pressure without and uncommon strength within. They had it in a lively faith and clear views of eternal things. Stephen, sinking to death by violence, saw "the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Did he see this with the natural eye? Surely not. But with a strong and lively faith, which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Nor are such visions of bliss at the end of life rare at the present day. The same support is given now, as then. Faith and patience always triumph. They who have gone before us to the heavenly inheritance, found these weapons of the holy war mighty through God. And mighty through God they are yet. Then what advantage had the ancient saints over us?

And what greater encouragement had they? They knew, as we know, that the work of faith and the patience of hope could not be in vain—that faith would ultimately be lost in the sight of him "whom having not seen they loved," and that patient endurance here wrought out for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." They knew that faith and patience, having their perfect work, would usher them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In view of this glorious result, they "bore all things, believed all things, hoped all things, endured all things," assured that earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal, and that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." And have not we the same assurances? "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth." It is a blessing upon the dead,

pronounced for the comfort of the living, both to stay their tide of sorrow for the dead and to encourage their hope of salvation, inasmuch as human nature has triumphed over sin and death, and re-entered Paradise. What encouragement, then, had they, that we have not? We have the promises which they had, and in addition, the fulfilment of these promises to them. The encouragement has been increasing from age to age, as more and still more have departed from earth, leaving the testimony that God is true and heaven attainable. These witnesses are not patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, only,—rare and singular specimens of humanity—master spirits such as appear once in an age or so, to dazzle us and disappear. They are people of every variety of class and condition—of every age—of every degree of intellectual strength and weakness. Nor are they all strangers to us. They have gone from our congregations, from our neighborhoods, from our families and our firesides, to join the cloud of witnesses above. Have they done what we cannot do? Have they attained an elevation that is beyond our reach? Shall we shrink from the path which they have trod? or refuse to make the sacrifices which they have made? Shall we gaze after them, and wonder, and admire, and praise, and not even attempt to imitate? Be ye followers of them, as ye have them for an example. They were partakers of the same nature with us, encompassed with the same infirmities, and exposed to the same temptations. They had no greater privileges, no more assistance than is offered to us, no stronger support, no higher encouragements. And with their example before us, shall we stand back, not daring to venture? Do you call yourself a man, and not dare venture where men have gone and have succeeded? Let us not be discouraged. Have we strong temp-

tations? So had they. Have we doubts and misgivings? So had they. Does the flesh in us lust against the spirit? It did just so in them. Are our fears at times stronger than our hopes? It was so with them.

“Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.”

Shall we be discouraged and depart, when they persevered and gained the prize? Let us hear the voice of the apostle: “Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

The instability of all things on earth urges us to seek a better habitation—“a tabernacle that shall not be taken down.” What have we here, that this earth should delight us so? Our foundation is in the dust, and our strongest hopes are on earth, or are built upon it. “The wind passeth over them, and they are gone.” And then the glory that lies beyond allures us on, while the spirits of the just made perfect beckon us to be followers of them, and seek with them a habitation—the eternal mansions. While their example and success invites, and the instability of earth urges, and the glory not yet revealed to us allures, let us “not be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Another has been added to the company of the just made perfect—of the witnesses that God is faithful and heaven attainable. An old man, full of years, has given up the ghost, died in a good old age, and been gathered to his people;—an old man known to us all, and dear to us all, whose example and influence we all have felt, and whose memory will be long

cherished. Living monuments of his faith and patience remain—living monuments of an active, laborious and useful life. While it is easy to give a sketch of his character that will be recognized—for there were prominent traits known and read of all men—it is yet difficult to give a fair and just description. But it is unmanly not to attempt what we can, from an apprehension of lacking entire success.*

LEONARD WORCESTER was born in Hollis, N. H., January 1st, 1767. He belonged to a family where God was worshipped morning and evening; where religion was prominent and exemplified, and its truths taught regularly and systematically. The father was not satisfied that his children should acquire their religious knowledge at hap-hazard. What he himself believed, with unwearied diligence he taught them. The main principles of religious truth were taught Sabbath evening after Sabbath evening, from year to year, and the family grew up under their influence. In addition to this home instruction, through the regular preaching of the gospel he was early taught to keep the Sabbath and reverence the sanctuary. His literary education, as far as direct instruction was concerned, was finished at a common district school. Academies and Colleges, not so common then as now, were beyond his reach. His religious impressions were early and strong, and often very pungent, as the strictness of God's Law, the holiness of his character, and the retributions of eternity were brought to mind. Indeed such instruction as he had received could not be in vain. It restrained from evil and gave power to resist temptation, and directed to the right course of conduct

* The remainder of this discourse was rewritten by the author and published in the Vermont Chronicle of August 12, 1846. We have followed the printed copy instead of the original MS.

before it made him wise unto salvation. At the age of 15 he belonged to a society of young men who met Sabbath evening for prayer and religious exercises, and bore his part with them, though he did not unite with the church till some years after.

In his 18th year he was apprenticed to Isaiah Thomas of Worcester, Mass., to learn the trade of printing.

Here a new scene was presented. He had never seen the Sabbath disregarded, or the house of God to any considerable extent neglected, and he had scarcely ever, if ever, heard a profane oath. But his new habitation and company were not like the old. A general looseness upon religious subjects prevailed, and vices that he had never known stalked abroad in open day. Many of his new companions partook of the spirit that prevailed.

His master, distinguished for wealth and enterprise, and business talent, and withal, for a whole-souled nobleness and generosity which seemed to recommend his very vices, was the profanest man he ever knew. It was a severe trial; and there is no trial more severe than that of a young man who has just left the quietness and peace and good order of home—none that shows more clearly the neglect or defects of religious and moral training. And if a young man can pass this trial, with his principles and habits unshaken, the great extremity is past; the bitterness of death is over. How many who promised fair have failed in the trial, and sunk from their high aspirings, and from the hopes of their friends to the lowest state of debasement. His early instruction was not in vain, and he endured the trial. Without setting himself as an example, or making an ostentatious display of superior purity, he avoided the vices and escaped the snares that beset him.

For many years he was the only *young* man that belonged

to the church. The great mass of the members in Worcester were people advanced in life, who had joined under a former and clearer and more efficient dispensation of the truth, or who could afford to make the sacrifice now the follies of youth were past. As the pious were few, they were drawn more closely together. His being alone pious of the young, while it exposed him to peculiar trials, gave also peculiar supports. It led to an intimate acquaintance with his seniors in the church; and, by associating with mature and experienced men, his principles were confirmed and his judgment matured while he was yet unripe in years.

His occupation gave great facilities for reading, (for his business was with books,) and great encouragement for composing. An apprenticeship, thus spent, prepared the way for advancement. The way to wealth was open to him by the offer of a partnership. Mr. Thomas had no regard for religion, but he knew the *cash* value of the intelligence, the business habits and the stable character which resulted from religion. Such a partner, so intelligent, and efficient, and safe, could not but increase the business and the profits. This partnership continued for several years. They published not only books to a large extent, but also a newspaper,* of which Mr. Worcester was editor. And had this business been continued, with his characteristic tact and energy, why might he not have been among the wealthiest of the land?

Thousands of Christians with such prospects would have continued it. No hope of saving souls from death could have diverted them from it for a moment. They would have said, "It is an opening of Providence which they ought to enter—

* The Massachusetts Spy.—T. S. P.

or a leading of Providence which they ought to follow—they have no right to sacrifice such prospects for themselves and families which Providence holds out to them.” Providence! What is called an opening of Providence and pursued and justified on that ground, is not unfrequently a temptation to try men and prove them, and see what is in their hearts.

Whatever may have been his thoughts, *we* cannot be insensible of the sacrifice which he made of earthly prospects to become a minister of the gospel. It is the better for him that he made the sacrifice; for what would all this wealth be to him now? And if it was better for him, O how much better for us! But it *was* a sacrifice to quit all these prospects of wealth and distinction for Three Hundred Dollars a year, liable to all the hazards of writs of ejection, and undesirable and undesired translations.

It is sometimes complained that ministers are poor economists. Well: they live on hope, and hope is almost always prodigal. “They have not the shrewdness and the tact which belong to other classes of men.” This, to a limited extent, is true; as it is often felt, however unjustly, that theirs is not the proper field for such qualities. They are doing a great work and they cannot come down. Many have lived and died in poverty who had previously shown that God had given them all the power to get wealth which has distinguished the most successful. And some, after ministering for a season and being laid aside by loss of health, or loss of voice, or some of the mischances that flesh is heir to, have shown that power revived. As their minds were diverted to other and nobler objects, it was a power which they were never suspected of possessing. There is no class in community that make so many and such varied sacrifices for the benefit of their fellow men as the min-

istry—sacrifices of which those for whom they are made are utterly unconscious.

Mr. Worcester was settled in life, and prospering in business, with every prospect of wealth. But he felt a deep interest in religious things and made them his study long before he had a thought of changing his occupation.

He claimed no knowledge of any language but his mother tongue—good, honest, straight-forward English. But then he understood that, and could wield it with a power that few could equal or resist. And even the grammar of this language he had never studied in the schools. He learned it not from grammar books, but from a careful reading of the best writers; and there he learned the power of the language and how to use it. May not such a man be more useful in the ministry than in his present occupation? His advisers were the wisest and best men of the times—such men as Dr. Emmons and Dr. Austin.

He never studied Theology according to the present mode, or according to the mode then in vogue. But his excuse is *no example* to those who evade all the means of instruction, and go into the ministry like Ephraim of old—“a cake not turned”—half burnt and half raw. Let them show the same mental discipline, and grasp of intellect, and extent and variety of knowledge, before they plead his example for neglecting the usual means of instruction. Without any time specially and entirely devoted to theological study, he was licensed to preach the gospel, March 12, 1799, by the Mendon Association, at a special meeting held at the house of Dr. Emmons,—15 members present. The Association had *forms*, but they had also good sense and Christian feeling, and were not so the

slaves of forms as to make the lack of "a regular course," a bar to licensure.

He preached twelve Sabbaths at Milford, Mass., and came to Peacham, June 21, 1799. The people of Peacham had long desired the labors of a settled Pastor; and though many candidates had passed in review, there were objections of one kind or other to all.* And the more candidates, as is usually the case, the more unlikely a settlement. In one instance a call was given by the church from which the people happily dissented.† The class of bishops without a church—sometimes called "everlasting candidates"—is not of recent origin. With all the destitution, there was a kind of surplus then as there is now. And the objection of a surplus to every effort for increasing the numbers of the ministry was as real and as valid then as now.

Mr. Worcester was recommended by two young men, formerly his apprentices, who had established a printing-office and newspaper at Peacham.‡

He came partly encouraged by the invitation of the church, and partly to visit those young men who had lived so long with him and had now shown their regard for him, but with slight, if any, expectations of settlement, and preached four Sabbaths; having appointments in other places which prevented his longer

* This sentence might mislead one not acquainted with the facts. "In 1791 the Rev. Israel Chapin was regularly invited to become the Pastor, and an agreement was entered into with him, to which a large majority of the people acceded, though there was some opposition. Why the connection was not consummated, I think I was never informed."—*Rev. L. Worcester's Sermon*, "What hath God wrought," p. 8. T. S. P.

† This call was to Rev. Stephen Williams.—T. S. P.

‡ Amos Farley and Samuel Goss, in February, 1798, established at Peacham, "The Green Mountain Patriot," which was continued till March, 1807. T. S. P.

stay. But every man has his place, though some work long before they discover it, and some apparently never make the discovery. Here was his place, as was evidenced by a unanimous call from the church and people. Separate from the unanimity and the hope of usefulness through it, there was nothing specially inviting, as there was no meeting-house, and the whole field was new. But it gave the privilege which he highly prized, of not building on another man's foundation. The path of duty seemed plain, and the call was accepted without hesitation.

He was installed, October 30, 1799.*

It was a happy day for Peacham. The church had received an answer to their prayers, in a Pastor in whom they had full confidence and from whose labors they indulged large expectations. And the people, like Micah of old, said, "Now we know that the Lord will do us good, seeing we have a Levite to our Priest." And each party showed their joy and celebrated the event in their own way—the former by prayer and praise—the latter by music and a dance. And as this latter method of celebrating events and showing joy often brings a sting, and leaves a sting behind, they found it so—an extra sting in the next Sabbath's sermon.

* The council which ordained Mr. Worcester consisted of the following members: From Worcester, Mass., Rev. Sam'l Austin and Dea. John Chamberlain; Thornton, N. H., Rev. Noah Worcester, Moses Foss; Newbury, Vt., Rev. Nathaniel Lambert, Dea. James Bailey, Jeremiah Ingalls; Salisbury, N. H., Rev. Thomas Worcester, Dea. Amos Pettengill; Danville, Vt., Rev. John Fitch, Dea. Israel Brainerd, John Short; Hollis, N. H., Rev. Eli Smith, Noah Worcester, Esq., Capt. Wm. Tenney; Waterford, Vt., Rev. Asa Carpenter, John Grow, Esq. Mr. Lambert made the introductory prayer, Mr. Austin preached the sermon; Mr. Smith made the ordaining prayer, Mr. N. Worcester gave the charge, Mr. T. Worcester the right hand, Mr. Carpenter made the concluding prayer. The sermon, (2 Cor. iv. 5,) charge, and right hand, were published.

The meetings were held for seven years in the Hall of the Academy. In 1806 a meeting-house was erected at an expense of more than five thousand dollars.

This large house was filled Sabbath after Sabbath for more than thirty years. The power of truth, with the influence of tact and varied talent in showing it in a clear light and setting it home, always drew a crowd of listeners. And so strong was the go-to-meeting propensity that emigrants from abroad, who had lost the habit, or never had it, were soon uniformly drawn to the house of God. Men of loose principles and looser lives fell in with the current. Whatever they might do or neglect in other places, at Peacham they all went to meeting.

The church at his installation consisted of forty members only, himself making the fortieth. It was considered a matter of importance at that time that a Pastor should be a member of the church to which he ministered. The increase of the church was by no means rapid. This was not to be expected, as there was an immense preparatory work to be done. The foundations must be laid deep and broad, before any thing substantial could be built upon them. He knew nothing of the hot-house process, by which a church could be made to grow up in a night (and the night is peculiarly favorable to such a growth) and perish in a night. He sought not temporary, but permanent results. During the first sixteen years of his ministry there were comparatively few conversions. And yet perhaps he was never more usefully employed than during those years. If there was no great increase of the church, impediments were removed, and minds enlightened, and the way prepared for increase. And when the way was thus prepared, the Spirit came in a revival which continued more than two years. As the result of the revival of 1817 and '18, two

hundred and thirty-three, as appears from the records, united with this church. The blessed effects of that revival are manifest still, after a period of almost thirty years. Many of its fruits have been gathered into the garner of God, and many are scattered through the land. But a considerable proportion still remain, among whom is the present Pastor of the church. In 1831 and '32, one hundred and fifty-six were added to the church as the fruits of the revival in those years. During Mr. Worcester's ministry five hundred and seventy-one were added to the church,—making an average of something more than sixteen yearly. His ministry of forty years was rich in direct results, to say nothing of the indirect and incidental. In 1838 he began to feel the infirmities of age. And frequent attacks of disease seemed to render it advisable that he should no longer be depended upon for permanent labors. His mind was in sufficient vigor to see and feel the decay, and he had no desire to continue his labors till the decay should become manifest to all but himself.

His formal connection with the church was never dissolved, till now death has sundered it, though for some seven years past he has ceased to act as Pastor. It was fit that he, who had so long and so successfully been Pastor, should retain the name while life lasted, even though he could no longer actively perform its duties.

Through increasing infirmity and repeated severe attacks of disease, death was often brought near, even at the door. But he contemplated his departure without shrinking. He knew in whom he had believed. His mind was at rest in the assurance that the great business for eternity was settled. He could not but be conscious that his labors had not been in vain. He had received grace to be faithful—and grace to see that faith-

fulness crowned with success. But he arrogated nothing to himself. Before God he had no plea but the merits of the Savior. His mind dwelt with childlike simplicity, and confidence, and hope, upon the great and glorious fact—that “it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” It was his only hope, and it was enough. Thus he met death quietly and in peace. He finished his course May 28, 1846. He died to live. He has vanished from the circles of this world. His voice is no more heard nor his footsteps seen on earth.

“So sinks the day-star in his ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.”

It will be seen at once that Mr. Worcester was a man of strong original mind. Slight and partial views of a subject never satisfied him. He longed to know the whole—to reach the heights and fathom the depths. The traditions of the Fathers, and the opinions of those about him, had little influence with him. He felt, like Job, “I have understanding as well as you.” There was no disposition to receive at second hand the thoughts of others, cut and dried and made up to order. His conclusions were the results of personal investigation, and he was not to be drawn or driven from them by hard names or harsh epithets. He “gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour.” And every attempt to subdue or crush was resisted with all the force of his great mind. He was not to be “taught with thorns of the wilderness and briers,” as Gideon taught the men of Succoth. There was a strong instinctive abhorrence of slavery—most of all of mental servitude—all that would check free thought and lay its deadly grasp upon

the mind. He dreaded *no thinking* far more than the danger of wrong thinking—a dead body, that, laid straight, would remain so, unless galvanized into life or quickened by a devil, far more than the unseemly contortions of a living man.

And as tending to produce this dead sameness he dreaded all large combinations with a stereotype theology that must be taken, or at any rate confessed entire, and a pyramid of officers, tier over tier,—Deacon, Priest, Bishop; or Priest, Elder, Bishop; or Presbytery, Synod, Assembly,—rising above to crush all manliness beneath, and save the rank and file of the church from all necessity of personal thinking—from anything but to *pay* and *obey*. In this view he looked with suspicion upon all attempts to draw closer the bands of denomination—even upon Consociations, as, however convenient to the officers, injurious to the body of the church. Anything that tended, in his opinion, to remove the power from the body of the church, met his decided opposition.

He was an out and out Congregationalist—not that he depended much upon forms of Government, in themselves considered, but as tending to develop or depress individual character. He would do nothing to compromit the rights of individual churches. His caution in this matter was remarkable and extreme, and his fears no doubt excessive, though we may live to regret that the age had not furnished more such men. So much was this a passion with him, that his caution sometimes bordered upon the ludicrous.

He was as liberal and hopeful of others, as independent himself. They were not cut or stretched to suit his measure, or left out of the pale of Christianity, if they failed to meet his measure. He was ever ready to say, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,”—however they

might in some respects differ from him. And this he did, without being at all doubtful of his own views, or considering them unimportant. There was a charitable hope, while anything was left to hang a hope upon, that they received the truth, though, viewing it from a different position, they saw it in a different way and used different language.

He had great hopefulness for the world. It is not unusual for the aged to feel that every thing is going backward, and that a wreck is near at hand. "What is the cause that the former days were better than these?" He felt that religion, since his remembrance, had made a great and rapid advance, that religious principle was far more prevalent, and religious character far more common and mature than in his early years. These days, though evil, were still better than the former. And his heart was cheered with the hope of better days still, though he should not live to behold and enjoy them. His feeling was like that of the Patriarch, "Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again into the land of your fathers."

His presence and counsel were often sought in church difficulties; and he had a rare faculty to discover where the real difficulty was, and to remove it. Almost all serious troubles in the church have arisen from covert or dishonest modes of doing business. His knowledge of business, and his having been in business, gave him an advantage over most of his brethren in the settlement of church troubles.

Though deprived of the advantages of early thorough instruction, he set a high value upon them, and was anxious that all should enjoy them. It is the common fault of self-made men to undervalue all that has not assisted in their elevation. They have risen to eminence without the help of college or academy,

and the uselessness of these schools seems a fair inference. There was no feeling of this kind with him. And he had no fear of being eclipsed by the youth of the congregation studying what had not fallen within his province.

His personal appearance was commanding, tall, and of full proportions in middle life, and erect to the last—a frame, large, compact, strong, and capable of much endurance—a fit habitation for such a mind. His appearance upon first sight was forbidding, rather than attractive. The rigid and the severe prevailed over the sweet and the inviting. He was not a sociable man—easy of access and free in conversation. In the company of strangers, reserved, while the youth felt an oppressive awe in his presence, and chose rather to admire at a distance than hazard a too near approach. In his visits among his own people he was more a listener than a talker, unless a subject was presented, or he was roused by opposition. He had little of the small talk which is so useful as a circulating medium, though there was a vast improvement in this respect in his latter years. This deficiency might have been fatal, had it not been supplied by his connection once and again with one of the most amiable and sociable of her sex. The preacher gave a charm to the meeting-house, the preacher's wife to the visit. With all his resolution and force of mind, he was naturally bashful and easily put to the blush.

He never appeared in the pulpit without full written preparation; and what he had written, he had written. With his commanding personal appearance, his voice and manner corresponded. His voice was strong, clear, and sweet; and his manner ardent and energetic. Some of his prepared sentences, containing important truth in a small compass, were repeated in a tone and manner that rung again like a distant clap of

thunder followed by one close at hand. Many of his sermons, delivered thirty or forty years ago, are remembered, not merely by those who were then of mature years, but by those who were at the time quite young. The sermons, perhaps, were not so very extraordinary, or might not appear so in print; but with his voice and manner they made lasting impressions. Few ministers have preached so many sermons that are remembered. For without being personal, the principles of the Bible were brought home to the state and condition of his hearers, and adapted to time and circumstances. His knowledge of the people of his charge was particular and exact. Few events, good or evil, escaped him. I have often wondered how a man of his silent and retired habits ever knew so much of the state of his flock.

He was not exempt from severe trials, as sickness and death often invaded his habitation. Of nine children that came to maturity, five finished their course before him.* There is a natural sorrow when children bury their parents, and natural tears that soon are dried. It is but the course of things on earth. But when parents bury their children, and one after another, as if their last coal was to be quenched in Israel, there

* Elizabeth Hopkins, died 30 March, 1817, æt. 20; Jerusha, died 3 Nov., 1829, æt. 25; Leonard, grad. Dart. Coll. 1825, Teacher of High School for young ladies in Worcester, Mass., and Newark, N. J., died 24 Aug., 1836, æt. 36; Evarts, grad. Dart. Coll. 1830, Preceptor Caledonia Co. Grammar School, Peacham, 1830-31, Tutor in Dart. Coll. 1832-33, commenced preaching at Littleton, N. H., April, 1835, was ordained there 17 March, 1836, died 21 October, 1836, æt. 29; Hannah, died 22 May, 1838, æt. 37. Five children died young. The four survivors are, Rev. Samuel Austin, grad. U. V. M. 1819, Andover Theo. Sem. 1823, Missionary to the Cherokees; Rev. Isaac Reddington, M. D. Dart. 1832, Pastor in Littleton, N. H., Sec. Vt. Dom. Miss. Soc., Dist. Secretary A. B. C. F. M., Auburndale, Mass.; Rev. John Hopkins, grad. Dart. Coll. 1833, Tutor, 1835-36, Pastor, St. Johnsbury, Vt., and Burlington, Vt.; Ezra Carter, M. D. Dart. 1838, Thetford, Vt.

is another kind of sorrow, more deep and bitter, as the course of nature seems reversed.

His defects were such as belong to his peculiar cast of mind—strength, that stood apart, not fully sympathizing with human weakness—and that was late to learn the extent and bounds of its own power—an independent spirit that could scarcely brook control or desert a position once taken—a sanguine temperament that could hardly conceive itself wrong. There was the *honest*, and the *just*, and the *pure*; but too slight an admixture of the *lovely* and the *amiable*. But these defects in great measure disappeared as he advanced in life.

His repeated afflictions had their influence in correcting the natural sternness and severity of his character, but most of all, those great revivals in which he bore so important a part. These revivals in their way were perhaps no less beneficial to him than to the people, melting and mellowing down the rigid and the forbidding, and bringing his heart more in sympathy with men. But we need not dwell upon his defects. He never claimed perfection; nor do we claim it for him, or speak of him in terms of universal eulogy.

He has finished his course and retired to rest; but his works live after him, not only in this the principal scene of his labors, but everywhere, where the young people of Peacham are scattered. They owe much of their success in life to him, as their established principle, their determined energy and perseverance were caught from him. They will feel, when they learn his departure, as we feel, that a great man has fallen.

NOTE. Mr. Worcester was town clerk of Peacham, 1805-39; a member of the board of trustees of Caledonia County Grammar School, 1800-39; secretary of the board, 1812-39; president of the board, 1829-39; a member of the corporation of the University of Vermont, 1818-21, (the last three years of Dr. Samuel Austin's presidency.)

He received the honorary degree of Master of Arts from Middlebury College in 1804, from Dartmouth College in 1827.

His publications were :

Letters and Remarks occasioned by a Sermon of Rev. Aaron Bancroft on the Doctrine of Election.

An Oration on the Death of General Washington.

A Fast Sermon, on "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked," &c.

A Sermon on the Highway and Way, ISA. xxxv. 8.

Answer to a Sermon of Rev. Wm. Gibson in opposition to the foregoing Doctrine of Atonement.

A Sermon on 2 SAM. vii. 27. Determination of God an Encouragement in Prayer.

A Sermon. Men sometimes act as their own worst enemies.

Inquiries occasioned by an Address of the General Association of N. H. on the Doctrine of the Trinity. Signed Cephas.

A Sermon. The Confession of Faith of the Church of Christ in Peacham defended. Montpelier, 1818, 8vo. pp. 39.

A Funeral Sermon. The Christian desires to be with Christ.

An Appeal to the Conscience of Rev. Solo. Aiken concerning his Appeal to the Churches. Montpelier, 1821, 8vo. pp. 16.

A Sermon delivered in Park Street Church, Boston, Aug. 25, 1825, at the Ordination of Rev. Elnathan Gridley and Rev. Sam'l A. Worcester, Missionaries. Boston, 1825, 8vo. pp. 30.

A Sermon on the Alton outrage. Concord, N. H., 1838, 8vo. pp. 16.

A Memorial of what God hath wrought, a Sermon delivered in Peacham, March 31, 1839. Montpelier, 1839, 8vo. pp. 16.

T. S. P.

SERMON X.

ON THE DEATH OF ERASTUS POOR.

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. ECCLESIASTES IX. 10.

HUMAN life is viewed in different ways by different persons, and by the same person at different times. Each speaks of it, and thinks of it, as he has found it, or according to his feeling at the time. One regards it as a season of enjoyment. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labor, which thou takest under the sun." Another regards it as a scene of trial and affliction—vanity and vexation of spirit. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." To one its shortness is a ground of despair. "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." Life is so short, that it is hardly worth while to attempt any thing. What is the use? What is the use of study or of labor—of honor or of wealth? We shall soon be gone, and never return again, and what is the use to sow a field, when we may never reap? or build, when we may never inhabit? To another its shortness is an incentive to pleasure. Let us *live*, while we *do* live. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

To those who view human life as the whole of existence, it is no great matter which extreme they take." Their joy as well as their sorrow is as insipid as the laughter of a fool,—“the crackling of thorns under a pot,”—the joy and sorrow of an animal, rather than of a rational being.

But life has a determinate object, and to accomplish that object all the powers and faculties must be brought into action. However much it may include of both, it is not a scene of mere enjoyment or suffering,—a heaven or a hell. It is a state of probation, and all its concerns, its business, labors, joys, and sorrows, are important, as they lay hold of eternity, and form habits and characters for eternity. Life is a school, in which the great lessons learned have their use in the future. It may be more or less useful for the present, but its principal importance is in the future. Its value is not in what it produces just now, but the foundation it lays for future productions; not what it gives in actual possession, but the capacity it gives to acquire and retain. It is an apprenticeship in which we are to grow up in the knowledge and practice of all that is honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report. He is not the successful man who has accomplished the greatest present results, any more than he is the wise man whose mind is burdened with the greatest load of knowledge. He that has acquired the most wealth, may be only like the scholar whose powers of thinking are stifled by a load of other people's thoughts. The text presents several things for consideration.

I. THERE IS SOMETHING TO DO.

II. IT IS THAT WHICH PRESENTS ITSELF. “*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it.*”

III. IT MUST BE WITH OUR MIGHT—THE BEST WE CAN.

IV. THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE.

I. THERE IS SOMETHING TO DO. Life is a scene of action. Life is not a holiday or a pastime. Neither our natures or circumstances admit of this; and those whose circumstances admit the nearest approach to it, are the most insignificant of the race. Coming soon to maturity, they soon fade. Obtaining all the necessaries of life easily, they have no strength of character, or firmness of nerve,—no energy in action, or power of endurance. Whatever may be the capacities of their natures, or the powers of body or mind, they die out in idleness. Having but few wants, and those wants easily supplied, there is no stimulant to action. Their powers are never called forth, and their weakness and imbecility of body are but indications of the state of the mind. Such is the race where the bounties of nature are scattered in the greatest profusion and there is neither storm nor cold to demand a shelter—inefficient, effeminate, idle, unthinking—joining to the age and size of manhood only the bodily and mental powers of children, as with the increase of years without exertion, there has been no increase of strength to either. Such would have been the race everywhere, had everything been furnished to our hands—all our land properly cleared and tilled, houses built and furnished, and provision and clothing both for protection and ornament supplied without our care—had we been preserved from sickness, or an infallible remedy presented so clearly as to make ignorance or mistake impossible. Yet we sometimes wonder that a good Providence had not done all this, and so prevented all necessity for labor—and made life a dull round of idleness and *ennui*, or a scene of dissipation and wickedness. We sometimes wonder and complain of Providence, that he has furnished, so to speak, but the raw material, leaving it to be brought into a usable and useful shape by human contrivance

and labor. As if his love for us, like the love of many a fond and foolish earthly parent, would make such arrangements as to prevent our improvement.

He has, however, furnished but the raw material, and human ingenuity and labor must do the rest. Here is the land, under heaven's rain and sunshine, fertile in thorns and briars, that might, had God so willed it, have produced with equal fertility all that nourishes and comforts man—thus dispensing with all the labors of the husbandman, and dispensing, too, with all the tact, and knowledge, and discretion, and hardihood that have been acquired in cultivating the soil. Here is the mountain stored with mineral wealth, that might have been scattered upon the surface in just the shape that is needed, thus dispensing with all exercise of body or mind. And so with everything else. Furnishing the raw material, he has left space and inducement for illimitable improvement, as one advances upon the discovery or invention of another; and every labor-saving invention but forms an outlet, and furnishes a demand for labor in other ways. All things are full of labor, and the demand for it from man is constant and unceasing from the commencement to the close of his earthly career. His very position and circumstances on earth demand it, while revelation joins in to confirm and record the demand. “Six days shalt thou labor.” “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.” All improvement of body or of mind is by exercise, and that exercise is labor. We come into the world the most helpless and dependent of all creatures, with body and mind in all the weakness of infancy; the faculties of both are to be brought

out and matured by exercise. There is an immense difference between an infant and a full grown man. It is a difference that labor makes, as labor makes the difference between the civilized and the savage. He that has his powers most completely developed, or under the fullest control—that can *do* the most—is the highest style of man. The power of doing, while it includes strength of body, much more includes knowledge how to apply that strength. This power to *do*—a power enlarged and matured (almost created) by use, is the source of all distinction. It is on this power that society rests its demand upon its members. *Do something*—“*do it.*” Don’t dream away life in gloomy or joyful visions. Don’t waste your energies in fancying what you would do with other powers or in other circumstances. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, *do it.*” It is on this power *to do*, that God rests his demand, and makes his claim, and it is the *doer* that meets his approbation and receives his reward. “Inasmuch as ye have *done it.*”

But II. DO WHAT? There is so much to be done—not so much if it could be equally distributed among all the race, and each would do his part—but so much as to startle, almost overwhelm him who inquires simply for the path of duty. Do what? “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do.” Do what is present and pressing in the circumstances in which Providence shall place you—leaving it for him to open the way, as what is now future shall become present. Few things are less matters of deliberate choice than our occupation. It is often a matter of great excitement and anxiety with young people, what calling they shall pursue, and the matter is determined by events over which they have no control. Their calling is not forced upon them—it is their choice—yet made when they were in no

condition for a deliberate choice, or in such circumstances as forbade every other choice. Few in after life have found themselves what in youth they had expected. They had made their calculations very deliberately, and very wisely—had laid the whole track of the future, scarcely a step of which has been traveled. They have been led in a way which they knew not, and to results of which they had no anticipation. All their plans have been crossed, yet there has been no force but the force of circumstances operating upon thinking beings. Doing what their hands find to do to-day, they are ready for what their hands may find to do next year, or ten years hence. Doing what in present circumstances is right, they are prepared to do well in any circumstances. As man's occupation is to him for the most part an accident—chosen for him by his parents or friends in his youth, or forced upon him by circumstances in after life—so it is a matter of very little importance to him what it may be. He may show all good fidelity and desire to serve his generation, and secure the great end of life,—the approbation of God in it, whatever it may be. It may be less conspicuous, or less honored of men, but it is not the less honorable, or less noticed of God—or if followed faithfully, less entitled to a reward. Yet how common a mistake upon this subject! An occupation is accounted honorable according to the profits, and no account is taken of any profit but the pecuniary. What he has made by his business is all reckoned up; what he has made himself in it is all forgotten. What he has come to possess through his business is the great thing—what he has come to *be* through moral discipline, and tried integrity, and matured powers; or meanness, and dishonesty, and cunning craftiness, is all nothing. You count what he *has*, and call it success or failure, and forget the infinitely more important matter, what

he *is*. Is that *success*, which secures money at the expense of integrity, and forfeits the soul for the things that perish with the using? And is that *failure*, which keeps a "conscience void of offense toward God and toward men," and, receiving a supply by the way and doing what the hand findeth to do, looks for and secures the recompense of reward—the glory, honor, and immortality? Do what your hand findeth to do. Its outward benefit may not be great, its inward benefit is immense.

The main thing is its effect upon you, in establishing right habits and characters, and increasing the power and facility of doing. Think nothing that is useful beneath you, however insignificant it may seem, and spend no time in wishing for better opportunities, or larger work. If that which your hand finds to do is least, be faithful in that, and this is a preparation for that which is higher and more important, as you advance step by step. Pursuing this course, what the world calls great, comes naturally and easily, and you are equal to any exigency that may arise. The great mistake of thousands—a mistake which defeats all the ends of life—is neglecting what the hands find to do. It is not sufficiently important, or sufficiently honorable. They have souls above it, or the recompense is too slight a stimulus to exertion. Thus the time passes by, and when great events assail them, and the opportunity for great actions, or great gains, presents itself, having neglected all the less, and so acquired no experience, or tact, or facility in business, they are in no condition to meet the occasion—to perform the great action, or secure the great benefit. What their hands find to do is neglected, it is so insignificant, and then when occasion presents what they deem important, they are in no condition to take advantage of it. The *much* is

seldom intrusted to him who has been unfaithful or indolent in the *little*. His character has been tried by the little and found wanting, as he that is unfaithful in little, in spite of all his vain imaginings, is also unfaithful in much.

III. But there is a further direction—not merely *to do*, and *to do what your hand findeth to do*—but DO IT WITH YOUR MIGHT. Nothing is done effectually, but what is done heartily; nor is any thing done heartily, which is deemed insignificant. That we may do with our might the proper work of life, we must understand something of its bearings, and its influence beyond immediate results. We must place the world and its business where they ought to stand in connection with the world to come—that the future life may reflect its glory upon this—and so prepare us to use the world as not abusing it—to be diligent in business and fervent in spirit. To do the work of our calling with our might, we must respect ourselves and respect our calling. Throw aside all absurd traditionary notions (as inconsistent with truth as with our reputation or profession) about one calling's being more respectable than another; take the broad ground that doing with your might what your hands find to do, in any honest calling, is worthy of respect. Then none but fools will withhold it, and happily their respect is worth nothing.

IV. The season for this earnest diligence IS THE PRESENT. Work. “There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” There is no work to be done, nor desire to do it, nor knowledge to facilitate the doing, or wisdom in applying means to ends, in the grave whither thou goest. The season for all this is past. There is an appointed time for man upon the earth, and an appointed work. Both have their appointed times—the time and the

work—this side the grave ; and the increasing shortness of the time, and the importance of the work, demand increasing diligence. Not, “let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,” but let us work, for to-morrow we die. Do every day the appropriate work of to-day, waiting for no to-morrow to finish out its neglected business. Do what your hand findeth to do, and do it with your might, and then as the Providence of God opens, your hand will find something better and more blessed to do through eternal ages. “Faithful over a few things,” you are prepared to be “ruler over many things.” Now while everything in this life depends upon this, and he that does with his might what his hand finds to do, finds more to do, and more profitable and more easily done, as his skill and knowledge increase, is it true of this world merely ? Does the soul, departing from time, leave its character, its habits, its large experience, and increased knowledge behind ? They go with it as part and parcel of the soul itself, and fit it to consummate that which has been commenced here. The work commenced on earth, and carried forward amid difficulties and trials, is perfected there.

The great preparation for heaven is the right performance of the appropriate duties of earth. He that is of no use here, is of no use there—can have no place there. The outward duties of earth may in a measure be performed from no spirit of devotion to God, or principle of obedience, and so be entitled to no reward from him. They have served their generation, but not according to the will of God ; useful on earth—not blessed in heaven. Yet the spirit and conduct which made men useful on earth, are worthy of earnest study and consideration, as a guide and encouragement to us.

The most useful kind of knowledge is to know by what

means others have succeeded—how much success is due to energy and perseverance, and how much to what men call accident, and the Bible calls Providence.

The history of our deceased friend is both interesting and instructive, as every man's would be, if it could be given as it is. His success was the result of a literal obedience to the wise man's direction. He did with his might what his hand found to do, and thus was prepared as Providence opened the way, to do more and better. He was led in a way that he knew not, and placed in circumstances that in youth he had no anticipation of, but he had so conducted from youth upward that there was a mind to meet the circumstances. His plan was to remain here, and remaining here he would have done as he did there, what his hand found to do, though his hand would have found very different things to do from what he did there, and the outward result might have been very different. An only son, his desire and thought was, to remain at home; and it was equally the desire of his parents. But there were no Temperance Societies then, pledging men to each other to abandon the use of intoxicating drink, and there was no more power then than now, in those accustomed to the use, to stop short of intoxication. They did not mean to be drunk, but continuing the use, they infallibly become so. Commencing the downward slide, there was no power to stop mid-way. To remain at home and endure the mortification and disgrace of an intemperate parent, was out of the question. He would do any thing, or go any where first. Finding no remedy, as the case was of the most hopeless kind, he took his departure, anxious merely to be as far off as possible. Traveling to the extent of his means, he found himself in a strange place, without friends or funds, prepared to do what his hand found to do. It was

not particularly inviting, in a provision store on the bank of the Ohio, on almost the smallest scale imaginable—buying, to sell, day by day. And the liquid was furnished as well as the solid. This may seem strange, considering the cause of his departure from home; but he had not learned to generalize. It was not safe for his father to drink, and to drink himself, with such an example, was an outrage not to be thought of; but he went no further. Yet when the temperance movement commenced, and his attention was turned to it, he gave up the traffic at once, at what seemed to be a great pecuniary sacrifice—wondering, like thousands of others, that he had never seen it in that light before.

With the increase of means he found a more eligible situation, and more extensive business, still doing what his hand found to do. His progress was onward and upward, with scarcely an interruption. There was no display of wealth, no ostentation, in dress, furniture, or appearance. He was never above his business, still doing what his hand found to do. His house was always open to all his acquaintances—especially those from Caledonia County. The unfortunate were as heartily greeted as any, unless they were vicious. He furnished a home for his mother, who went out to Cincinnati with me in 1834, and finally for his father,—who, whatever he might be here, has been there a pattern of sobriety. Our friend was a thorough business man—straight-forward, upright, manly in all his dealings—shrewd, but not that kind of shrewdness which consists in cunning and intrigue,—thinking no honest business disgraceful, with no peculiar talent unless it be the combination of all in common sense. He had no airs on account of his success, and dealt in no denunciation against the unfortunate. On the contrary, he was always ready to help.

He was sensitive, perhaps over-sensitive upon a single point,—that which caused his departure from home; and for years was almost afraid to hear from home, lest he should hear of some crime committed in the frenzy of intoxication. I seldom saw him without hearing two inquiries: “What is the news from Peacham?” and then, with hesitation, as if almost afraid to ask, “Do you hear anything of father?” And yet there is more than one man that will subject his children to such a trial—obstruct their prosperity, and place himself in such a position that they cannot think of him without thinking of the disgrace, and anguish, and mortification he has caused them. I know of nothing that reads to fathers a louder temperance lecture than this.

That in the highest and noblest sense he did what his hand found to do, I have no right to affirm or deny. We leave that to Him that judges righteously.

The following is an extract from the funeral sermon at Cincinnati:—

“Erastus Poor for thirty years has been known in this community as a man remarkable for his fair dealing, his uprightness, and honor, and integrity in his business transactions, and his unflinching fidelity as a friend. His efficient services in the schools of our city, are worthy of the highest praise. He has served long and faithfully in the Board of Trustees, and long will be remembered by those children who have been cheered on by him. It was his ambition to make the schools of Cincinnati equal to those of Boston. The New England part of the community must do this. To do this, they must overcome a mass of dead indifference and living opposition, of which we have scarcely a conception. They have succeeded.”

NOTE. Erastus Poor, son of Noah Poor (b. Pembroke, N. H., 29 August, 1771; d. Cincinnati, O., 28 May, 1851) and Clemency Clark, his wife, (b. Lebanon, Conn., 17 July, 1771; d. Cincinnati, O., 16 January, 1836,) was born in Peacham, Vt., 25 Sept., 1796. He went to the West in the Spring of 1817, and three or four years later fixed his residence permanently in Cincinnati, O. He engaged in mercantile pursuits, and at the time of his death stood at the head of the oldest mercantile house in Cincinnati. He was for several years one of the directors of the Franklin Bank, Cincinnati, and for ten years previous to his death a trustee and visitor of common schools. He died in New Orleans, of cholera, 23 January, 1850. T. S. P.

SERMON XI.

AT THE FUNERAL OF DR. G. W. COBB.

The beloved physician. COLOSSIANS IV. 14.

EVERY man is bound to serve his generation according to the will of God, and so far as in him lies to increase the common stock of comfort and enjoyment. There is a place for all, and the service of all is required. But all have not the same place, nor is the same service required of all. "Every man in his own order," and according to the means which Providence has put in his hands. He is to secure to himself the means of comfort, and promote his own enjoyment by serving his generation. And serve them in some way he must, even though he does not mean so, or his heart think so, as he cannot entirely separate his interests from theirs if he would. Providence has so arranged it that no man can effectually benefit himself without also benefitting others. The drone or the loafer, the mere hanger-on upon society, is as real a burden to himself as he is to other people; often more so, as they can sometimes escape him or shake him off. But how shall he ever escape or shake off himself? That a man may serve his generation, and secure to them and to himself the ends of that service, an occupation of some kind is necessary; and choosing a profession, a trade, or occupation, is just choosing the way in which we will serve our generation. And while we serve them, are we served of them. For it is not necessarily a one-sided matter. It is service bestowed and received, so that there is, or at any

rate may be, an equality. And such is the fact, as far as society approaches any just model,—all serving, all served. The shortness of life does not admit that any one man should know all that even his own necessities require should be known, or do and do well all that even his own necessities require should be done. If society advances beyond its rudest state, there is of necessity a variety of occupations and a division of labor—and the division is more minute as society advances. This no doubt may be carried to a ludicrous and ruinous extreme. But the fact that it is capable of this abuse is no valid objection to the thing itself. No one man can be a lawyer, and physician, and preacher, and farmer, and mechanic, in such a way as best to answer his own ends and serve his generation. It is far better for him, as well as for them, that he should make some one of them his prominent business, while his knowledge of the rest should be as extensive and particular as may be. Among these various ways of serving his generation he has a choice, and makes his selection. And he owes it to himself and to them to make it his prominent business. By doing so, he serves them and himself in the most effectual manner. Some of these occupations have existed under every form of society, and some have arisen from the necessities of civilization. In barbarous countries the mechanics are few, and of the rudest sort. In despotic governments there are no lawyers, simply because there are no laws, or courts, or trials,—nothing but vengeance, or summary justice, which may or may not be justice, as it happens. But in all countries and in all ages there have been physicians. The necessity for them lies in the very nature of man—diseased and dying, with remedies scattered abroad to alleviate pain and cure disease, and for a season ward off death. And by the application of these remedies, an im-

mense amount of misery has been removed or prevented. These remedies were to be discovered, and tested, and applied. The whole business originally was a matter of experiment. The keenest observer was the best physician, since he improved his knowledge and skill by every trial, and learned from failure as well as from success.

One of Paul's companions in travel was a physician,—the beloved physician, who sent in this letter his characteristic salutation to the brethren. "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." I propose on this occasion to consider the characteristics of a physician who is entitled to be beloved, and who, in all ordinary cases, certainly will secure affection. This subject is suggested by the melancholy event which has brought us together.

I. The beloved physician UNDERSTANDS HIS PROFESSION. He does not assume an office or enter upon a business ignorant of its duties and responsibilities, or expect to acquire knowledge by instinct. A man may be born a poet, but no man is born a physician. He may have an aptitude for that calling rather than others, but a knowledge to perform its duties is of no easy attainment. It requires close and accurate observation, and much and diligent study of the observations of others. The human system—a system "fearfully and wonderfully made,"—he must know in all its parts,—their dependence upon and connection with each other, and how these parts combine to make a whole. He must know what it is in its healthy state, and the various stages and kinds of disease. And in this age he has no right to acquire this knowledge by practice and personal experience. With less trouble to himself and no pain to others, it may be gained from the recorded observations and practice of those who have gone before him. His first

business is *steady* study,—nor should study ever be laid aside. But with a knowledge of the human system and its diseases, must be combined a knowledge of the various remedies. These remedies were known originally by experiment. They are not matters of experiment now, but for the most part matters of fact—and to be learned for the most part like other matters of fact, from the testimony and experiments of others. A physician without study is unfit for his business—little else than a wholesale murderer. He may cure by accident, but never by design. Nor should his study be confined to the physical part of man. There is an influence of mind upon body in producing or curing disease. And to perform his work he must understand that influence in its nature and extent, as the same medicine does not produce the same effect in different states of mind. But with all his knowledge he is sometimes at his wit's end. Diseases, new, or assuming a new form under an old name, sometimes present themselves. He has seen nothing exactly like them in his practice—he finds no account of them in his books. And with observations from day to day, and remarking the various symptoms, he is still in doubt about the nature of the disease. What is really the matter he does not know, and of course does not know what remedy to apply, or whether any. In cases of this kind he is entitled to all the facilities which the public or the relatives can furnish. The patient dies. And surely measures should be taken that another may not die in the same way, through a similar unacquaintance with the disease. The dead cannot be injured, nor should the feelings of the relatives or the public revolt at the examination of the dead. It is not indeed desirable to any, on its own account,—to the physician any more than to others—nor should it be indulged in merely to gratify an idle curiosity.

But when knowledge may be gained that will enable the physician to meet another case, and alleviate pain or save from death, there can be no valid objection. Humanity urges the examination, and very properly, for the dread of desecrating the deserted tabernacle should give way to a desire of preserving the inhabited. I mention this, because the physician is sometimes denied the means of acquiring that knowledge which the necessities of the living require of him. A physician, to be entitled to respect and affection, must understand his business, and while his knowledge will be matured and enlarged by observation and practice, he has no right to tamper with the health, and comfort, and lives of his fellow-men by ignorant practice, or to experiment in cases that long experience has settled. He has no right to go forth in his ignorance, with the hope of learning to practice by practicing.

II. The beloved physician has a SOUND JUDGMENT IN HIS PROFESSION. No business or profession can dispense with this. But it is more indispensable in some than in others. There is no stereotyped method of curing diseases, or healing patients, and books cannot give directions to meet every case. There is no royal road to successful practice. Disease varies with season and climate—with the constitution, temperament, habits, and age of the patient. It may pass under the same name, and have the same general features. But it so varies as to require a treatment in some respects peculiar, in almost every severe case, and sound judgment alone can meet these peculiarities. And there is a constant appeal to his judgment when the decision must necessarily be rapid and fixed. There is often no time for hesitation and delay. What he does, must be done quickly; and a mistake, or error in judgment, is fatal. And even when there is time, and the necessity is

not pressing, almost every thing depends upon his judgment and his power to distinguish between things that resemble each other, or to see resemblance between things that differ. No doubt this power increases by exercise, and he learns to decide more rapidly and more justly as his practice extends. But there must be a sound and balanced mind at the outset, as no practice can increase what has no beginning, or build without a foundation. And this sound judgment is a different matter from what is called talent, and knowledge, as men are deficient in this, often, who are by no means destitute of talent or information. It is the power of applying talent and knowledge to use, and making them available to the purpose in hand. What benefit is talent or knowledge without sound judgment to bring them to meet the exigencies of the case? The physician must have the power to discern readily, and decide rapidly and surely, that he may act promptly and efficiently. Without this he can never be entitled to respect and confidence in his calling, let his talents and knowledge be what they may.

III. The beloved physician RESPECTS HIMSELF AND HIS CALLING. No man can succeed, or ought to succeed in a business that he is ashamed of. No man can succeed, either, who does not respect himself—whose diffidence and modesty are such as to be continually asking pardon of the world for being in it. He makes indeed no great pretension, but there is a sober, settled estimate of himself, in comparison with his fellow men. He is not willing to sink beneath them, or in his own bosom admit that he is beneath them—and he “gives place by subjection, no, not for an hour.” “I myself also am a man.” He makes no claim, by a domineering spirit, to be more—he is not willing by shrinking and subjection to admit himself to be

less. His knowledge in his own vocation ought to be more than that of the mass, and is no ground for peculiar pride and self-satisfaction; his knowledge may be less than that of the fathers in the profession, and that is no cause for peculiar humility and self-distrust. It is no encroachment upon his self-respect to ask and receive counsel of them. "I am young and ye are old." "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." As he respects himself, so he respects his calling. He is above the low arts of quackery, and the appeals to prejudice and passion, by which feeble, and vulgar, and ignorant minds seek notoriety. He leaves them to their own element. An honorable profession is really disgraced by dishonorable acts. The popularity that springs up in a night and perishes in a night, suits not his principles nor his purposes. He has been behind the scenes, and knows the real value of nostrums, and panaceas, and elixirs, and balsams, and heal-alls, and cure-alls—one medicine for every disease—and gives them no countenance, though pocket interest may prompt.

His patients may love to be deceived, but he cannot disgrace himself or his calling by being accessory to the deception. The temporary popularity of quacks and empirics is no doubt often vexatious, and, when the blind lead the blind, his spirit is stirred within him in mingled compassion and indignation, as he anticipates the fatal result. But as he has no power to prevent it, or force the right remedy upon the afflicted, he is content to wait till experience shall teach wisdom, and sense and reason shall revive. And they *will* revive. All delusion and deception is in its very nature temporary. It has its run and its day. But it springs from nothing, and to nothing must speedily return. He that understands his business, and, re-

specting himself and it, enters upon it with a sound judgment, is not destined to perpetual obscurity. He finds his level, and by those whose judgment is worth anything, is estimated at his real worth. For though men through mistake and false views are often deceived, and even love the deception, yet they have no interest in being deceived. The trial may be severe, but the very trial shows his worth. Let him abide his time, and he shall find his proper level. The beloved physician respects himself and his calling.

IV. The beloved physician RESPECTS THE FEELINGS OF HIS PATIENTS, AND HAS FEELING FOR THEM. His acquaintance with suffering does not destroy his compassion for suffering, or his sympathy with the sufferer. While he does and gives what is necessary, it is done and given in manifest kindness. He has a *heart* as well as knowledge and judgment, and all his intercourse with his patients shows it. There is, indeed, a sickly sensibility that would unfit him for his peculiar duties—a dread of giving pain that would withhold the appropriate remedy, or postpone or shrink from the necessary though painful operation. There is a sensibility that weeps when it should act—that unnerves when the firmest nerves are indispensable. He discards all this, as in its nature inconsistent with his calling. But this is a very different thing from utter insensibility and heartlessness. I can conceive of nothing more repulsive than this utter heartlessness. It is said the tendency of the profession is to this. Familiarity with suffering begets a disregard for suffering. The physician needs no heart, and finally has none. That this is true in some instances, may be admitted,—that he has no heart, and deals with his patients as if they had no more feeling than himself. But it is oftener imputed without just cause. Has a man no heart because he does not give way

to his feelings on all occasions? or because his feelings are schooled into subjection to reason, and the necessity of the case? Has a man no heart because he does not suffer mere feeling to interfere with imperative duty? Such feeling is superficial and temporary—of little use any where, as it vents itself in tears and expressions of pity, and is gone. It is like the “Be ye warmed, and be ye filled,” that still gives not that which is needful. But a physician, to be loved, must have a heart, and must show a heart. Without this his patients take him as they take his medicine—because they can’t help it—while they abhor both, as both are equally nauseous. And even while they know to some extent their obligations to his skill and judgment, their abhorrence for him is not at all diminished. A heartless being cannot be beloved. There is nothing for affection to take hold of, or cling to. He is on some accounts necessary, perhaps, even though he have no heart; but at the very best a necessary evil. But there is no necessity for heartlessness in his profession or round of duties. A kind and affectionate manner and spirit, and even expressions of sympathy and pity, are not lost. They are as really useful, and as really subserve his purpose, as skill and nerve. For without them he cannot be beloved, and is far less likely to succeed. So conscious are some of this, that they assume the virtue though they have it not. But with the mass, there no need of assuming. They have it—a heart to pity, as well as power and skill to apply the appropriate remedy. This is the great recommendation of the model physician—the physician of souls—that with power to relieve, he has also sympathy and heart to enter into the feelings of his patients, and there is kindness in his very severity. “For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are

tempted." He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." There is heart, as well as power and skill, with him. And while our necessities urge us to him, we are attracted by the very heartiness with which he enters into the feeling of our infirmities.

V. The beloved physician IS GOVERNED BY CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. He has a work to perform, and an account to render. His time, and knowledge, and skill, and affections, belong to God, and he recognizes God's claims. He is placed here to serve his generation according to the will of God. He does God service by labors to benefit his fellow men. The more knowledge, and skill, and judgment, and heart, he can bring into the service, the more efficiently he answers the great end of his existence, and God is glorified in him. He has no interests separate from the interests of his fellow men, and is, and expects to be, benefited by benefiting them. His religion is not a distinct and separate thing—a matter merely between his own soul and God—it enters into all the business of life. It writes the law of love—love to God, and love to man—upon his heart and mind. It purifies his feelings, directs his course, animates his exertions; and what he does he does heartily, as to God, and not merely to man. His labor is, in his calling to exemplify the Christian spirit by Christian action, and any of God's creatures to whom he can be of service is his neighbor. There is (and I rejoice to say it) a professional readiness to administer to the poor as well as to the rich, and to continue it, with no prospect of pecuniary reward; and the man who from mere pecuniary considerations should refuse to the poor his service, would lose caste with his profession. There is also a joy in success, separate from all thought of personal reputation, or pecuniary profit. The sick restored by

his means is a matter of joy in itself. It is an amiable feeling, and one that we rejoice to recognize, perhaps when we should not expect to find it. But there is a higher principle—a nobler feeling of joy still—a joy in God in dispensing blessing for his sake, and looking for his approbation, and in a measure imitating the Great Physician. The beloved physician is a Christian, not in word or in tongue merely, but in deed and in truth. He identifies himself with the kingdom of God, and is at home with the citizens of that kingdom. There is something beyond this world to care for and to provide for,—a life beyond death,—a happiness perfect, complete, and eternal, of which he partakes as he serves his generation according to the will of God.

Finally, the beloved physician IS NOT A MERE PHYSICIAN. His mind is not so engrossed by what is professional as to neglect or be indifferent to other interests. He is a man, and a neighbor, and a citizen,—belongs to a school district and religious society—perhaps a husband and a father. Human nature is not one mass of disease for him to cure, nor is the world all medicine to cure it with. One business is prominent, but not alone. There is nothing solitary in his affections or his interests. All the institutions he sustains claim an interest in his attention and thought. As an educated man, much is due to society from him aside from his profession. Every effort at improvement of any kind looks to him for countenance and encouragement. Every thing that can promote real peace and enjoyment, or in any way diminish sin, and ignorance, and misery, finds in him an advocate.

Is it strange that he should be beloved? or that his departure should bring tears to many eyes, and leave a vacancy in many hearts? Such a man no society can afford to lose. The

loss is a public calamity. And yet death strikes down such, as well as others, and often when to our imperfect view they seem most needed,—when their sun has not yet reached its meridian, and years of business, and success, and usefulness were before them. They have hardly obtained the requisite qualifications, and established themselves in useful business, before they are transferred to another sphere. What was in their heart to do, time has not been allowed them to accomplish. But it was well that it was in their hearts.

The beloved physician *understands his profession—has discretion and judgment to apply his knowledge to practice—respects himself and his calling—respects the feelings of his patients, and has feeling for them—has a HEART as well as intellect and skill—feels the existence and control of Christian principles—and withal is more than a mere physician.* Such was the beloved physician whose death we mourn—a death early, and, to us, untimely. All who employed him felt confidence in his skill and judgment, and were attracted to him by the very heartiness with which he entered into their case. He *could* do what became him, and he *would* do what he could. He grudged no personal sacrifice, to accomplish the object of his calling. His anxiety in difficult and doubtful cases was, without question, often excessive—such as wore him out without any corresponding benefit to them—and an unfavorable result produced disappointment and depression. A more complete control over his own feelings—a more nice and exact measurement of his exertions by his ability to bear—might have spared him longer. Had he dismissed the care of his patients when he left their presence, it had been far easier for him—perhaps equally well for them. But he was not the man to do this. There is, no doubt, a happy medium (which,

after all, is difficult to find) between an excessive anxiety about results, and a cool, deliberate want of feeling, which takes quietly, if not carelessly, the death of patients.

Between these extremes in a physician, no man would hesitate for a moment which to choose. Give us the man who has a heart, even though it beat sometimes too violently. It was this very whole-heartedness, which as much as any thing else—more than any thing else—commended him to every class of community. As a man, we expected his help in every useful enterprise—every thing to improve the state of society, the manners, or morals, or minds. He was a firm supporter and unflinching advocate of temperance, a hater of oppression in all its forms, and especially of that legal system of abominations that dooms a whole race to hopeless servitude. Nor was he so taken up with this, as to overlook cases of petty tyranny, or what he deemed such, nearer home. He felt strongly, and spoke as he felt, in strong language. Any thing that looked like an attempt to oppress or crush—any special display of calculating heartlessness met his decided and indignant reprobation,—a high-minded, honorable man. He had a heart, and no sympathy with those who had none.

His relation as a subordinate agent to the Supreme Being, occupied his thoughts and attention for many years. The subject of religion was to him one of deep interest, as something befitting man, and necessary to make the man complete, and many of its requirements were regarded externally long before he had experience of its power. Before he thought himself a Christian, or made profession of religion, God was acknowledged in his family. It was a service due from him, in the relation he sustained to the God of the families of the whole earth,—right, in itself. The Bible was studied, not to support

preconceived ideas, but to know the will of God. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" A system that dispenses with religion, and yet ensures safety, did not meet the revelation of God, or the necessities of man. Whether all were safe or not, religion was a reality, and man must feel its power, and the sooner the better. He was not disposed to argue upon the subject, as he was conscious of the futility of mere argument in such a case, nor condemn as utterly wrong those who advocated what he deemed a wrong system. But the system did not meet his necessities—he felt sure that it would not meet the necessities of man any where. For it was not so much a religion as a substitute for religion—a substitute that in the most important points failed to answer the purpose. Whether it might consist with piety or not, it was not piety. It quieted the fears without calming the conscience, or bringing the heart into union with the Savior, or harmony with God.

In May, 1843, he became a member of this church, and has always shown a deep interest in its increase and prosperity. His feelings have been variable, and especially since his sickness commenced in earnest. The disease itself gave great scope for hope and despondency, for excitement and depression, and in connection with the medicine has often painted before his mind an unreal state of things. For near a year past he has been manifestly—(not what he was)—subject to strong nervous excitement, and a kind of derangement, and consequent miscalculation of his strength, and of the power which disease had over him, and sometimes a miscalculation of the intentions and feelings of others towards him. And he deemed at times fully aware of this.

It was natural, and within bounds, right, that he should desire to recover, and accomplish a great work on earth. The

most of his life so far, even as to this world, had been but a preparation, and with continued life and health, he might have served his generation and secured to them and himself the results of that service more and more.

When the voice of Providence seemed to say to him, as to Hezekiah, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live," he received it like Hezekiah—with prayers and tears—and yet commenced the work of setting in order. He said to me,—“I have prayed, ‘If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’” His confidence in the Savior was firm—“I depend upon Christ. He is all in all.” His excitement was always quieted by prayer and religious conversation. He rests from his labors, and we trust, rests in peace.

“This *earth* is afflicted no more
 With sickness, or shaken with pain;
 The war with the members is o'er,
 And never shall vex him again.”

It remains for us to learn, both from his virtues and from his defects. And let no man who has no trial, bless himself that he is free from such defects. The inquiry is not, whether there be chaff,—there is more or less with all,—but, is there any wheat? And, “what is the chaff to the wheat?” We have lost what we can ill afford to lose—an affectionate, high-minded, intelligent, Christian physician, in the prime of life, and in the midst of usefulness.

NOTE. Gardner Wheeler Cobb, son of Elkanah Cobb, was born 22 Jan., 1816. He read medicine with Geo. C. Wheeler, M. D., of St. Johnsbury; attended lectures at Dartmouth College and there received the degree of M. D. in 1840; practiced medicine in Peacham from 1840 till his death, 15 September, 1847.

T. S. P.

SERMON XII.

AT THE FUNERAL OF JONATHAN MARSH.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. REVELATION i. 18.

MEN may well tremble at the presence of God. A clear view of him has always excited apprehension. He is the great and terrible God. When he appeared to the patriarchs, the first emotion, even of their minds, was fear. Their fears were stronger than their hopes. His dread fell on them, and his excellency made them afraid. His glory was overwhelming to their meanness and insignificance, and they sank under it. They were prepared to receive his messages of mercy only after their fears were quieted, and their hearts assured.

It was so with the prophets. What a sinking with Isaiah when he beheld the glory of the Lord. "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." So of Habakkuk.* "My belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself." Peter sank down before the glory, even veiled in mortal flesh, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The beloved disciple beheld the glory of the Savior, and was overwhelmed at the sight. "I saw one like unto the Son of man." And yet how unlike the poor, forsaken, persecuted, crucified Master whom he had known after the flesh. He had associated with the man of sorrows, and all his most interesting recollections were of him in this form—in

his state of humiliation. And now so exalted and glorious was he, the beloved disciple hardly knew him. "I saw one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot; and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in the furnace: and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." So changed, so exalted, that the disciple hardly knew him; and shall he be known of Christ? Will Christ in his exaltation and glory, remember the humble friends of his low estate? Fit companions of the man of sorrows, fit companions of him in the form of a servant, are they his fit companions now? In all externals they are the same, while a great change has passed over him. I fancy there was a feeling of joy with the beloved disciple, that his Master was so exalted, and of regret that he was exalted beyond his reach—taken out of his sphere—no longer a fit companion for him. He is exalted, and I rejoice at it; but his very exaltation has made an impassable gulf between us. I, whither shall I go? The feeling was overwhelming. "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not." There is no cause to fear. The heart of man is often changed by a change of circumstances, and he no longer remembers in his prosperity the humble friends of his low estate. But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." His heart is in the right place. His humble friends are never forgotten. He is exalted for them as well as for himself. "For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with

him : If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." " Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Jesus is not changed. " Fear not ; I am the first and last : I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death." This was to quiet the fears and reassure the heart of John. " It is I ; be not afraid." I am Jesus, the Savior, who have died, and been raised from the dead, and die no more. " For in that he died, he died unto sin once." " Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." But the atonement completed, his death would never be repeated. " Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him." On the contrary, he has become the conquerer of death, and received dominion over it. It goes and comes at his bidding. " I have the keys of hell and of death." The key is the emblem of power or authority. I have the key which opens the door of exit from life—the door of entrance to the invisible world. It is his to remove the living, as it is his to raise the dead. He " openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth." He opens the gates of death when he pleases—the gates of the eternal world, of happiness or misery—is the disposer of all events, and the Judge of all, from whose sentence there is no appeal. It is as though this and the unseen world—parts of the same kingdom, and under the authority of the same king—were separated only by a very thin partition,

in which is a gate or door through which all must go in their passage from time to eternity. This door or gate is locked, and Christ has the key. "I have the keys of hell (i. e. of the unseen world) and of death." This was to quiet the fears, and encourage the heart of the disciple. The power was with the Savior—all power in heaven and on earth. Nor was this for his sake alone, but for ours also. The instruction it gives is of deep interest to us all. Let us turn our attention to some important considerations.

I. IT IS A GREAT THING TO DIE. Things are often presented to us in a false light—little things magnified, and great ones diminished. Death, as well as life, has its importance with all. Nature shrinks from it. It is an event of uncommon importance. The Son of God, the Redeemer of men, presides over death. He has the key of death. He signalizes himself by this fact. And is death a trifle, if he is magnified by presiding over it? We sometimes speak lightly of it, and it fails to make an impression of its deep importance. "Such an one is dead." It is a matter of course, or a matter of wonder, as it had, or had not been anticipated. But the deep and awful import of our words is not felt. Yet, when we consider the thing in itself, we feel that it is a great thing to die. A reasonable soul has changed states. An intelligent being has gone out of the world. A state of probation has closed. A never-dying soul has gone to bliss or woe. How important is life! And how careful a guard has God set over it! God reserves it to himself as his peculiar prerogative to dispose of it. "I kill, and I make alive"—"the God of the spirits of all flesh." He is not merely the Father of spirits, whose dwelling is not in flesh, but also the God of the spirits of all flesh. The Father of angels, and no less our Father. It is a

great thing to die, as our life and every breath we draw is under his direction. "If he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust."

II. DEATH NEVER COMES AT RANDOM. It is not an accident or casualty, but an act of divine determination in reference to every case. For as the key signifies authority and power, the turning of this key of death is an authoritative act. The key is in the hand of the Savior, and it is used with determination and judgment. He opens the gate from life to death—from this to the unseen world. And none but he can do it. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?" He "hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation,"—bounds which they cannot pass. Our days are numbered and measured. What is called accident or casualty is only in reference to us, and shows our ignorance of futurity. But it has no reference to him. To his all-comprehending mind there can be no accident. For those who live as though they thought they came into the world by chance, it is natural to think that they shall die and go out of it by chance. "Without God" in the commencement of their being, they are, consistently, without him in its close. They are atheists, not heathen. The very heathen will rise up in judgment against those who would take the key that opens the gate of death from the hands of the Savior and give it to accident,—would degrade the Savior and enthrone chance,—for the heathen had no such doctrine as made the beginning and end of life a chance.

The Savior measures our time on earth, and at his will we go hence. He employs various means and instruments, but they are all under his control, and work his will. Then by

whatever means, or at whatever time, we die not at random. Death, though accident with us, is design with Him. It is his act, according to the counsel of his own will. What a thought—that the Savior is constantly concerned in measuring out our life! That it is he who weakens our strength, and cuts short the thread of life, in what seems to us the midst of our days!

III. OUR LIFE ON EARTH IS UNDER THE CONSTANT NOTICE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. He has the key of death, and waits and watches for the time to turn the key and close life. Through the whole of that time which he measures out to us, we are under his eye—in a state of probation. He takes constant notice of what we do, and of what we neglect. For as his turning the key at last is a judicial act, it supposes a close and accurate inspection, and proceeds upon it. Of him who had the key it is said, also, that “his eyes were as a flame of fire.” With these eyes he sees all that is done—they pierce through every disguise—the darkness and the light are both alike to them. “There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.” He observes all that is done—not the outward appearance, merely, but the heart. Did careless sinners consider this—that he beholds them with eyes like a flaming fire, and with the key in his hand—would they dare still to trifle? He beholds their bold adventures, or insolent attempts—their drowsy slumbers, or lingering delays. He beholds the effect of every sermon, the spirit under every prayer, the influence of all his providences. Oh! did they consider this, their fears would be awakened, and their minds excited to agony, lest the key should be turned before their great work was accomplished.

Our life is under the constant inspection of our Lord Jesus Christ. “I search the heart, I try the reins, even to give

every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." As he knows us, "our down-sitting and up-rising; and understands our thoughts afar off;" so he knows our temptations, and dangers, and enemies, and can protect us to the utmost. How easy for him who has the lives of all in his hand, to disappoint the devices of the crafty, and carry their counsel headlong. The key is turned, and they removed; all their plans are broken up, and their thoughts perish. If those who trust in him are left to suffer, it is not from inadvertency, or indifference, or impotence; but from design. They are chastened for their profit. They suffer in the flesh, that they should not be condemned with the world. Or if the wicked triumph for a time, their triumph does not take him unawares. He waits his time. "For he seeth that their day is coming." He turns his key, how and when he will.

IV. HIS POWER IN DEATH CANNOT BE RESISTED. "There is no *man* that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it." It is in vain to struggle when Christ turns the key. The power of the keys, lodged with him, is absolutely decisive, and the effects permanent. That soul for whose departure the key is turned must go, willing or unwilling, ready or not ready. It may be engaged in the most delightful employment. Cheered by the brightest hopes, it may look forward to the future with high anticipations of joy. "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." "I will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain." It must go—leave all and go. Those who would not leave all through love for Christ, *must* now leave all at his command. The turning of the key is

definite, and ends the business. There is no power to resist or withstand. Christ's invitations may be slighted, and his gospel in its saving influence resisted. The heart hardened in sin may withstand the claims of eternal mercy ; but his power that takes away the life he gave, no man can resist. In his hands are the keys of death. How easy for him to stop the breath, and recall the spirit he gave !

V. SOULS UPON WHOM THIS KEY IS TURNED, THOUGH SEPARATED FROM THIS WORLD, DO NOT CEASE TO BE. Dead, they still live—not metaphysically, or figuratively, but really and truly. Although in the grave, they are not lost in oblivion. Removed from earth, they still exist with all the powers and faculties of an immortal nature. They pass from the sight of their fellow men, and have no part in the things done on earth. Their mode of existence and sphere of operation are changed, but the vital power remains. This has been a common feeling with all men, always and everywhere ; and language is so framed as to express it. Death is a removal—a departure. It is a breathing out the spirit—a giving up the ghost—implying even in death a continued existence.

The same idea is presented, all through the Scriptures. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not ; for God took him." He ceased to be on earth, but still lived with God. Abraham gave up the ghost and was gathered to his people,—his body was not brought into the same grave with theirs, for they were buried hundreds of miles apart,—but his spirit was gathered to theirs—dead, yet alive. The living is gathered to the company of the living. So Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same inheritance, did not cease to be when their voices were no more heard, nor their footsteps seen on earth. God was still their God—out of the flesh as well as in the

flesh. "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." They see with these eyes no more, and no more hear with these ears; but still see, and hear, and understand. It is a mystery to us how the mind can hold intercourse with the external world by means of the senses. It is no more mysterious that the intercourse should be continued without them, or by other means of which we have now no apprehension. Souls departing from earth do not cease to be. The key that opens the door for their departure from earth, opens the door of admission to another world.

VI. THE INVISIBLE WORLD IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SAVIOR. He has the same unlimited authority there as here. There and here are only different provinces of the same kingdom. How glorious his power and grace, and how complete his dominion! "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." He has opened the celestial world to our view, that it may be open also to our safe entrance and blissful habitation. He has presented it as it were afar off, that it may raise our hopes and attract our hearts. He who was dead, and lives, has entered heaven before us, and for us—as our forerunner—"the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." He has overcome him who had the power of death, and joined the power of death to his own, and the region of death to his dominion. He has delivered "them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage." "He hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." He bids us lift up our eyes, and behold the heavens opened, and himself standing at the right hand of God.

He has opened hell as well as heaven to our view—the world

of misery as well as the world of blessedness—to warn as well as to allure—to excite us to flee from the wrath to come as well as to lay hold of eternal life. He is the Judge of the world, as well as the Savior. “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” It is his to punish those who know not God and obey not his gospel, as well as to save with an everlasting salvation those “who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them.”

As mediator he must deal equitably between the disagreeing parties. He must render back entire his violated rights to the ruler of the world, and obtain for us as entire his forfeited favor. This was his work, when as a sacrifice he was slain to redeem us to God by his blood—to give him back his revolted creatures, reconciled and restored—and to give *them* pardon, acceptance with God, and eternal blessedness. It was his to give this pardon and acceptance only as they “yield themselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” The invisible world as well as this is under his control. The power to reward and punish, as well as the power to save, is his. There is no mercy like the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no wrath like the wrath of the Lamb.

It is a great thing to die, and we die but once. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” We die not at random, but when Christ wills it. The key of death is in his hand, and he turns it when, and upon whom he will. We should live expecting death. How absurd to forget death, and think he has forgotten it too; when the key is in his hand for the very purpose of opening the door for our exit! How absurd to think that he will neglect his work and let us

live, because we neglect ours and make no preparation for death. No man, indeed, knoweth the day of his death. But though the time of death be uncertain, it cannot be remote from any. How short is the measure of life! And how vain to promise ourselves that which is in the power of another—to presume upon life's continuance, and thus provoke him in whose hand are the keys of death! How wise to accommodate ourselves to his pleasure—to live as though continually expecting to depart hence—"confessing that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth,"—not setting our affections on the world, but making all our arrangements to leave it—laying up treasures in heaven, and making ourselves ready to go there!

Nor need we sink or faint when our friends depart—least of all think it strange, "as though some strange thing happened." It may take us by surprise. It may come in ways, and by means, and at times that make it peculiarly distressing. But it is the result of infinite wisdom and goodness—the act of him who has the key of death. Through all means and instruments we see him—through lamentations and tears we hear his voice, saying, "Fear not; I am the first and last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace."

NOTE. Jonathan Marsh, son of Samuel White Marsh, (b. Haverhill, Mass., d. 4 Aug., 1841, æt. 76,) and Sally Brown, his wife, (d. 30 July, 1814, æt. 50,) was born in Danville, Vt., 24 March, 1798. After learning the shoemaker's trade in Haverhill, Mass., he resided in St. Johnsbury, Vt., three years; in Danville, seven years; in Peacham until his death, Monday, 25 June, 1849. During the last part of his life he was a farmer. He was a faithful, humble Christian. Mr. Merrill's remarks concerning his character were not written out with the sermon and cannot now be recovered.

T. S. P.

SERMON XIII.

ONE HABITUAL SIN RUINS THE SOUL.

When I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. 2 KINGS v. 18.

THESE are the words of Naaman the Syrian—a prayer, we may call it, offered under peculiar circumstances. There is about it a degree of frankness and sincerity, in themselves worthy of commendation. In making a covenant with God, he would have the conditions well understood. The promise went no farther than the intention to perform. So far I will go. As to any thing beyond that, I must be excused on account of my peculiar situation. But with God, peculiar situation is no excuse. His authority extends to all situations, and his laws are binding in all situations. No exceptions or reservations can be allowed.

This case is worthy of our attention, as a manifestation of the spirit of the carnal mind. Naaman had been cured of leprosy, and was strongly affected by this exhibition of the power of God. He was satisfied that none of the gods which he had worshipped could perform such a work, and determined at all hazards to renounce them. They should receive no more worship and sacrifice from him. “Behold, now I know there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. . . . Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto any other gods, but unto the Lord.” Now this was going a good way for a heathen,—making what we would be disposed to call a good beginning. And a good beginning

it was, if it had been carried out in all its length and breadth. But here was a failure—evidencing that the very foundation, good as it appeared, had not been properly laid. His master was an idolater, and he must attend him, not merely at court, but at the idol temple. Of course it would be expected that he would conform to the established usages. When his master bowed down to the idol, he must do so too. He must either conform or lose his place at court, and perhaps his head too. The temptation was very strong. He had not the heart to resist it. “The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.” He seemed conscious that it was wrong,—that there was no communion between God and idols. But then, without it, disgrace and suffering, and perhaps death, awaited him. Not having the spirit of a martyr, he was not willing to give up all, or to risk all in such a cause. He determined to conform, and in order to palliate his fault as much as possible, and cast the blame upon his circumstances, he smoothed the whole over with “The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. I am sorry it happened so. But, situated as I am, how can I help it?” A really pious man would have known how to help it. A determination, “it must not and shall not be done,” would have been formed in a moment. He would have said, “It is pleasant to hold a place among the honorable of the earth, but there is no necessity that I should hold that place at all hazards. It is pleasant to live, but there is no necessity that I should live at all hazards. But ‘necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me,’ if I obey not the voice of the Lord God.” Earthly distinction, and even life itself, when laid in the balance against the favor of God, are altogether lighter than vanity. There were many things favorable in the case of this man, but this one thing destroyed the whole. He could give up many things,

but he could not give up all. And for the same reason, thousands who go far in religious ways, come short of salvation. They will not give up enough. For one sin, persisted in, will destroy the soul. There is no necessity for going all the length of abomination ; let a man hold on to one sin, whatever it may be, and he is forever ruined. I am aware that this is contrary to the apprehensions of most men ; they have no idea of such thorough-going devotion to the service of God. Allowances are made for sin here, that God will not make hereafter. Indeed, the general apprehension seems to be, that if the conduct is upright in the main, and the great evils avoided, the Lord will pardon an indulgence in smaller matters. Most men would judge Naaman, with his simple reservation, a pretty good Christian. But the law does not so judge—nor shall we, if the truth have any place in us.

ONE SIN DELIBERATELY PERSISTED IN DESTROYS THE SOUL. From the *very nature* of *sin*, it must be so. What is sin? A departure from God—a passing over bounds which he has fixed—a cloud to hide the face of God. While a single sin is persisted in, the soul is away from God, and without the circle of blessedness. And there hangs the cloud to hide His face. Thus, in the very nature of the case, one sin must be ruinous. To save a soul that persists in a single sin, is as much impossible as to change the character and laws of God. We may as well suppose God to be different from what he is, as to suppose such a salvation. Sin, is going away from God ; and persisting in sin, is continuing away. Doing many things which God has required, does not destroy the distance. While the soul continues away from God it must be in a state of ruin and wretchedness. So that the hope of many, that some things may be neglected provided others are performed, is palpably

absurd. The cause of ruin must cease to act before the ruin can be repaired. And while one sin is persisted in, the cause remains.

From the very nature of religion, one sin persisted in destroys the soul. What is religion? It is the image of God enstamped on the soul—the soul renewed again in the image of him that created it. It is a grafting into the good olive tree. And the graft must first be separated entirely from the old stock. So that religion and persistence in a single sin are inconsistent. For whoever persists in a single sin, shows that he has not been cut off from the old stock. If he had been, he would not be nourished by that root. Sin would not have dominion over him. Persistence in one sin is as clear and convincing evidence that he has no part nor lot in the matter, as persistence in ten thousand. Religion is the law of God written in the heart,—not a mutilated copy of the law, but the whole, written in fair legible characters—a law contrary to all sin—making no allowance—forbidding one sin as well as another. Can he who has the law thus written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of God, persist in any species of iniquity? Can he say, “The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing,” while he determines to hold on to it? The very spirit of religion is to abstain from every appearance of evil. And if the Spirit of God dwell in him, he will not desire to abide in any iniquity. He will rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free, and have no wish to be again subjected to bondage. Taking the Lord Jehovah for his portion, he can willingly renounce every thing which would separate him from his portion. He will no more think of indulging sin of one kind than sin of all kinds. The same spirit which leads him to hate one, leads him to hate all. From the very nature of

religion, then, it is evident that one sin persisted in, must destroy the soul;—that the man who is unwilling to do or to give up what God requires of him, and remains so, is a lost man. Whatever he may be in other respects, alters not the case at all. The sin which he holds on to, will lead him to perdition. No matter what the sin may be, omission or commission, as long as he makes a reservation of that, and spares that, so long he remains uninterested in the great salvation. And if in that salvation he has hopes, they are the hopes of the hypocrite. What has he to do with hope, who deliberately withholds what God has required of him, and by withholding declares that he prizes it above the favor of God, and that he would rather lose heaven than lose it? What right had Naaman to hope, while he loved a place in an idolatrous court better than the favor of God, and was disposed to compromise between his duty to God and his present interest? He was ready to serve God only so far as his worldly prospects would admit. Can a man possessing such a spirit be a servant of God? Will God accept his person and look favorably upon his services, when the man regards himself first, and the best of all beings as only second?

The Bible goes upon the supposition that one sin persisted in will destroy the soul. Mark the language. “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness.” “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: *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,” excluding not merely the man who is guilty of two or three of these, but any man who persists in any one of them. Let him practice any one of them, and though he

avoid all the rest as he would perdition, he is ruined. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,"—he is a condemned worker of iniquity. So far from his obedience being an offset to his disobedience, it shall not even be mentioned. In his iniquity in which he lived, he shall die. The declarations of God aim at the utter extirpation of sin, and make no allowance for it in any shape. The man who lives in it shall perish by it. He may say, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing," but God hath said, "Mine eye shall not pity, and my hand shall not spare."

Again, *facts warrant the assertion* that one sin persisted in destroys the soul.

What ruined Balaam? There was a great appearance of piety about that man. Indeed, if circumstances were ever favorable to religion, his were. He was skilled in the knowledge of God above his fellows—favored with divine revelations—seeing the people of God in their peculiarities and numbers and blessedness—looking on to distant time and beholding a star rising out of Jacob and a sceptre out of Israel, the kingdom and glory and triumph of Jesus Christ. And he was strongly affected as any man would be by such a glorious prospect—conscientious, too, for the first message and temptation of Balak was rejected. And when he went, he went declaring, "the word that God putteth into my mouth, that shall I speak." Through all his prophesyings he adhered strictly to this rule. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord." Now here is knowledge, and conscience, and firmness. He has resisted the temptation, and come off conquerer and gone home. Had it ended here, who knows but this man might

have been saved? But he could not forget the silver and the gold. He had rejected them, but his heart went after covetousness. His eyes were dazzled and his thoughts are deep in meditation upon the silver and the gold. How shall he obtain them. He did not dare prophecy a direct lie in the name of the Lord. That was too barefaced. But he went about to accomplish the same thing in another way. He "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and to gain them he must assist Balak to ruin Israel. Counsel better fitted to effect that purpose was never given. It was followed; and sin, and wretchedness, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth spread over the camp of Israel. He had his reward. He was consulted as a lawyer, and for the sake of his fee gave this hellish counsel:—not that he had any particular spite against Israel, but he "loved the *wages* of unrighteousness." Every thing else about Balaam looks favorable. But for this single thing, he might, to all human appearance, have been saved. He was anxious to be rich, and was not particular about the means which he used to obtain his wealth. And this one sin persisted in, ruined him.

What ruined Jeroboam? In the division of Israel, ten tribes had fallen to him. But Jerusalem was the place of worship for the whole nation, and that was not in his dominions. If the people went up there to worship, they might kill him and return to Rehoboam. In this difficulty some expedient must be devised to keep them at home. And—"the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing,"—he was forced by the necessity of the case to set up calves at Bethel and at Dan. The Levites who were suspected of adhering to the line of David were expelled, and with them all religious instruction and almost all religion. Out of mere good policy, he made Israel to

sin and his own salvation hopeless. It was not that he had any more regard for idols than Naaman had. But to retain his station, he must bow down and make the people bow down. He had not learned to hope against hope, and to risk every thing in adhering to the God of Israel. To establish his throne he deserted the worship of God and cut himself off from the means of grace. Had it not been for this carnal policy, his throne might have been established in righteousness. But he felt safer in his own hands than in the hands of God. He would not risk any thing for the true religion. His own purposes and the religion of his fathers might come in competition, and—"the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing"—religion must give place. Shutting the door of hope upon himself, he perished, and why? Ambition ruined him. He was determined to reign at all hazards. The first place in his affections was occupied.

What ruined Herod? He had sins of every description and every enormity. How could perseverance in *one sin* ruin him? He persevered in every sin he was capable of committing. True. But every man has his lucid intervals. "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune," seasons of peculiar interest in their lives, and the sin which ends these seasons in ordinary cases is the sin which settles their destiny. Herod had at least one such season, when he came out from his corrupt course and stood as it were looking toward heaven—between a world of iniquity pressing hard upon him behind and a world of perdition rising up to receive him before. I say, even Herod looked unto himself and was astonished, and trembled, and "did many things, and heard John gladly." His life was reformed, and hopes were excited that even Herod might be saved. And had it not

been for adherence to a single sin, to all human appearance John might have baptized him. In the days of his blindness and unbridled iniquity, he had taken his brother Philip's wife. John knew that a partial reformation would answer no good purpose, and told him with the frankness of a man of God, "it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Herod had already gone far, but he was not prepared to go *that far*. If he could only have been pardoned in that thing and allowed to retain Herodias, there would have been no difficulty. But it could not be. It was not lawful. And all his other reformation availed nothing with God while he lived in this iniquity. The declaration of John came home to his feelings, brought the whole matter to a point. The sincerity of his former reformation, and his regard to God, were brought to the test. His enmity was enkindled. He commenced a quarrel with the truth, which ended in the beheading of John and the everlasting perdition of Herod. Perseverance in a single sin was apparently the cause of all. But for this, who knows but Herod might have been saved. He would abstain from other sins, and hear the word gladly, and do many other things, but this he would not give up. "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing," he said, and perished.

Behold that young man coming to the great teacher with the interesting inquiry, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" In his conduct and appearance there is everything to excite hope. See his engaging manners, his amiable disposition, his regard for the law, his anxiety to obtain eternal life. Perhaps human nature never presented a better specimen;—so engaging and amiable that Jesus loved him. "What shall I do?" The commandments of the second table are mentioned. "All these things have I kept from my

youth up." Ignorant of the spirituality and extent of the law, he no doubt spoke this in sincerity, not as boasting, but as what he supposed the literal truth. It was saying what few could say, even understanding the law as he understood it. "What lack I yet?" "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." Any thing else, but this is really too much. This amiable young man goes away sorrowful from him who has the words of eternal life. He could not find it in his heart to go that length. There was no other difficulty in the way,—if he could only have been pardoned in this thing. But it could not be. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Eternal life was set up for sale. He knew something of its value and bid high, but not high enough. He was not ready to sell all that he had to buy this pearl of great price. Who does not see that this single sin ruined him—as completely excluded him from heaven as though he had been the most abandoned wretch that ever walked the earth?

What ruined Judas? He had no particular spite against his master, nor did he betray him just for the sake of doing an abominable deed. But he wanted the money. He was covetous. This single sin has made his name a curse upon the earth, and clothed him with everlasting shame. If he could only have been pardoned in this thing. But covetousness is idolatry, and it cannot be.

Who has not read of Ananias and Sapphira, and their awful death? They kept back part of the price, praying, "The Lord pardon thy servants in this thing," and perished forever.

Thus facts abundantly prove that there is no need of joining iniquity to iniquity, but that a single sin persisted in destroys

the soul. Whoever prays, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing," deceives himself and mocks God. God requires the *whole* heart and respect unto *all* his commandments—a spirit of universal obedience. He is worthy of the highest place in our affections, and he demands it, and will accept no other. If we are not ready to take him as the supreme and only portion of our souls, and sacrifice every thing to him, we have no part with him. Naaman might have been saved, but he was fearful. He had not yet come to the full determination to worship Jehovah, and him only, in all situations and circumstances, and to give up all in attachment to him. He wanted the privilege of conforming to the world—not that he delighted in their conformity, but simply to save himself from trouble. Are there not descendants of Naaman in this congregation—those who, by adherence to a single sin, are likely to fail of eternal life? Let us make the application, and then judge ye.

God has said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,"—a command binding at home and abroad. At home I admit the authority of the command. I would as soon steal as be engaged in any secular business on that day. But when I am abroad on a journey, and in company with those that regard not the authority of God, and the Sabbath day comes—"The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing"—I must travel. I shall be left behind. I shall be laughed at. There is no decent place to stay. There is no meeting to attend. I am anxious to get home. I drive on, praying, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing," and the Sabbath is no Sabbath to me. I do not hold to violating the Sabbath any more than Naaman to worshiping idols, but how can I help it? When I am out on a journey and my company all violate the Sabbath, I must have the privilege of doing so too. I will keep the

Sabbath holy to God in all other circumstances, but "the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." Now, would not this exception destroy the whole?—a determined perseverance in this single sin, shut the gate of heaven? Supposing I do not come forward with the frankness of Naaman and make this exception in the very articles of agreement, but give myself wholly to the Lord, and yet take the privilege and determine to take it. Is this making the matter better or worse? Am I not in this violating my own solemn obligations as well as the command of God? Say not, this is a small matter. It may exclude you from the kingdom of heaven. For one sin persisted in destroys the soul.

Again, God has said, "Forsake not the assembling yourselves together." At some peculiar times it is delightful to obey this command. When a multitude are "with one accord in one place," I'll be there. But as to attending any place of worship regularly, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." I must consult my own convenience. I cannot and I will not be bound down to particular rules. The impressions made by one sermon are all eradicated long before another is heard, and a habit of neglecting the house of God is formed. Every time the people of God assemble for worship, a voice within says, Go thou with them and stand before God, and hear the words of eternal life. But I can't go to-day, and the next time it is the same. I know that by the foolishness of preaching God saves those that believe,—that faith comes by hearing. And I will do every thing but this one thing upon which, to all human appearance, my salvation depends. Any thing else. But "the Lord pardon thy servant in *this* thing." Yet, remember that one sin persisted in destroys the soul.

Again, I know that every house should be a house of prayer,

having its altar for morning and evening oblations. God has made me the head of a family, and I hope to be saved, and hope my family will be saved. I know that peculiar obligations rest upon me, and that, situated as I am, I cannot be saved or perish alone. I am willing to do many things for my household, to instruct them, to send them to the Sabbath School, to restrain them from evil—to encourage them in every good work. Will not all this suffice? Must I also pray with them? “The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.” I have no time. I have no capacity. I am ashamed to begin. I would willingly redouble my efforts in other things, but this I cannot do. I know it is my duty, and I do not feel easy while it is neglected. I have lain awake many a night thinking of it, and if I had only had ten talents instead of one, I should have commenced long ago. But now how can I? Know ye not that one sin persisted in destroys the soul? It is useless to say, “The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.” No excuse will be allowed. A little resolution, a determination to serve God in all things is demanded. If you have not resolution enough for that, you have not resolution enough to be saved. The fearful and faint-hearted are cast out with the unbelieving. Diligence in other things will not excuse neglect in this.

Again, I know that no man liveth to himself. Every man is affected and influenced by the conduct of his fellow men. Public opinion has an immense force. But public opinion is nothing more than the opinion of a great many individuals agreeing in the same thing, and the more numerous the company the greater the influence. Public opinion is forming against some particular desolating vices. But I am determined to live to myself. I will not help the cause. Why? They

strike too deep—attempt to effect too much. The cause is good. But I cannot aid it without making a sacrifice. I must give up some things that I consider at worst innocent and sometimes useful. Though I wish them success—"The Lord pardon thy servant in *this* thing"—I cannot join them. The result is, my influence all goes to the other side—refusing to join the good, I do in fact join the evil. And I am quoted in defence of that which almost the whole body of the pious are united in an attempt to put down. This certainly is a strange predicament for a Christian, and even for an honest man. It is a sin, even on my own principles—a sin which I fear will go far to the ruin of many souls. I know that "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure,"—that it is easier to keep ten men from becoming drunkards than to reform one. A society is formed, both as a cure and a preventive. Will I patronize it? No. For *I drink myself*, and it has never done me any hurt. But it has done hurt to thousands of others, and ought I not to assist in banishing it? No,—“pardon thy servant in this thing,”—I prefer my own gratification to the good of my fellow men. I would have the fashion of drinking continued, although I know it has slain its ten times ten thousand, that it has clothed the earth in mourning and peopled the world of woe, and has not a single redeeming quality. Is not this sin? Can a man stand aside and say, “The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing,” and be guiltless? Men may plead ignorance. And if they had no means of information, the plea might stand. But those who deliberately prefer the gratification of an appetite to the welfare of their fellow men, are in no way to be saved.

I might go on through the whole round of sins and show that the man who deliberately persists in any one cannot be

saved. He has within him the root of bitterness, and its fruit must be gall and wormwood. Take heed, then, "lest, a promise being left you of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." "For if ye do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." But if you use your iniquity to escape from the duties which God has imposed upon you, and say, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing," how can you stand? Iniquity may discover a thousand reasons for omitting what God has required, and doing what he has forbidden; but will these reasons stand in the judgment day?

SERMON XIV.

THANKSGIVING SERMON, 1847.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished. PROVERBS XXII. 3.

“There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.” His prosperity and enjoyment in this life, and forever, depend upon the use made of this spirit and understanding. He is made wiser than the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and a nobler destiny awaits him, if he use properly that higher wisdom. But if he suffers it to remain inactive, and judges merely by the sight of his eyes, and the hearing of his ears, he fails of all the great purposes of life, and makes a wreck of himself and of his dearest interests. On the contrary, using properly the wisdom he has, insures its increase as the exigency demands. Though without prophetic power, or infallibility, he is able to anticipate events—to foresee what will be, from what in similar circumstances has been; for man is the same, the laws of nature change not, the same God governs by the same principles, and the same causes produce the same results. Hence, he does not suffer events to come upon him unawares, and so unprovided for. Thus, a prudent man, by knowledge of cause and effect, foresees the evil in season to make arrangements to meet or escape it. Knowing by tokens almost infallible, he has all the advantages of certain knowledge. The coming storm, though no visible signs of it appear, warns him to seek shelter, and he is safely sheltered when it comes.

But the simple pass on in security. "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." They never think of a storm till it bursts upon them in all its fury. Feeling the pressure of no evil, they anticipate none; and, prospering for a season, they think they shall always prosper in the same way. The latent causes working evil they never seek after, and so never find; and they never inquire what will be the end. They are utterly astonished, as they are entirely unprepared when the evil comes. There is a true saying, and an important one, though it come from no very creditable source, and was used at first in no very creditable way. It is, "The better part of valor is discretion," or, as the wise man has it, "Wisdom is better than strength," and "better than weapons of war." "But the simple pass on and are punished," for they make no proper use of their understanding, and exercise no discretion.

The sentiment of the text is so important, that it is repeated word for word in the twelfth verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of this book of Proverbs,—repeated to make a deeper impression of the absolute necessity of prudence and discretion. These, more than any thing else,—more than all things else,—ensure prosperity and safety. Now, a man may be prudent and discreet in one thing and not in another; and he succeeds, or is safe, or hides himself, only in that in which he is prudent. He may be prudent in the management of his worldly affairs, and prosper in them accordingly, and yet have no prudence or discretion with regard to his eternal interests. He may be prudent in the affairs of others, and yet have no discretion about his own. This is by no means an uncommon case, for human nature runs in streaks. He is not universally prudent, who is prudent in some particular thing only; nor is he uni-

versally and wholly simple, who is simple only in some particular thing. Man is safe only in regard to those things in which he is prudent, since he does not hide himself from those evils which he has no prudence and discretion to foresee. No prudence but that which covers the whole ground of experience—a prudence to foresee and guard against *all* threatening evil—will avail *universally*. A limited prudence can never meet the necessity of an unlimited experience. It only guards that point which it is set to guard. He who is discreet in the management of his worldly affairs will prosper in them. If he fail to prosper there is a screw loose somewhere, and, commonly, it is not difficult to tell where. At any rate, the shrewd ones soon discover it and take advantage of it. As he who prospers in worldly things, because he gives his mind to them, and has prudence to direct to the appropriate means, may be the simplest of all simple ones in regard to heavenly things, with no prudence to foresee evil or good, and no discretion to avoid the one or secure the other; so he who has prudence to lay up treasures in heaven, may be far from wise in the management of his worldly affairs, and *as far* from success in their management. He avoids the evil and secures the good which his prudence foresees, and perhaps that is all he cares about, or feels any great interest in. The evils of poverty and privation he takes no pains to foresee or hide himself from. Perhaps he hopes to escape them without using the appropriate means—a hope which of course ends in disappointment. He fails where he is not prudent, but does not where he is. He has treasures in heaven, though none on earth. The great object of life is secured, but he fails of the minor objects which shrink into insignificance in comparison with that; yet in themselves they are not insignificant. He suffers loss, even though he is saved,

and he suffers it from want of prudence to foresee the evils of life, and so guard himself against them. He suffers privation and poverty, which with prudence might have been avoided. He suffers loss, from want of power to help others. He suffers loss, from being a receiver rather than a giver—the loss of that greater blessedness which comes upon the giver more than upon the receiver. He “hideth himself,” that is, is safe or prosperous only in that in which he is prudent.

I wish to make an application of the text not usual in ordinary Sabbath discourses—an application, however, properly within the scope and meaning of the text. I speak of prudence in the management of worldly affairs. And I know no reason why the subject should need an apology, unless it be that it is one which men of my vocation are not supposed to know much about. Whether this supposition be true, or if true, any credit to the ministry, I leave others to judge. The *manner* of treating it may perhaps demand an apology. We are capable of various emotions. There is a time for every thing, and every thing is beautiful in its season; hence the gravity that becomes the Sabbath may not be requisite on such an occasion as this. My apology for the mode of treating the subject, is found in the occasion. It is thanksgiving day, not Sunday.

I hardly need say that every man requires the comforts of life, and that in all ordinary cases they are to be had; and that the best state of society is where all have them, and are upon a kind of equality. A perfect equality is past hoping for. But something nearer equality than master and slave, or lord and serf, or even landlord and tenant, is exceedingly desirable. The best state of society is where every man is in a condition to show himself a man—where the earth is cut up in

small divisions, and each man has a house of his own. The laws of every community should favor this; and our laws do. But to favor it, is the extent of their capacity. No law can force it, or maintain it, in any other way than by putting every man, as far as possible, in a condition to take care of himself. And it can do this in no other way than by removing obstructions, and giving him a clear field. Then, under God, all depends upon himself—to sink or swim.

Where all are removed from a state of poverty, there can be no very great concentration of wealth. But it is the desire and hope of every one to escape the evils of destitution and dependence—to have something that he can call his own. Having it, he is more of a man among men, for it. The possession has an influence upon his own spirit—removes slavish and shrinking feelings, and enables him to show out what he is in a way that, oppressed with poverty, he could never have the face to do. You have perhaps heard of the English preacher who was accustomed to borrow a guinea every Saturday night, and return it Monday morning, on the ground that he could face his congregation better with money in his pocket. There are some preachers who would not be relieved by any such process; for they would be haunted continually by the reflection, “Alas, Master! for it was borrowed.” It is not enough to say that a man is better treated and more highly respected for being the owner of property; and that the world is mercenary, and knows no worth but money, and no value but cash value. This may be true, but it is not all. He is more of a man for it, and is able to show qualities of head and heart deserving of respect, that would otherwise be concealed. A man able to take care of himself is respected, because, with the consciousness of that ability, he respects himself. Standing upon an

even footing with his fellow men, there is no shrinking in their presence—no abject feeling of dependence upon them. But it is exceedingly difficult for a man who doubts this ability, to maintain self-respect. He is either servile, to show his submission to his fate; or is saucy, to show his independence; and neither of these are qualities that deserve or secure respect.

As every one desires something that he can call his own, so there is nothing necessarily wrong in this desire. It may be extreme, and out of proportion with matters of infinitely greater moment; it may seek gratification by unrighteous means; or it may occupy the whole mind and soul, as if this were the whole business of life. Then it is wrong; but it is not necessarily so in itself. Not long since I heard of a man who had come to the agreeable temperament of limiting his desires to his possessions. He had been a minister, and forsaken his calling, having discovered a more excellent way—one of the thousand and one ways open in these last times for reforming the world. On a visit at the house of an old acquaintance, he remarked that he had not any property, and that he did not want any. “And yet,” said the mistress of the family, “he liked a good dinner as well as any body I have seen lately; and if we had been like him, he could not have got it. Why is it not his business to collect the materials for it as well as ours?” And sure enough, why? Were all like him, the earth would be a desert, and its inhabitants, if inhabitants there could be, would want all things. Every sane man desires something that he can call his own, and he may have it, and it is the interest of all that he should have it. There is room for all, and enough for all, and a source from which industry and prudence may increase the comforts of life a thousand fold. But man does not have them, or having, keep them, as a mat-

ter of course. He does this only by using appropriate means. These means prudent forecast will discover far more readily than I can find language to describe. They are not such as imply either meanness or dishonesty.

The business of the world as a whole is exceedingly complicated, and every man's business is in some way connected with that of others. He cannot buy or sell, pay or receive a dollar without connecting himself with others. Yet, complicated as business is, there is method in this seeming madness; and, though the whole method may be beyond the reach of any one but a Rothschild, who makes the method, or controls it, every one may understand it sufficiently for his own purposes. It is the first dictate of prudence that every one should thus understand it.

Every man who desires to secure the comforts of life seeks a profitable business. But what is profitable at one time, is not necessarily so at another. There is no prudence, then, in always pursuing the same business in the same way. He must vary to suit times, and seasons, and circumstances; and he must prudently anticipate them, to some extent, or he is ruined before he is aware of danger. Just going on with his business, as he has done, and selling at the same prices, or holding on till he can, is the open road to ruin. Scarcely any thing but a miracle can prevent it. Illustrations of this are abundant. Within twenty years the price of almost all manufactured articles has fallen from one-half to three-fourths. No man can afford to make them now as he did then, simply because he cannot sell them now as then. Occupations that were then profitable, are now given up. The individual cannot compete with the corporation, nor mere bodily labor with machinery. He must do his business in another way, or, if he cannot adopt im-

provements, he must turn to some other employment. These changes have not been effected at once. Coming events cast their shadows before. The prudent saw in these shadows the coming events, and made arrangements accordingly, while the simple passed on at their old labor, in the old way, till poverty come upon him like an armed man in the shape of a sheriff or constable. The man has worked as hard as ever, perhaps harder, to bear up against the new state of things, but he might as well bear up against a railcar or an avalanche. He has not failed for want of industry or economy, but for want of prudence; and in his case, these without prudence are but a drop in the bucket. His object was to do a *living* business—not greedy, or making haste to be rich—and his sign stands like the solitary tavern sign on some hilly road, when a new, smooth and level path has taken the travel all another way. The figure on his sign should be, “Patience on a monument smiling at grief.”

A man seeks a profitable business, and almost every man can decide what is profitable at present. Then there must be prudent forecast to anticipate events, as much as in man lies, in order to justify the outlay in setting up his business. A good mill seat does not justify the building a mill, when the business of grinding or sawing is already overdone. If the mill has nothing to do, it might as well be on the top of a hill as on the finest stream. A man seeks a *profitable* business, or as the phrase is, to make money. Figuratively, every man is said to make money, who makes or does that which will bring money. Men make money by working in metals, or leather, or wood, or by the productions of the earth, by the labor of the hands, or the labor of the brains. He who attempts to make money directly is a counterfeiter; but he who makes it

by these indirect methods makes it legitimately, by increasing the comforts of life—benefitting others by benefitting himself. His own gain is in proportion to the price beyond the actual cost to himself. Of course, mere labor on his part is not sufficient. That which has no intelligence can, to some extent, perform the labor. But something more is required and justly expected of him. His labor must be applied to those things that suit the market, and whose market prices give him an equitable return.

But then, the market price is fluctuating. Prices change with plenty or scarcity of the article, and with plenty or scarcity of money. What is a good business this year, is an indifferent one, or a losing concern, next. But the first inquiry should be, to know the market price; and this in all ordinary cases is the fair price. “A thing is worth what it will fetch,” but no man has a right to falsify or present the thing as it is not, to make it *fetch*, i. e. sell for more. No body of men have a right to combine to raise or depress prices, that they may sell dearer or buy cheaper. The value of a thing is according to the demand for it. A man may show kindness and liberality by selling for less than he could get, and in some cases is under the strongest obligations to show that kindness and liberality. But these are required by no law except the law of kindness. He may fulfil them or not, as he shall answer to God. The market price is the fair price; and this, with the reservations already stated, is what it will sell for.

You have articles to sell, and an offer for them several per cent. below the market price; and knowing nothing of that price, you deem it a good bargain, and accept the offer. It is more than you expected, and more than the cost to you. You have come over him this time. By and by you learn that your neighbor has got the market price for the same kind of articles

—several per cent. more than you—and the purchaser whom you thought you had come over, you now abuse as a cheat. He has taken advantage of your ignorance—he ought to have told you. But what right had you to be ignorant in a matter that you deem so important? You might have taken a newspaper and known the market price as well as your neighbor; and thus have saved the price of a dozen newspapers. Whether the purchaser be justified or not, you have no ground of complaint. You have suffered loss through want of information, when the information was perfectly within reach. You have saved the price of a newspaper at the expense of ten times its cost; and what is more wonderful still, you will perhaps do the very same thing again.

But the market price,—what makes that? The demand. Upon what is the demand founded? Upon a real or supposed scarcity. The demand in foreign markets increases the price in our own. The famine and starvation in Europe has increased the price of provisions in this country by millions beyond what it otherwise would have been. And not only has it increased the price, but it has given a spur to production which must ultimately diminish the price, even though the same demand should continue. For to have the same price with the increased production, there must be a corresponding increased demand. Is it so? Is there any prospect of it? If not, the price of every thing of provision kind must come down; and the question, “Is there a prospect of increased demand in foreign countries for provisions from this country?” interests every man who has provisions to sell or buy. Prudence directs that the answer to this question should in some way be taken into the calculation. Through the length and breadth of the land, more provision has been raised this year

than in any preceding, stimulated by the extraordinary demand and price of last. Now, if there is only the same demand, it must be cheaper, as there is more of it. If the demand be less, it must be cheaper still. Every man is interested to examine the premises, form some kind of judgment of his own, and make his arrangements accordingly.

But there are other things in this connection, deserving of consideration. The scarcity abroad has sent their specie here by millions to purchase it. And it has also sent something else which is not specie, and, as it seems, not capable of being converted into it. It has sent drafts by millions, or bills of credit, drawn by those who have nothing to meet them on their return—those who were ruined by overtrading, or having nothing, lived upon mere credit. The bills drawn upon them are returned protested, and failure there prepares the way for failure here. Merchants who almost controlled the market of the world, are bankrupt; and so many of these are there as to excite an almost universal panic. And with the panic there is a prospect of a deeper, wider ruin. The extreme of suspicion naturally follows the extreme of confidence,—business overdone sinks for a time beneath its proper level. Now, with confidence shaken and business depressed, how can prices be kept up? especially when the test at home becomes as severe as it is beginning to be abroad. The specie brought in by an unnatural state of things, is already commencing its return to foreign countries; while millions of it are going to what may or may not be a foreign country, as the case may be.* But foreign or not, it is no more likely to return to meet every immediate exigency, than that which has crossed the ocean. With

* It will be remembered that the war between the United States and Mexico was in progress when this sermon was delivered.

this constant drain of specie, what is there to keep up prices? The remains of the last year's excitement, the excitement and expenses of the war, and bank issues. The credit of the government, as a safe debtor, is thrown in in various ways to prevent an immediate crash—of course anxious that the ruin should not come under this administration. The extraordinary expenses of government give activity to business; but these extraordinary expenses are merely the extraordinary flood of water from draining a pond; or the extravagant expenses of a spendthrift heir, that gives a spur to the whole neighborhood. Bank issues are large, almost beyond precedent, and of course money plenty. No man wants it to lie idle on his hands, and it circulates freely. With a free circulation of money, business is brisk and flourishing—every thing brings money.

As to the amount of bank issues, every one can form an opinion for himself. The privilege of guessing is guaranteed to a yankee, by common law if not by statute; and I guess there is more bank paper circulating in these United States, than there is specie in the whole world. But if all other things were favorable, there would not necessarily be any breaking of banks on that account. A bank is not, and is not designed to be, a pond, to which a whole community may rush and get water at once; but a spring, to meet the ordinary wants of individuals or families. Be patient—there is water enough. Enough for what? Enough for the whole community demanding a pailful this instant? A spring was not designed to meet any such case. No business man can at once meet all the demands against him, and no bank can at once meet all its bills with specie. It is not expected or required that they should keep on hand specie equal to their issues. It is enough to meet every demand as it comes; and this, like the spring,

gives assurance that all other demands can be met in the same way. If a rush is made upon them, they can only pay as they collect. As they collect, the circulation diminishes; the value of money is increased by its scarcity, and this will have the effect to diminish the price of every thing else. Now, is there any prospect of this? It is a matter for prudence to foresee and prepare for.

Will the banks dare to keep up the present circulation? It is of course for their interest to give out and keep out all the bills they safely can. But to do business long at all they must keep their own credit; and any issue of paper or delay of collection which endangers that, prudent men will not risk. Both their own interest and the interest of every one who has a dollar of their money, demand this as a first point, that they should not risk it. To delay collection when that delay endangers their credit, is to favor their debtors at the expense of community—a favor which they have no right to show. Their credit depends upon their ability to meet their issues; and that ability depends upon the solvency of merchants and traders, the success of trade at home and abroad, and more than all now, perhaps, upon the continuance of the extraordinary expenses of government. But trade has already met a check abroad, and that has had and must have still more influence at home. Bankrupt merchants abroad make bankrupt merchants at home. The time seems at hand when the ability to keep up present circulation must depend simply upon the extraordinary expenses of government. Nor will these extraordinary expenses long be a safe dependence, with trade depressed and merchants bankrupt. When these extraordinary expenses are reduced to the ordinary standard, there must be a crash, and should they continue long, a crash before that. The banks

whose so free issue makes money so plenty, and prices so high, and business so flourishing, will be obliged to diminish their circulation and call in their debts. Demands will be made upon them which they can meet only by demands upon their debtors. Every dollar they collect diminishes the circulation, increases the value of money, and diminishes the price of every thing else.

And the price will be diminished in other ways. The bank debtors have property enough at present prices to meet their liabilities three or four times over. At least, this is to be presumed, as corporations have usually pretty shrewd intellects, even though they have not much soul, and take special pains to secure themselves, as their own interest and that of community demand they should do. But their security, directly or indirectly, is property. The demand upon them is money, and to meet that demand this property must be converted into money. Farms, and produce, and merchandize, won't pay the debts, and they can't take them. They must be exchanged for money at sheriff's sale. And so much brought into market at once, must reduce the price of every thing of the kind.

Now, this is supposing the very best—that banks meet their liabilities and pay dollar for dollar on demand. But all experience shows that this is supposing too much. Can they all make calculations so as to meet the demands upon them? May not some have put their money away where they can't get it again; and so be obliged to stop, and their bills cease to circulate, or circulate at a hap-hazard discount, thus opening the way for all kinds of shaving and speculation? The country is not without experience upon this subject. What has been, may be. It is the interest of bank debtors that banks should break, as they can pay their debts, in this depreciated paper.

It is the interest of a few others—loafers, who sit loose upon society, and live upon contingencies. But it is a terrible calamity to the community—a calamity which honest and honorable men are bound by all possible means to prevent. And this in many cases has been prevented by the personal pledges of corporators of known wealth and character, beyond their legal liabilities. But that is neither here nor there. The signs of the times certainly foreshow broken banks and depreciated paper.* It cannot be delayed beyond the close of the war. It may and most likely will come much sooner, especially if that should be continued for years to come, as the prospect now is. When this time comes, specie will first of all be at a premium—to use a cant phrase of the bankers—which means, as I take it, that while bank bills are as good as specie, specie is several per cent. better than bank bills. It is a very poor and thin attempt at deception, for every one knows, or ought to know, that specie is the standard, and there is no premium about it. When specie is said to be at a premium, it is only an attempt to disguise the fact that the bills are at a discount; and the fact will very soon be ascertained. Commencing the downward progress, where will they find a stopping-place? From the amount of specie taken over the waters and to Mexico, what remains must soon be at a premium, and then—

But why wait till then? The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.” Believing that money will always be as plenty as now, and the same high prices continue, the simple pass on.

This is not a matter of mere speculation. It has practical bearings which interest every man, and for practical purposes

* Of course the author could not foresee the discovery of gold in California, and the vast influx of specie thereupon consequent.

the subject is now presented. Let us attend to about three of these, which will be sufficient for the present occasion.

1. IT IS A GOOD TIME TO PAY DEBTS. Business is flourishing, money plenty, prices high. It is a royal time to pay debts. When will there, when can there be a better? When can they be paid more readily or easily than in these good times? You intend to pay them, no doubt, and even if you do not, your creditors mean you shall. But they will not be guilty of so great an oversight as to enforce payment now, if they feel that the debt is secure, unless the money be wanted for immediate use in their business. But when times have changed, and money is scarce, and every kind of property is reduced in price,—just when it is of the most benefit to them, and of course the greatest sacrifice to you—then they want it, and must have it. Will you wait till then? Will you suffer the prudent to take advantage of your simplicity, and not rather with the same prudence meet them on equal ground? It is your prudence to pay dollars when you can get dollars the easiest—when every kind of property will command them; just as it would be your prudence, if you owed grain, to pay when you could get grain the easiest, and not wait till it has become of double price. It is a good time to pay debts, and the prudent will take advantage of it. “There is a tide in the affairs of men,” and it is high tide now. Let no man indulge the vague hope, or take for granted that it will be higher. Let him view the whole matter as a man of sober reason should, and if in his best judgment he is satisfied there must be a higher tide yet, why, then, so be it. Let him act accordingly. But don’t let him shut his eyes to the whole matter, and assume that it must be so, and act accordingly.

2. As it is a good time to pay debts, so IT IS OF SPECIAL IM-

PORTANCE FOR THOSE WHO ARE OUT OF DEBT TO KEEP OUT. And for the same reasons. It is going in debt when money is plenty, to be paid when money is scarce—when prices are high, to be paid when prices are low. Many a man has bought property at what was at the time a fair price, and paid half down; and in a few years given up the property for the other half, and made a good bargain at that. Thousands in this way lost every thing at the close of the last war. They presumed upon the continuance of war prices.

What is more common than going in debt when business is flush and prices high? It is just the easiest thing in the world—just a matter of course with a great portion of community. They buy when money is cheap and pay when money is dear, and are “all their life time subject to bondage.” So much is this the case, that it has become a common remark that good times and high prices are a curse to community. They lead to extravagant hopes, and extravagant expenditures, and deeper debt. The high prices of provision a few years ago, left the farming community in a worse condition than it found them. The change found them unprepared. They hoped for still better times. The provision perished on their hands; and the money—the bank bills issued so freely on the credit of insufficient deposits—perished on their hands. The present times forebode a convulsion to which that was child's play. We have no means to determine exactly when it shall break upon us, but in the mean time, pay up your debts, and keep out of debt. What John Randolph called the philosopher's stone, is really so in these times. Pay as you go. “A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished.”

The queen's chaplain reproved her for her profanity. She

thanked him for his frankness and faithfulness, and wished to be informed of other faults. "I will inform you of the rest," said he, "when I see what improvement you make of what I have already told you."

I might add thirdly, but first and secondly are sufficient. As the other is of no present pressing necessity, it may be reserved for some other occasion—the next thanksgiving, perhaps, should God spare our lives and permit us then to converse. At least, it may be reserved till it is seen what improvement is made upon first and secondly.

SERMON XV.

THANKSGIVING SERMON, 1848.

Thirdly, Brethren,

Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 2 THESSALONIANS iii. 10.

The Bible of course cannot mention every particular duty which devolves upon man ; least of all enumerate the various duties which arise to individuals from their various circumstances. “ There is a spirit in man ; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding,” and much must be left under the general direction of the Bible to that spirit and that understanding ; as to particulars, much must be left to every man’s judgment and conscience. But the directions are often much more specific than could have been expected ; and as little is left to inference as possible. The Author of the Bible knew the temper and spirit of man,—his readiness to evade or mistake his duty ; and he has taken pains to present it so clearly as to leave scarcely the possibility of mistake or evasion. To those beings who are perfectly disposed to obey, and whose hearts are right with him, a hint or intimation of his will may be sufficient. He knew that it was not sufficient for man. So he has not left his will on the most important subjects to be gathered by inference from a long course of reasoning.

The text is but one of many instances. That this should need to be said to a Christian church, at first sight may seem wonderful. The wonder, upon second thought, will cease ; for a church may be far from the perfection that is in Christ Jesus.

Its excellencies may only serve to make its defects more manifest, and so increase their influence and importance that their correction becomes indispensable. The direction in the text was not a new one, arising from the necessity of the case. It was given from the beginning as part and parcel of the Gospel which the apostle communicated. They are here only reminded of what he said when he was with them. Their state was such that they needed to be reminded of it. For there were some among them walking disorderly, "working not at all."

The subject is appropriate to this occasion. We turn aside to give thanks to God for his blessing upon labor, for crowning labor with rich success, that those who have worked may now eat—not of their penury, but of their abundance. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." Or as the Governor has it, "it is fit to give thanks unto the Lord . . . for the signal prosperity that has attended our labors in all the useful arts, and the various pursuits in which we have been engaged."

The text is based upon a just principle. Universal nature sustains it. It is founded upon those words of the Lord, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." There are some who do not work—who cannot work—who are sent to earth, or left on earth, to give scope to the kindly feelings of their fellow men, to teach us the frailty of our nature, and give examples of patient endurance. There are those who have worked, but can work no longer. "To will is present with them, but how to perform . . . they find not." Having accomplished their day, they are worthy of double honor. But if any man *will* not work, neither let him eat.

Work is required by a law from which there is no exemption.

I. OUR NECESSITIES DEMAND IT.

Some body must work, both to break down and to build, to pluck up and to plant. Whatever the earth was in its original, it now yields the noxious spontaneously, the useful only by cultivation. In this world there is no advance, without industry of some kind. All things are full of labor, and every thing valuable is the result of labor. Providence has furnished the raw material, but not wrought into shape to suit our necessities. Nothing is furnished ready to our hands. No possession, or benefit from possession, without labor. There are mountains covered with forest or stored with mineral wealth. But of what use is the forest or the mine, without labor? There are vast tracts of fertile land covered with timber and stone, or with thorns and briars, but of what use are they without labor? There is provision furnished for the beast of the field and the fowl of the air—all ready for them. Their very nature requires this, and they are treated according to their nature. "They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." We are not treated like them, as our nature differs from theirs. We are made wiser than the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and a necessity is laid upon us which is not upon them. By having a demand upon the powers which distinguish us from them, we are treated as higher beings.

Just imagine for a moment the condition of the human family, should all work cease. How soon would thorns and briars gain their ancient possession of the fields, and all that goes to support or comfort human life disappear. A degree of industry has been forced upon man by his very state and condition on earth. His natural indolence and dread of labor has been

overcome by a strong necessity. He is made to feel that he must do or die.

II. OUR BODILY CONSTITUTION FITS FOR WORK, AND REQUIRES IT.

There is in our bodily constitution a provision to meet the claims upon it. Any draft regularly drawn will be honored, as the strength rises with the necessity. A draft regularly drawn is a demand for a little, regularly increasing, and there is a regularly increasing bodily power to meet the demand. The strength is not destroyed by use, but renewed and increased; it is enlarged, not used up. The completest bodily development is the result of regular exertion. While strength is essential to work, work is equally essential to strength. To have more, you must use what you have. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." The power not used, gradually diminishes till it ceases to be. To give the body full health and vigor, or to keep up its strength, there must be regular employment. It runs down of course, unless there be an effort to keep it up. It dies out under the corroding influence of idleness. And as the powers and strength fail, so fails the appetite. He that won't work, by and by can't eat. One part can hardly perform its office while all others neglect theirs. All attempt to evade the commandment—and eat beyond the work, is an attempt to evade the very law of our being. Nature is sure to vindicate her laws, however man may not his. A distinguished British nobleman was lately found dead alone in a by-path. He had been invited to dinner, six miles from his residence. Convinced at last that to eat, there must be work of some kind; to prepare for the dinner he commenced his journey on foot.

But he had too often violated the law of his being, and death met him upon the way. His attempt to satisfy nature failed, for it was partial and came too late. Many eat and depend upon medicine to perform the part of work ;—most commonly upon quack medicines, which have sprung up and overspread the land like the flies or frogs of Egypt. They owe their existence to imposition on the one side, and gullibility on the other. The effect of medicine is often more fatal and rapid than the disease,—and at the very best, is only like borrowing at 3 or 4 *per cent.* a month to stave off bankruptcy ;—postponing the day a little, but rendering it more ruinous and deadly. Our bodily constitution requires work, and it never can exist in full vigor without it. It is feeble and puny, or loose and overgrown ; having no strength of muscle or firmness of nerve only as it is built, like a city, “compact together” by work. Every effort to evade work, is but a contrivance to ensnare and delude. For though men may set aside the ordinance of heaven, they can never save themselves from the results of violation.

III. OUR MINDS CANNOT BE QUIET WITHOUT WORK.

Our busiest seasons are our happiest seasons—the time filled up, and no vacant space upon our hands. The most depressing and disheartening of all feelings is listlessness—either having nothing to do, or no sufficient inducement to do anything. A consciousness of cumbering the ground, and an uneasiness of feeling, yet not enough to excite to active effort.

Without any thought, we might have the happiness of a brute ; with thoughts deep-stirred within us, we might have the happiness of an intelligent being. But hanging between, we have the miseries of both and the joys of neither. A happy couple in middle life had gathered a sufficiency of wealth

to satisfy their moderate ambition, and retired from business. They had no children, good or bad, to provide for—to disturb their quiet or cheer their hearts. They felt no interest in a single human being. After the comfort and quietness of their retirement had become familiar, and things outward were fixed to their mind, their strongest wish was to sleep more and think less ;—a wish that unhappily could not be gratified to the full extent, at any rate, not all at once. But the happy couple are continually approaching the object of their ambition—continually sleeping more and thinking less—not dead *quite*, but buried, and yet with hardly life enough to say, buried alive. How many envy such a state. Freed not only from labor, but from all necessity of thought or care. As though a man could be happy with nothing to think about and nothing to be interested in ;—in a waveless calm, a slumber of the dead.

Our minds cannot be quiet without labor of some kind—at any rate, not until they have ceased to manifest the distinguishing attributes of mind. The mind, as much as the body, demands work. Without employment, it sinks in darkness or spends its strength in preying on itself.

IV. THE EXAMPLE OF THE BEST OF OUR RACE ENCOURAGES WORK. They all found something to do, and they all had a will to do it,—not reluctantly, or half-heartedly, but with their might. They were laborers on earth,—their very religion made them diligent in business. They made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. They were faithful in little as a preparation that they might, and an evidence that they would, be faithful in much. They did not sleep away life in idleness, or dream it away in romantic fancies. There was a work to do, and their minds and bodies too were girded up to

the work. It was not pastime, but work such as brought on fatigue, and required rest preparatory to its renewal. Nor were they dispirited and down-hearted because the results of their work were not all for their own benefit. They found a pleasure in working for others. The Savior, while on earth, claimed no exemption from work. With him, want of occupation was not the sum of blessedness. Nor was his labor eye-service, or amusement. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day." There was no idea of degradation attached to work—nothing disgraceful in work. Nor did it trouble him that his station was not the most conspicuous, the most honorable, according to the view of men. "I am among you as he that serveth." I "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "He took upon him the form of a servant." The honor or disgrace with him was not in the station, but in performing or neglecting the proper duties of the station.

Nature and revelation point to the extremes to encourage work and shame idleness. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." Go to the Savior, O vain man, and learn that there is nothing degrading or disgraceful in work. "All things are full of labor." Shalt thou claim exemption, or go to it reluctantly, and complain of thy hard lot which makes it necessary? The very necessity for work is one of heaven's richest blessings to the earth—not merely a blessing itself, but the only effectual guarantee that any thing else shall be a blessing. "Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom, . . . fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness."

We sometimes complain of long winters and sterile soil, of abundant snows and rocks with scanty sunshine, and envy

those who have fallen upon a more productive soil and a milder climate. But the more there is furnished to the hand, the less the maturity and energy of personal character. "Necessity is the mother of invention," and by enlisting the mind it relieves the body of an over-pressure. The sterile soil and hard climate set the wits to work, and produce an astonishing facility and tact in business—a practical common-sense which every where commands respect. A minister at the West overtook a traveler who had broken his harness, and, being unable to repair it or get on without repair, and far from any house, he was at his wit's end. He had none of the forethought which fills a Yankee's pocket with tow strings; and was venting his feelings in language like this: "If I was a Yankee I should know how to fix this,—I wish I was a Yankee." The minister rode up, saying, "I am a Yankee. I will fix it for you." By means of his early training he had *common sense*, according to the definition which a farmer gave of the phrase. Some students had been puzzling him with their extras, and he in turn tried his upon them, setting them at a kind of work which practice had made perfectly easy to him. Having shown their ignorance and awkwardness to his amusement, he called on one, saying, "Let him try, he seems to have some *common sense* about it." One of the students whose common sense was thus virtually called in question, inquired of the farmer what he meant by common sense, no doubt feeling, "now I have you, sir." "I mean," says he, "the knack of doing a thing. Our hard climate and comparatively barren soil gives this 'knack of doing a thing.'"

But work, though so necessary,—required by both body and mind, and encouraged by the example of the best of our race, and of God in human nature, is condemned in various ways.

1. By *false notions of religion*. The idea that uselessness on earth is a fitting preparation for heaven, is by no means a new one. It was one of the early perversions of Christianity—perhaps the earliest practical one. The first Christians in multitudes were driven by persecution from society. They did not forsake the habitable parts of the earth and the business of the world voluntarily, but from necessity. “They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” There alone they could live in safety, and the mountains, and caves, and dens of the earth were sanctified by their piety. But thousands, forsaking all the business of life, flocked to them after the necessity had ceased. They claimed that they were following the footsteps of those “of whom the world was not worthy.” And in some sense they were doing the same things. But they were doing from choice what those whom they professed to follow did from necessity. It was as if a man in health should lounge upon the bed or idle about the house in imitation of the patience, and quietness, and submission of a sick man. No such patience, and quietness, and submission are required, or accepted of him. What are virtues in the sick man are no virtues in him. The pious were forced to dens and caves of the earth. The practice, sanctioned by their example, became popular and contagious, even after the circumstances were entirely altered. Thousands rushed to the deserts, anxious to escape life’s temptations, even by evading all its duties. This course was supported by a feeling which, when properly directed and controlled, was a right feeling—a feeling of the vanity of all earthly things, and of the overwhelming importance of heavenly things. Eternity made time, and all the things of time, nothing. And, surely, there is no comparison, in value and importance. But why set them

against each other—the business of earth against the joys of heaven? That is the old feeling,—that uselessness on earth is the preparation for heaven,—that the proper duties of life are inconsistent with that preparation,—that worldly business, which the Bible requires, implies worldly-mindedness, which the Bible condemns. Then, because the man is unfit for earth, he must be fit for heaven! But in truth, true religion gives a new value and importance to earthly things, as they lay hold of heaven, and, under the influence of the Spirit, fit souls for heaven. “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.” “If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” To prepare for the future world, is to perform the appropriate duties of this; to “use this world as not abusing it,” and so join it to the world to come, that when we fail here we may be received into everlasting habitations. It is not what the world and the things of the world are worth, set by themselves,—say “vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” if you please, but why disjoin them from the things of eternity? Work is condemned by false notions of religion, as though it was inconsistent with spiritual-mindedness, and as though it were giving an importance to earth which it does not deserve. “We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all,”—neglecting all business on religious pretenses,—too celestial for earth, though they still need food to eat, and raiment to put on, which somebody must provide for them. “Working not at all, but are busy bodies.” Having no business of their own, they have leisure to meddle with other people’s. “Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.” Again, he says

to the same church, "That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands as we commanded you ; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." Writing to another church, he says, "Let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Every true feeling and principle of religion encourages and requires work. Indeed, there is no hope of permanency or use from religion itself, except as those who receive it are taught to be industrious. Industry, so far from being an accidental adjunct, enters into the very essence of religion. It is part and parcel of the gospel. He that through idle and vagrant habits is good for nothing here, is good for nothing any where. Unfit for earth, he is still more unfit for heaven. For surely, heaven is not the gathering place of those who have cumbered this world. A religion that dispenses with industry, and suffers men to be dead weights upon society, that continually interferes with and interrupts the proper business of life, is the religion of the pope, but is not the religion of Jesus Christ.

2. Work is condemned *by false views of gentility*. As some are too celestial to be of any use on earth, so some are too genteel. A greater absurdity certainly cannot be stated in language. Yet so it is. A prominent idea of gentility is uselessness. It is a path, long or short, that leads to nothing, busy to no end, work that would be disgraced by making any thing,—activity, here and there, that brings nothing to pass, nor seeks to bring to pass any thing useful. The very test of this false gentility is uselessness. "They toil not, neither do they spin." The glory is to spend, or waste,—the shame, to earn. This spirit manifests itself in a great variety of ways.

It is no stranger any where. Perhaps the hardest of all lessons to learn is, that there is nothing really shameful but sin. When work must be done, this spirit is seen in excuses and apologies—deploring the necessity—lamenting the ungentility of being found at it,—or putting a false face upon it as an amusement or a prescription of the doctor's. A New Hampshire lawyer, so the story goes, was sawing wood one morning like a man, i. e. with all his might, and looking round saw the carriage of his friend the judge driving up. To be caught in the very act of so ungentle a business was awful; and if not caught in the act, his heat and perspiration would betray him. He trembled like a Hindoo at the very thought of losing caste. But “necessity is the mother of invention,” and being both a Yankee and a lawyer, he was fertile in expedients, and would not die without a struggle. He rushed into the house, seized his gun, put for the woods in double-quick time, and in a few minutes, all in a sweat, came in *from hunting*. The judge could draw an inference, and though he saw not the whole, he saw enough to infer the rest. His visit was a short one, for he felt, like the poet,

“To laugh were want of dignity and grace,
And to be grave exceeds all power of face.”

While this false gentility is sometimes simply ludicrous, and is to be treated rather as an infelicity than brought as a grave accusation, it commonly shows itself in more oppressive forms. It is the source of a great portion of the miseries that earth has suffered.

Three millions of human beings in this free country are held in abject servitude. They are punished like human beings, only with far greater severity. They are human, yet accord-

ing to law can claim the treatment of human beings in no other respect. They can do nothing, possess nothing, acquire nothing but what must belong to their master. All the rights of humanity are denied them ; all the laws of God to them are annulled. They are things composed of arms, and legs, and various integuments convenient to work with. But the windows of their souls are shut by express statute. As creatures of conscience, of immortality—in God's image, they have no legal existence. The law knows them only as working animals, except in the single matter of punishment, and provides for them only as such. Now what is the foundation of this system of abominations? It is that false gentility that is ashamed to work. It is the very spirit I have described—modified by circumstances. In the North, more frequently ludicrous in its mode of manifestation, in the South, devilish, but the same spirit. A man may hunt, fish, gamble, race horses, any thing but work, and be a gentleman. But let him put his hand to any useful and regular employment, and he loses caste. Now, he who feels thus may be too poor to be a slave holder in fact, or may live where slavery is not allowed ; but he is a slave holder in spirit, live where he will. The foundation of the whole system of slavery is this false gentility. It produced slavery, and slavery increases it. They mutually operate as cause and effect—just as strength is essential to work, and work increases strength. And shall this false gentility, which is both the root and offspring of slavery, have still ampler scope to show itself, and bring forth its fruit of Sodom—be planted and go to seed in new lands? The whole object of the famous Wilmot Proviso, which, I am glad to say, all parties in our free country favor, is to prevent this. Let slavery flourish and go to seed at the South, if the gentlemen of the

South will have it so, for so it is "nominated in the bond," but shall it curse other lands?

To this same gentility that is ashamed to work we owe most of the wars that have desolated the earth. They have been wars of plunder, to secure the fruits of others' labors; the idle, and therefore profligate, seeking to appropriate to themselves what has been raised by the industry of others. The thousands and tens of thousands who have rushed to them, are those who must eat but won't work. They are those who have always hung loose upon society, with no regular employment, and living at hap-hazard,—those who, hasting to be rich, have ever failed by their over-anxiety, and so are without employment or character, or those who, with some means, but no occupation, find time hanging heavy on their hands, and long for excitement and adventure. All armies, with very few exceptions, are composed of these three classes, who differ in spirit, but agree in the result. They will not work—too indolent or too proud for any regular employment—ashamed to soil their hands by industry, but ready to dip them in blood. And in this genteel profession they risk lives of no use to the community,—and through indolence, or disappointment, or listlessness, of little value in their own estimation. It was of old counted the happiness of the soldier, that it was soon over with him; one rush, and sudden death or joyful victory,—he is made for life, or done with life. It is the same feeling now—by the extra efforts of an hour to dispense with further—to connect his disappointment with a respectable profession, or, having become familiar with the excitement of races and gaming tables, seeking the stronger excitement of the battle field. Our own army for the most part has been made up of these three classes—the two former principally from the North, the

latter principally from the South. What would become of the younger sons of the nobility in England, but for the army and navy? It is disgraceful to work in agriculture, or art, or commerce. A long line of noble ancestry forbids that any thing should be honorable in their hands but the sword. And what will become of the younger sons, and older too, of the southern nobility, without war? A false gentility forbids all healthy excitement from useful employment. And their minds must stagnate or seek other excitement—the intoxicating cup, the horse race, the gaming table, the duel. They risk life readily, for, shut out from the comfort of regular useful employment, they set no high value upon life. They think of it fairly; for, to them, it is not worth much. They do not avoid all useful employment through indolence, but through false notions of gentility. For, removed from the withering influence of these false notions, they have the industry of other men, and shown in the same way, as tens of hundreds of emigrants from the slave states to the free, bear witness. But war is connected with slavery. It is the natural outlet of the spirit of enterprise and energy which slavery shuts out of all useful employments. The earth is laid waste, and thousands of human beings are sent to their last account, that the idle may have excitement and exercise of some kind to give them appetite; that those who are ashamed to work may have a genteel business in killing and being killed. Sometimes they expire on the battle field in a blaze of glory, though far more frequently they die of camp diseases, through inattention, and the utter want of all provision or medicine. Glory, forsooth, the most wretched and forlorn of all masters,—and they return covered with glory, and clothed with cursing as a garment, saying nothing about the spoils. The origin of all this is a false

gentility, which in some of its manifestations appears so ludicrous. Just so far as that is removed, and right thoughts of work entertained, just so far we banish slavery and put an end to wars, with all the minor evils that mortify, but do not kill.

Let what is manifestly right, be felt to be manly and honorable. Never be ashamed of any thing that is really useful and necessary. Let work appear in its own dignity and importance—not shamefaced, borrowing leave to be, and asking pardon of the world for being. There has been too much of that already, and workmen that need not be, have been ashamed. As there are those who glory in their shame, there are also those who are ashamed of their glory. Away with all this. Let us all learn that there is nothing shameful but sin, that no real disgrace can attach to us while we are true to God and to ourselves.

The exhortation last year was on two points. And without saying exactly that ye “are dull of hearing,” it may not be useless to repeat; especially as they are opportune at the end of every year. First. *Settle up your accounts, and see how you stand.* Secondly. *Be careful about going in debt.* Thirdly. *Never be ashamed of your business;*—unless it be really shameful, then be out of it quick. Be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,” and then don’t be ashamed. It is the highest honor of man to be useful on the earth. Trust in the Lord and do good, and you shall never be ashamed, world without end.

SERMON XVI.

TEMPERANCE SERMON.*

Neither be partaker of other men's sins. 1 TIMOTHY V. 22.

THE text has reference to a particular case. It is an exhortation to Timothy not to "lay hands on skulls that cannot teach and will not learn," enforced by the consideration that in that case he would be partaker of their sins, as all the mischief which they did could be traced back directly through them to him, who had given them countenance. This subject is very copious, and might justly be applied in a thousand ways, in which we have neither time nor inclination to apply it at present. I shall apply it to the purposes for which we are convened. Let us then consider some of the ways in which one man may become partaker of another's sin.

I. BY APPLAUDING IT, AND THOSE WHO COMMIT IT. The love of distinction lies deep in the human breast. To this the Bible appeals when it offers the honor that comes from God, and an everlasting name that shall never be cut off; and when this appeal prevails, duty and happiness, the glory of God, and blessedness of man, are forever united. But distinction is offered from a thousand quarters, and sought in a thousand other ways. Indeed, so keen is this desire of distinction, that it will grasp at any thing that seems likely to give it. In some cases it shows itself in things merely laughable or ridiculous, in oth-

* This Sermon was published in 1833, and generally known as the "Mate to the Ox."

ers it lays the foundation for infinite evils. You may see it in dress, in manners, in pronunciation, in the use of pompous and unmeaning words, or in the boast of being or having been peculiarly wicked. You may hear it in the challenge,—I can out-run, out-ride, out-shoot, out-drink. Here is the mischief, and through the land it has been one great source of drunkenness. For multitudes have made themselves drunk, not so much because they courted the excitement of the spirit, as the praise of their compeers. For who would be beat, if he could help it? Many a time has a wager been laid, and the greatest drinker is the winner; and when there is no wager, the presence and applause of others produces all the effects of a wager—an intense anxiety for victory, and an effort put to the utmost stretch to obtain it. Many a man has died in the operation, and myriads have been made drunkards. They did not care for the spirit at first, but then, praise was to be gained by drinking, and they were candidates for fame, and aspirants to the high honor of having the most capacious stomachs and the strongest heads. Now, all that hailed the victor in a drinking match, or shouted “well done you,” as he drank off the glass of triumph over his prostrate competitors, are partakers of his sin—and partakers in no common measure. For they knew that he was made of inflammable materials, and yet applied the torch, utterly reckless of the consequences. How much of intemperance may be traced to this source? It was creditable to drink deep—a proof of uncommon capacity, and a matter of boasting. Many a lie has been told by the man of small powers, to disguise his inability to come up to the full measure. Even children soon learn that it is manly to take off their glass without shrinking, and disgraceful to show by their wry faces that they are new beginners. Let any man recollect the strife

which he has seen to outdo in drinking, and the applause the victor received, and the envy which men of more limited powers spent upon him, and he can neither wonder at the extent of drunkenness, nor think the drunkard the only criminal. Who praised his strong head, and thus encouraged him to take another dram? Who called in question his courage, and thus put him up to deeper drinking? Who appealed to his love of distinction, or his politeness, and thus induced him to drink again? In the scale of crime there is a stage beyond the perpetration of abominable deeds, and it is occupied by those who applaud them. The doer, criminal as he may be, yields the palm of wickedness to those who cheer him on. For the applause would seem to arise from interested love of wickedness, as if they had adopted Satan's principle—"evil, be thou my good."

II. A man becomes partaker of another's sin BY ADVISING IT. Ardent spirit has been a remedy for almost every disease that has afflicted the human race, and applied in almost every conceivable circumstance. For this physicians are, in a great measure, responsible. "How shall I take this 'ere medicine, Doctor?" "Oh, take it in a little whiskey," says the Doctor; "or, if you have brandy, it is all the better." Whatever else may or may not be proper, ardent spirit never comes amiss; without it, the medicine can never produce its full effect. Is it any wonder that men think highly of that which can accommodate itself to any disease, and go merrily along with any medicine? or that they should not be sparing in its application to any of the ills that flesh is heir to? Now, who introduced and patronized this opinion? Physicians: partly to please their customers, and partly as a matter of convenience, for ardent spirit is always at hand. Nor is the physi-

cian now alone in giving this advice ; multitudes have become almost as wise as he, and can recommend spirit with as grave a face, and as hearty a good will. And there is scarcely a liquid compound for the relief of misery, from "number six" down to plain bitters, but spirit is one of the principal ingredients. Previous to the present excitement, a few of the faculty have opposed the current, and done what they could to undeceive the public mind. It is said that a patient of Doctor Rush's, who was directed to take some very unpalatable medicine, sent to inquire whether he might take it in spirit. "No," said the Doctor, "he shall never stand before his Maker and say I made him a drunkard." Had all physicians adopted this noble principle, what a saving there had been of human wretchedness ! But it may be said that the patient has gone beyond the prescription, and in that case he alone is responsible ; for he was never advised to be a drunkard. True. But the adviser knew something of the nature of man, and of the insidious action of spirit ; and though he did not advise his patient to go clear to perdition, he pointed out the road that leads to it as a safe and pleasant one, at least, for a considerable distance ; and he knew, too, that when his patient had once fairly set forth, he might almost as well stop lightning in mid volley, as stop him. Is he clear, then, of the drunkard's sin ?

III. A man becomes partaker of another's sin BY FURNISHING THE MEANS. Perhaps none are more deeply criminal than these, and none more strongly entrenched. It is an admitted principle, that he who furnishes food or arms to an enemy, is a traitor to his country. He puts the means of destruction into the hands of those who are disposed to make thorough proof of them, and, in effect, bids them God speed in their work of

mischief. By aiding and abetting the enemy, he proves himself a traitor ; and as a friend in disguise, perhaps serves their purpose more effectually than if he had openly taken their part. So is he that gives his neighbor drink. He seeks his own interest ; hears not the cry of blood ; sees not the crime of blood ; but looks merely at the price of blood. He pursues one undeviating course ; and whether men shall be killed speedily, or guzzle long, as well as deep, is a mere calculation of profit. Now, who furnishes the drunkard with the means of sinning ? or, to be more particular, suppose the drunkard guilty of a specific crime. In a fit of madness, he has murdered a man. Is he the only criminal in the affair ? How came he bereft of reason ? He was drunk. Where did he get the means ? At the store, the tavern, or grocery. But how came he a drunkard ? When a boy, he learned that it was manly to drink. Who made the spirit, and who furnished the materials from which it was made ? The drunkard has done the deed, and at a human tribunal must answer for it alone. At a higher tribunal, his partners in crime will be revealed, and those who are most remote as to time and place, may be nearest in guilt—those who corrupted his mind and taste, and cheered him on in youth, and those who filled the grand reservoir which stands as the fountain head of all the mischief—while he that in location is nearest, i. e. he that furnished the liquor that brought death to a fellow mortal, may be the least guilty of the whole train. Yet, what retailer could escape self-reproach and public indignation in such a case ? And how would all the rest rejoice that the spirit that had produced so horrid a result, did not come from their houses ;—though every man knows that its coming from one house rather than another is a mere accident. If they did not furnish it,

they were ready to do it; and had the miserable man laid his money on their counter, they would have been in the place of him whom they are so ready to blame.

We condemn ardent spirit, not on the ground that it here and there does mischief, but that it is fitted for every evil work, and has no redeeming qualities. We condemn it on the same ground that we condemn sin. Look at sin generally—what has it done? You may make ever so black a catalogue, still your enumeration is nothing to what it can do and will do. We see but a very small portion of its effects, for they are very gradually developed. Sin is reined in by the Almighty power of God. So of ardent spirit. We reprobate it not merely because it does much mischief, but because its capacity for mischief is unbounded. We wonder not that its effects are so awful! The wonder rather is, that with such a tremendous power, they are not unspeakably more so. Let God withdraw his hand and suffer ardent spirit to produce its full effect, and earth would present all that imagination can conceive of hell. And every man who deals in it, or favors it, helps to make earth a hell—by tempting men to break through all restraint, and tempting God to withdraw his protection. Especially is this the case with the maker and vender. It is their trade to furnish men with the means of sinning. They live upon the ruin of their fellow creatures, as birds of prey upon the carcasses of the slain, and their only apology is, “it is a profitable business.” On the same ground it would be a profitable business slyly to kill off all their relations, for then they would be sole heirs—and this, in effect, they do. The result of this narrow-minded policy has been the ruin of their dearest relations. Many a man, by trading in ardent spirits has brought the curse of God upon his family—a curse like that which fell

upon him who builded Jericho :—“ he laid the foundation thereof in his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Joshua.” Many a distiller and tavern-keeper has commenced and consummated his business just in this way. He commenced it, for it was a profitable business, and has carried it on to the wreck of his whole family. Nor has the misery been confined to his family ; it has extended far and wide through the neighborhood, and the more decent and inviting the establishment, the more ruinous ; for all this gives a false coloring—makes the road to ruin respectable. The distiller may write upon his door, “ no drinking done here,” and send miserable drunkards empty away, and so keep quite a decent house, and quiet his conscience, and shield himself from reproach, yet send damnation in a thousand streams all about him. Or the tavern-keeper may keep no bar, and like a hypocrite keep his bottle in the back room, where in secrecy and retirement those may drink who would be ashamed to drink openly, and so, under cover, he furnishes them with the means of sinning. The more decent and inviting the appearance, the greater the temptation, and the greater the guilt of the tempter.

IV. A man may become partaker of another's sin BY GIVING IT A GOOD NAME, OR EXTENUATING ITS EVILS. The world has suffered immensely from a misapplication of words, and a woe is denounced against them that call good, evil, and evil, good—that shame a good thing with a bad name, or dress out a bad thing with a good one. Yet, what is more common than to call things by other than their proper names, and thus make them appear white or black as shall suit our purpose. If men commit crimes, and we soften them, and call them by mild names, we encourage the crimes, and encourage the perpetra-

tors and others to think lightly of them. As far as we extenuate their wickedness, so far are we partakers of it. We all know something of the power of mere words. If a crime be called by other than its proper name, it produces no such sensation of horror as the crime ought to produce. How differently do these two phrases, "murder," and "an affair of honor," strike the mind! and how different are the trains of thought or feeling which they excite. Yet all this difference is made by the name that is given. He who is disposed to extenuate sin by giving it mild and pleasant names, is a partaker of it, and the partakers in this way are not few. How often are men of contemptible characters made to appear respectable by the mere charm of words. The prodigal is called generous; the miser, economical; the unforgiving, honorable; the deep drinker, good natured and sociable; and even the habitual drunkard,

"Who starves his own! who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love,"

even he is a good hearted, companionable creature, and means no hurt, and injures none but himself. The apologist of crimes is a partaker of their enormity, and so is he that would make them common by removing and concealing their grossness. With what flowers has the path of dissipation been strewn! what enticement which genius or ingenuity could supply, has been wanting? How have the good words of the language been arranged to recommend this path, and a monopoly of good feeling claimed for those that travel it! It is friendly and polite to drink to another, and it is unfriendly and impolite not to respond. At any toast, and any witty say-

ing, politeness makes the same demand. Many a poet, too, has garnished the path to hell, and sung the praise of spirit in melting melodies. Many a man has drank for friendship, and more, for politeness. Can friendship require that which produces quarrels, or politeness that which insults God or man? Why abuse words so egregiously? It is time things were called by their proper names, and these abused words restored to their proper places. It is time, too, that all those places where spirit is made and sold, were known as the road that leads down to the chambers of death; and while we exercise all conceivable friendliness towards their keepers, and use every effort to withdraw them from the cursed business, let us not make a lie, even to sustain their characters or save their feelings. Let us not daub with untempered mortar, nor besmear with the praise of honest, and honorable, and excellent men, those whose very trade is to undermine the deep foundations of society, to destroy the hopes of men, and fit immortal souls for the bottomless pit. If we shrink from declaring the truth, and use art to excuse the maker, and vender, and user of spirit, we are partakers of their sins.

V. A man becomes partaker of another's sin BY SETTING THE EXAMPLE. Very few men have originality or independence of mind enough to strike out a course of their own; and fewer still to pursue it under the direction of an enlightened conscience. Circumstances have an immense power over us. Our good and our bad qualities depend very much upon others, for we are insensibly fashioned after the model. Were we inhabitants of a desert, we might act on our single responsibility. But the voice of God has declared, "no man liveth to himself." We are placed in the midst of society, and have an agency in forming its manners and morals. None are with-

out influence, and few are aware of the extent of their influence. Practices which may be of little injury to us, may be ruinous to others—practices which they would forsake if we were willing to set the example. If we loved God or man, should not we set this example rather than be accessory to the ruin of a fellow creature? “Can you swim?” was a question once put to a noted religious innovator. He, without perceiving the drift, answered in the affirmative. “There are thousands following you into deep water that can’t swim, and what will become of them?” It is said the reformer forgot his speculations and discoveries for a moment, and shed tears, as in fancy he beheld the wreck. Now, admit that you can swim: you know thousands cannot—and were you in no danger, should you have no feeling for them? Perhaps no single thing has done more to sustain intemperance than example, and there is not a more efficient instrument to put it down. Every one that uses ardent spirit encourages the drunkard. They are both in the same path, though the drunkard is a little ahead. The only difference between them is not in kind, but in degree. This every drunkard knows, and always looks upon such an one as his companion. He would spurn an exhortation to temperance from one whose example affords a standing apology for dissipation. Many an unhappy instance of this has been related. In former times, when all drank, from the preacher up or down through the whole graduated scale, it was no easy matter to stand out alone—to resist the calls of appetite on the one hand, and the shame of wanting self-command on the other. We are told a story of this kind. A man had been excluded from the church for intemperance. He confessed his sin, and resolved to “put a knife to his throat,” and was restored. Some time after, he attended a public sale,

where the people were collected, preacher and all, and whiskey was circulated as usual. He knew his weakness: but could he stand out alone, and thus say that he had no self-command—that he was so very poor a wretch that he could not take an honest dram without getting drunk? The ring was formed, and the bottle commenced its journey. “Now,” says he to himself, “if the preacher don’t drink, I won’t.” Here was the last hope. He could not bear to be utterly singular. The “circulating medium” in its journey at last reached the preacher—and he tested its contents with as little hesitation, and as long a look upward, as any man in the company. The last prop to resolution has failed:—from that moment the unhappy man seemed to have given over all thought of resistance, and instead of waiting for the bottle, left his place in the ring and ran to meet it—and before the sun went down had lost all power of locomotion. Was he the only guilty person on that ground? Was not every one, and especially the preacher, a deep partaker of his sin? Let us go one step further, and suppose they had urged him to drink, and when he refused, had twitted him of his weakness, and appealed to his pride and his shame, and thus overcome his resistance, and made him drunk. Who has not heard cases of this kind? Let me mention one—of a young man, proud, ambitious, aspiring, and with talents, too, far above the common order. Few have set out in life with higher character, or higher prospects. The only drawback was this fatal propensity. He knew that he must drink deep, or touch not, and he determined upon the latter; and to strengthen his resolution, and make security doubly sure, and withal to prevent suspicion, (for he was ashamed of this apparent want of self-command,) he went all lengths against drunkards and drunkenness. Language was

too poor to furnish adequate expression of his abhorrence. One evening in the company of his merry associates, he was urged to drink, as usual, and, as usual, refused. All the common arguments were used in vain. At length, one of the company in a taunting manner alluded to his want of self-command. "He dares not drink! for he knows he cannot drink without getting drunk." The secret is out, and the appeal is irresistible. *He dares do any thing.* He has defended his character on one side by abstinence, and an extreme contempt for drunkards and drunkenness. And now it is assailed on the other; pride, shame, appetite, all urge him to drink, and vindicate his character—to drink, and not let it appear that he shunned and despised drunkards in self-defence. That evening he was drunk, and, to all human appearance, that evening settled his destiny. I knew him well. Many a year has rolled round since that fatal evening—an evening so fatal to the prospects of an amiable wife, and the hopes of an extensive connexion. In the progress of these years there have been many temporary reformatations, and those that loved him have had their hopes raised only to be withered by a deadlier blight, and the last intelligence told that he was on the borders of the grave. And who is responsible for all these blighted hopes and perverted powers? Who has made him a disgrace to his kindred, and a curse to society? Let us not excuse him. But will he perish alone in his iniquity? If the man who persuaded him to drink had planted a dagger in his bosom, it would have been an act of charity in comparison to what he did. He has made him die a thousand deaths. This is not a solitary case. Hundreds are circumstanced just as he was. A bad example may ruin them; then how much more a regular effort, or a taunting speech to remove their scruples. No man

who uses or advocates the use of ardent spirit, can escape being partaker of other men's sins. God has placed us in society, and has given us an influence there. Now, if we take our own course, and do what pleases us, regardless of others, we may as well escape death as escape responsibility.

But there is one class whose bad example is specially fatal. I mean professors of religion and members of temperance societies; and wo to them if men are encouraged to drink by their example. The bad example of others aggravates the disease, they slander and vilify the remedy. For no remedy for intemperance has ever yet been discovered but temperance societies, and the grace of God. Of the efficacy of these remedies, those who have tried them should give living demonstration. Now, if they can take a little sily, or when they are abroad; if they can deal in it "not openly, but, as it were, in secret," they slander these remedies as quack medicine, and spread despair of all relief. They tell us that neither the principle of religion nor the pledge of honor has power to bind men. And if these will not bind, what can? Are there such cases here? Is it the voice of slander or of truth, that declares that members of this society do drink sily at home, and openly abroad? I know the enemy is on the alert, ready to take advantage of the least sign of faltering. I know also that many opposers of the cause are not scrupulous about the means, and I would be slow to believe their report, that any man has forfeited his honor, or that there is so mean and unprincipled a wretch among us—for mean and unprincipled such an one must be, and destitute of the common qualities of a man. And the principal danger to the society, I apprehend, arises from this quarter. But the society cannot be crushed. Its supporters are strong and many, and opposition from without settles it firmer on its

foundations. Yet, it may become an unwieldy mass, and fall of its own weight. Men may learn to trifle with their honor, and by joining a temperance society, only add hypocrisy to their other sins. Let us beware. And let any member who violates his solemn pledge recollect, that he speaks lies in hypocrisy. We wish those who join to have a full view of the evils of spirit drinking, and to join from a deliberate purpose in every way to discountenance it, and to join from a sense of interest and duty combined, and thus hold on to the utmost and the end. And if men are found acting the hypocrite in this matter, it is but justice to this society to expose them, and thus show the world that we are no more patrons of hypocrisy than drunkenness. Oh, what a responsibility is ours, if, after having solemnly covenanted to stand aloof from this deadly pestilence, we are found connected with it as appetite, or interest, or custom prompts. Let us remember that a defect here is peculiarly glaring—"a spot upon a vestal's robe, the worse for what it stains."

VI. A man may become partaker of another's sin BY CONNIVANCE. Every law requires not merely a ceasing from evil, but an actual doing of good. He that does nothing is a transgressor, and the plea that he has done no hurt, will never be admitted, for it is not true. He has done hurt, in letting evils take their course when he might have arrested them. No man who has power to offer the least resistance to iniquity, can honestly stand aside and let its current roll on. He that connives at wickedness, is a partaker of it. A variety of motives may induce him to do this. He dares not risk his popularity by taking any decisive steps to resist evil; or he dares not meet the anger of those who perpetrate it, and though he disapproves of the evil, he equally disapproves of all means to remove it,

and contents himself with a sorrow that things are so, (which by the way does not render him very unhappy,) and a lazy wish that they were otherwise. How common is this! Who does not count a licensed drinking house a public nuisance and a curse? Look at its inmates, and its influence. No one can think of the misery which emanates from such an establishment without a feeling of horror! But the keeper pursues his business with a clear conscience, for he is licensed according to law; and if any evil arises from it, it rests not on him, but on those who are appointed to watch for the public good. He sells just in the way of trade, and he is regularly licensed. If he allures the young to his shop, and initiates them into all its abominations, what of that! he is regularly licensed. Here hopes are blighted; here parents forget natural affection, and children spurn parental restraint; here death reigns and revels, and who cares for that? The shop is licensed according to law. Can a man, for a sum of money, legally claim license for such an establishment? If so, those who give it, when they have gone to the extent of the law, are not responsible. If the law has left the licensing optional, then those who give it are partners in the business;—little as they may get of its profits, they are partakers of its guilt. The license, in effect, gives leave to make as many drunkards as possible, and they who give it when they might withhold it, say, “Go on and prosper, and the Lord deliver them into your hands.” No doubt, in this way a clamor is avoided, and they are called liberal and generous, and they console themselves, that, though it was wrong, they could not well help it. We have an instance on record of one in authority, who dreaded to be unpopular, and who suffered his better judgment to be overcome by importunity. He knew his duty, but lacked resolution to perform it.

“Take ye him,” said he, “and judge him according to your law, for I find no fault in him. But when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person.” “We wash our hands of the wretched business,” say those who license such establishments. Does this disclaimer dissolve the connection, and free them from the charge of blood; even though the retailers should agree, as in the other case, to pocket the responsibility with the profits? This may seem hard upon men in authority, and infringe upon the good rule, not to speak evil of dignities. I am aware of the peculiarity of their situation as agents of the public, and that they can detain but a little while what the public voice demands; and that blame is frequently cast upon them which belongs in another quarter. You go by one of these licensed abominations, and curse those who licensed them, and lay all the censure at their doors. Have you done what lies in your power to abate the nuisance? You call them Pilates, and can you forget that even Pilate wished to do right? Admitting them to be Pilates, then, who knows but a few more voices will encourage them to banish the curse? They are agents, and you are some of those in whose behalf they act. Have you ever taken a decided stand, and thus let them know your wish upon this subject? Multitudes have done so. Your names may turn the scale. It may depend upon you, whether this curse shall remain, or be swept away. A combination is formed to strengthen the hands of every good man, and to remove one of the most intolerable evils from the land. You are perfectly temperate, and you ask, what is it to you? And you do nothing, neither oppose nor advocate. You see its victims prostrate in the dust; you

hear the wailings of thousands of thousands, and you do nothing to sustain the standing or raise the fallen—or shut up the flood gates of misery. You see the traveler wounded and half dead, and, wrapped in a mantle of impenetrable selfishness, you just pass by on the other side. Remember that the “cursed” at the last day, are those who grudged the trouble and expense of kindness. “Inasmuch as ye have *not* done.” &c. He that stands aloof from a temperance society, connives at the sins of the drunkard, and at all the misery and mischief which ardent spirit is producing through the land. Whatever he may be personally, he helps their cause. It is time every man knew where he stood. There is no neutrality here. “For to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” Thus we are situated: a thousand chords vibrate at our touch; the weal or woe of thousands is connected with the course we take. If we encourage them by our applause or advice—if we speak lightly of their wickedness, or furnish them with the means of sinning—if we strengthen them by our example, or connive at their doings—we are partakers of their sins. There is no way to escape it, but to come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. He that refuses to do this, may wash his hands and proclaim his innocence, or he may thank his stars that he is not a slave to appetite. But God will not hold him guiltless, for he is accessory to the ruin of his fellow men, and bids the pestilence God speed.

I need not expatiate upon the evils which ardent spirit has produced. Of the enormity of these evils, you have heard from the lips of experience. Many of you have seen in real life, what no language can adequately describe. You have heard of the numbers bound to the car of Juggernaut, and of thirty thousand yearly immolated victims. You have heard of

the expense, of the quarrels, lawsuits, imprisonments, diseases, and capital punishments, that follow in its train. You have heard, too, of the efforts made in former days, to stay its desolations, by pronouncing anathemas upon drunkards and drunkenness. And you have seen the abortiveness of all such attempts. For who was ever reclaimed? The tide rolled on, carrying with its current, ten thousand wrecks. Multitudes looked upon the wrecks, and pitied, and mourned, and cast reproach. But they could no more stop the current, than they could prevent the deluge when the fountains of the great deep were broken up. The absurdity of all such efforts is now manifest. It was building without foundation; it was laboring at the streams while the fountains were suffered to pour forth death unchecked. Unhappy men were suffered to float merrily on unwarned, till they were past recovery. The syren song of "no danger," was sung till appetite had gained the complete ascendancy, and habit had become fixed and inveterate. And then, as if to make up for all deficiency, they were assailed on every side with exhortations, and entreaties, and curses; and thus the last hope of reformation was cut off. They were encouraged to drink, by applause, or advice, or extenuation, or example; and now men turn up their eyes and wonder that they are drunkards. And truly it is a most astonishing affair! that men so much encouraged to drink should become drunkards!! How should they become any thing else? The trial has been thoroughly made, sufficient to show that the evil could not be corrected in that way. Another method has been discovered—to enlighten the public mind, to remove temptation, to abolish all occasion for drinking, and thus prevent the manufacture of drunkards. This is the last hope. If it fails, we may give up the cause and resign ourselves to despair.

But it will not fail. The God of heaven will prosper us. In such a cause, we wish the assistance and countenance of all. Each in his place can render an essential service, and who that loves God or man will not do it? We do not ask it as an act of charity, (though in a certain sense it is so,) but as an act of duty to God and justice to men, and as the only means of escaping a most fearful and tremendous responsibility. And every one who refuses, is a partaker of other men's sins.

Of the guilt and misery of the drunkard, most of us have heard in full tale; but how shall we depict the guilt of his partners? Who has not seen that miserable man in the Almanac, thrust through with a dart from every sign in the zodiac. It would seem as if the celestial powers were combined for his destruction. This unhappy man, suppose, is the drunkard, and these darts that transfix him are all of earthly origin, and sent from human hands, and as he lies thus pinned to the ground, his enemies stand about him in many a grizzly form, and in the name of death, their master, triumph over him. There stands the distiller, and he that furnishes the grain—honorable men! each with a javelin fixed in his hand. A little lower may be seen the physician, on the one side, prescribing spirit, and the moderate drinker on the other, making a most feeling application to his stomach. Next stands the applauder, appealing to his pride and love of distinction, while over against him stands the merchant with his gallon measure, offering opportunity to test the capacity of his stomach and the extent of his ambition; while the landlord and grocery keeper trip up his heels and pin him to the earth, that he may never rise again; and imagination can trace in the distance an immense group of all who for various reasons will not join a temperance society, standing round to see the sport. Let this

pass for a true explanation of that famous picture which adorns the second page of the Almanac, and I trust that every man, when he sees this picture of a human being pierced with a dozen javelins, will remember the unhappy lot of the drunkard—to compass whose death so many are combined. And how can he escape such a host of enemies? Now, if we can persuade or shame the whole dozen to retire and let him recover—or what is better, if we can persuade them not to bring another human being into this miserable predicament, the work is done. But in vain do we intreat or curse the drunkard, while we suffer these twelve sons of Anak to hold him fast. And the great object of our society is to persuade these men to cease conspiring and compassing the death of their fellow men.

If you would know the evils of drunkenness—evils to which so many are accessory, and for which so many must answer—think what of evil it has done, and what of good it has prevented. Compare the condition of any drunkard with what, but for ardent spirit, it might have been. There is poverty, and wretchedness, and quarreling; a heart-broken wife; a dispirited and disgraced family; character gone, and health going with it; a heart embittered against God and man, and every day increasing in all that is opposite to heaven,—a human being becoming more and more divested of humanity, till forsaken of God and despised by men, he dies unregretted, and appears before his Maker. But for ardent spirit, there might have been the opposite of all this;—a comfortable habitation and flourishing family—respectability abroad and the voice of rejoicing and salvation at home—the favor of God, and a hope full of immortality. What a contrast! Go, ye men of blood, to the wretched habitation, and behold your work! You urged him to drink—you defied him to drink; you ridiculed sober

men; you encouraged him by your example and applause. For any little ailment you advised him to drink. You sold him the poison, and thus made gain of his ungodliness. You have helped him ruin himself, abuse his family, disgrace his connexions. You have helped him to cover his past history with shame, and to cast a mantle of sackcloth over the future. Had you done your duty, all this sin and wretchedness would have had no existence. And now you take airs, and pity the poor fool, and wonder at his excesses. You rowed him into the midst of the stream, and cried "bravo!" and "well done!" as he passed one landing place after another. Now he is in the vortex and has become dizzy in the whirl—now you urge him to land, and call his enterprise a mad one, and talk of character and family—perhaps of Christ and salvation. But he hears not. His head turns with the current, and a continual sound is in his ears, and the sea and sky are mingled; and in a little time his frail bark sinks, and the voice of a brother's blood cries to heaven for vengeance. For his blood will be required at your hands.

It is on these grounds that we ask you to join a Temperance Society, and be no more accessory to the ruin of your fellow men. If they will perish, let them no longer have your encouragement or countenance. Your own interest, the good of your fellow men, the safety of the country, demand this of you; and if you cannot make this little sacrifice to support such interests, what claim can you have to the name of patriot, or of saint?

SERMON XVII.

THE GREAT SALVATION.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation. HEBREWS ii. 3.

INSTRUCTION is never given in the Bible merely to gratify curiosity. Nor is its end answered by simply enlightening the mind. That is necessary as a means to an end. But the great design is, to affect the heart and influence the conduct. Truth is in order to goodness, therefore it is accompanied by a personal application to the heart and conscience. When the apostle shows the superiority of Christ to Moses—of the Christian dispensation to the Jewish—it is to urge upon those who live under these superior privileges, and this clearer light, their more fearful responsibility. If “he that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses ; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God ?” If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, how much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven ? “If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward ; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?” If under less light and fewer privileges, they did not escape, but lust then conceived and brought forth sin, and sin when finished, brought forth death, will sin be less deadly with more warnings against it, and when the more clear and manifest way of escape is neglected ? Here is an appeal to

every man's judgment and forecast, to every man's heart and conscience. The text presents the fact of a great salvation, and an inquiry founded upon that fact. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." Let us turn our attention to this salvation, and see how great it is.

I. Its greatness is manifest FROM THE GREATNESS OF THE RUIN. The remedy must needs be great to meet the necessity of the case. "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Man has sunk from the high state in which his Creator placed him, to the depths of shame and infamy. There is no midway between right and wrong. In departing from God there is no stopping place. Sin has sent its pestilential influence through all the powers and faculties of the soul. The heart made according to the heart of God, is now the reverse of it—a sink of inordinate affections, a store-house of all impiety. The very mind and conscience are defiled. The will is perverse, the passions blind, the choice, the judgment, the purposes, the devices, the desires are wrong. Though often changing, it is only from evil to evil,—from one wrong choice or purpose to another. The heart is continually framing something, but no right thing—nothing good and acceptable to God. As the heart is the reverse of the heart of God, so it is excited and animated by influences and motives adverse to him. It is under the influence of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"—evil, only evil, evil continually, all of a piece and all wrong. Such is man's heart in the view of him who sees things as they are. "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out

of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. . . . Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Casting off the authority of the Most High, and breaking loose from their place in his system, they are "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." As the first great commandment does not direct and control them, neither does that which is like unto it. When the law of love to God was cast off, the law of love to man could not retain its power. Both sunk together. So little influence have these laws upon the natural heart, that they are scarcely thought of or recognized as laws. No man in a state of nature expects to obey them, or that his fellow men will obey them. He is under other laws, influenced by other motives, and he expects the same of his fellow men. In all his dealings with them, he takes it for granted that neither the love of God nor the love of man has any authority over them. If he would influence them, he must appeal to other motives—to another spirit. The whole framework of society, and all its laws and regulations, imply the utter absence of the law of love. The very constitution of society supposes this. He that overlooks the fact of depravity, and acts as if it were a fable, is in the eyes of all men a simpleton. His imagination and dreams have run away with his common sense. The world which he fancies, is a very different matter from this every day, matter-of-fact world in which he lives. This is the fatal defect of the community system. It supposes a purity of intention, an uprightness of heart, and a regard for right, which have no existence. Every experiment of the kind has shown out this fatal mistake. They have had confidence in man, and

have been disappointed. They have supposed him to be what he is not, but have found him to be what he really is—true to his fallen nature. And that is the only truth from which the natural man never deviates. He follows divers lusts and pleasures, even as he is led, being “carnal, sold under sin.” He yields his “members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity.” “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Loose from God and holiness, it is “like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked”—no settled, lasting peace. There is no consciousness of integrity to sustain them in the hour of trial. Their hearts condemn them. And the condemnation of their hearts is but an earnest and assurance of the greater condemnation of him that knoweth all things. Now, such a state of the race—such a universal prevalence of wickedness—required a *great* salvation. Such utter perversion could be remedied by a *great* salvation only. If man is restored to his right mind—to the right use of his powers, and to his right position before God, it must be a *great salvation*. The very depth and completeness of their ruin made this indispensable.

II. THE VALUE OF MAN required a *great* salvation. All God's creatures have value in his account, but not the same value. All do not have the same capacities, and hold the same relation to him. Some are made subordinate to others, and have their value in their place, but are not of equal value with those to whom they are subordinate. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” The earth was made to

be inhabited, and subservient to the use of its inhabitants—inhabitants of various kinds, subordinate, kind after kind, to each other, and all, to man. To him was given dominion over the whole;—he was made lord of the world—all owing allegiance to him, he only to God. To fit him for this high station, he was made in the image of God—after his likeness. God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”—the representative of God on earth, the regent of all creatures here, to show forth the glory of God, and with mind and heart to speak his praises. All things were put under his feet, and he was crowned with glory and honor. The *worst* results from the perversion of the best. The more excellent and valuable in its original, the more difficult to restore from its perversion. Man’s high station, at the head of creation, and his immortal and intelligent existence, after the image of God, only made the difficulty in the way of his restoration the greater. His redemption had been easier, had his value been less. What is worth little should cost little. But what shall redeem an immortal soul? Where shall an adequate price be found? The high station, and exalted powers, and immortal existence of man, rendered a great salvation indispensable—made every thing else unavailing. Corruptible things, as gold and silver, cannot redeem, for they bear no proportion in value. For the same reason, inferior creatures cannot make an atonement, and purchase redemption. Yet sacrifices have ever been offered, and blood poured upon God’s altar. Behold the Jew coming with his offering to the door of the tabernacle. He lays his hand upon its head and confesses his sin. The beast is slain for him, and its blood sprinkled upon the altar. But no atonement is made, no soul redeemed, no conscience cleansed. The soul is worth too much to be redeemed

at such a price. See the heathen. The altar has already smoked with the blood of beasts, but there is no quiet to the soul of the offerer. He comes now with a costlier sacrifice—his only and *best*-beloved son, “the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul.” But man cannot thus “redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” The very worth of man in God’s account required a costlier sacrifice. And a costlier sacrifice has been made. We “are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.” “The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” takes to himself our nature, and in that nature offered himself a sacrifice to God for us. The blood of Christ is the price of the soul’s redemption. “By his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” We are bought with a price, and that price meets the value of the soul. It shows how high an estimate God sets upon the living soul, made in his image and after his likeness. The very price shows the greatness of the salvation. A salvation at such a price is beyond conception great and glorious.

III. THE INTEREST WHICH IT EXCITES proves the salvation to be great. No sooner was sin introduced to earth by man’s disobedience, than his attention was turned to this salvation. He was not left to despair, but the door of hope was opened. “The enemy came in like a flood, and the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him.” “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel.” So said the Lord to the serpent. This promise foreshowed the salvation. It was renewed and enlarged through succeeding generations, and kept before the minds of men as an object of intense interest. By believing it, they experienced its power.

Who the Savior might be, or in what manner the salvation would be effected, was not clearly made known. But the fact of a salvation was made known, and it was a fact of the deepest interest. Abel, through faith in this salvation, offered a more acceptable sacrifice to God than Cain. By faith in it Enoch was translated that he should not see death. This salvation was the hope of Abraham—he saw it afar off, and was glad. Jacob, living and dying, waited for it. The whole Jewish system prefigured it, and all the saints looked forward to it. It was the burden of the prophets, and they searched into the meaning of their own prophecies, “searching what, or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” Even the angels desired to look into it. For through it a ladder was set up on the earth and reached to heaven, and the angels descended and ascended upon it. Messages from heaven came by the ministry of angels, and they are sent forth as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” But this salvation is not interesting merely to the pious, and the angels who kept their first estate,—it has an interest in hell as well as heaven—with the contentious and disobedient, as well as the pious. The interest in hell is to prevent, to frustrate the salvation,—to continue the blindness of man, and harden his heart. Legions of devils are excited to new diligence, and new arts for that purpose. And the clearer its manifestation, the more energy, and zeal, and cunning craftiness to delude. No indifference is felt there, but the deepest interest. And so with the wicked on earth. Any thing else may be tolerated, however ridiculous, or frivolous, or pernicious. Ancient enmities are laid aside for combined opposition

to the truth. Herod and Pilate are made friends to each other to destroy Christ and nullify his gospel. They can think quietly of the advance of any cause but the cause of Christ, and keep their tempers on any subject but the subject of religion. They cannot understand its principles or see its influence without a deep interest. For its spirit rebukes theirs, and its works shame theirs. Every one imbued with its spirit condemns them, as Noah, building the ark, condemned the world. They might be willing to let it alone, and even admire it at a safe distance, if it would let them alone. But its very spirit is aggressive, and they resist with a zeal and determined energy that shows a consciousness of its greatness. A small matter that had no power to stand, could never call forth the sneers and invectives that are poured upon this salvation—could never combine so many hearts to oppose it. If so they viewed it, they could never tremble at its approach, nor triumph when its professed advocates are found unworthy of their trust. Its greatness is manifest from the interest it excites in heaven, and earth, and hell,—among all classes,—those who have never wandered from God, those who have returned, and those who are farthest off.

IV. THE GLORY IT BRINGS TO GOD, manifests the greatness of this salvation. It is the great work of God,—the greatest of all his works, as it makes the most glorious display of himself. The creation of all things was the result of mere intelligent omnipotence. He spake, and it was done. This beautiful world arose at his command. His “hand laid the foundation of the earth, and his right hand spanned the heavens.” When he calls to them, they stand up together. This was a most glorious display of his wisdom and power. Over this new creation, that showed him so wise in counsel and mighty

in strength, well might “the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy.” But his salvation shows other and nobler qualities—not the powers of his mind, merely, but the feelings of his heart—not his greatness, so much as his goodness,—the greatness of his goodness, the depths of the riches of his grace.

“ ’Twas great—to speak a world from naught,
 ’Twas greater—to redeem.”

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”—revealed his justice and his mercy—his abhorrence of sin and pity for the sinner—his regard for all that is right, his compassion for all that are wrong. There is no sacrifice of mercy to justice, nor of justice to mercy. In this salvation they meet together—righteousness in him and peace to the sinner embrace each other.

“ Here the whole Deity is known;
 Nor dares a creature guess—
 Which of the glories brightest shone—
 The justice or the grace.”

Qualities that seem opposite combine—unspotted purity and inflexible justice, with infinite compassion and boundless grace. Every sinner saved is a specimen of the justice and compassion, the power and grace of God. One great end of this declaration was to reveal God, to bring his real character to the knowledge and the hearts of his creatures, to show to principalities and powers in heavenly places, as well as to his creatures on earth, his manifest wisdom and grace. God would be known, that those who worship him may worship in spirit and in truth. Through this salvation he is known, as his heart is

laid open in the sacrifice of Calvary and the influence of his spirit. It has pleased him to make this most glorious display of himself here on earth, and to fix the attention of all creatures upon this world as the field of his noblest achievements. And what though it be little among the worlds that surround it? Does the glory of the achievement depend upon the importance of the place where it is performed? On the contrary, the place may acquire an importance from the achievements. But its insignificance can never dim their glory. Many a place otherwise unknown, has gained a name and distinction in history, from some great work performed there. Pharsalia was but a country town, and Actium a fishing port, and Waterloo a small village, and Bethlehem little among the cities of Judah. Little in themselves, they gained distinction from what was done there, just as this world gains distinction as the chosen field of God's great salvation. And to say, as some have done, this world is too insignificant for such achievements as to engage the attention of the universe, is to just say the battles of Actium and Waterloo were nothing, and the world had no interest in them, because the places were so insignificant. Whatever the world may be in itself, or however insignificant, it acquires an importance from the scenes transacted here—scenes which reveal God, and which angels desire to look into.

V. This salvation is great FROM ITS ACTUAL EFFECTS.—Suited to the nature and wants of man, it has its power and influence upon human hearts. It touches the very springs of life, bringing order out of confusion, cleansing the conscience, purifying the heart, restoring the soul to its right position, and the right use of its powers. Under its influence, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." It quickens together with Christ those who are dead in trespasses

and sins, and "raises them up together, and makes them sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It gives "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." In human hearts, the graces of the spirit take the place of the works of the flesh. Instead of "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revilings, and such like," come "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And this is done by what seems an easy and natural process, showing the efficiency of God's plan, and the power of his salvation. He works in grace by the gospel, as he works in nature by law, to effect a glorious change. We look abroad over barren fields, and decayed vegetation; storms sweep over them, and the white mantle of death covers. The naked trees are frozen to the very heart. But the spring returns. The pall of death is dissolved, and passes away before the fire that God has kindled. The direct rays of the sun melt and warm the frozen earth, and the refreshing rain comes down from heaven. All nature is changed. The fields are clothed in living vegetation. The mountains and hills, but lately so barren and waste, "break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands." Can we see this change passing before our eyes so quietly and yet so thoroughly effected, and not think of the power of God's salvation. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." "The Sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings." There is power in his rays to dissolve the chains of sin, to melt the frozen heart in penitence and godly sorrow, to transform by the renewing of the mind, to produce a new life and spirit, of

which all the change in nature is but a faint emblem. It does this now. It has done this—upon every class, upon every kind of human beings. Men have looked upon portions of their race, so unthinking, and sensual, and devilish,—the Hottentots, the Hindoos, the savages—and in despair exclaimed, “Can these dry bones live?” They can. They do, not only with hearts renewed by the gospel, but with intellects almost created by it. It has brought out a power of thought and feeling, of which in their debasement they seemed incapable. It is “mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;” restoring man to his right mind and to his right position before God, making him as the angels, and an heir of heaven. Such is but a faint outline of the great and glorious salvation which is brought to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ—great from the very necessity of the case, inasmuch as the ruin is great,—great from the price it cost, from the interest it excites, from the glory it brings to God as a just God and a Savior, and from the effects it produces.

Now the inquiry comes up, neglecting it, how shall any man escape? For, after all, it is not forced upon any man. The idea of force is inconsistent with its very nature. It is provided and offered freely, and it must be received as freely. God deals with men according to the nature he has given them. “There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” And however perverted and debased, it is not destroyed.

All who have been saved by this salvation, have employed their minds about it and studied into it, and so felt its power,

and been transformed by the renewing of their minds. It commends itself to every man's heart and conscience. But if his heart is full of other things, and his mind otherwise employed, the commandment is vain to him. He must *look*, that he may see. He does not see what he refuses to look at—he is not restored by a remedy which he neglects to apply. How shall we escape, having neglected so great salvation. This inquiry places the neglecter out before us. He has gone through his appointed season—his state of probation. There he stands—having neglected. Now, how shall he escape? It is a challenge to the wisdom and power of the world to devise a way of escape. He has no connection with the Savior—no hold on heaven—his sins are all upon his own head. The storm is at hand, and he has no shelter. Having neglected so great a salvation, how shall he escape? Once, any one could have told *how*. For there was a Savior, and a salvation, and an open door, and an open way to heaven. But now, having neglected this, *how*? How shall he escape? How can he!

SERMON XVIII.*

DEATH AND THE JUDGMENT.

As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

HEBREWS IX. 27.

THE text contains two assertions; and the second gives terror to the first. Were death the end of existence, it would still be dreadful. The soul shrinks back upon itself, and startles at destruction,

“ For who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity ? ”

Death in its own nakedness is never contemplated without terror. The very beasts tremble at its approach, as nature shrinks from it. To meet it calmly and boldly, without shrinking, requires a hardihood beyond human. The *thought* of it is unpleasant, and it is commonly put away among the things upon which we cannot bear to reflect. Though known and admitted to be inevitable, it is carefully excluded from the mind, and to the last hour of life, rarely appears as a reality. Each is perfectly aware of the exposure of others, and unconscious of his own. “ All men think all men mortal but themselves.” And it comes at last in a day when we look not for it. With all the manifest tokens of its approach, it comes unexpectedly. But there is something more dreadful than death—“ to be we

* This Sermon, delivered Sabbath P. M., July 14, 1850, was the last Mr. Merrill ever preached.

know not what—we know not where”—“after this, the judgment.” To go from the pains of disease to a tribunal of justice—from the agonies of dissolution to the judgment seat—to hear his voice, saying, “Return to the dust, ye children of men,” and then again, “Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.” For every man shall give an account of himself to God, who shall bring every work into judgment. All this is fitted to excite fear and terror to the highest pitch. The assertion of the text is incidental. It is not the apostle’s design to declare the certainty of death and a judgment after. He refers to these facts as matters well understood and admitted. The apostle’s design was, to show the pre-eminence of the sacrifice of the cross over all the Levitical sacrifices. One thing in proof of this superiority, is the fact that it was offered but *once*, whereas the Jewish sacrifices were offered continually, year by year. And the very repetition showed their insufficiency, for had they been efficacious, he asked, “would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins,” for “where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” Christ does not offer himself often, but once, and once for all. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” As to men, there is once to die, and after that the judgment; so to Christ, there is once to die, and after that to save or destroy, as his gospel shall be received or rejected. “As it is appointed to men once to die,” so Christ was once offered. Death finishes man’s probation, and sends him to the judgment; so the death of Christ finishes the work of righteousness and opens the gates of life. There is a judgment after death.

I. THIS IS NECESSARY TO VINDICATE THE CHARACTER OF

GOD. In this world there is a continual call for confidence and hope in God. Faith is to give substance to things hoped for and evidence to things not seen, and give reality and power to things that do not yet appear. Our God is a God of judgment. He loves righteousness, and hates iniquity. But this is not so manifest that there is no plausible ground to question it. He does not come forth at once to display his affection for the one, or abhorrence of the other. The side of righteousness is not always crowned with success, nor the side of iniquity covered with defeat. Every transgression shall receive its just recompense of reward, but we do not see this as yet. This is to the world a matter of faith, and not yet of experience; for while in some cases the extreme of wickedness has brought punishment at once, (as "some men's sins are open before hand, going before to judgment,") in others, the extreme of wickedness has secured success, or defied detection. Every transgression shall receive its just recompense of reward. But when? There is a time for every purpose, and for every work—a time to sow, and a time to reap—a time for probation, and a time for retribution. The retribution is not in this world. The judgment is *after* death. Here, for the most part, success or failure is a matter of prudence or imprudence, far more than of right or wrong. From the fall of man, the earth has been filled with violence. But God has always had a seed to serve him. They were his friends and favorites—heirs of his kingdom—dear to him as the apple of his eye, and engraved on the palms of his hands,—but no outward prosperity or enjoyment distinguished them from others. In a few extraordinary cases, he interfered to protect the pious, and punish the wicked, but in general, nothing of the kind. Desperate wickedness has often prospered by means of its very desperate-

ness. In how many cases would a little conscience—a little scruple about means—in other words a little less depravity, have prevented success! How slight a defence, often, is right means against all kind of means. In this world, the determined or the wilful for the most part bear rule. They push their own plans regardless of others, and push aside those who are too conscientious or kind-hearted to contend with them. How often does the force of numbers, or the force of fraud and falsehood, bear down the cause of righteousness. And the world is dazzled by the splendor of success, and praises what prospers. The conquerer wades through seas of blood to a throne. If he had been more mindful of his fellow men, his enterprise had failed—if he had been less prodigal of their blood, or less desperate in his course, his plan had failed. The pirate, acting upon the principle that “dead men tell no tales,” adds murder to robbery, and prospers for years; while the humanity of another spares his victim, to his own destruction. No man can observe the triumphing of wickedness and of the wicked, without the assurance that this is not all; as this does not show a God loving righteousness and hating iniquity. There is a judgment *after* death, which shall vindicate the character of God, and clear him from all appearance of conniving at wickedness.

II. A JUDGMENT AFTER DEATH BRINGS OUT HIDDEN WICKEDNESS. How many assume a virtue though they have it not, and accomplish their selfish ends by false pretences; and the hypocritical covering remains till they finish their probation. Their life is one long lie, and yet they prosper in it. Pretence is more successful than reality,—falsehood more profitable than truth. There is no outward defeat or discomfort to show God’s disapprobation. How much that is apparently good, and really

useful, is wrong in principle! Man looketh at the outward appearance, and he judges favorably, as he ought,—for he judges the unknown by the known,—but God looks at the heart, and sees it wrong in spirit and false in principle. Yet there is nothing to show his disapprobation. He requires truth in the inward parts; and finds falsehood, and suffers it to pass unpunished,—even unrebuked. How much of evil has been discovered after the perpetrators have left the world! They have had all the pleasures of sin, and for the time—as far as appears, for *all* time—escaped its pains. They have lived in all good reputation on earth, and died apparently in peace. Their crimes have been discovered years after their departure. Others have been successful in defying discovery. Their crimes perpetrated on earth, are concealed from men. Judgment is clearly after death—the judgment that brings out hidden wickedness.

III. A JUDGMENT AFTER DEATH GIVES JUST REWARDS TO MEN. A judgment before this, would be ill-timed and incomplete, as it would be formed upon partial or limited views—a judgment of what was intended, or *doing*, not of what is *done*. Till death, the work is unfinished and the character immature. The cup is not full, nor has the right or wrong grown to its full strength. But it is appointed to men once to die, and as that fixes its stamp upon his character, and finishes his probation, *after that*, the judgment.

Where is the selfish soul punished, that is rich to himself, and not rich toward God? He has lived to himself. His own pleasure and profit have always been the great objects of his regard, while his whole business has been to use his fellow men for his own advantage. The great law of love has been set aside, while he has neither feared God nor regarded men.

Where is he punished? His shrewdness or skill in transferring from others to himself, and holding with a desperate grasp, are praised rather than blamed on earth, among men. He is envied more than pitied or abhorred. "Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself." Where is *he* punished who has sacrificed the hopes and happiness of millions to his own aggrandizement? He has often prospered to the end of life, and left the fruit of his rapacity to his posterity. Job asks, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?" They are free from any peculiar suffering, and pass quietly away. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Death not so presented as to alarm their fears of evil—the pain itself but momentary—not punished by fearful forebodings, as it comes unexpectedly—not punished by lingering torments, as it is done at once, in a moment. A judgment after death is necessary, to give just rewards to men, as there is manifestly no such reward on earth; for no man knoweth good or evil by all that is before him. "Moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. I said in my heart, God *shall* judge the righteous and the wicked." But not now. "For there is a time there for every purpose and for every work," and Infinite Wisdom has selected the future time—*after* death. Such is the state of things on earth rendering a review and conviction indispensable, or truth and justice are trampled down forever.

There is a judgment after death. *Conscience bears witness to this, and often anticipates the sentence.* Conscience is the judgment which the mind forms of its own character—acquitting or condemning. Conscience cannot act without light and

knowledge. Its decision depends upon what is known. And enough is every where known to secure a condemnation. Every man knows that his Maker is entitled to his service, and that his law is the supreme law, and that he himself deserves to be happy or miserable, as he has or has not made it the supreme law. Is there not every where a consciousness of guilt and its desert? No man fears injustice at the hands of God. No man dreads him as a cruel or capricious being. Why then dread to appear in his presence? Why do man's fears arm the whole invisible world against himself? His guilt gives substance to things dreaded, and evidence to things not seen. Why do men fear death? Do you say, nature shrinks from dissolution? But when nature is subdued by severe and protracted suffering, death is still terrible. Do you say, death is dreaded as the end of earthly enjoyments? I answer, that when all these have come to an end, it is still dreaded.

But that which is so necessary to vindicate the character of God, to bring forth hidden wickedness, to give just rewards to men, and which conscience so often and so fearfully anticipates, the word of God declares shall be—*judgment after death!* This fact is presented in a great variety of ways. Refer to the providence of God. It was the great question debated by Job and his friends,—“Is judgment *before death*, or after? The friends said, “*Before.*” Job said, “*After.*” “Wherefore do the wicked live?” They are not punished here, as they spend their days in wealth, and die suddenly, and without pain. Neither does conscience cause them to lead an unquiet life, as the knowledge upon which alone conscience can act, is excluded. They have said unto God, “Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”

Jesus has taught the same truth in the parable of the tares

and the wheat, where both grow together till the harvest—in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, where *after death*, one was comforted and the other tormented. The fact of a judgment after death, stands or falls with Christianity itself. God now commands all men to repent, “because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.” “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.” After death, then the judgment.

1. *Here is consolation to the righteous.* Their Father has set upon them no outward mark of distinction, nor are they exempt from any of the sorrows of this present time. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. They are not what they wish to be, or what they shall be, as in this tabernacle, they often “groan, being burdened.” But they are saved by hope, and in this hope “they greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) they are in heaviness, through manifold temptations.” Their trials are of various kinds. Their characters are aspersed, their motives misrepresented, things which they know not, laid to their charge. The temptation is strong to vindicate themselves at all hazards. But all these have their time to pass away. Wait. Bear. “Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.” “After death, the judgment,” “and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.”

They see the law of God violated, his authority set at nought, his gospel despised, and the blood of Jesus trampled under foot. They are jealous for his honor, and ask, Where is the God of judgment? and they almost ask that fire may come down from heaven. The wicked, emboldened by delay, ask, “Where is the promise of his coming?” *They* are impatient of delay,—

anxious to precipitate matters, and outrun the justice of God. But the text teaches us to repress all such impatience or anxiety. Be not hasty in thy spirit, as though the God of judgment were unmindful of the time. Be patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. He seeth that their day is coming, and none the less certain or terrible from the apparent delay. He waits. Wait thou also. "After death, the judgment." Neither be discouraged at the afflictions of the righteous, nor impatient at the triumphing of the wicked. The time is short. Wait. How much better his time for correcting all this, than yours.

2. *Here is encouragement to effort. After death.* Then the whole space before, is a season of probation. Hope comes to all—hope diminishing as death approaches, but not vanishing till death has done its work. We are ready—too ready to despair of men—we look to the blinded mind, the hardened heart, and the seared conscience—the confirmed habits, the repeated rejections, and despair of men,—unless God should make windows in heaven. Without a miracle, their salvation is deemed impossible. We are disposed to remove God's land-mark, and give over efforts to save men, while the life is yet whole in them. But all such discouragement or despair is out of place, as anticipating God's time—*after death*. Be patient, and hope to the end, and if need be, hope even against hope. But if there is no hope from man, is there none from the Gospel? "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is fitted to every condition, and it is powerful to save to the utmost. Remember, "*after death, the judgment.*" The whole space *before* is a season of probation.

3. *How important an event is death.* It closes up the account, and fixes the seal upon the destiny of man. "It is appointed to men once to die, and after that the judgment." It is all over at death. And yet how seldom is death thus viewed! Death comes in various ways—by what is called accident, or sudden disease, or years of lingering pain. And it startles us according as it was sudden and unexpected. Yet who thinks of the judgment that comes after? We follow the remains to the grave, and they are buried out of sight. We pass our judgment upon the character and conduct of the departed, and little think of that judgment from which there is no escape, and no appeal. Committing ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, we retire from the field of the dead, and the whole scene is forgotten. An immortal being has ended his probation—a never dying soul has gone to the judgment—to bliss or wo. And the living fail to lay it to heart. There is no communion with the eternal world, as there is no faith to give substance to things not seen.

How important is death! And how near! On what a slender thread hang everlasting things! Does not wisdom cry, "Work while the day lasts. Make use of the delay of judgment to seek a shelter from the storm, a covert from the tempest." "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." And, safe in Christ, let it come. It is God's appointment, and let it be fulfilled. "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Death is at hand, and, "after death, the judgment." What will be the destiny of this audience? Shall it be acquittal or condemnation in that day? "A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished."

SERMON XIX.*

SUBMISSION.

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. JOHN XIII. 7.

JESUS enforced his instruction by his own example, and showed in his life what he required of others. In the way of holiness he does not say *Go*, but *Come*. Do as I have done. He has left us an example, that we should follow his footsteps. He had taught his disciples,—“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” “Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.” “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.” “He called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

But still he discovered pride, and an ambition to be great, and he took this method to correct and repress it. After supper he girded himself and appeared as the servant of all, ready to perform the most menial office. Peter considered this de-

* This Sermon was never preached. It was written subsequent to the last sabbath Mr. M. officiated in the pulpit. It was the last Sermon he wrote.

grading, and objected to it. "Lord! dost *thou* wash my feet?" It is *not becoming* for the Lord to perform it. It is not becoming for him to submit to it. He felt that he could order things better. Why! his Master had forgotten himself. He! perform the work of the lowest servant—wash my feet! Never! I know my place, and I will not submit to it. "Jesus said to him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,"—as if he had said, "Suffer it now, and you shall know the reason of it by and by. For, strange as it may appear, it has a meaning that even you shall commend, when you come to understand it. Have patience, and wait."

This is very often the language of God's providence,— "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," and this ought to satisfy us.

For the sake of illustration, let us recur to a few instances. The Bible affords them in abundance. Abraham left his own country and kindred, at the command of God, and went out, not knowing whither he went. "I will make of thee a great nation." And yet for years he had no child, and when at last a child was born, and grew up to years of maturity, he was commanded to offer this child a sacrifice. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Abraham was an old man, and this was the heir of prophecy and of promise—the prop of his declining age, the chosen seed through whom God's promises were to be fulfilled—and going forward to obey the command he must be left a lone wanderer on earth, and the promises fail of their accomplishment. Why such a command? If the solace of age must be removed, and the parent left childless, let God do it by his own immediate act, and not employ

the wretched father in this strange work. "Take thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of." Shall a parent imbrue his hands in the blood of his child? and that parent a friend to God, and God require it? How strange and seemingly unnatural—the best affections of his nature stifled—the dearest object of his heart slain by his own hands. But strange as this may seem when seen in part, there is nothing strange when the whole is seen and understood. Abraham went forward to obey the command, simply because he recognized the authority and had confidence in the character of him who gave it. He knew no particular reason why it was commanded, or what end was to be answered by it. It was enough that such was the command of God. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." And the result justified all his confidence. He knew that it was right to obey God, and that it was safe following his directions in the darkness and through the deeps. Why he was led in this particular way he could not know. But he knew all afterwards, and he did well to wait the event.

So it was with Jacob. He was led in a way that he knew not, and through trials and afflictions that seemed evil, and only evil. A great portion of his life was embittered by the wickedness of his children—their combinations in wrong, or their contests one with another. He loved them all, and yet he found it impossible to please them all. A favor shown to one was an offence to the rest. The younger, which was the object of his special regard, was for that reason the object of their special spite and malignity. They conspired to remove Joseph out of the way. Their first plan was to kill him,—their next to put him into a deep pit, and leave him to die. Then, as a company of slave-traders passed by, there was an appeal to their

cupidity. They could gratify their malignity, and at the same time make money by it. They sold him, and cheated their father into the belief of his death. But there was a providence in all this—God working as well as man—God meaning good, as well as man meaning evil. This providence was continually saying to the father, “Wait—judge nothing before the time—‘what I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.’” The aged saint agonized in bitterness of spirit, while the wicked prospered and rejoiced. But after twenty years, the time of trial came. A famine overspread their land, and there was provision in the land to which they had sold their brother. Thus they were brought to meet him face to face; and the various trials to which they were exposed, were fresh trials to the good old man—as they returned *all but one*, and demanded that the younger brother should go with them. All this looked not like salvation, but destruction. Jacob judged according to appearance—though (as the event showed) not righteous judgment—when he exclaimed, “All these things are against me.” The whole seemed designed to “bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave,” while the real design was the salvation of the whole family. He that was sold into bondage, was in effect but sent on before “to save much people alive.” Through all the process of trial, God said to him, “what I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”

Says John to the well-beloved Gaius, “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” So it was with Job. His soul’s prosperity was the measure of his worldly prosperity, for he was “perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.” He had a flourishing family, and large possessions,—prosperous every way. His prosperity excited envy and malignity.

His religion was misconstrued—charged as selfish and mercenary. “Doth Job fear God for nought?” And when the pious prosper in worldly things, Satan and his emissaries are always ready with such questions. Their uncharitableness puts the worst construction possible, and imputes evil when there is the least plausibility. In all the trials of Job, this was the point to be tried. Was he mercenary? seeing no glory or beauty in God only as God defended and prospered him? Did he love the *character* of God, or only his *gifts*? Now if he had been told beforehand that *this* was the object of trial, the great end of trial would not have been answered. It was a necessary part of the trial that he should not know why he was tried. Was he to trust in God even when walking in darkness and seeing no light? Would he trust in God even when he inquired in vain, “Show me wherefore thou contendest with me?” “Make me to know my transgression and my sin.” God said to him, “Be still and know that I am God,—what I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” And when the trial was complete, the whole object of it was manifest. He came out of the furnace as gold purified by the fire, and was again a prosperous man, with no plausible pretence of mercenary or selfish motives. A better man, he had larger possessions. He prospered and was in health. God was justified in all his dealings with him. He was victorious by his faith in God through the trial, and the event showed the justness of his confidence. He believed that he was not afflicted merely to make him miserable, but that a good end was to be answered by his trial, though he had no kind of conception what the good end would be. Now he saw and felt it, and looked back upon his trial as the ordering of infinite wisdom and goodness.

It was so with the crucifixion of Christ. He was taken by

wicked hands, and crucified and slain, though he did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth. His disciples were often told that this *must* be—he *must* go up to Jerusalem, and there suffer the things that had been foretold of him. And yet it was a mystery that one so good should be subjected to such trials—that one in whom God was well pleased, should be given into the hands of wicked men—and that one able to save himself should thus freely be given up to die. His disciples looked on with wonder and astonishment—with a hope at first that he would deliver himself, and when that failed, with a sinking, despairing heart. They knew not that he must suffer and then enter into his glory—that the Captain of salvation must be made perfect through suffering. The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow were all a mystery, and at his departure sorrow filled their hearts,—and though told that it was expedient for them, they had no conception in what way. They must wait and trust. “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” By death he must conquer him that hath the power of death. They did not understand it,—they had no conception of it. What he told them, came to them for the most part in word only. But how glorious afterward, when their eyes were opened, and their hearts enlightened to understand the great designs of his death—Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation—making atonement for sin, and drawing hearts to God—procuring pardon and purity—justifying God and saving men.

How often did the disciples hear the same voice. They were few, and needed the support and companionship of one another. And for this mutual support they crowded together, weeping and rejoicing in their own company. Then came per-

secution, like the explosion of an earthquake, and scattered them all abroad; and what was intended for their destruction turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. Cast upon their own resources, they found an unexpected ability to meet their dangers. Separated from their friends, they went every where preaching the gospel, and so making new friends. They found companions and support, as God always caused them to triumph. Their dispersion spread abroad the riches of grace, and multiplied the heirs of salvation. It was a mystery that they should be so much and so deeply afflicted, but a mystery that was soon explained, even to their own satisfaction.

So with the early death of the pious. How often are they taken away in the midst of their years, and as it were in the beginning of their usefulness. A great portion of their time on earth is spent in preparation, and the preparation is scarcely completed when they pass away. How could the early church spare Stephen—"a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost?" The very qualities that fitted him for heaven, made him most of all desirable on earth. But his death may have been more effective than all his preaching. There was a close connection between the death of Stephen and the conversion of Saul, and useful as was Stephen, he gave place to one far more useful. Now in this and numerous other cases, the providence of God speaks an intelligible language. Judge nothing before the time. Bear. Wait. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." This ought to satisfy us.

For, 1. The reasons in many cases *are above our comprehension*. We cannot enter into the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, and even were they explained to us, we have no mind to grasp them. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" And shall God

have no secrets? “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught Him?” Shall a single ray of reason judge the decisions of Infinite Wisdom? and condemn all that it cannot understand? Shall we bring the Infinite to our little measure, and decide that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are nothing, because they are beyond us? That there is no height beyond what we have reached, and no depth beyond our power to fathom? “Lo, these are parts of his ways,” and however strange in themselves, they may be all clear when seen in connection with the other parts.

2. In many cases the knowledge would be *inconsistent with our state of probation*. We are on trial—a trial of our faith and constancy, our hope in God, our regard to the right. And surely it is no great credit to adhere to the right when there is no temptation to do otherwise—to submit to God’s dispensations when they are just such as we would have them. The trial of constancy is when things seem dark, and we are led in a way we know not; when wickedness seems triumphant, and the wrong, good policy. We then show our confidence in Him by a simple adherence to His directions, and looking through all appearances to Him. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “Although the fig tree shall 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 stall; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” “It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth Him good.” What seems good to us, is often evil; what seems good to Him, *is* good.

3. *The future world will reveal*. “Thou shalt know hereafter.” The reasons will be made clearly manifest, and our

minds enlightened, and hearts purified, will be prepared to appreciate them. God's dispensations will be presented in their true character, and hearts in sympathy with him will understand and rejoice in them. Those that in faith have said, "He hath done all things well," though they could not see how it would be well, now see clearly. It is no longer faith, but sight. They understand the whole matter, and see that it is well. They justify God throughout. His wisdom and goodness stand out in real life, and they rejoice in all the way in which he brought them, and glorify him for all—for the prosperous and the adverse, for all they have suffered, and for all they have enjoyed.

The great object of trial is to beget confidence in God. Trust. Wait.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace."

What I do thou knowest not now, therefore judge nothing before the time.

"Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

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