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# SERMONS AND ESSAYS

BY

MINISTERS OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

EDITED BY THOMAS O. <sup>Sumner</sup>SUMMERS, D.D.

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Nashville, Tenn.:

PUBLISHED BY E. STEVENSON & F. A. OWEN, AGENTS,  
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

1857.

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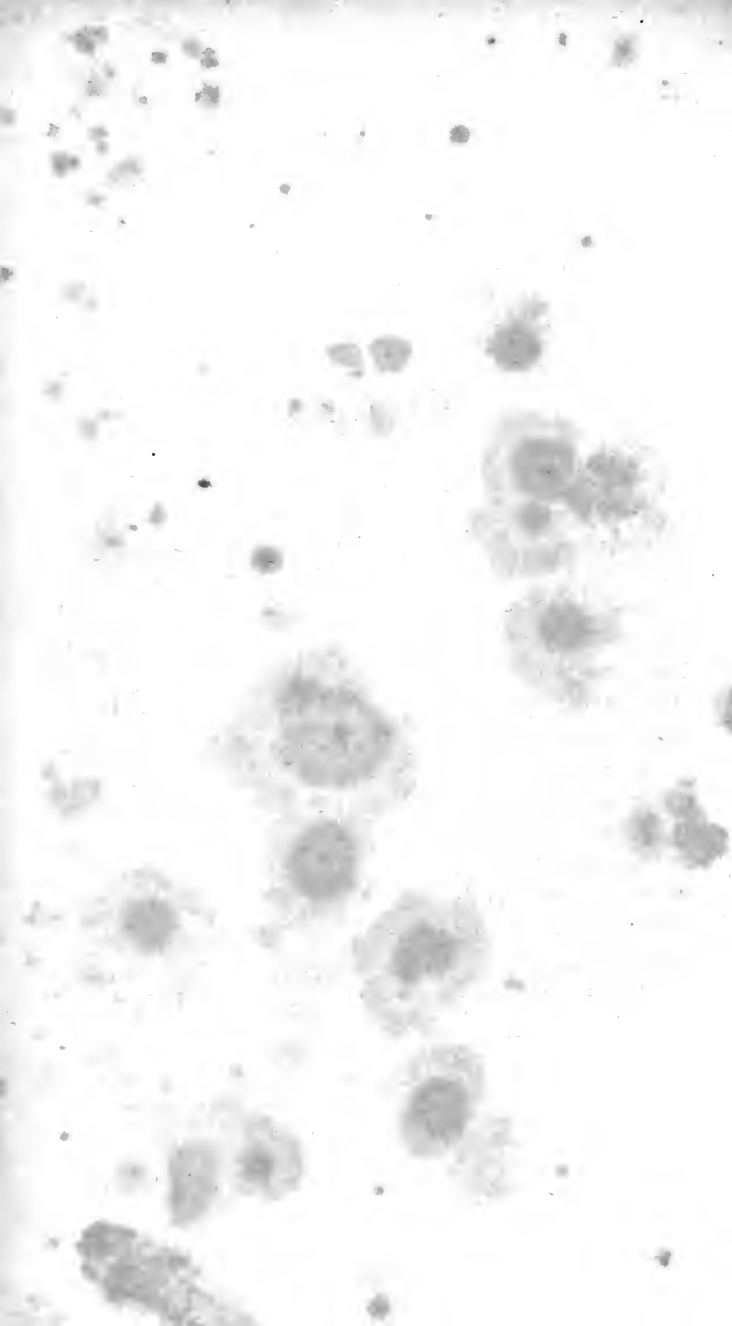
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## Editorial Note.

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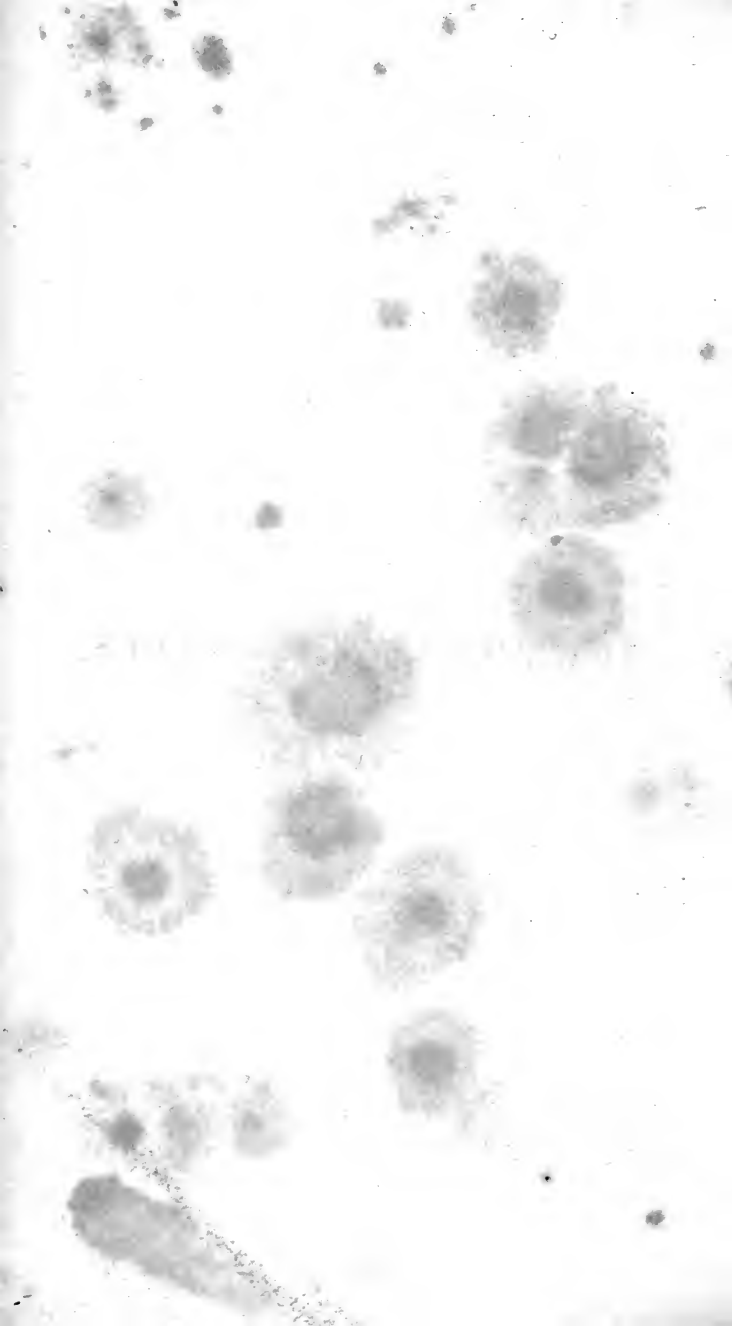
THE Sermons and Essays contained in this volume have all been published in separate pamphlets, in which form they are still issued, for the convenience of those who wish them for gratuitous circulation or other purposes. They were all brought out under the supervision of the present editor, who does not, however, hold himself responsible for all the views which may be advocated by some of the authors; though it is believed none of them transcend the freedom of opinion and utterance recognized by the communion to which they belong. The importance of the topics, the general ability with which they are discussed, and the variety of matter and style, render this an interesting and edifying book.

The Editor.

NASHVILLE, TENN., February 5th, 1857.

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SERMONS AND ESSAYS.





OBJECT AND NATURE

OF

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP:

A DISCOURSE

Delivered at the Dedication of John-Street Church,

NEW YORK, JAN 4, 1818.

BY JOSHUA SOULE.

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Nashville, Tenn.:

PUBLISHED BY E. STEVENSON & F. A. OWEN, AGENTS,  
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

1857.



## Editorial Note.

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THE following Discourse was delivered by Bishop Soule, when he was connected with the Book Concern in New York; and was published by request of the Trustees of John Street Church. It was delivered at the opening of that edifice, which stood in the site of the present church, where also stood the first Methodist church in America, erected in 1768. A copy of this excellent sermon recently came into our hands, and we are not willing to let it go to oblivion. It deserves a better fate. We do not, however, feel at liberty to publish it without the Advertisement, prefixed to it by the author.

THOS. O. SUMMERS.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., May 5, 1855.

## Advertisement.

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WHEN the following discourse was delivered, the author had no expectation that it would appear before the public in print; consequently, but very little had been written, or so committed to memory as to preserve the identity of expression. The reader is also desired to recollect that two discourses had been delivered on the same day, particularly adapted to the occasion of opening a house for religious worship. To avoid interfering with the subject of these discourses, the speaker, in the evening, found it necessary, in several instances, to depart from the design which had been previously formed; in consequence of which, several ideas were entirely omitted, especially in relation to the divine immutability. But although such omissions might be admissible, under the circumstances above stated, in delivering a discourse to nearly the same congregation which had heard the previous ones, yet it would be very improper to present it to the public mutilated by such omissions. It is, therefore, published in substance as it was designed. Scarcely an idea was advanced, when it was delivered, which is not here retained, and the order is preserved as far as the above circumstances would admit. That there is a variation of language there is no doubt; but the strictest care has been taken to preserve the phraseology in which it was delivered, as far as possible. No apology is offered for presenting it to the public but a desire to gratify many, it is believed sincere friends, who have repeatedly requested its publication, and a hope that it may be useful to some into whose hands it may fall.

## RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

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“God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—JOHN iv. 24.

THAT all nations of men, in all ages of the world, have possessed some ideas of a God, or a power above themselves, appears evident, as far as we can depend upon our limited means of knowledge respecting them. Indeed, it should seem that (independent of innate ideas) the variety and grandeur of the works of creation—the order and harmony of the whole system of visible things—the daily demonstrations of the frailty and dependence of every grade of animated being—and the constitution and powers of mind, of which there is a certain consciousness—are subjects, considered in relation to perceptive and reflecting beings, sufficient to produce a conviction of an intelligent Cause. But although the light of nature might afford such evidence as would produce a belief in the *existence* of a God, we are fully assured that it is totally insufficient to guide the human mind to such a knowledge of his nature and attributes, of his will and moral government, and of the relations between him and his creatures, as is necessary to acceptable devotion and eternal happiness.

How dark and superstitious were the notions which the most enlightened heathens possessed of the Deity—their gods were multiplied to a number not easily calculated—they were partial and passionate—sometimes at war with men, and sometimes hurling their thunderbolts or casting their fatal javelins at each other. There was not a passion, however disgraceful to themselves, but was considered as existing in their imaginary deities; and this too at the zenith of arts and sciences—when philosophy and the splendid branches of human

knowledge were cultivated with extraordinary zeal, both in public and private life. But however bright the sun of science might have shone, a dark and portentous cloud filled their temples and enveloped their altars.

The inscription, "*To the unknown God,*" while it stands a monument of the insufficiency of the light of nature to guide our dark and bewildered minds into the paths of truth, righteousness and eternal life, will, at least indirectly, lead us to admire and adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of the God of all grace in furnishing our benighted world with a revelation of himself, and of his purposes and designs concerning man.

In tracing the history of that divine revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures, we observe that all its important contents were not to burst upon our world at once. It contained the plan of an infinite mind, and the times, manner, and methods of unfolding it were best adapted to the ends for which it was designed.

The communications of God to the ancient patriarchs, and the openings of the divine counsels under the prophetic dispensation, all pointed to a more perfect and intelligible display of the mind and will of Jehovah.

The giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, in the wilderness of Arabia, was a grand era in the history of man. But terrible indeed was the sight when God came down to write his law on tables of stone—Moses must fear and tremble, and a veil must be cast, even over the mirror which was to reflect the divine glory and majesty—thunderings and lightnings must accompany the awful message. But even in that message the whole Deity was not known—the Mount was enveloped in clouds and smoke; and a law of burdensome ceremonies follows, all which were shadows of better things which were yet to come. In all these, God was but dimly seen. It was reserved for the Messiah—the Ancient of days—the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, to make a full declaration of the nature, perfections, and counsels of the eternal Mind. This he has accomplished in the capacity of our Mediator. In *him* we behold the meridian sun of revelation—the light of the world—the brightness of the Father's glory—the express image of his person—the desire of nations—the hope of Israel—the end of sacrifices—the fulfilment of the law—the

accomplishment of prophecy—the Alpha and Omega in the economy of redemption and grace. It is a sufficient recommendation of the words which I have chosen on the present auspicious occasion, that they proceeded from his gracious lips; but, rightly understood, they will be found to convey a much clearer and more comprehensive view of the nature and attributes of God, than can possibly be obtained from all the methods of communication prior to the gospel era; and to explain the duty of man in relation to the Deity in a manner which claims a grand ascendancy over every former dispensation. It is not my design, on the present occasion, to furnish you with a narrative of the *rise* and *progress* of building houses, specially for the purpose of religious devotion: this would only be treading in the footsteps of many who have gone before me; and, should the history be conducted by the light of impartial truth, it would furnish many circumstances which could reflect no honor upon the professed friends of religion. Neither does it incorporate with my present views, to attempt a vindication of the propriety and necessity of erecting houses for such purposes. It is a favorable and delightful consideration, that the pious zeal, which seems to be almost everywhere rising and prevailing, in a great measure removes the necessity of such a vindication. The *time* and the *manner* in which this house has been built corroborate the pleasing fact. The words of the text, in conformity to the event of opening this house for religious solemnities, lead us to consider, First, the *Object*, and, Secondly, the *nature* of religious worship.

First. God is set before us in these words as the proper Object of worship. And that we may not do homage to an *unknown* God, the inspired writings have furnished us with a revelation of his nature, attributes, and administration. And to these writings, as to an authentic communication from Heaven to men, we must have recourse in all our endeavors to obtain a right knowledge of the true God.

The light of nature is inadequate to the purposes of our investigation; yet, so far as we can trace the harmony of the books of nature and revelation, we must be sensibly struck with their agreement. In exploring the works of creation and providence, we discover evident manifestations of design—of an intelligent Cause. The order, magnitude, and mo-

tions of the heavenly bodies—the *form* and *natural divisions* of the earth—the succession of day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest—the exquisite beauty of the vegetable kingdom—the mysterious organization of animated bodies—and, above all, the powers and faculties of mind, inspire a conviction of an efficient *Cause*, and intimate that this *Cause* must be wise, eternal and omnipotent. But numerous examples from among the most enlightened of the heathen world, demonstrate the insufficiency of human reason, unaided by revelation, to form just conceptions of this *first Cause*. But no sooner do we cast our eyes on the luminous page of revealed truth, than the veil is removed. Here that Being whose glory was but dimly reflected by all the grandeur and majesty of his works, is pleased to make himself known by a direct communication. But before we enter directly on the subject, it is necessary to observe that all our inquiries concerning the Deity should be attended with deep humility. Ostentation would be highly criminal where a subject so awful and interesting is concerned. Let us enter upon it with the reflections of the Psalmist deeply engraved on our hearts: “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, *what is man?*” “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold! thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” By searching we shall not be able to *find out* GOD. His attributes will still lie infinitely beyond the grasp of our feeble intellect; and the farther we pursue the inquiry, the more fully shall we be convinced of our incapacity to comprehend the Eternal, or fathom the depth of the counsels of the Most High. Yet such may be our discoveries as to lead us to wonder, admire, and adore.

1. The words of the text lead us to consider God as a spiritual essence. In the darker ages of the world, mankind had gross ideas of the Deity as a material being, possessed of body and parts, and tangible like other sensitive beings. Hence the *multitude* and *locality* of their gods. But the light of revelation has dispersed these clouds of ignorance, and declared the perfect spirituality of the divine nature. In this light, the single



expression, "*God is a Spirit*," accomplished that for the world which had confounded the wisest philosophers, and baffled the exertions of human science for ages and generations. The *spirituality* of God being asserted, his *unity* must be perceived; for, as far as the human mind is capable of discovery, divisibility is the property of matter only. But direct testimony has established the doctrine, and removed the necessity of proving it by conclusions from given premises. "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is *one* Lord." "Now, a Mediator is not a Mediator of *one*, but God is *one*."

2. The eternity of the Deity is here established.

I will not impose upon your understanding by attempting to prove this point of doctrine; but would rather introduce it with a design to impress your hearts with a suitable reverence for that infinite Being, who *is*, who *was*, and who *is to come*; and to inspire such *trust* and *confidence* in him, as the ideas of endless duration and immutability are calculated to encourage and support.

It was for the same purpose Moses spake of God in this light: "The *eternal* God is thy *refuge*, and underneath are the *everlasting* arms." And the same end is proposed when the prophet represents the Deity as the "High and Lofty One, inhabiting *eternity*." All sublunary things have a beginning—are subject to change and decay—and must finally dissolve and perish; but God is the same, and his years shall have no end. He is from everlasting to everlasting, and his throne for ever and ever. The human mind, limited in its capacity of comprehension, soon becomes lost in the contemplation of a being whose duration cannot be measured by fixed periods. We mete out time by days, weeks, months, years and centuries; but there are bounds beyond which our calculations cannot pass; and when we have increased the account to millions and millions of ages, we cannot say *this is a part of eternity*. Here no comparison can be drawn or proportion conceived. Such then is the object of our worship; with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

3. The ubiquity of God is here asserted. The person with whom our Saviour was conversing had suggested ideas of the *locality* of the divine presence. Indeed, the Jews, as well as the Samaritans, appear to have supposed that there were par-

particular places where the Deity more especially resided, and where only he could be acceptably worshipped. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but ye" Jews "say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." The same prejudices have been handed down from generation to generation; and notwithstanding the light of the Christian Scriptures on this subject, we still discover too many traits of the ancient superstition. But how certain is it, that an *undivided* and *eternal Spirit* must exist equally in every place; and that devotion is equally acceptable to him, whether offered from the cottage or the throne—from the closet, or from the public assemblies—from the wilderness, or from the city. If the Christian dispensation has authorized the erecting of houses particularly for the purpose of religious worship, we must consider it in relation to social order and happiness, and not as any proof of the locality of the divine presence. In this connection it will not be improper to take notice of certain expressions not unfrequently used in devotional addresses to the infinite Jehovah—especially praying that he would be present with us in this or that place. Now, that he is present with all creatures, in *all places*, and at *all times*, is most certain; for unbounded space is his temple, and he fills *time* as he fills *space*. All, therefore, which is necessary to individual or social happiness, is, that such a manifestation of his presence may be made as will lead the mind to a right apprehension of his character—produce a conviction of a personal interest in his favor, and inspire a firm confidence in his providence and grace. Such a manifestation of his presence should, therefore, be the subject of prayer.

But as the omnipresence of God is one of the grand pillars of revealed religion, and a belief of it of the first importance in the exercises of rational devotion, let us attend to the representations of the Spirit of inspiration. "Can any hide himself in secret places where I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. God is not far from us, for in him we live, and move, and have our

being." How insignificant do all the heathen deities appear, when viewed in the light of these sublime descriptions of the one true and living Jehovah! There is not a place where the Christians' God does not exist. He environs all beings, penetrates all substances, and by an active influence guides the stupendous wheels of nature. Universal space is the temple where he dwells—earth, seas, and skies are his altars, from whence the sacrifices of sincere love, humble devotion, and grateful praise ascend, with equal acceptance, before his throne. What are these stately pillars? these well-proportioned columns? these majestic arches? Turn your eyes to the more stupendous productions of an Almighty hand! Behold the ten thousand variegated beauties which appear on the surface of our globe: survey the grandeur of the scene where earth and ocean meet: view the lofty arch of heaven, studded with radiant diamonds: contemplate the ponderous planets, rolling in grand succession through the pathless fields of space; and from all these works learn to elevate your minds to *Him* whose *word* gave them birth, whose *finger* guides their motions, and whose *power* preserves their being. That there is a place which we call heaven, or the paradise of God, where the divine glory and majesty are specially manifested, there can be no rational doubt. Revelation assures us of it, and points us to it as the place of perfect and eternal joy and rest. Reason corroborates it; for however innumerable the multitude of saints and angels, or however various the orders of holy and happy spirits, they can all occupy but a limited space, and this space must bound the *manifestations* of the divine presence. But it should always be recollected that *time* and *place* are terms which can only apply to derived, and, consequently, limited beings; and if they are used with reference to the Deity, they must always be considered in a relative sense. Suffer me to close these observations on the omnipresence of God, with the substance of the reflections of a pious and learned man. How *happy* must be the condition of that intellectual being who is always in the presence of the Deity, and is always conscious of his presence from the manifestations of his love and favor! How *melancholy* is the situation of a rational being who is continually in his presence without a consciousness of it; and how inconceivably *wretched* and *miserable* must that intelli-

gent creature be, who is for ever in the presence of God, and is conscious of his presence only from what he feels of his wrath and indignation.

4. The God we worship, being *eternal* and *ubiquitary*, must be omniscient. "Known unto God are all his works." He who has *created* all things, who *upholds* and *governs* all things, must have a perfect knowledge of them; not only with respect to the several properties of distinct beings, separately considered, but also in reference to all the relations and dependencies of the great whole. Matter and mind are equally naked in his sight. The most secret springs and hidden motives of human actions are perfectly disclosed to his view. He marks with strictest scrutiny the various degrees of the moral excellence or turpitude of the works of men. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; for the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Nothing can exceed the beauty and sublimity of the Psalmist in his reflections upon infinite knowledge resulting from omnipresence. He had just taken a view of the divine majesty as everywhere present. If he cast his eyes to heaven, the ineffable glory met the powers of vision: if he looked towards hell, the terrors of his wrath were there; and should he arrive at that dark and gloomy centre to which human skill had never penetrated, even there he could not elude the grasp of his Maker's hand. But will not the darkness conceal him? No: that gloom of night which is impenetrable to every other eye but that of the Deity, is to him as meridian day. His understanding is infinite. "My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them. Thou has searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising: thou understandest my thoughts afar off: there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Such thoughts of God can never fail to have a powerful influence over the exercises of the heart. Hence the pious author of this psalm annexes to these reflections the most lively expres-

sion of his delight, thanksgiving, and prayer. Such are the sentiments and feelings which should ever mingle in all our attempts to worship the God of wisdom, power, and grace.

5. To the foregoing perfections of Jehovah we must add that of immutability. Fluctuation and change are stamped upon the face of all visible things. Man, through ignorance, weakness, or design, frequently fails to accomplish his engagements. The best concerted plans of frail mortals are often defeated. Hopes which appear to be founded in the strongest human security, are blasted in an hour. The most permanent systems of civil polity have suffered revolutions. Thrones have trembled. The most powerful monarchs, whose sceptres have made nations bow, have themselves fallen to rise no more. Even the heavens and the earth, and the constitution of all visible things, are reserved, under an infallible determination, to a grand and universal change.

But that Being, who is *spiritual* in his essence, *eternal* in his duration, filling infinite space with his presence, and possessing a perfect knowledge of all things, must remain the same, without variation or shadow of turning.

But as the doctrine of the immutability of God, rightly understood, affords the greatest possible security and consolation to good men, so, misapprehended, it may tend to encourage presumption, false confidence, or despair. It may therefore be proper to observe that immutability, as a perfection of the Deity, is nothing more nor less than the *fixed* and *unchangeable* determination of his mind to the accomplishment of that which is right and just; having in view his own glory, and the good of his creatures. But we should have been still in obscurity, as it respects the counsels and purposes of the divine Mind, had not a direct revelation unfolded them. In this revelation it has pleased the everlasting Father to make known his will to man with specific reference to a *rule*, and to an *end*. The moment we quit the dubious regions of metaphysical refinements, and philosophical disquisitions, and make our impartial and unprejudiced appeal to the oracles of sacred truth, we find our path illuminated with rays of heavenly light: the character of our Almighty Creator and gracious Redeemer appears as drawn in sunbeams; and on the fair picture stands engraved, in letters more precious than gold, "*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;*

*but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*" Here we learn that the immutability of God necessarily implies an unchangeable love of holiness and hatred of sin; and an invariable determination to render to every man according to his works. There is, therefore, no disagreement between the doctrine that a man may be a subject of the displeasure of God at one time, and of his favor at another, and the doctrine of the divine immutability. Indeed, to deny that a man may be a subject of grace at one time, and a child of wrath at another, is either to deny the possibility of a change in the moral character of men, or to assert the mutability of God. For example: suppose David to have been equally in favor with God at the times when he was meditating and executing murder, and when he was meditating and delighting in the law of God day and night: what is the conclusion? Most certainly one of the following: either there was no change in the moral character of David, or the divine administration must have changed. Or is it to be supposed that sin loses its moral turpitude and criminality because it is committed by those who have once been delivered from its guilt and power? This supposition is not only a direct violation of the most plain and positive declarations of the Scriptures, but a flat contradiction of the dictates of common sense, and in open hostility with those great maxims on which the administration of punitive justice is founded. The criminality of a sinful action is increased or diminished according to the degrees of knowledge or conviction against which it is committed, and the strength of the obligations which are violated. To produce the numerous passages of Scripture which go to establish this proposition, would be to transcribe a considerable part of the Bible. If we read that "God is of one mind, and worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," let us always remember that his will is the standard of eternal rectitude and truth. It is in this light we behold the claim of the Deity to our sincere and devout worship. It was in this character Moses exhibited him before the whole house of Israel: "Because I will publish the name of the Lord, ascribe ye greatness to our God. He is the *Rock*: his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment. A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." No language could better describe

the unchangeable nature of the attributes and government of God. The Psalmist exulted in the contemplation of this sublime truth. He surveyed the heavens and the earth as growing old like a garment, and changing like a vesture; but He who created them as enduring and remaining the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His promises must stand fast when the sun grows dim with age, and nature sinks in years. O ye servants of the living God! lift up your heads with rejoicing: this dust may return to its mother dust: the earth may receive back to its bosom its numerous offspring: the lamps of heaven may burn out: the planets may start from their orbits, and, quitting their ancient courses, rush in wild confusion one against another: the elements may dissolve: the pillars of the universe may tremble and be removed: nature may utter her last expiring groan, and time be lost in eternity; but when all these grand revolutions shall have transpired, HE who has set his bow in the cloud will remain the same, and his covenant shall endure for ever.

6. Notwithstanding the observations already made, it is necessary to add, that the Object of our worship is possessed of every moral perfection. This, indeed, has been suggested in the course of the investigation; but not with sufficient clearness to answer our present design. Would we worship God according to the requisition in the text, we must apprehend him as a Being of infinite goodness, mercy, justice, and truth; and as exercising these adorable perfections in the moral government of the world. The proportion and harmony of the divine attributes must be considered. Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, must meet and embrace each other. Were we to consider God merely as possessing infinite power, without being able to determine the principles by which its operations were governed, our condition, to say the least, would be very forlorn. We should be ignorant whether it would be exerted for our happiness, our misery, or our annihilation. Should we unite justice to power, we might have cause to fear and tremble; but where would be the ground of confidence or hope, for creatures conscious of sin and guilt? What but wrath and indignation could be expected? God could only be viewed as an inexorable judge. But when to these attributes we add mercy and goodness, we find a proper foundation for all those exercises of the heart

which are incorporated in evangelical worship. Infinite power is directed by unerring wisdom, governed by justice and truth, and attended by love and mercy. We fear, we trust, we love, we praise. O what a deep interest have perishing sinners in those declarations which God has made of his dispositions and designs towards them! dispositions of kindness and designs of grace. Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! while He proclaims himself the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. It is certainly an act of infinite condescension for God to accept the penitence of rebels, and receive to his favor the repenting sinner; but it is only from a view of this condescension that we are encouraged to approach him with the hope of acceptance. To sum up the whole, when we apprehend God as a Spirit, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, and immutable; possessed of every moral perfection, and exercising the whole for the happiness of his intelligent creatures, we have before us the proper Object of our worship. Having thus considered the Object, let us, *Secondly*, notice the nature of religious worship.

It appears evident from our Lord's conversation with the Samaritan woman, that very imperfect notions were entertained of the nature of that worship which man owed to God. The Samaritans possessed a scrupulous veneration for the mountain where their fathers worshipped, and the Jews were equally tenacious of their city, their temple, their synagogues, and their altars. But Jesus Christ declared that the time was at hand when neither in that mountain nor in Jerusalem, as preferable to other places, should men worship the Father; but that the true worshippers should worship in spirit and in truth; that it was such worship which he required, and such only he would accept.

From his words we learn, in general, that spiritual worship consists in paying a due respect, veneration, and homage to the Deity, by the sincere and unfeigned devotion of the heart and life to him, according to the declarations of his will in the Holy Scriptures. Such worship stands opposed in its spirituality to the legal ceremonies of the Jewish dispensation,



and to the long and dreary catalogue of heathen superstitions. The Christian economy, as it more fully unfolded the nature, attributes, and providence of God, so it furnished a more perfect knowledge of the obligations and duties of man. What particularly distinguishes this dispensation is, that it contains much clearer and more powerful influences of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy points to this in multiplied instances. It was with particular reference to it that God promised to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh—to put his laws in their hearts, and write them in their minds. Who does not see the contrast here drawn? God had once written his law visibly on tables of stone; but under the gospel he writes it on the tables of the heart. The same is alluded to by St. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews: “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and *darkness* and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the *heavenly Jerusalem*, and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the *new covenant*, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Our blessed Lord gave repeated assurances of the large and general effusions of the Holy Spirit; and when the time was fully come, sent him down from the Father according to his promise. The office of the Spirit, thus sent, was to convince and reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—to enlighten every man that cometh into the world, and, abiding always with believers, to lead them into all truth. It is his prerogative to take of the things of the Father and show them unto us. Under such a manifestation of light and grace, it is reasonable that man should have a clearer knowledge of God; and that he should love him with all his heart, soul, might, mind, and strength, and serve him with uniform zeal and universal devotion. It is proper therefore to observe, more particularly, that in the spiritual worship which God requires of his creatures, is implied, first, a just apprehension of the Object. Without this, all

our pretended devotions must necessarily partake of superstition or enthusiasm. It is only when the mind is impressed with a suitable sense of the divine perfections, that the heart can be rightly exercised in prayer and praise; but a right view of God will not fail to stamp the characters of sincerity, humility, and fervor on all our religious performances. This, too, gives stability and firmness to our devotions; and produces that uniformity and consistency of character which can only result from genuine conviction. Our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship ye *know not* what." "We *know* what we worship." The Athenian altar was distinguished by being inscribed, "*To the unknown God:*" and a God unknown must be ignorantly worshipped. To arrive at such a knowledge of the Deity as is requisite to produce in the heart that humility, veneration, and respect which are included in spiritual worship, it is necessary to have recourse to all the methods in which the divine character is revealed, and to all the means of instruction which Providence may have placed within our power. The works of creation and providence are well adapted to this end. Through them the invisible things of him from the beginning are clearly seen, even his eternal power and Godhead. But the sacred oracles must be resorted to as our infallible directory. Reason must submit her high pretensions to the authority of revelation. Here God is seen in his own light—all his attributes are delineated by the pencil of infallible truth. With such means of knowledge at hand, can we be ignorant of God, and remain innocent? No: this is ignorance at which God will not wink. Let us know then, assuredly, that whoever would serve God in an acceptable manner, must seek to know him.

2. To worship God aright implies an adequate perception of the rule. By the rule, I mean those directions which the word of God has supplied relative to the government and regulation of our hearts and lives in all our religious devotions. Without a proper knowledge of this rule, we are in danger of presumption on the one hand, and of lifeless formality on the other. For want of such knowledge, enthusiasm and superstition have too often usurped the seats of Christian moderation and charity. It is not the least affliction which the Church has suffered, that many of her professed friends have substituted the impulses of their passions,

or the strength of their prejudices, for the unerring testimony of the oracles of God; and, through an indiscreet zeal, have broken down those sacred barriers which the gospel has erected to guard her rights. With such persons a special impression upon their own minds, or a particular prejudice of their education, will outweigh the plainest declarations of the Bible, and is paramount to all authority, human or divine. The best reason they can assign for their practice is, that they *feel* it to be their duty, or their parents or instructors taught them so. With these persons we shall generally observe a disposition very foreign from that moderation, candor, and charity so highly recommended in the word of God. Hence the importance of searching the Scriptures to ascertain what is the will of God concerning us. To this infallible standard all our *feelings*, all our *impressions*, all our *prejudices* and *prepossessions* should submit. And let no one suppose that because he has found a single text that appears to favor his opinions, he has sufficient authority on which to rest. But rather let him read, examine, and compare the Scriptures, with devout and humble prayer that the Holy Spirit may shine upon his understanding, and teach him the things which he knows not.

As it is not unfrequent for Christians to produce examples from the manners of the pious, under the Jewish economy, as authority for the same practices under the gospel dispensation, it may not be improper to observe that such examples should be admitted with caution in all cases where there is not some corresponding authority in the Christian Scriptures. The propriety and importance of this observation will appear if we consider that in many respects the two dispensations differ widely from each other. The Mosaic code was distinguished by signs, figures, and types, which were objects of *sense*; the promises which it contained chiefly pointed to temporal blessings, and its threatenings to temporal calamities. In all these particulars there appears to have been a special adaptation to the passions. But the Christian era unfolded the gates of *immortality and eternal life*. All its sublime doctrines, all its maxims, all its instructions, all its promises, all its obligations, were suited to intellectual beings, and peculiarly calculated to exercise all the powers of the human mind, and, through the medium of the understanding, to enlist every

passion and affection of the heart in a voluntary and cheerful obedience to its holy laws. It is safe, therefore, to take the New Testament as the rule of our worship; and here we shall find that the frame of the mind, and disposition of the heart, are much more particularly and strongly marked, than any external form whatever. On the whole, considering how many inlets there are to the heart, how variously the passions may be moved, how strong the prejudices of education, and how powerful the influence of example, it should be the business of all who desire to glorify and enjoy God, to examine the doctrines and examples of Jesus Christ and his inspired apostles with diligence and prayer; and, under a humble sense of the weakness and frailty of human nature, cleave to these doctrines and examples as the only safe and infallible directory for redeemed sinners in offering themselves as a living and acceptable sacrifice to God.

3. Simplicity and sincerity are essential to spiritual and acceptable worship. God must be worshipped in "truth," not only in opposition to the "shadows" of the Law, but without hypocrisy or deceit. The motives of action must be pure. No ostentation, no pride, no love of praise, no desire of worldly profit or applause, no secret wish to be seen of men, no thirst to have our gifts displayed, no anxiety to know what others say of us, can form any part of true worship, but are directly opposed to it. A single desire to please God—to offer ourselves wholly to him—to enjoy the favor of his countenance and the consolations and joys of his Holy Spirit, and to advance the interests of his kingdom on the earth, is a savour without which our best offerings would be an abomination in his sight, the most specious forms would be mockery, angelic eloquence would be *empty* sound, and the zeal of martyrdom a fruitless toil, if a pure design were wanting. We cannot but notice how frequently our Lord and his apostles denounce all ostentatious formalities, as inconsistent with the principles of the gospel, and highly displeasing to God. Let us always remember then to carry to our closet, and to the house of God, that singleness of heart which in his sight is of great price.

4. Spiritual worship implies the exercise of all our powers. There is not a faculty of the mind but what finds constant and delightful employment. Here the attributes, the works,

the providence, and the grace of God completely engage the perceptive and reflecting faculties of man. Here the soul, absorbed in pious thought, forgets the world. Silent contemplation heightens spiritual joy. The mind surveys the wonders of redeeming grace and dying love, till the heart swells with gratitude, and the lips are clothed with praise. Here the passions, rectified by reason and by grace, move harmonious within their proper bounds: here the affections quit the earth and fix on things above. Nor are these devout meditations and fervent exercises transient or superficial. The true worshipper of God is such by *conviction*—is such by *design*. Hence *stability* and *uniformity* mark and distinguish his religious course. His zeal, accompanied with a humiliating sense of human frailty and dependence, is the same in the closet, in the congregation, and at the altar. And while he is gentle towards all men, he habitually studies to offer himself a living sacrifice to God; loving him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. Thus I have endeavored to lay before you the *Object* and the *nature* of spiritual worship. We will conclude with two inferences drawn from the whole.

1. We may learn to distinguish between true religion and enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is the hope or expectation of obtaining an *end*, without the use of those *means* which God has connected with it. We readily perceive this in the ordinary affairs of life, and the common sense of mankind disapproves it. No man expects to reap a harvest in autumn if seed has not been sown in the season; and we should pronounce him a madman or an idiot who should calculate upon being a proficient in science without application to study. Happy would it be for our world if men judged and acted with equal consistency in matters of religion, where the knowledge of God and the harvest of eternal life are incorporated.

But in the more common acceptation of the word, enthusiasm means zeal in religion not according to knowledge; where the passions, improperly excited, leap the bounds of moderation and reason, and precipitately rush to wild confusion. But how different is the religion of Jesus Christ; which teaches us the knowledge of God and of ourselves. Its blessed doctrines are calculated to enlighten the under-

standing, rectify the conscience, and bring every thought of the heart into obedience to Christ. There is no concern in which man can engage that has an equal claim to be entered upon with deliberation. The reason is obvious: its truths are momentous, its morality is pure, its duties are great and numerous, its obligations are strong, and its interests are eternal. Hence it requires us to consider; to count the cost; to resolve; to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord—in short, to make our *calculations* for another world. How then, my brethren, will you appear in this house of God, now dedicated to his holy service? Will you tread this court with careless feet? or sit in these seats idle and inattentive? Will you suffer your thoughts to rove abroad to the ends of the earth, while the precious truths of the gospel are proclaimed to you? Will you permit the surrounding objects of sense to divert your attention, while Christ and his cross are exhibited before you? Or will you sleep while repentance, death, the resurrection, judgment, heaven, hell, and eternity sound from this pulpit? God forbid! But rather give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Here let your employment be meditation, prayer, and praise.

2. From this subject we may learn the difference between evangelical worship and superstition. When any thing of human invention, of which we are scrupulously tenacious, is added to the true worship; or when we form such ideas of God as lead us to serve him with a slavish fear of his wrath; and especially when this fear is productive of servile acts to appease his anger, we may be said to be superstitious. But the subject which we have now investigated stands at the utmost distance from this. Our Lord and Saviour has made such a declaration of the divine character as lays a proper ground for fear, confidence, and love. Guided by the light of his doctrines, while we are awed by justice and power, we rejoice in mercy and goodness. We behold not a tyrant, who takes pleasure in the exhibition of his vindictive wrath; but a gracious and compassionate Sovereign, who delights in the happiness of his creatures, and is ever ready to pardon the penitent. Here no external forms are made the criterion of our sincerity. The Jew may be accepted in his synagogue, with the distinguishing signs of his dispensation; or the Gentile

in his uncircumcision. Here is a kingdom, not of meat and drink, but of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. None are excluded; but "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Let every Christian rejoice that this religion is destined to cover the whole earth. We live at an eventful period. The time, yea, the set time to favor Zion is come: thousands are engaged for her prosperity: the prophecies are fulfilling: Jesus shall have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Those who have sacrilegiously bowed to the image of a virgin, or the sign of a cross, shall come and worship in spirit and in truth. The kings of the earth shall lay their honors at the feet of our Emmanuel, and crown him Lord of all. The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters the great deep. *Then* they shall not hurt nor destroy in all his holy mountain. Hasten it, O Lord, in its time. Amen.

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### SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

BY C. WESLEY.

JESUS, thou soul of all our joys,  
 For whom we now lift up our voice,  
 And all our strength exert,  
 Vouchsafe the grace we humbly claim,  
 Compose into a thankful frame,  
 And tune thy people's heart.

While in the heavenly work we join,  
 Thy glory be our sole design,  
*Thy* glory, not our own:  
 Still let us keep our end in view,  
 And still the pleasing task pursue,  
 To please our God alone.

The secret pride, the subtle sin,  
 O! let it never more steal in,  
 T' offend thy glorious eyes,  
 To desecrate our hallowed strain,  
 And make our solemn service vain,  
 And mar our sacrifice.

## RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

To magnify thy awful name,  
To spread the honors of the Lamb,  
Let us our voices raise,  
Our souls' and bodies' powers unite,  
Regardless of our own delight,  
And dead to human praise.

Still let us on our guard be found,  
And watch against the power of sound,  
With sacred jealousy;  
Lest haply sense should damp our zeal,  
And music's charms bewitch and steal  
Our heart away from thee.

That hurrying strife far off remove,  
That noisy burst of selfish love,  
Which swells the formal song:  
The joy from out our heart arise,  
And speak and sparkle in our eyes,  
And vibrate on our tongue.

Thee let us praise our common Lord,  
And sweetly join with one accord,  
Thy goodness to proclaim:  
Jesus, thyself in us reveal,  
And all our faculties shall feel  
Thy harmonizing name.

With calmly reverential joy  
We then shall all our lives employ  
In setting forth thy love,  
And raise in death our triumph higher,  
And sing with all the heavenly choir  
That endless song above.



# DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST:

A SERMON PREACHED IN

McKendree Church, Nashville, Tenn.,

APRIL 15, 1855,

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE

WILLIAM CAPERS, D.D.,

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

BY BISHOP PIERCE.

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Nashville, Tenn.:

PUBLISHED BY E. STEVENSON & F. A. OWEN, AGENTS,

FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

1857.

## Correspondence.

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TO THE REVEREND BISHOP PIERCE :

DEAR BROTHER:—It affords me great pleasure to inform you, that at a meeting of Methodist Ministers at the Publishing House, Nashville, Monday morning, April 16, the Rev. Dr. GREEN having been called to the chair, and THOS. O. SUMMERS appointed Secretary, it was unanimously

*Resolved*, That the Rev. Bishop PIERCE be respectfully solicited to furnish, for publication, a copy of his excellent discourse delivered on yesterday afternoon, at McKendree Church, in memory of our late Bishop, the Rev. WILLIAM CAPERS, D. D.

*Resolved*, That, should the manuscript be furnished by the Bishop, the Book Editor and Agents be requested to publish the Sermon, as one of the Methodist Pamphlets for the people.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of this meeting be instructed to make known its wishes to Bishop Pierce.

Your compliance with the wishes expressed in the foregoing resolutions, will, by the Divine blessing, be productive of good and will, moreover, add to the personal obligations of

Your friend and brother,

NASHVILLE, TENN., April 16, 1855.

THOS. O. SUMMERS.

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MY DEAR BROTHER:—Yours of the 16th has been received. The discourse delivered by me on Sabbath last was not written. As soon, however, as I can, amid other engagements, prepare the manuscript, I will submit it in obedience to your call.

My affection for Bishop Capers as a man, and my admiration for his beautifully consistent character as a preacher, will make it pleasant to me to bear my testimony to his worth in a more permanent form than the fugitive tribute of an oral discourse. The memory of this great and good man is precious. If any thing I can say or write will perpetuate the perfume, I shall feel that I have done good, while I have gratified my affection.

Yours affectionately,

NASHVILLE, 18th April.

G. F. PIERCE.

## DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST.

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“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”—ROMANS xiv. 7, 8.

THE spirit of Christianity is essentially a public spirit. It ignores all selfishness. It is benevolence embodied and alive, full of plans for the benefit of the world, and actively at work to make them effective. Catholic, generous, expansive, it repudiates all the boundaries, prescribed by names, and sects, and parties, and “stretches its line into the regions beyond,” even to the uttermost parts of the earth. The world is its parish. Its wishes are commensurate with the moral wants of mankind, and the will of God, who gave His Son to die for us sinners and our salvation, is the authority for its labors and the pledge of its triumphs.

It is the policy of every form of infidelity and speculative unbelief, and of every false religion, to depreciate and undervalue the nature of man. They despoil him of his true glory by their chilling, preposterous theories, even while they affect to magnify him by fulsome eulogy of his intellect and its capacious powers. By false notions of personal independence, they isolate him from his kind, and the sensibilities, which Heaven intended should flow out free as the gushing spring, they contract and stagnate, till the heart grows rank and putrid with its own corruptions. But while our holy religion exalts man as made in the image of God, the head and chief of the system to which he belongs, and thus invests the *individual* with dignity and value, vast and incalculable, far, far beyond “worlds on worlds arrayed,” it yet links him in closest fellowship with the kindred of his race. For him the ground yields its increase, the sun shines, the stars beam in beauty, the winds blow, the waters run. Earth, air, and ocean are

all astir with agencies commissioned to do him good; but not for him alone. No matter what his rank, power, influence, he but shares the bounties which have been provided, in the munificence of Heaven, as the common inheritance of all his fellows. No matter what his personal rights and interests, he is but a part of a great whole. He belongs to a system. No choice of his own, no social caste, no civil distinctions, can detach him from it. Linked with the world around him by a law of his nature and the decree of his Maker, every plan of isolation is abortive; and the very effort at separation and exclusiveness brands him as a miser, a misanthrope, a selfish, heartless wretch, without natural affection or any redeeming principle. A brute in human form—a demon, with the lineaments of man, he is under the outlawry of a world itself, alas! but too ignorant of the law of love and the noble aims and ends of this mortal life.

Bound together, as we are, by the ties of a common nature and of mutual dependence, every man is a fountain of influence, good or bad, conservative or destructive. Whether he will or not, he is an example. His language, spirit, actions, habits, his very manners, all tell—forming the taste, moulding the character, and shaping the course of others, to the end of time. *No man liveth to himself.* He can not. Apparently he may, but really he does not. His plans and his aspirations may all revolve around himself as a common centre, but within and without their orbits will be concentric circles, enclosing other agents and other interests. He may rear walls around his possessions, call his lands by his own name, and his inward thought may be, as the world phrase it, to take care of himself and his dependents; but he can neither limit the effect of his plans nor forecast the inheritance of his estate. Another enters even into his labors. Disruptive changes abolish his best-concerted schemes, and scatter to the winds all the securities by which he sought to fence and individualize his own peculiar interest.

But while all this is true, and constitutes the basis of a fearful responsibility, it is not exactly the idea in our text. In the declaration before us, the Apostle does not affirm a principle as predicable of our nature and its social relations, nor merely state a fact as resulting from an immutable law of our being; but he presents a moral rule, and erects it into a stand-

ard for the adjudication of character. He defines the rights of Jesus Christ our Lord, and the obligations of those who claim to be his disciples and representatives.

A dispute had arisen in the Church concerning meats and days—what was allowable and consistent in the one case, and what was required and binding upon the other. It was a question of privilege—of Christian liberty. Assuming that the parties were equally sincere, the apostle did not seek to quell the agitation by a temporary expedient, a dubious, unreliable compromise; but took occasion to declare a principle of universal authority and application. He lays down a rule by which we are to judge others as well as to measure ourselves. What one may regard as a ceremony and a superstition, is not to be charged upon another, whose opinion is different, as proof that his profession is a mask or his piety insincere. Nor is the latter to denounce the former as a timeserver—a man-pleaser, turning the grace of God into licentiousness. “He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.”

Conceding the right of private judgment—frankly confessing imperfect knowledge—let both judge charitably. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink—but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. There may be, there is unity in the great principles of Christian morality, and yet a difference of judgment and practice in little things. We are not to despise one another because of this diversity, nor, though fully persuaded in our own minds, harass a brother by the vexatious obtrusion of our peculiar notions. His liberty is not to be bounded by our prejudice, nor his conscience regulated by our superstition. The law of love not only requires good will, benevolent affection towards all men, but stretches its authority over our opinions, our moral judgments, our estimate of character. We are not to perplex the weak with doubtful disputations, nor incur the risk of imbittering our own feelings by urging our ultrasisms as essential to salvation. Life is too short to be wasted in frivolous disputes, even about matters of conscience. Christianity is too precious and noble and vast to be scandalized by contentions in the Church about

meats and drinks—the tithing of mint and anise and cummin. As Christians, we are public men. We live for our race. The Lord is our judge. Great principles are to be avowed — maintained — diffused — established. God and our generation are to be served—the one to be glorified, and the other to be saved. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

The text is a comprehensive description of a Christian's life—a decisive test of character. It is the language of one who well knew what Christianity is, and who himself exemplified its principles and spirit.

Avoiding minute details, we proceed to fix the meaning of the terms, *living unto the Lord, and dying unto the Lord.*

Living unto the Lord may be considered as implying, that we distinctly recognize the will of God as the rule of life.

If I may so express it—as the natural subjects of the Almighty, we are bound to serve him to the full extent of the powers He hath given us. He has an unquestionable right to our obedience. This results from our relation as creatures. He made us and He preserves us. This original obligation, instead of being relaxed and impaired, is confirmed and intensified by purchase and redemption.

The will of God is to be sought in the statute-law of the gospel—the plain and express decrees which define and regulate our duty. It is important to notice and to remember that the service we are to perform is not left to our choice. We have no rights of legislation in the premises. Our task is assigned us, divinely appointed. Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do? ought to be the inquiry of every human spirit. The word of God gives the answer: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” This is the law and the prophets—the true philosophy of life—the first and second commandments. On these hang all the subordinate requirements of “judgment, mercy, and faith.” The precepts of Christianity are so wisely and graciously adapted to promote the private interests of individuals and the general welfare of human society, that many who are disaffected towards the divine government, will, for their own

sakes, choose to do many things which are just, and kind, and beneficent. These things are comely, reputable, of good report among all men; and a man cannot therefore serve himself more effectually than by practicing the great virtues of humanity. Man's chief controversy is with God—against Him he wars. He is not naturally the enemy of his kind. While some fierce and unsocial passions occasionally break out, and startle us by the atrocity of some monstrous individual crime, and while nations wrought into fury sometimes quench their hate in blood, yet commonly the social instinct, and the love of ease, and the fear of retribution, prevail over what is hostile and malignant in our nature. In the absence of injury or provocation, men generally wish others well, and are even disposed to do them good. To some of the duties of Christianity there is therefore no natural aversion—no active repugnance. And it is greatly to be feared that many are basing their hopes of heaven upon their exemption from the vices that corrupt and embroil society—upon their amiable feelings and kind relations—upon neighborly offices and charitable expenditures. But those virtues which are merely human—educational—conventional—cannot save. In this world they have their origin, their use and their reward. The great element of piety is wanting. There is no reference to God. And here is a marked difference between the man who lives for himself, and the man who lives unto the Lord. The one obeys a constitutional impulse perhaps—consults his reputation, his business, his influence; or, it may be, rising a little higher, he may rightly estimate his responsibilities as a father or as a citizen, and so is honorable, moral, refined. But he is without God in the world. Oh, the loneliness and destitution of such a spirit! Atheism is his religion, if not his creed; or at best he is an idolater—himself the idol. The other realizes the divine authority, and obeys *because* God commands.

The relative duties of life are performed not to gratify a native generosity, or eke out a dubious popularity, but as part of the service and homage due his Maker. Over the whole circumference of his engagements—in the bosom of his family—the busy marts of trade—the retirement of the closet—the worship of the sanctuary—the citizenship of the world—there presides a solemn recognition of the Divine presence,

his being and his empire, and every step is taken in reference to Him as a witness and a judge. I know that many profess and seem to be religious on lower principles. Public opinion—consistency—ease of conscience to shun hell, to gain heaven, all operate, and they supersede and dethrone the higher law in the text. Not that these motives are illegitimate, but partial and inferior. They ought not to become principal and paramount; and they cannot without a deleterious unhingement of character, and a transfer of our duty from the ground of what is divine and authoritative, to that which is human and self-pleasing. The motive in the text is comprehensive, embracing all lower ends—harmonizes all, yet subordinates them all to its own sovereign sway. Like a conqueror at the head of his battalions, it marches forth to subdue the insurgent elements that would dispute its dominion. It is the “stronger man” keeping his goods in peace. Without it, there can be no consecration, and with it, no compromise of duty. The failure to recognize and adopt this great principle of morality, has fearfully diluted the experience of the Church, and embarrassed every department of Christian service. “I will run in the way of thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart,” said the Psalmist. No man can rise above the constraining considerations which spring from interest, feeling, safety, pleasure, in reference to all minor questions of duty, save as he resolves religion into some great general principles and purposes, from the decision of which there is no appeal. These principles, wisely adopted and well understood, will marshal all the chances and changes of life, all its untoward events, all its interfering agencies, so that they shall fall into ranks like well-trained soldiers under the command of a superior officer. They simplify religion, disentangle it from all purely selfish influences, from the bias of worldly interests, from the guile of passion, and leave a man free to glorify God according to the Scriptures. How simple and sublime the character, deriving its greatness and worth from God and duty! How grandly independent is he who knows no fear but the fear of God, who seeks no favor but the smile of Jesus, and whose single eye scans all things, great and small, in the light which no shadow can eclipse! His life regulated by one great pervading law and purpose, he escapes all the trials by which feebler and less decided



Christians are tormented and impeded. His heart, consecrated in all its plans and purposes, falters not at sacrifice, or peril, or suffering. Difficulties and doubts he has none. His religion is to him a law that never changes. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His plan of life settled scripturally, advisedly, and in the fear of God, he is not to be bought or bribed, frightened or defeated. Turning neither to the right nor left, he moves right on. If, along his pathway, the den of lions opens, he lies down and lodges for the night, and in the morning tells how the angel kept him. If the furnace be kindled to test or to destroy him, he walks unburned in the flame, and comes forth without the smell of fire upon his garments. Escaped from the shallows and the breakers where so many toil with unavailing oar, he has launched on the deep, and, favored by wind and tide, looks with lively hope for an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But the principle I am discussing, considered as a test of character and a rule by which to adjudicate our Christian claims, is worthy of enlargement. Living unto the Lord implies that we make the approbation of God our governing aim—that we study to please him, and that, whatever we do, we do all to his glory.

Religion, to be saving, must be supreme: "My son, give me thy heart"—"He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." God claims the body and the spirit. He will not divide the empire, which is his by right, with invaders and usurpers. Unless, therefore, His approval is the predominant motive, we not only base our Christianity upon mistaken apprehensions of the Divine claims, but we repudiate the only principle which can subjugate the rebellious elements and passions of our fallen nature. Before conversion, we form attachments and allow indulgences wholly inconsistent with a life of devotion. To do well, we must first cease to do evil. The flesh, with its affections and lusts, must be crucified. Self-denial is the first law of discipleship. Who would submit to have the right hand cut off, the right eye plucked out—much less, perform the operation upon himself—unless, by the expulsive power of a new and holy affection, these enemies which encamped within his heart shall be routed and taken captive? There must be the ascendancy of another and

a higher principle than any which is merely human, to break down the dominion of appetite, and passion, and habit. Flesh and blood are sad counsellors in the work of God. To consult them is to betray our spiritual interests. The multitude do evil—we must dare to be singular. But who will come out from the world—brave its scorn—defy its persecution—disdain its blandishments, and rebuke its ungodliness by declining its fellowship? None but those who feel that God's smile amply remunerates for the world's contempt, and that the testimony that we please Him outweighs all earthly treasure, and outshines all earthly glory.

To live for Christ, and to live for ourselves, is utterly impracticable. The union is a moral impossibility. We love a good name; but they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. We are rich; but the command is, Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow me. We love home and friends; but Christ calls to absence, and labor, and sacrifice. Religion is popular—you embrace it: the Church is fashionable—you join it. The people shout Hosanna, and Jesus is escorted by a worshipping multitude—you say, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." The Master replies: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." What will you do now? Go away sorrowful? or, having counted the cost, go on to build? "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve;" or have you settled this question long ago in favor of duty and Heaven? Are you living unto the Lord? You are making a fortune—is it that you may do more good? You are rising in the world, seeking title, and honor and influence—is it that you may enlarge your sphere of usefulness? O brother, if the carnal affection grows along with the carnal interest, thy prosperity may destroy thee. Or if thou art seeking thy own pleasure, gratification, and advancement, thou hast fallen from grace. Even Christ pleased not himself. Paul obeyed the heavenly vision immediately, conferring not with flesh and blood. And every man who would fulfil the great purposes of his creation and redemption, must make God's approving judgment the motive of all his actions, and the goal of all his efforts. Oh, how the saints of the Bible luxuriated in this element of devotion! "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I

seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple." "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." These exemplars illustrate our subject. They lived unto the Lord. In his favor was life. "A day in his courts was better than a thousand." The world's parade and pomp paled before the glory of the sanctuary. The festal charms, the music and the mirth of the tents of wickedness, were despised, and the lowest place in the house of God preferred. They felt that they did not live at all except as they lived unto the Lord.

This is the spirit of the text. Life is not to be measured by days and months and years, but by a succession of services to him that loved us, and gave himself for us. I have no doubt that when the last hour comes—that hour for which earth has no comfort and philosophy no hope—when the spirit, disenthralled from the seductions of time, the witchery of sense, shall stand face to face with the realities of an eternal state, then even life's most serious engagements will all seem as vacancies, like the hours passed in sleep, and the pleasures of the world like the vagaries of sleep itself. Go, buy, sell, get gain—build a name—rear houses—add field to field—project public improvements—locate railroads—plan empires: this is all labor and travail—vanity and vexation of spirit.

This is to breathe, not to live—to work, not to enjoy. "All flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the grass;" "but he that doeth the will of God, liveth and abideth for ever." To love God, this is joy: to know Christ, this is gain: to do good, this is life. Mortal man! child of the dust! this vain life which we spend as a shadow is but the vestibule of being. Here we die while we live: the cradle rocks us to the tomb. We spend our strength for naught. Riches fledge and fly away. Honor is but a dew-drop, glittering in the morning ray, exhaled by the very beam that makes it shine. Love and friendship—the heart's blest affections—wounded, pine; or, bereaved, they dwell among the dead, like Mary weeping there. Oh! where is the bloom without the blight? the sun without the cloud? Lord Jesus, thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence, though

dimly seen, is unutterable joy, and where thou art in glory visible, is heaven.

“Whether we die, we die unto the Lord.” This is an important declaration, “wholesome and full of comfort,” “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” The death of a good man is of too much import to happen by chance. It is an important instrument in God’s plans of mercy and judgment. The event is big with instruction. Not to lay it to heart when the righteous perish, is criminal insensibility—a wicked indifference to the dispensations of Heaven. Such a death is a public calamity. It is not a sparrow falling to the ground, a flower fading in the field, “the sere and yellow leaf” afloat upon the autumnal gale, and then descending to the earth, where its mates of the forest lie hueless and dead. A light is quenched, and the darkness grows deeper. The world is bereaved of a conservative influence. The prayers he would have offered are lost, and if “the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” how great the loss! The family loses a guide and guardian, the Church an example, the country a benefactor. He serves the country best who loves God most. He is not the patriot who fights the nation’s battles, right or wrong; but he who leads a life of quietness and peace, all godliness and honesty. He is not the most important man who projects your laws, marshals your parties, and leads in politics; but he who, by faith, and prayer, and power with God, averts the wrath our sins provoke. David did more for Judah when he bought Araunah’s threshing-floor, built an altar, offered sacrifice, and stayed the pestilence, than when, with kingly authority, he despatched Joab to quell the rebellion of Absalom. The intercession of Moses, when, with holy boldness, with daring confidence, he rushed between the offending Israelites and the Almighty, girded for battle and extermination, and prevailed for their salvation, wrought a greater wonder than when, obedient to his magic rod, the parted waters returned in vengeance upon Pharaoh’s pursuing host. Elijah was the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof—the bulwark of the nation. The clouds of heaven hung their keys at his girdle, and the widow’s meal and oil multiplied beneath his blessing. A good man! Oh, ye men of royal

birth, ye sages, statesmen, heroes, ye glimmer faintly beside the saint shining in the image of God. His wisdom is divine, his lineage heavenly, and greater than he who taketh a city, for he hath conquered himself. I admire architecture, painting, sculpture, the wonders of the chisel and the pencil. I love nature in her mountain majesty, the rolling ocean and the woodland vales—all that is lovely and sublime; but God is witness I would go farther to see a good man, to hear him talk of Jesus, enter into his communion, feel the moral grandeur of his destiny, than to behold any achievement of art or scene of nature. These change and perish: he is immortal. He thinks, he feels, he loves. His body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and his spirit is bathed in the glory of the Shechinah—the symbol of the presence and worship of God. The departure of such a man is a token of displeasure. It is the voice of Heaven in judgment. But, though the family is afflicted, the Church in mourning, and the nation smitten, *he* “dies unto the Lord” and “in the Lord.” With him “it is well.”

Or the text may find its fulfilment in that God hides him from the evil to come. I knew a good man who, in dying, said, “My God is housing me from a storm;” and the declaration was prophetic. Soon evils that would have broken his heart and brought him in sorrow to the grave, came upon his family in overwhelming disaster. Dangers—spiritual dangers—are coming; domestic calamities draw nigh; national troubles are fermenting: God sees the clouds gathering, the elements brewing; and, while yet the cloud is as a man’s hand and the winds are murmuring afar off, He transfers his faithful servant to the repose of the blest. “In his hand are all my ways.” Delightful thought! He directs my steps, hears my sighs, chooses my allotments, numbers the hairs of my head, is about my bed and my path, and knoweth how and when to deliver: “Whether we die, we die unto the Lord.”

But it may be asked, Why, if the righteous are so dear to Christ and so valuable to the world, are they doomed to death at all? Why does not religion, which saves us from a thousand other evils, release us from this law of mortality? In answer, I remark: The reasons are obvious on reflection. Exemption from death as a reward of piety would appeal se

strongly to the love of life—the quickest, most enduring instinct of our being—as to override the freedom of choice, and thus make rational, voluntary piety impossible. We should adopt it as a starving man would clutch offered bread, or the man dying of thirst would seize the cup of cold water. And besides the violence done to our nature in making the propensities decide a question belonging—under the present economy and in the proper fitness and adaptation of things—to the intellect, the heart, the will, the incongruity would follow of proposing a carnal, earthly motive for a spiritual life. On such a plan, Christianity must approve what she now repudiates; and the holy considerations by which she now seeks to win us from error to wisdom, from earth to heaven, would all be neutralized and lost, and the world to come be doomed to borrow the forces of time to achieve its noblest victories.

The evil of sin cannot be shown but by its punishment. This conclusion is legitimate from what is revealed of the divine administration, and from what we know of the processes of conviction in the mind of man. God hates sin. It is a blot upon his dominions. But he has not left the world to learn the fact even from the awful denunciations of his word, but he has written it in the catastrophe of nations. The deluge, famine, pestilence, fire and brimstone from heaven, have been the messengers of his wrath and the instruments of retribution. And where, save in the crucifixion of Christ Jesus and the damnation of the guilty, will you look for a more impressive demonstration of God's justice and his indignation against sin, than in the dying agonies of infant innocence, or the mortal convulsions of him who dies unto the Lord? It is written, "The body is dead because of sin," even when "the spirit is life because of righteousness." But death, with all its antecedents and consequents—the mournful harbingers of its approach and its power—the loathsome desolations of its victory and its reign—to the saint of God is no longer death. It is but dissolution—a departure. Sad in its aspects and accompaniments, it is nevertheless a release. A pillar of cloud and fire, its shadows all fall on this side the grave: beyond, all is light, and life, and glory. We die unto the Lord, and—may I not add?—for the Lord. The death of the good preaches terror to the wicked. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly

appear?" Oh! we ask not "Enoch's rapturous flight, nor Elijah's fiery steeds" to bear us away, if by dying we may help to convince the world of sin and judgment. We would do good even in death. As we wish to live to serve him "who loved us," so would we die to make his glory known—"the justice and the grace."

"Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." "The chamber where the good man meets his fate" is a scene of glory. See his patience under suffering—the calm submission, and often the joy unutterable. Is this human fortitude—the stoicism of a blind philosophy—the outflashing of sentiment and fancy? No, no. It is the fulfilment of promise, grace abounds. It is the conviction that the Judge of all the earth will do right. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is the knowledge of the Redeemer in his pardoning mercy—his purifying spirit—and in the glory soon to be revealed in its fulness and eternity. It is an argument for religion, that it ends well: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." The prophet's prayer finds an echo in every heart not lost to hope and heaven. Who that looks upon a dying scene where Christianity wreathes the pale face with smiles of rapture, and inspires the failing tongue to utter its last articulations in the dialect of heaven, does not breathe from his inmost soul the wish—even so may I meet the last enemy? In life, being strong in faith, we give glory to God; so in the final struggle He is glorified in us and by us. "These all died in faith"—immortal record! epitaph of the good, and interpreter of their doom. Living and dying, "we are the Lord's"—His property—absolutely, in every change, walking upon the earth and sleeping in its bosom. He made us and He loves us. He is "not ashamed to be called" our God. Life, probation, and death, are all ministers employed by Him to do us good. If He prolong our days, it is that we may serve Him and our generation by the will of God. If He afflict us, it is "for our profit—that we may be partakers of his holiness. If he call us hence, it is that we may "see Him as He is, and be like him for ever." Our bodies may inhabit the house appointed for all the living, and our very name perish from the records of time—but He looks down and "watches all our dust till He shall bid it rise." We are the Lord's—the jewels

of his kingdom and the travail of his soul. He hath said it, and it shall stand fast—"they shall be mine"—"Because I live, they shall live also." "We are the Lord's." Let us rejoice in our relationship, and walk worthy of our high descent and our immortal destiny.

The principle and spirit of the text were beautifully exemplified in the life and death of our beloved brother, Bishop Capers. I have never known a man of more simple, single-hearted, uncalculating devotion. Born of God while yet a youth, his life was consecrated unreservedly to the service of Christ and his Church. Through all the changes of his career—youth, maturity, and age, single, married, and surrounded by sons and daughters, on circuits, stations, and districts—a deacon, an elder, and a Bishop—he exhibited the same steady, onward devotion—a man of God, of faith, of zeal. His steadfast purpose never faltered—no change of fortune modified the entireness of his dedication—no accumulation of cares relaxed his efforts to do good. He lived unto the Lord. Absence from home might entail loss, afflict feeling, tax affection—no matter, he had set his heart within him to finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. On more than one occasion he might have secured to his family a home rich in comforts, and to himself honors and emoluments, by separating himself from the itinerancy he loved, and consenting to serve a people who proved their esteem by the largeness of their offered liberality. But attached to our Church and its economy, by conviction and choice, salary was no temptation to leave it, or even to modify his relation to it; and, in the face of all the sacrifices and privations and labors of a travelling Methodist preacher, he declined a city home and a well-filled purse.

My acquaintance with our dear departed brother (I ought to call him father) began while I was but a boy, and he was in the meridian of his strength, and the blaze of a renown such as few attain. The impressions made upon me then by his humble manner, his sanctified conversation, and his unwearied labors, were fully justified by the familiarity of intercourse in after years. He seemed to me to be dead to the world, its gains and honors, and alive only to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. While his name was upon



every tongue, and crowds were rushing from appointment to appointment, and the whole country was in a fever of curiosity and admiration, he seemed to shrink from fame and the exultation by which a common mind and a common heart would have been lifted up, in his case was lost in an overwhelming sense of the responsibility his position entailed. He was one of the very few men I have known who was not injured in his piety and preaching by great popularity. To seek popularity as an object, in a minister is a crime—to bear it meekly when it comes unsought, is a virtue of rarest value.

This virtue characterized, distinguished Wm. Capers in the freshness of his youth, the glory of his noon, and in the mellow ripeness of his sanctified old age. He was clothed with humility. It was his beauty and his strength. The praise even of the lowly oppressed him. Courted and caressed by the rich, the great, the mighty in the land, he shrunk from their embrace, lest he might seem to others to be seeking great things for himself. His faith was never hindered by seeking the honor of men—his fidelity never compromised by the adulation of the Church or the world. Who ever heard him tell of the mighty works he had done—the great sermons he had preached—the wondrous revivals he had carried on? Who ever saw in his air the conceit of success, or detected in his language the self-gratulation of a praiseworthy deed? He was not the hero of his narratives—nor did he talk to make the simple wonder, or the great admire. Like Paul, whose visit to the third heaven was kept a secret for fourteen years, and revealed at last only to vindicate his apostleship, he said but little of his own experience, save in the retirement of private life, to the ear of intimate companionship. Astonishingly fluent, he talked much, but always well. He never forfeited in private the reputation he had made in public. Cheerful without levity, and easy without familiarity, he never degraded the minister into the trifler, nor reproached the sanctity of his profession by foolish talking or jesting, which are not convenient. As a man, his nature was alive and gushing with all noble, generous impulses: kind, affectionate, full of sympathy, he rejoiced with them that rejoiced, and wept with them that wept. In his family, gentle without weakness, and fond without improper indulgence. His wife, herself a model woman, revered, while she loved and honored, while

she served. His children, feeling themselves favored of Heaven in the virtues of such a father, obeyed his commands, consulted his wishes, and felt his smile to be a meed and a recompense. No man loved his children more. He regretted in the last hour that so few of them were present, and yet rejoiced that he had seen them so recently. Lovely family—children honored in their parents, and parents honored in their children. God's best blessing continue with them to the latest generation.

It is not amiss to say that Bishop Capers was in manners a gentleman, bland, courtly, refined. In him the polish of the courtier and the simplicity of the saint beautifully blended. His politeness did not consist in the formalities and ceremonies which, in certain circles, are dignified as the insignia of the well-bred and the fashionable; but it was the outgushing of a heart which knew no rule but the promptings of its own benevolence. It was the outward expression of an inward disposition—a mode of action which a loving spirit instinctively prescribed—the free, untaught, unconstrained operation of Christian courtesy. In the parlor and the pulpit, the street and the sanctuary, he was minutely regardful of the proprieties of life; and while the simplest rustic found no affectation, the fastidious critic discovered no fault.

I must not omit to mention his excellence in prayer. Whether we consider his power as a gift or a grace, he surpassed most men. In his devotions there was so much of the evangelical element, that a heathen man might have learned the plan of salvation from any one of his public exercises. On his knees he knew nothing but Christ. The cross was his all-prevailing plea. He urged it with fervor, affection, and faith. He was himself an intercessor—filled with yearning sympathies for his fellow-men. And sometimes his power with God would remind us of Jacob and the Angel—of Israel and his blessing.

To describe him as a preacher belongs rather to his biographer than to the sketch of a funeral discourse. He was a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God—an able minister of the New Testament. He brought forth out of his treasure things new and old. Rich in thought, fertile in matter, there was no sameness in his discourses, even when he preached from the same text—which he often did. I never

heard him use the same illustration twice, or falter for a word. Copious in language, apt in selection, and inexhaustible in variety, he was always ready and always new. It is difficult to classify his style as a preacher. His sermons were not essays nor expositions, nor were they narratives with reflections interspersed, nor yet topical exactly; still, all these sometimes, except the first, were mingled by him. Perhaps the word textual will fit his manner best. His sermons grew out of his texts, not by formal divisions, but by an artistic development, a verbal evolution of their meaning. Under his peculiar management, many a verse or passage to the untrained eye dark, or at least obscure, became instructive—beautiful—most interesting. Gifted with wonderful versatility and readiness, he excelled all I ever knew in adapting his text and discourse, on a sudden call, to all that was peculiar on the occasion. He often awakened attention by the announcement of a verse which none but he would ever have chosen. In this, however, he was not fanciful or eccentric, but simply obeyed the impulse of a mind unique in its conceptions and modes of thought. In thought, language, style, he was original, yet without eccentricity; called no man master, and yet violated no rule of the books; always accurate, always simple, but elegant in his simplicity. His sermons were often ornate; but there was no florid coloring—no exuberance—no glare. There was a delightful propriety, a minute beauty, a neat, chaste, graceful arrangement of every part. His flowers were not artificial: they all had roots, and they were redolent with the morning dew—fresh and fragrant as a vernal garden in the early day.

It is but just to say that his pulpit efforts were very unequal; yet in his driest, darkest moods, he was William Capers—all the mental characteristics of the man stood forth—a familiar acquaintance could not fail to recognize them. He possessed the singular faculty of speaking with fluency, grace, and propriety when his mind was barren and empty, and his hearers listened well pleased, even when they got nothing to carry away. But at other times he was transfigured—his very form dilated—his eye beamed with celestial beauty, soft with the light of love, yet radiant with the joy of his rapt and ravished spirit, and his voice, mellowed by emotion, spell-bound while it inspired the hearing multitude. When the

Spirit of the Lord God was upon him—when the angel touched his lips with a coal from the altar—oh! he was a charming preacher. I have heard him when the consolations of the gospel distilled from his tongue as honey from the rock, and the message of salvation came down like the angelic song upon the shepherds of Bethlehem. Anon I have seen him clothe himself with terrible majesty, as when a prophet proclaimed the vengeance of the Almighty, and then the thunder of the violated law pealed from his lips like the trump of doom, and the pallid, awestruck assembly told that the preacher had power with God and prevailed with men. For the mourner in Zion, the grief-stricken, the bowed, the desolate, he had the tongue of the learned and the heart of a seraph. Oh! the pathos of his sympathy—how touching and tender! It was a healing oil, a soothing balsam: beneath its magic charm, desolation bloomed and tears were turned to rapture. Many a wayworn pilgrim, weary with life's heavy burdens, faint, yet pursuing with faltering steps, felt his hopes revive and his courage grow strong while this "old man eloquent" discoursed of providence, and grace, and heaven—of the cross, the mercy-seat, and the crown of life. These were the themes on which he loved to dwell: they were the rejoicing of his heart, and the staple of his ministry. But the harp is broken, and all its music gone. The pleasant voice is hushed, and he who played so well upon that wondrous instrument, the human tongue, lies low in cold obstruction and dumb forgetfulness. Bishop Capers is no more. His place at the council-board of the Church he loved is empty. The pulpit shall know him no more for ever. The grave's dark eclipse rests upon that beaming face, and that venerable form, that moved among us but a little while ago—shrouded, coffined, buried, sleeps in death—thank God, in Jesus too—awaiting the descent of the judgment angel and the revelation of the Son of man.

The circumstances of his decease have been so widely published—are so generally known—that I need not detail them now. Suffice it to say, that having finished his last episcopal tour, visited his children, he returned to his quiet home, to rest for a season in the bosom of his family. Oh! the sober bliss, the grateful joy of such a meeting! It was a mercy that allowed him this last interview. Death found the soldier

in his tent, recruiting for another campaign. At midnight the spoiler came. The sleeping household were roused by the trembling cry of the wife, the mother, in the agony of her alarm. They rushed to the good man's chamber, and found him sitting up, but writhing in pain. "Make my blood circulate," he said. They essayed the task, but failed. Seeing their alarm, and feeling that his end was nigh, he said, "I am already cold, and now, my precious children, give me up to God. Oh that more of you were here! but I bless God that I have so lately seen you all." But see how principle, and duty, and devotion to the Church, worked at the last and to the last. Bathed in the dew of mortality, enduring untold agony, longing for the faces of those he loved, gasping in death, he said, "Mary, I want you to finish my minutes tomorrow, and send them off." Duty was his law in life—his watchword at the gate of death. Partially relieved by the physician's skill and the power of medicine, he asked the hour. When told, he exclaimed, "What! only three hours since I have been suffering such torture? Only three hours! What must be the voice of the bird that cries Eternity! Eternity! Three hours have taken away all but my religion." Health gone, strength gone, hope gone, life almost gone, but religion abides steadfast and stronger. Retreating from the shore where stand wife, children, and friends waving their last adieu, but my religion goes with me. All the foundations of earth are failing me, but my religion still towers amid the general wreck, securely firm, indissolubly sure. Glory to God for such a testimony from such a man!

For a little while nature seemed to rally—the king of terrors to relent. His children retired to rest at his urgent entreaty. On the morning of the 29th of January, he proposed to rise and dress himself, and insisted that his devoted wife should seek repose. She reminded him of the doctor's prescription, and besought him to keep his bed. He took the medicine, drank freely of water, pillowed his head upon his arm, and breathed his last.

"So fades a summer cloud away,  
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er,  
So gently shuts the eye of day,  
So dies a wave along the shore.

Life's duty done, as sinks the clay,  
 Light from its load, the spirit flies,  
 While heaven and earth combine to say,  
 How blessed the righteous when he dies !”

In the history of our honored, beloved brother, there is no vice to deplore and no error to lament. I say not that he was perfect; but I do say, a world of such men would liken earth to heaven. I say not that he had no infirmities, no human frailties; but I do say that his self-sacrificing spirit, his humble, holy, useful labors, his unwearied zeal, and his spotless example, are to his descendants a noble patrimony, and to the Church a priceless heritage. Alive, he was a demonstration of the power and truth of Christianity; being dead, he yet speaketh, proclaiming to all that God is faithful. He left all and followed Christ, but never lacked any good thing. Counting all things but loss that he might win Christ, God gave him friends and fame, honor and usefulness. A messenger of God, his visits were blessings. The country admired him and the Church loved him. His death fell like a shadow upon many a hearthstone, and his native State became a valley of weeping. Cities struggled for the honor of his burial, and Methodism, in mourning, repeats his funeral, to prolong her grief and consecrate his memory. Oh, brethren! we have lost a friend, a brother, an advocate, an example, a benefactor. Earth is growing poorer. There is now less faith, less zeal, less love in the world. The righteous are perishing, the good are taken away. Oh, ye venerable fathers of the Church, contemporaries and fellow-laborers of the ascended Capers, your ranks are broken. The friends of your youth are gone, and, relics of a generation well-nigh past, ye still linger among us. God bless you: we love you much, but we cannot keep you much longer. Your sands are running low, your change is at hand. You, venerable Sir,\* are almost the only bond that binds the preacher and his congregation to the pioneers of Methodism in this broad country. That bond, fretted and worn by more than threescore years and ten, is well-nigh threadless, attenuated, and ready to break. But God is with you. The raven hair, the ruddy

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\* Bishop Soule.

cheek, the vigorous arm, the enduring strength, are gone—all gone; but *your religion, too*, thank God, is left you. Leaning upon that staff, you are waiting your summons. Heaven bless you with a smiling sunset, a pleasing night, and a glorious morn. And you, hoary veterans of the cross—one and all—heroes of a glorious strife, remnants of an army slain and yet victorious, if we survive when ye are gone, how bereaved and solitary our lot! But ye are going: the wrinkled brow, the furrowed cheek, the halting step respond, Yes, we are going. Pray for us while you live, and bless us when you die.

And you, brethren, middle-aged and young, let us imitate the example, catch the spirit, of our glorified brother and fellow-laborer. He felt himself a debtor to the wise and the unwise. The White man, the Indian, and the Negro, all shared his counsel, his labors, his sympathy, and his prayers. The white fields are yet ungathered, and the strongest reapers are falling. The mournful event we commemorate cries, Go work to-day in the Lord's vineyard. This is our duty, and ought to be our only business. We are here, as officers and ministers of our branch of the Church, to inaugurate our great missionary and publishing interests under new auspices. But the cold shadow of death falls darkly upon our council-chamber. Its presence is a warning. We have home-interests we may not live to supervise: there are plans of usefulness we may not help to execute; for we too are passing away. What we do must be done quickly. Let us live unto the Lord: let us live unto the Lord more than ever: let us be more prompt, self-denying and laborious. Let us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. What we lay out he will repay. Amid our toil, inconveniences and trials, be this our consolation—"We are the Lord's." If we live till our physical powers decay, the dim eye may still read our title clear: on Jesus's bosom we may lean the hoary head, and in death's sad struggle feel our kind Preserver near. God will not love us less because "the strong men bow themselves," and "the keepers of the house tremble." His love endureth for ever. His claim is undeniable—his title indisputable. The grave's effacing fingers cannot mutilate the handwriting. Time's ponderous wheel, as it grinds the world to dust on its march to judgment, cannot destroy the record. "A book of

remembrance is written before Him"—safe beyond the desolations of earth, and the triumphs of the sepulchre. Heeding then the solemn providence which bids us weep a brother deceased, let us go forth bearing precious seed, sowing beside all waters,—we shall rest, and stand in our lot at the end of the days. "Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Living and dying, dead and buried, we are His—His when we rise, His when heaven and earth are fled and gone, His in the New Jerusalem, for ever and for ever.

"Servant of God, well done!  
 Rest from thy loved employ,  
 The battle fought, the vict'ry won,  
 Enter thy Master's joy."  
 The voice at midnight came:  
 He started up to hear:  
 A mortal arrow pierced his frame,  
 He fell,—but felt no fear.

Tranquil amid alarms,  
 It found him on the field,  
 A vet'ran slumb'ring on his arms,  
 Beneath his red-cross shield.  
 His sword was in his hand,  
 Still warm with recent fight,  
 Ready that moment, at command,  
 Through rock and steel to smite.

At midnight came the cry,  
 "To meet thy God prepare!"  
 He woke,—and caught his Captain's eye;  
 Then, strong in faith and prayer,  
 His spirit, with a bound,  
 Left its encumb'ring clay:  
 His tent, at sunrise, on the ground,  
 A darkened ruin lay.

The pains of death are past,  
 Labor and sorrow cease;  
 And life's long warfare closed at last,  
 His soul is found in peace.  
 Soldier of Christ, well done!  
 Praise be thy new employ;  
 And while eternal ages run,  
 Rest in thy Saviour's joy.



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# SEMI-CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE:

PREACHED, BY REQUEST, BEFORE THE

## Georgia Annual Conference

OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH,

IN AMERICUS, DECEMBER 7TH, 1856.

BY

THE REV. LOVICK PIERCE, D.D.

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Nashville, Tenn.:

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## General Notice.

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THE following is the substance of a Semi-Centennial Discourse, preached by request of the Georgia Annual Conference, from a few notes hastily made at the time of delivery, and from which the written discourse has been taken—the only changes made relating chiefly to order. I have, of course, said more on some points and less on some others, in the written than I said in the spoken discourse. The hope that my knowledge of Methodism for fifty years, both as to gains and losses, might be useful to the Conference, has constituted my only apology for publication; and, as a rich reward to my own feelings, I ask the pleasure of dedicating the discourse to the Georgia Annual Conference, as a token of my unfeigned love for that Association.

THE AUTHOR.

Very faint header text, possibly containing a date or reference number.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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# A SEMI-CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE.

BY LOVICK PIERCE, D.D.

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“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life.”—2 Cor. ii. 14-16.

THE work assigned me in this call being peculiar, it will not be expected at my hands that I go into all the processes of a regular sermon, but only into such an analysis of the words as will bring out the great doctrines and facts contained in them to easy view.

The text declares a great fact in connection with apostolic preaching: its universal triumph. But its universal triumph was in Christ—never out of him—never without him. He was the sum and substance of all apostolic preaching—the great central thought. No matter what theme engaged the attention of an apostle and minister of Christ in those days of primitive orthodoxy, if you followed it to its origin or to its end, it either came from or flowed back to Christ. No one of this original panel of preachers ever lost sight of Christ. The cross was the centre of attraction; and although there might have been, even then, some centrifugal force working to wild and erratic ramblings, still the centripetal power of the cross—Christ crucified—was the controlling law. Christ being, as he declared he was, the way, the truth, and the life, nothing could be gospel-preaching unless Christ was the Alpha and Omega of the discourse. The triumph of the gospel in the

age of the apostles of the Church, was not the effect of their office, but because they preached Christ crucified—notwithstanding they knew that such preaching was to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block. It is not our business to take care of the gospel, but to preach the gospel; and let it take care of itself.

He “maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place.” The gospel ministry is the ordained means and medium of promoting the knowledge of Christ, whether we allude to its intellectual or its experimental progress. We regard it to be the saving knowledge of Christ that is designed in the text. And to bear out the just boast of the apostle, we ask, When or where was Christ ever preached without fruit? The certain, unlimited, and universal success of preaching is its test. Converts constitute the Heaven-attested testimonials of a true and Divinely authorized ministry. Here is proof of apostolic succession: converts, which are the epistles of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God—copies of regeneration so well made out as to be known and read of all men. Let all preachers among us hear and fear at this point.

The thought that God ever calls a man to preach as an evangelist, lays on him the worth of souls, and sends him out to warn and teach every one the knowledge of Christ—the theme of every evangelical preacher—and yet that there should be no immediate fruit—no sinner awakened and converted to God—is an absurdity. To call men to preach who become mere gleaners, entering into another man’s line of business made ready to their hand, amounts, in our opinion, to a negative. Where is the proof Divinely given that God makes known the savor of the knowledge of Christ by them in every place? There may be some variety in the developments of efficiency as seen between one minister and another: indeed, we fully believe this is so: the revelations of the New Testament evidently teach us so; and this being a principle in the original design, it will follow as a sequence that the demonstrations of the Spirit, as they urge home the truths of Christ, may be more immediate in some cases than in others: more immediate because the saving influence acts upon a more visible and demonstrative law of life; but not more effectual in their ulterior issues—sometimes not so much so. The Spirit

is given to every man—preëminently so to every minister of Christ—to profit withal. In every variety of form, and in every measure of degree, the Spirit is given. A man preaching without the Spirit is a mere lecturer on theology. If gifted in the charms of speech, he may win silly admiration, but his genuine converts will nowhere be found. God must work with us, confirming the word preached by legitimate signs, or else proof Divine is wanting. Let no other necessity which lies upon you as a ministerial qualification, ever take precedence of the high and indispensable qualification given to the graduates of the pentecostal commencement—*power from on high*.

We deem it proper in this connection further to remark upon the varied visible success of preaching. We do so the more cheerfully because many faithful preachers are sorely tempted on the ground of no success, when, indeed, they are doing good work in the salvation of souls. All our views on this work ought to be modelled after the Saviour's allusions. He meant much when he said, "One soweth, and another reapeth: I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor." The popular notion of here and there revival preachers, who are called in when great things are to be expected—like popular auctioneers, where large sales are to be made—we deprecate, as a perversion of the appointed ministry. No, my brethren. It is the word of God faithfully preached and relied on as God's appointed agency, coming from a minister like Barnabas—a good man, and full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost: such a minister will be a revivalist in the legitimate sense of the phrase.

But to be more definite. How often do we see a warm-hearted, devoted preacher labor for a whole year—labor, too, with surpassing ability—with but little visible success; (and ministers only get credit for what becomes visible;) but all the time he was seeding the mind with the word of God, preparing well the fallow ground, kindling a refining fire in the conscience, indoctrinating the mind with safe views of duty and of piety. But conversions and accessions are few and far between. He leaves his field of labor, discouraged, tempted, cast down, and ready to locate—yes, even to decline the calling. He is succeeded by another, far below his predecessor in all the essential qualities of good sermonizing.

But, like John, he preaches many things in his exhortation. He is a good pulpit declaimer—warm in spiritual fire—happy in Christian experience—makes fine music on the sympathetic nerves. Under his exciting addresses, currents of feeling which had before run gently along, but not idly, swell into rushing currents which no longer admit of concealment. Here, now, is a preacher for you—a revivalist—a man brought into market upon a stream which he did not train into the channel wherein it bore him into such honorable notice. To him is awarded the glory of this mighty work; while it is very likely the entries of heaven will put less to the credit of his efficient instrumentality than any one of the primary agents engaged in the preparatory processes. Great mistakes are often made in our estimates of preachers on the score of usefulness. Many of these *star preachers* find a people made ready, prepared for the Lord; and there they revel in easy victories. But let no one imagine we depreciate the value of these men. No, indeed; they are a part of the regular employees—destined reapers. Our object is, rather to have tempted preachers duly appreciated.

It is hardly proper to inquire under what department of ministerial instrumentality arises the greatest honor. The honor of being employed at all, as a medium of Heaven's spiritual communings with man's immortal interest, is honor enough. It matters little whether we plant or water, whether we sow or reap, whether we exercise the pastoral office over Christ's lambs or his sheep, so we feed them always upon the unadulterated milk of God's word. The comfort is, that ultimately, he that soweth, and he that reapeth, shall rejoice together.

Come, my brethren, let us cheer up. How it thrills the Christian's heart to think of that jubilant company, the grandmother Lois, and the mother Eunice, and Paul the Apostle, all rejoicing over Timothy in eternal life. And who now will pretend to determine to which of the three belonged the immortal honor of Timothy's conversion? Paul, no doubt, filled the largest place in the eye of the world, perhaps in the eye of the Church, too; but eternity alone can answer the question, Would Paul's preaching have gathered Timothy into the Church, if it had not been for the sowing done by his grandmother and his mother? They imbued his boyhood's mind with such scriptural indoctrination as was



able to make him wise unto salvation. The way of the Lord was prepared, and his paths made straight in Timothy, long before Paul preached to him. In the same way now, are parents, Sunday-schools, good books, godly examples, and well-timed preaching, making ready a people prepared for the Lord. And although ministers, and especially our so-called revivalists, may seem to be the chief instruments, yet it is not really so. Eternity will show the pleasing fact, that the very seed, which slowly but steadily vegetated into religious maturity, was deposited by a mother's pious care, and nurtured by a father's prayers. Thus shall the jubilee of salvation be an occasion of joy to many an unheralded instrument. The sower and the reaper shall both now play upon the same heavenly harp.

But we must bring into notice another feature in our text. We mean the mysterious, but, according to the chosen phrase of the apostle, the natural issues of a Divinely appointed ministry. Such a ministry is a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that are lost. To the former, the minister of Christ is the savor of life unto life; but to the latter, the minister of Christ is the savor of death unto death. In both instances, the issue declared is because the agent is the minister of Christ. A self-constituted ministry, or a ministry ecclesiastically created, could never lead to such responsibilities as those declared in the text. The commission to transact business of such eternal interest, must issue directly from the Lord himself. Accordingly, the true delegates of Heaven, appointed to act for God in these premises, are denominated ambassadors for Christ—beseeching men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. Few men, either in the Church or out of it, have ever deigned to think of a minister of Christ in that august character he sustains to the rebel world to which he is sent, in God's name, to beseech each and every offender to become reconciled to God through Christ. Every Divinely appointed legate of the skies is to every one of us as the mouth of God. Christ said once for all time, in reference to these ambassadors, He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. Here, then, is the ground and reason why the preaching of the gospel must work mighty results. It is a gracious proclamation of peace and pardon, made at God's own instance,

made through Christ, by declaring that he had made him a sin-offering, notwithstanding his innocence, to the end that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. How can such an offer be made without a reflex action?—acceptance works life; rejection, death. The notion of results so direct and specific as those claimed in the text, whether arising on the side of mercy or of wrath, could never arise as sequences of executive administration, except the government and its agents were a unit in law and interest. How would it appall every considerate mind to realize the terrific truth that every time we decline to accept of offered mercy—of Christ as a Saviour—we do, to all intents and realities, personally and positively reject Christ; although the offer come to us from human lips, come to us in the course of our regular Sabbath ministry. But remember that Sabbath minister of ours is God's ambassador; and as such, is praying and beseeching us in Christ's stead; therefore, if we refuse the minister of Christ, we refuse Christ himself.

This is one of the occasions when it is needful to fix the meaning of a word; especially so, when if it have different meanings, according to the connection in which it is used, there should be one which enters into the just judgments of God. And here is an instance. The ambassador of Christ, with his message of grace, and the terms of reconciliation, through Christ crucified, is declared to be "unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that are lost." How is it that Christ is the same to God the Father, in reference to them that are lost, that he is in reference to them that are saved? The answer to this inquiry could never be satisfactorily given, if it had not been so variously declared, that God has not appointed man to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. This we believe to be the only original precedent decree of God, in reference to man's moral and eternal destiny. Hence, we learn from that stronghold of predestinarian comfort, in Rom. viii. 29, 30, that, instead of any predestination outside of Christ, every word contained in this scale of Divine decrees, as to precedent measures, refers directly to the Divine determination that Jew and Gentile should become heirs of eternal life, upon the same general principle—unmodified faith in Christ. Hence the decree is, in its essential requisite, that

we must be conformed to the image of God's Son; therefore, as no man can be saved unless he is saved through Christ, and every man is redeemed in Christ, and must be saved by faith in him, or condemned and adjudged to everlasting death for denying the Lord that bought him, it is easy to see how the accredited minister of Christ may be unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are lost; a thing that never could have been, unless Christ had died as effectively for every man as he died for any man: we mean to be understood of redemption in the abstract view of it, as it regulated the will of God, and justified his economy of mercy. He solemnly and most affectingly swears that he had no original willingness to human woe; and makes death, even eternal death, the wages of sin.

The principal meaning of savor is confined either to odor or taste. Its substantial import is found in the existence of valuable qualities, such as give character to the thing. The property of saving from putrescence, found in salt, is clearly alluded to, when it is said, "If the salt have lost its savor." But we are to find the Divine meaning of the word in the Divine use of it; and that use is in connection with sacrifices Divinely appointed and properly offered. In these typical offerings, Jehovah scented the rich odor of the cross, and anticipated the day of gospel sacrifice, when the stricken sinner, with broken heart and contrite spirit, shall offer the incense of Christ's living blood. After the flood, as soon as Noah had dry ground to build an altar on, he did so, and offered thereon of every clean thing; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor.

The same general idea is maintained in the Epistle to the Philippians, where Paul speaks of their large liberality as an odor of a sweet smell; a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. Here acceptability is brought to view as the chief if not the only reason why the charity alluded to was an odor, or like an odor of a sweet smell.

Whenever we offer Christ by faith as our passover, sacrificed for us, there will be an odor of a sweet smell indeed; because, as believers, we offer a sacrifice well pleasing to God. The valuableness of this offering constitutes its acceptableness. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." The preaching of Christ in his order and in his offices—that is to say, in all his availability as the High-priest

of our profession—must minister to the saints in such a way as to make us a savor of life unto life in them that are saved. O what an overwhelming thought! This work of perfecting the saints and edifying the body of Christ, is divinely pleasant. How like alluvial deposits do successive discourses on the plan and the promises of salvation enrich the soul in the depth and the fruitfulness of its spiritual soil!

It is on the principle of a reflex action in the Divine economy that the minister of God is a savor of death unto death in them that perish. How could God, in mercy, institute a mean, a medium of salvation, at so great a cost and upon the principle of faith and believing obedience, without attaching to it this reflex law? Such action is not an incident but an element in the judicial department of government, adapted to free moral agents. A system of grace, offering life to the submissive, must necessarily deal in death to all that refuse and rebel. Wherefore, the blessed Saviour said, "For judgment I am come into the world, that they that see not might see, and that they that see might be made blind." This blindness was to be strictly judicial. It came on its ruined victims, not as a cause, but as an effect—not as the antecedent, but as the consequent. It is to us, at least, a very discernible element in the equity of God's righteous dealings that such a scheme of agencies and of responsibilities as we find in the gospel of God's grace must kill, if it does not make alive. No virtue can be an object of legal protection on the ground of inherent goodness, without the condemnation of the opposite vice. The rewardableness of patriotism requires the reprobation of treason; so in like manner must the reception of Christ, as a rewardable act, render necessary the reprobation of his rejection, and, with it, the voluntary agent. It is overwhelming to think of it, but not at all startling, that every faithful sermon we preach is finishing up the doom of many a beloved hearer. It must be so: God himself cannot prevent it, unless he could, by lawless power, invert every principle of systematic justice, and negative all the substantive properties of vice by an arbitrary exaltation of virtue. Should the sinner conclude, the case being so, to lessen accountability by neglecting to hear, he cannot do it. He only does, by one definitive act, what he would do by a series of similar acts, if he were to attend preaching and re-

fuse obedience. It is the sin of denying the Saviour that does the fell deed; and whether it is a protracted act or a single act is a matter of no material consequence. If there is any difference in the two cases, it is only the difference of what our philosophy calls the chances. It is true that the probability of conversion is greater when we stately attend the ministry of the word than it is when we stately neglect it. The salvation of a sinner may be regarded a bare possibility when he designedly abandons God's sanctuary: of his salvation there is no probability.

Having vindicated the tremendous issues of preaching Christ's gospel, as they tell upon the doom of him who receives the grace of God in vain, by showing simply that the judgment to condemnation is the evidence both of the need of the atonement and of the individual universality of it, we will again advert to the developments of preaching, as we have learned them during the last half century. The difference there is between a minister gifted in casting the seed of life into the mind, and one who, by stirring appeals, puts the gentler convictions into action—between those that plant and those that water—we have before alluded to. Our business now is to view the effects of preaching as they differ in much that is visible, and, perhaps, mainly accidental, seen in different phases of society as it moves upward, in reference to moral illumination and Christian indoctrination; we mean such Christian indoctrination as leaves nothing outside of its converting influence but an unsundered heart.

It is pleasant to contemplate the truth that in this evil world there are many young people being brought up in pious families and good Sunday-schools that have not a prejudice against the Church, nor a doubt about the truth of religion. This is the effect of the approach of our moral luminary to meridian brightness. It is neither impossible nor improbable that this transfusion of the Spirit and law of God into the minds of the children, as the Church progresses in her appropriate work of teaching God's commandments to children's children, will bring on such a degree of intellectual faith, and of reverential regard for the kingdom of God on earth, that much of the visible difference between their non-professing and their professing life will consist in a connection with the Church in membership, and the due observance of Church

rules and ordinances. Such persons are behindhand with God more in the way of duty than they are in the way of faith, and furnish instances in point where works might and often would make faith perfect. In most of these cases, conviction of sin and distress on account of sin, to a semi-centenarian, might appear too shallow and quiet ever to lead to regeneration. So it seemed to me, as I came up from the style of convictions and conversions common in the days of my inauguration; but my own mind is fully satisfied. I now believe, these converts that grow up into Christ—persons who have always felt identified with the Church, and remind one, not inaptly, of well-bred persons who, when thrown into highly improved and polished circles of society, seem naturally adapted to it—these converts, when they come into the Church, are at home. The Church fits them; and they fit the Church. Other things being equal, it is now well known that these converts make our best Church-members. They are more liberal, more active and serviceable, more uncomplaining, and easier satisfied. The rationale of this is that they bring into the Church as much heart as others, and more principle.

In contradistinction from these, we may contemplate the power of the gospel, as it suddenly pours a flood of moral and religious light upon a mind long dark, and a conscience steeped in the lethean dregs of sin—sweeping over the soul, like an unexpected courier, proclaiming news of the most imminent danger, with barely time, if indeed there is time, to avert it—leaving, in letters of fire, in the confessing conscience, traces of guilt more indelible than letters chiselled in granite. The hearers thus operated on, as a general fact, belong to grades and conditions of civilized society where the light of religion exists chiefly as a matter of natural conscience—a dim outline of moral obligation and responsibility, sufficient, at most, only to forbode danger of eternal wrath, without any of that education of the mind which shows the loving favor of God in its encouraging and soul-quieting aspects. Hence the peculiar tendency of conviction in all these subjects of natural religion is to great anguish of feeling. A sense of guilty wretchedness and of righteous condemnation causes groans and trembling, and even the most piteous screams have been uttered—not hysteric screams, but

such as arose from terrific apprehensions of God's wrath, which they saw continually hanging over them. These persons do not see their condition any worse than it is—not worse, indeed, than the more quiet penitent, of whom we have before spoken, as to the substance of conviction; but the difference is in the fact that the more quiet penitent had been long feeling on this point, had admitted substantially all these truths, become familiar with them; but upon the other, the whole vision comes with the freshness of a new revelation. His sins blaze in the light of God's holy law: his conscience sanctions its righteous authority; his judgment approves its infinite justice; and in the universe there is not a star of hope to alleviate his wretchedness, unless it can be found in the undeserved mercy of God. Of this, in his case, he doubts. This doubtfulness continues, sometimes for a longer and sometimes for a shorter period; but in every case until the penitent reaches the point of utter self-despair—of despair in every thing save in the merits of Christ Jesus. At this point he falls on Christ—falls on him as the leper did, saying, in effect at least, "If thou wilt, thou canst save me." And in a moment, like Thomas, he cries out, as if it were involuntary, "My Lord and my God!" The change in the other class of penitents, although the antecedents were not so agonizing in their effects, is generally very similar. They pass the ordeal more in the style of an intellectual effort to trust in Christ; and when they find peace in believing, it is more like the filling of a desideratum. They feel that all their intellectual speculations on the feelings of a new-born soul were nothing more than the meagre drapery of the living reality. And thus, in the end, each of them and all of them come to the same knowledge of Christ, and come to it in the unity of the faith.

And now, having fulfilled our promise as to the text in all its mighty sentiments, and in some of its collateral suggestions, we will dwell for a brief space on the great leading fact to which St. Paul alludes as an accompaniment of gospel-preaching, to wit, its universal triumph; and apply this fact to American Methodism. But let it be premised that we do not claim for the gospel universal triumph over individuals, but that in every country, and in every locality in every country, where the experiment has been fairly made, it has

triumphed. If success in preaching the gospel of Christ were the *experimentum crucis* in the Divine intent, well and truly has the result vindicated the intrinsic merit of the agency. This was the sense in which the apostle intended to be understood here, and also in Col. i. 6. The gospel is emphatically the power of God; and whoever preaches it without this testimonial may be regarded as preaching professionally, but not with the demonstration of the Spirit. All that Paul directs, in order to insure success, is found in the employment of a known tongue, and in prophesying; that is, in such recitals of God's own word as the apostles used in preaching to the Jews, with direct application. In other words, it was using great plainness of speech. This style of preaching reached both the ignorant and the unbelieving, producing just such instantaneous conversions as we have before alluded to. It was not pulpit cant—it was not silly declamation—it was not far-fetched simpering—it was not imaginative issues—not bombast and fustian—not digging graves, and parading pall-bearers, hearses, and mourning processions. Neither was it philosophy, logic, nor metaphysical disquisitions. But it was the testimony of God, simply declared. Can any disputant point out any State, or any county in any State, where the gospel has failed to bring forth fruit, if properly administered? And this inherent energy residing in the gospel of Christ is the Divine seal, both of a Divinely appointed ministry and a Divinely acknowledged ministry; and is, in our opinion, the only evidence of apostolic succession. They that have the living epistles of Christ written by the Spirit of God on fleshly tables of hearts, ministered however by us, need no other credentials, either prelatical, episcopal, or presbyterial, in as far as a Divine call and appointment is the question; though ecclesiastical credit is indispensable to order and organization.

The original inherent power of the gospel is still further and demonstrably verified in its independence of all governmental aid, and in its utter independence of forms of government. All the gospel wants, as the gospel, is to be let alone. Do not embarrass it by legal restrictions, nor attempt to increase its efficacy by statutory force, and it will work its own justification. It achieves its victories as easily and as certainly in monarchies as in republics; and would do so in



political despotisms. Spiritual despotism, however, is the paralysis of gospel energy.

To be ministers of such a gospel has been the aim and end of Methodist preachers in the United States, I am sure, since the time of my entrance among them.

In the winter of 1804-5, I was admitted as a licentiate in Charleston, S. C.; and in the winter of 1806-7, I was received into full connection in Sparta, Ga., and ordained deacon, making this Conference the fiftieth of my membership. And now, bringing the past and the present into view, I might fitly exclaim, What hath God wrought! and as fitly answer, He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad!

When I entered the itinerancy, there were seven Annual Conferences in the United States and their territories. These Conferences were made up of a handful of self-sacrificing men, without the prestige of antiquity, or the talismanic charm of learning and wealth. The want of antiquity was *primâ facie* evidence against their claim to popular favor, or their right to be recognized as a branch of Christ's Church. The Baptist Church could count back to John the Baptist; the Protestant Episcopal Church to Christ and the apostles; and others to a respectable antiquity. But as for the Methodists, they were of yesterday—a religious mushroom. A somewhat notorious writer considers it an unanswerable argument against the Methodists that they came into existence seventeen hundred and forty odd years after the Church of God was organized, and could not by any possibility be of it. But perhaps a greater difficulty than that which relates to time is, that we, like the ancient Israel of God, came through Jordan on dry land. But be this as it may, it once had its force that we were the youngest sister in the family, and might most naturally be suspected of unlawful birth. That the Methodist Church was the last that came into existence under original organization, dating no farther back than 1784, we admit; but we deny the reasonings of our enemies on this premise, and will use it, under the authority of the text, as conclusive evidence in favor of the apostolic type of Methodism. What is the testimony rendered in attestation of a Heaven-sent and Heaven-approved ministry, but that God makes manifest the savor of his name by it in every place?

We can fearlessly challenge every evangelical Church in England, and especially in our beloved America, to offer as many proofs of Divine origin as have been afforded to us—the last in the field, and denounced not more by the world than we were by every old and well-established Church in America. Not only had we been born out of due time, but we were proclaimed heretics by every powerful and accredited Church in the land; and not heretics merely, but by the more bitter and demagoguish class of enemies we were traduced as loyalists and tories; and this, too, before the victorious republicans of the Revolution had hardly washed out from their homes the blood of patriots shed by tories. And these were days when the word tory roused up the most insatiable hatred that ever was kindled in the breast of an American citizen or soldier. This unchristian slang was rung through all its changes in 1812, when war with Great Britain became a fixed fact. The gallant patriotism of the Methodists, however, during that war, so completely silenced these mutterings, that we had ceased to think of the vile slander, until a certain writer, like some one who had slept forty years, ignorant of all the progress of the world, woke up, and forty years behind the time, cut in, as fresh as if the excitement were just beginning to brew. An attempt like this, to override a numerous, well-known, and long-tried denomination of Christians, by acting upon a morbid element of American democracy, and seeking to get a popular tempest on political jealousies, and thereby root out a dreaded rival, is more devilish than just.

The cry of heresy was one to which all religionists looked with intense interest. Previous to the appearance of Methodist preachers in this country, the Calvinistic phase of theology was the one which had prepossessed the public mind in as far as the pulpit had influenced it; and as far, too, as doctrinal books had moulded the public mind, that mind was *Calvinized*. Against some Calvinistic teachings, such as a limited atonement, unconditional perseverance, and the necessary indwelling of sin in God's children until death, the Methodists opened a heavy cannonade. Of course, the denouncing of these new-comers as false teachers and heretics was everywhere encouraged and justified where the progress of religious knowledge had been sufficient to establish a religious

creed: of course, every Church in the land which was regarded evangelical had all the odds of prejudice and of predilection against us. There was nothing in the way of prestige to give us either aid or comfort. And to the truth, as it is in Jesus, do I believe all impartial minds will attribute the unexampled success of Methodism as an evangelical organization. Against all this odds, Methodism, in the course of seventy-five years, has made its way to a numerical prominence unequalled by any sister Church, having in my day grown in Conferences from seven to more than fifty, and from one hundred thousand to a million and a half of members. And could we add to the living the great multitude that have died in the Church, and left the savor of a good life behind to excite the living to duty and to diligence, we could swell the chorus of triumph into a strain of loud and unanswerable exultation.

There is one feature in Methodism which it is proper to advert to in this connection: we mean the greatness of her doings at home compared with the scantiness of her work abroad. On this point we offer nothing by way of apology, and but little by way of explanation. The reason is a very obvious and a very comprehensive one.

When Methodism entered upon her appropriate work—the spreading of scriptural holiness over these lands—the United States consisted of the original thirteen, lying along the Atlantic, from Maine to Georgia, but with territorial border and extension almost limitless. This territory has been constantly coming into occupancy, offering to enterprising citizens, to foreign emigrants, and to that class of migratory persons who have enough of the savage element mixed up with the civilized to make the wildest state of society the preferred state, the very inducements which would keep up an ever-extending and increasing population. This state of things has gone steadily on, until the flood of immigration and population has reached the Pacific. And now there is inviting, unsettled territory enough between us and the Pacific to fill up the next fifty years in the same exhausting process. We have kept up with the wave of immigration as it flowed westward, and have demonstrated one thing at least, that is, that our itinerancy is well adapted to the spread of the gospel in a newly settled territory. But to

meet this necessity has exhausted our men and means; so that, though Methodism claims the world as its parish, we have done but little for the heathen in foreign nations. For the Indians in our country we have done much, and reaped much ripe fruit. Whether our principle of action has been the best, we will leave as an open question.

And now it seems to us to be a work of necessity, before closing a semi-centennial discourse, that we give expression to our personal views of Methodism during the last fifty years. And this, we think, can be best accomplished by a brief recital of facts, and a comparison of results; and to these remaining duties we immediately proceed.

And first: We think great evil has arisen from a change in the style and matter of preaching. The style is too declamatory, and not enough experimental. The early practice of drawing a scriptural delineation of all the emotions, convictions, mental exercises, peculiar temptations, and common experiences of awakened and converted sinners, had a wonderfully good effect upon anxious souls. In those primitive days of Methodism, every preacher felt it his duty to study human nature and character with the closest care, and the Spirit's workings with the deepest interest, to the end that he might guide seeking souls aright. And every member of the Church felt, when he went to hear a sermon, that he was to sit for his spiritual likeness—that he was to be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary; and he listened with trembling solicitude. And when, in spite of all his fears and his sore temptations, he was compelled to own himself a child of God, according to the admeasurement of God's own word, the soul was often full of glory and of God. I hear little or no preaching of this sort in these latter days. The characteristics of personal religion are merged into a beautiful generalization, and floated before the gaze of the multitude; and many professed Christians, finding themselves in possession of some of the general properties of religion, assume that they have all or enough of the specific properties to save them; and so, while they lack "one thing," they cling deludedly to their general character, never daring a special trial.

A return to this Pilgrim's Progress style of preaching, under a well-digested scheme, would no doubt set some of the former

currents of feeling to flowing again. Church members should often be put upon a fair trial.

Again: It is quite certain to us that when the ministers gave being and form to every conception of Church appliances, and led in the practical application of them themselves—for in those days we did not have proxies, but helpers—we had a more spiritual membership than we have now: we mean, that the proportion of truly converted members, in relation to the whole number of members, was much nearer than in these days. Indeed, as a very old sentinel within the wards of our Methodist Jerusalem, I must say that a formalist—an unconverted member in the Church—was unknown for many years of my early ministry. This wonderful fact I now account for, in a large degree, from the unvarying rule of holding class-meeting, as preachers in charge, every time we preached; and always with the class-papers so marked by a letter, that we knew every member we spoke to that was a seeker; and then and there we addressed them as mourners under far more favorable circumstances than those now in use at our crowded altars. This course was unintermitted until every seeker that came into the Church was decidedly converted. And O, what decided converts then adorned our despised Methodism! But if there was a failure in any probationary member then—if any failed to manifest their desire of salvation, as prescribed in the general rules, and would not be urged to duty—such delinquents were formally dropped, and would be now, if the keys of the kingdom of heaven had remained where Christ placed them.

And here it becomes my duty to say, that, according to the *data* brought before me in our past history, it is clear to my mind that our future history will be one of still further declension, unless, as preachers, we reïnaugurate class-meetings, not in name and form merely, but in spiritual substance. We must kindly, but very honestly, tap all the fountains where evil might lurk in disguise, or error in spirit. The pastors of God's Israel must be, and ought to be, the most prominent agents in this work: indeed, there is by general allowance a sort of Divine right as well as Divine authority given to ministers as pastors, that will not be cordially awarded to any other order of church officers. Very special, individual pastoral conversation, with such applica

tion of it as the spiritual condition of the member demanded, would be the best, indeed the only substitute for class-meetings that the ministry could adopt that would be worth the labor of observing. And class-meetings, carried out as a Church ordinance, and for the spiritual discipline of the Church, is the wisest and best economy the Methodist Church ever adopted for spiritual fraternization. And whenever, by usage or by law, class-meetings cease from among us, Ichabod may be written across the once fair fame of the Church. So well satisfied am I of the justness of these views, that I declare it to be my opinion that in as far as the membership of the Church are concerned, many of us who are going round our circuits and visibly doing nothing by preaching, would, if we were to hold good old-fashioned class-meetings, have revivals of experimental religion that would renew the Church.

There is another fact connected with the progress of Methodism which it is proper to review in this connection. We allude to that lust of numbers which, twenty years ago, ran into such wildness, that, at camp-meetings and at revival-meetings, the door of the church was opened sometimes two or three times in each day and night, followed with the most pressing persuasions; and almost always during the highest excitements that ever occurred. And although we know that mere éclat of numbers was never the controlling motive, yet we do believe that, to a large extent, it insinuated itself into the transaction. At all events, like all instances of carelessness when allowed to incorporate with things which necessarily demand great care and constant vigilance, the practice entailed on the Church a series of evils. It overcame and virtually set aside the law of admission, as contained in the Discipline. It gave countenance to the practice of doing a very important and solemn act in a very summary and careless manner. Nothing was promised, because nothing was required. The whole matter was allowed to proceed as if it was a mere personal adventure. The proceeding was unbusiness-like—it was unmethodistic. It was, as I believed then, and as I know now, the entrance of an evil leaven into our Church, which has been ever since seeking to leaven the whole lump. There was no pastoral oversight of these new recruits. They enjoyed no ministerial intercourse. Many

of them never even shook hands again with the preacher. He never met them in class: did not know whether they had been soundly converted, as in the better days of Methodism we did. The preachers (many of them, at least) pleaded too much fatigue to hold class-meetings. All other necessities and duties were, by common consent, subordinated to the matter of revival and Church-extension. Class-meetings being first omitted by the preachers, were afterwards neglected by them; and as soon as it was evident that the preachers neglected them, the members began to neglect them. And thus, by little and little, the early and excellent means of conducting our seekers on to the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was withdrawn; and if they did not get converted during the confused aid they received at the general mourners' altar, especially in our circuits, they perhaps never had another word of suitable sympathy and advice addressed to them. The consequence was, many of them fainted and tired, like sheep not having a shepherd; and many more rested in the moral reform which a deep conviction of sin, especially of outward sin, had very indelibly impressed on their taste and judgment. But never having been truly regenerated, they were left without those spiritual appetites and affections which could find delightful pasturage in a close class-meeting, or sufficient entertainment in a conversation upon holy living. Hence the dislike which many of the modern Methodists feel to class-meeting. They think that it is the institution itself that they dislike, but they are mistaken—awfully mistaken. It is the communion itself that they dislike. If the same time were to be devoted to a meeting where the carnal appetite, instead of the spiritual, were to be regaled, these very objectors would be their strongest advocates. Alas for a church-member who feels any loathing for such a means of grace as a good Methodist class-meeting! And here let me say again, that nothing but such ministerial intercourse and oversight as our class-meeting usages gave us over our probationary seekers will either arrest or neutralize this growing evil among us.

Another remark on Methodism as it once was and as it now is seems to be absolutely demanded. The question whether the original application of Methodism to the condition and necessities of the American people would always continue the

best plan of application, is now the question; and if any modifications in the plan are necessary, what ought to be the nature and extent of these changes. When Methodism was introduced into the country, most of it where Methodism now flourishes was an uninhabited wilderness long after I became a travelling-preacher; and for many years it was the case that the people, as a general thing, felt unsettled. New territory was constantly being acquired—territory inviting to enterprising men of every vocation. Amidst the wavy population, nearly every move we made was made in view of a present necessity or propriety. There was little or no forecasting in view of the future of Methodism. Present success was the prime motive of action; and the future of Methodism was left, as it ought to have been, to shape its course according to the condition and wants of society. The wise flexibility of Methodism in its operative genius is one of its highest political qualities. The way in which we then proceeded was the way for the times. It was informal, elastic, and adaptive. We met the demand that was upon us, took things as we found them, preached in-doors or out, went everywhere, organized what we called churches—but many of them had very few attributes of a church, if what our Articles state is the true notion of a church. We had a preaching-place—sometimes a dwelling-house, sometimes a schoolhouse or barn, and sometimes we had a cabin or shanty, called a meeting-house. In these unsightly places of worship, we enrolled a membership without a church-book. Every thing was got up and carried on as upon a temporary plan. From this incomplete system, as I believe, it became an infesting evil in our general body to go on in Church matters as we did not in any other interest on which it was necessary to impress the progress and improvement of society. I have long felt that we were blamably tardy in our church improvements. It is true that when we built our huts of churches, they were in character with things in general; but long since, in many prosperous portions of Georgia, they have fallen below and behind our dwelling-houses, gin-houses, and barns. Every thing beside has been enlarged and improved; but the old, unfinished, dilapidated churches, as we got to calling them, have remained, and have testified against us that we have come to think any place kept for worship is good enough for God. 1



allege, that our slipshod style of Church doings has betrayed us into a hurtful policy. Most of these places of worship were located without any possible knowledge of the changes which would take place in advancing years. These changes long ago threw many of our preaching-places into a very unfavorable relation to the population, who ought to have been brought under our regular ministry, but who, by reason of real or imaginary inconvenience, fell without its saving influence. They failed to come to us, and we, by a too pertinacious adherence to old arrangements, failed to go to them, until I judge it true that for the last ten or fifteen years we have unwisely submitted to the largest outlay of ministerial talent, time, and labor, without any prospect of a rich remuneration in the awakening and conversion of sinners, ever endured by a body of ministers professedly and honestly laboring for that end. This ever-to-be-lamented evil has grown out of the fact, that a system of ministerial labor once applicable to the masses has become inapplicable to the remaining and more select inhabitants of the country. These views are not introduced to the consideration of the Methodists as having a universal application to our system of circuit-preaching, but as applied to those portions where the country has become old, and the more restless and roving citizens having sold out and removed, the farms which once supported five or six church-going families have been bought up, and are owned by one man; and the old circuit preaching-place is no longer the suitable location for a country congregation.

And to these evils, all working against us, we may add another which has been no less deleterious. In this connection we notice the division of large societies into two or three small ones; as also the founding of original societies so contiguous to each other, as to have foretold that insignificance must mark their course, and failure be the epitaph of their grave. This language would be severe if it were not that it is only a common-sense perception, to see that a good congregation cannot be built up without population enough to furnish it. We have not wisely used our common sense. These impolitic measures have, no doubt, been the accidents of our week-day system of preaching. We have simply designed to save time by shortening distance. But, in this connection, allow me to say, that it is certainly impossible to throw around one of these

diminutive establishments any considerable conservative moral power. So long as the place resorted to as a place of public worship is among the most inferior and least inviting of public resorts, just so long will the uniform motion of the moral current be in ebb. This truth is demonstrable in relation to denominational influence. One denomination can root itself out of a community, and another engraft itself upon it: the first, by contempt of the house of God as a house, and the second, by that kind of good taste, liberal arrangement, and Christian regard which invite all worshippers to the house of God, and make them comfortable while there. And it will require only the time of one generation to do that in this age of progress and refinement. The great principle of religious conservatism in this age, and in all such population as clearly indicate a ripeness for it, will be found in building up a large church and congregation at suitable distances and points, and investing them with all the attributes and agencies of a church. Then their proper moral power will be seen and felt; and if our opinion of the indispensable necessity of combining the pastoral with the ministerial office be correct, it will follow, as a thing of necessity, that our circuit charges must be lessened, either by diminishing the number of preaching-places constituting a circuit, or by increasing the number of preachers on a circuit; and in our opinion the former will work better than the latter mode. As to the expense, it is easily seen that there will be but little difference. As a principle in our political economy, it is a well-attested fact, that the fewer the number of payers, the more certain the pay, if they are at all able to do it, and voluntarily undertake to do it. If four congregations in the country were to undertake to support a preacher, they would do it as easily and liberally as eight would, for the very reason that they would feel, as a first principle of action, that a liberal subscription would be necessary. I allege it as the great accidental cause of the scanty support of our ministry during this half century, that the specious numerical basis has led to the parsimonious support. There were so many to help raise the allowance, that no one felt any absolute necessity to be liberal; and this practical idea, that no one need do much in order to meet the claims of the Church, diffused itself through all the veins and arteries of the Church, until many of our people regarded it a corruption of Methodism,

that money had become so necessary to the support of the ministry, and the progress of the Church. Other denominations, who early engrafted upon their patrons the necessity of a more liberal support, never had our difficulties to contend with, neither have they now. I do not intend to censure the past generation of Methodists, nor to flatter the present; but I will say, that I do not believe the present degree of liberality could ever have been engrafted on the fathers of American Methodism: I speak of them as a body; there always were noble exceptions. This ascending spirit of liberality in the Church must be drawn out and encouraged until we build large and comfortable churches and parsonages, and furnish them. Settle our minister, for the time allowed him, in our midst. Let him preach to us, visit us all, pray with our families, instruct our children, visit our Sunday-schools, and discipline the members. And for this he must be decently and comfortably supported; and whenever we get a preacher that will neglect his flock to rusticate with his family, let him be sent home to stay with them.

The advantage of a more constant and direct intercourse between the pastor and his charge, is now a fixed fact. There are many large settlements within the scope of my ministerial acquaintance, in which Methodism is slowly but regularly wearing out. Its moral force is not as much felt and respected now as it was twenty years ago. It is admitted that there may have been other causes leading on to this issue besides our week-day preaching, and the consequent failure of pastoral duty; but is there any member of this large and respectable Conference prepared to say this declension would have occurred, if these communities had enjoyed, all the time, regular Sabbath-preaching and pastoral attention in every family connected with the pastor's charge? And if we are not prepared to declare this much, then it is evident that the mode of our serving the Church is an improvident one. And in further support of this presumption, we plead the universal success of the Methodist ministry in every place where the pastoral element has been faithfully combined with it. In most of our colonial cities, whether on the sea-coast or in the interior, it was hard to plant Methodism; but by means of a residential and pastoral ministry, constantly kept up, we worked our way into the heart of the city population. No one believes

we could have done this by a non-resident ministry. In all the new cities which have sprung up in this State, and in which we have had a regular stationed minister, we have become a stable denomination—often the most numerous. And will any one say that our moral force and numerical strength would have been what it is now, if we had entered the city, even every Sabbath, and done a day's good preaching, and returned home, and in this way carried on city preaching, without pastoral visiting, without meeting the classes, and without mixing in Sabbath-schools? And if all say, "No," then we have additional evidence, that in whatever degree the pastoral office is subtracted from the ministerial, in that same degree is the ministerial compromised, if the evil is avertable. It is not because the beneficiaries of this work live in cities that it is so useful; it would be just as useful in the country church as it is in the city church.

But once more: I challenge all my contemporaries, and all others, to point out a single county, town, or village in Georgia, where the Methodists have been supplying the village congregation, as one of the circuit appointments, where Methodism is upon any thing like as broad and stable a foundation as it is in those places where the Church has sustained a regular stationed minister; and the village that comes nearest, is the one where the circuit preacher has resided in it.

There are many things connected with Methodism on which I would like to remark. To do it would be a relief to my full heart; but my effusions have already become too long, and there are some things remaining that I must say. And now, as it regards practical Methodism—how will it compare with Methodism forty years ago? and I think I may come down to even twenty years ago. But I choose to speak of it as it was when I was initiated, and for a few of the following years. Methodism in America, as an organized Church, had existed only twenty years when my name went on the Minutes as a probationary preacher. From 1805 to 1815 was a period of great revival influence, interrupted, however, by the war; and since then, at different times, a mighty work has demonstrated the divine character of our ministry. But, as I have before said, we inadvertently let our prosperity become our bane, until, I think, the following is not far from a fair comparison. For the first thirty years of Methodism, I judge that eight-

tenths of our membership attended diligently to every institution and ordinance of the Church, especially to our class-meetings. Of late, and at this time through the country generally, in as far as week-day circuit preaching is involved, and in as far as class-meetings are involved, I say, with poignant regret, that two-thirds of our common membership habitually neglect these rules of the Church. - If the state of the Church is as sound and safe now as it was when these requirements were habitually observed, then are the rules nugatory, and Methodism was foolishly overtaxed with religious observances. But where is the negligent Methodist that will look to the judgment-day, and say these duties never did and never can minister to the spiritual necessities of the soul? Nay, my brethren, you yourselves know that those members of the Church who have faithfully lived by these old spiritual landmarks of Methodism, have been regarded by others, and by yourselves also, as the best of your Church. Take heed lest God should finally blot your names out of the book of life, upon the verdict of your own judgment.

We come next to a comparative view of our preachers as we knew them fifty years ago, and as we have known them during the last fifty years. At our entrance upon the itinerant field, it is true, a large number of the travelling preachers were single men. They were at home wherever their work led them, and many of them carried their little all with them. It is an humble account we enter: A Methodist preacher out on the mightiest mission ever filled—a mission of salvation to dying men—and carrying both his wardrobe and his library in a pair of saddle-bags, and, in this humble condition as to worldly goods, calling upon all grades of human society to repent. Yet it is true, in those palmy days, like Levi, many of us, at the Master's call, rose up, left all, and followed Christ. To be an itinerant preacher then, was well understood to be a life of self-sacrifice. No compromise was ever thought of. There was in the Discipline a nominal salary of eighty dollars, but it lay so deep in the pockets of its owners, that in my case it never got up to any thing like eighty; but the good sisters kept us well clad in domestic goods. But even in my early days, there were a good many married men in the Conference. The duty of a travelling preacher in those days, however, was understood by us all as our paramount duty. The claims of the

Church were first in order, and highest in degree. So we understood Christ to have ordained, and so we conducted; and so I understand the specific directions given to every man of us called to follow Christ in this particular line. Accordingly, married preachers went home when the interests of the work would allow it. Home qualifications and interests were strictly subordinate: the Church was never left to chance; chances all fell to home issues. Home was never a leading consideration in the stipulations of a Methodist preacher in those days of apostolic men: hence in all main matters there was but little difference between married and single men on circuits. When ministers married in those early times—for licentiates, mere boys in the work, never presumed to marry in the early days of Methodism—they married on their own responsibility, and for their leisure moments; they all understood that they were under prior and even higher obligations, and that their duty, as long as they continued travelling preachers, would be to consult the Church as to when they could go home—not home as to when they could go to their circuit. I must say, however, that I think I have seen the days and the years wherein Methodist preachers have planned for home, not as a subordinate, but as a coördinate interest with the Church. And I hope they will calmly hear me when I say, that I believe every preacher will do his duty best, when he finds his home inclinations and interests strong enough to lead him to blend their claims with the claims of Christ and his Church, so as to demand compromise, to retire to local life. In saying this, my conscience bears me witness that I have travelled and acted upon this principle all my life. I have never compromised a Church obligation either to get home, or to remain at home, in all my itinerant life; and I do not believe a vigorous, right-hearted body of itinerants will ever cultivate our Methodistic Zion again, until we are re-supplied with a corps of preachers who will be able and willing, when they cannot do both properly, to leave home, with all its fond endearments, and give themselves willingly, yea, even joyfully, to the work of the gospel ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ. I allow, indeed, that it is the privilege of a deacon, or an elder, to “be the husband of one wife;” but I defy any one to show the authority for either to decline going into all the world to preach because married. Indeed, if getting married after a call to

preach, or being called to preach after marriage, could lessen or change the obligation laid on ministers in their Divine call, then would the broad commission given to the disciples be a nullity, unless it had been enforced by a law of celibacy; and whatever we might do, if, indeed, we did any thing, under this world-wide command, would be ministerial acts *ex officio*. O Lord God of the Church! send upon us again those Pauline days, when an admitted call to travel and preach will end for ever our conferences with flesh and blood!

We have said of the wonderful race of preachers by whom Methodism was inaugurated in this country, that they carried their library with them. This was not hard to do. Their library consisted of a Bible and hymn-book, and one other small volume. This little volume was generally a work on Christian experience or duty, or a biography of some minister or saint of such distinguished piety and devotion as to make every anxious soul feel, after reading a lesson in it, religiously afraid they had not religion enough to carry them to heaven; and they laid down the book and retired to pray. Then add to this the influence of the Bible upon such an order of Christian ministers, and you will not be surprised if they should have had more power with God than we have. I judge from personal observation, that these early Methodist preachers read God's word ten times as much as we of later times, and prayed more frequently for Divine illumination.

I regret most deeply the necessity I feel to make this comparison; but I feel implicated myself. This is an age of books; and if a preacher does not properly estimate the Bible in his reading arrangements, it will be dangerously supplanted by other books, good in their place, but highly injurious when mind and memory come to give to them an undue prominence. With due regard to truth, I would say, it seems to me that one of us, with a mind enamored with his profound theological learning, might read Watson's Institutes, and adopt it as a standard of scriptural doctrine, until, imperceptibly and unconsciously, we might come to rely upon the clearness and soundness of his conclusions for conviction and success; and by this error in the state of our mind, make it judicially necessary for God to withhold from our ministry the sanction of spiritual power. We must always place our reliance for success upon the same means and measures which God has

chosen and ordained, if our gospel is with power. This work is only safely done when the substance of our discourses is made up of declaring unto our hearers the testimony of God. The word of God must be the ground and reason of our expectation. It must not be made vital in our use of it by Wesley, Watson, or any one else: its life is in itself, and God will give his glory to none other.

I think it highly proper to make these remarks respecting books in general. Fifty years ago, what might have been called Methodist literature was very limited, but well chosen. Our readers almost always laid down the book piously dissatisfied with themselves, and went off to seek more grace. Not so now. Persons who have the love of God in their mouths, can and do read volumes through, and their mind is never once turned to the soul's drooping condition. It is evident to me, that much of the reading that is done for knowledge, becomes a drain to spiritual piety.

It is very natural that I should be asked what is the extent of my objection to reading good books, not directly religious: to which I answer, my objections extend no farther than to their too great substitution in the duty of reading. I have long believed that the absence of the spiritual literature from our families, or the little use that is made of it where it can be found, is one of the undercurrents which, unnoticed, is all the time draining off spiritual affections. It is alarming, to one of my age, to travel at large in this country of thrift, and examine into the reading matter furnished for family use. Would you believe it if I say that I can show families enough, worth thousands, who cannot produce books, exclusive of a Bible, to the value of five dollars, and not one of these soul-searching books in the house! A newspaper may be there; but the chances are against its being the Advocate. Much depends in our eternal destiny upon the stirring up of souls by heart-moving books.

A comparative view of the piety and devotion of early Methodist preachers with those of the present day is confessedly a work of delicacy. There is no such thing as being too pious: it may be possible to be too much of a recluse to allow that mixing with society which we believe to be good for soul and body, if rightly graduated. But it does seem to us old men that the present race of preachers are becoming



too jovial, too full of anecdote—in a word, too full of frivolous sociality. They are certainly much more addicted to these time-wasting pastimes than their noble fathers in Methodism were. Now, whether they did not laugh and talk enough for ministers of Christ or not, or whether we of this day do too much of it, I will let conscience and sober, grave Christianity decide. Early Methodist preachers, as far as my knowledge extended, conversed but little, in a merely social style, only enough to form a link in the common fraternity of human association.

They did this always, as if it was a privilege to be enjoyed, in full view of the obligation, "Let your moderation be known to all men." Preachers in those days laughed and talked little, read their Bible and prayed much. They lived much in the woods, much upon their knees. They never came to the pulpit like one from a glee club: they came from their knees—came from a season of prayer—from the soul-impressing work of supplication and intercession through Christ for poor dying sinners. No one of us ever thought of any thing less than the conviction and conversion of a soul or of souls. If we failed, it was the exception, not the rule of our preaching. And if we failed, we did not go home with some one to eat a good dinner, smoke a good cigar, and spend a social afternoon; but we went home with a troubled spirit, fearing lest some fault of ours had driven God's Holy Spirit off. We ate in mournful inquietude, soon left, and went out to mourn over a fruitless effort, and to institute a solemn inquiry into our own heart. To us, in those days, the state of things which is coming off almost daily—the preaching to a few or to many, coming down and shaking hands with the church very socially, holding no class-meeting, having no mourner to pray for, taking no one into the Church, and apologizing to three or four for going to the same place we went to before—would have driven us, in the palmy days alluded to, into silence and despair. We could not have made out our case. We never presumed to be assured of our Divine calling, only when the Lord worked with us, confirming the word with signs following.

Every thing appertaining to our divine vocation is full of the deepest interest: our call to the ministry—our ordination to the ministry—the vows and obligations we took upon

us in that day. May it not be that there are before me to-night elders who have never retraced the obligatory portions of the formula of their consecration—never solemnly asked, “Am I faithfully performing my ordination vows?” Alas for a minister who can so let down in the spirit of moral obligation as to take our vows upon him, and yet in the run of a few years seem to have lived and worn them into a shadow! Yet this monstrous infidelity has been seen among elders. Brethren, how did it ever engraft itself upon our ministry, that we could learn to get easily along, yes, even become familiarized to a ministration bringing forth no immediate fruit? Can it be that the habit of preaching so much to a few church members all along through the week, without a sinner to awaken, or a mourner to comfort, has led to it? I would not be surprised if it had. It would only be a natural type of human character. Where it is a precedent opinion that nothing will be done, ceasing to look and labor for it is a thing of course; and what makes this the more probable is, that during all this dwindling economy, the preachers have continued to labor for mourners and conversions at all their Sunday preaching places where they have had material to work on; and also at their two days’ meetings on the same account.

As I have said before in another form, so say I again, it was an evil day for ministers, and for the Methodists as a people, when the extraordinary form of ministrations in order to awakenings and conversions was substituted for the regular daily and ordinary ministry. The idea that the addition of days, and the increase of ministers, can add any thing to the gospel, or effect any thing in the way of converting souls, is all wrong—all deluding. The Holy Ghost is the only efficient, indispensable agent in the success of the ministry, and this Spirit resides in the gospel, in the word, and is always present when that instrumentality is used, without making it dependent on extraneous issues and agencies; and we insist that every act of the Church, whereby we either directly or indirectly substitute array and arrangement for the inherent energy of God’s own truth, necessarily brings the curse of seeming if not positive barrenness on our pulpit labors. It has always required the presence and authority of the most stringent law of God to keep his Church from displacing him, to make way for her conventional supplements. Brethren, it is

the declaration of the testimonies of God that will insure his coöperation—"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth:" "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." When Christ prayed the most immortal and capacious prayer ever prayed for his Church, uttered with creative power in his nature, and a Saviour's sympathy in his heart, he adhered to the eternal formula, showing that he would neither pray nor bless outside of its provisions—"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"—the living word of God—that word which endureth for ever. It is instinct with life, the life of God, the Spirit of God: the quickening Spirit, which contains a hidden but almighty power which mysteriously permeates every part of man's immortal mind; bares to the quickened vision of the conscience a deep dark pit of wickedness, where devils and diabolical passions hold revelry. The word of God is the only almighty energy the Scripture has revealed to us. What has God done but by his word? I believe this is the grand and natural reason why Christ bears this title, The Word. All things were made by him—by the word of his power. Christ is the power of God, as well as the wisdom of God. His very enemies felt this godlike influence: his word was with power. This power is as much an inherent element in God's word now as ever it was.

And if there were as little of the wisdom of men, as little excellency of speech or of wisdom in sermons now, as there was in Peter's pentecostal discourse, there would be as direct testimony of the overpowering presence of the Holy Ghost now as then. That grand and glorious scene of Divine power and grace was not intended by the Almighty dispenser as a mere miracle, as an isolated act of God's spiritual energies brought out once, as if merely to show his Church what he could do under the preaching of the word, if he would; but it was intended as a specimen act of revival power; a type of a religion under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Its divine identity was well described by Joel the prophet, in its universality as to the race, and its similarity as to effect. The Spirit, in this dispensation, was to be poured out upon all flesh, poured out upon the Church in its fulness, leaving nothing more to wait or hope for in the way of Divine influence. All flesh here means, all conditions of the race, both as to age

and as to social position : upon old men, and upon the sons and daughters of such, the Spirit was to be poured out : also upon men-servants and upon maid-servants was the Spirit to be poured in those days ; and all of them were to exhibit effects and fruits of a common order ; and so exactly did the pentecostal revival develop these prophetic evidences, that Peter declared the occurrences that day to be the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, and the promise of his ascended Saviour. And in attestation of this apostolic exegesis, God gave the most signal sanction ever given to truth on earth. It was meet that the evidence of this unction from the Holy One should be indisputable in its effects ; but it was a specimen act—a type of a Holy Ghost revival of religion. The conversion of Cornelius and the company of hearers invited by him to be present on that memorable occasion, was recognized as genuine, as pentecostal, by the signs of the pentecostal work. The circumcision—the Jews themselves, admitted that the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles as it had been upon them at the beginning, and they were admitted to baptism and Churchmembership upon this evidence. In this case the converts spake with tongues, and praised God. This was the only time, we think, that this miraculous evidence ever attended the outpouring of the Spirit after the day of pentecost ; and doubtless occurred then to attest the oneness of the Spirit upon Jew and Gentile. The power and presence of the Holy Spirit in our ministry is all we need to bring back the scenes of bygone years ; but many of us do not have these powerful charms. Our preaching has every other attribute of attraction but this. This, however, is the only attraction that is powerful enough to allure people to the house of God to hear lessons on repentance, faith, and holy obedience. But if this power of the Spirit were manifestly with us, awakening sinners, converting mourners, and sanctifying believers, with such original demonstrations as proved their pentecostal identity, our old, almost deserted chapels through this country would be crowded with interested hearers, and that gloom which has inclined us to sing so dolefully, as if our successive meetings constituted only a protracted funeral, would give place to quick and lively music, suited to such words as these :

“ My God, the spring of all my joys,  
The life of my delights !”

We must have this unction of the Holy One. We must wait for it in Jerusalem till it comes. It is not worth while to go out without it. We have felt it, but not deep enough yet: we have gone on hoping for improvement; but our feelings never came properly to a point. We could easily and quietly tolerate a barren ministry; spend the evening and night succeeding these cold and fruitless efforts in social festivity at the house of a brother or sister who had not felt the enrapturing power of the Holy Spirit for so long a time, that the absence of this comfort has ceased to give holy disquietude; and yet the preacher himself either sees no need of agonizing prayer for a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost, or seeing it, neglects to pray. Come, my copartners in this spiritual calling, let us look about us. There is some comfort, after all, in that dangerous adage of sinners—"Never too late to do good." In our case it is happily true. Let us pray and never cease until we receive a tongue of fire.

There is now lying before the eye of my mind the map of Methodism for fifty eventful years. Upon its broad face I behold many things; and among these things are some which, to use Solomon's language, are like dead flies in the pot of ointment. Dilapidated meeting-houses, not likely to be replaced by churches worthy of the name: settlements once populous with Methodists, now owned by a few planters, and inhabited mainly by slaves, and they without any regular gospel privileges: ecclesiastical fields, like old corn-fields, overgrown with briars and sedge: congregations diminishing; class-meetings, prayer-meetings, and love-feasts all declining; and an air of something like "don't care" spread over the face of Zion; may be seen dotting the once fair face of this map. And where is the clue to the secret source of this mischief? Is it in the membership? or is it in the ministry? or does it lie between both parties? Where is it, and whence did it arise? We all have a share in this incipient degeneracy. The tendency of human nature in all is to laxity; in ministers no less than in members; and in determining the question from the stand-points from which I have made my surveys, I am compelled to attach much blame to the preachers. They certainly led off in the decline of class-meetings. Circuit preachers ceased, to a large extent, to hold class-meetings as a duty, long before they went into such disuse by the leaders and their

classes. We ought to have foreseen this evil. Church members will never outrun their pastors in duties which are obligatory on both. Brethren, let us in this case cut off occasions from such as desire occasion.

But we are perhaps more to blame for neglecting discipline. The faithful exercise of discipline would have preserved class-meeting in the Church throughout the continuance of the law as a term of membership. The legal class-meeting was rather the one held by the leader, than the one by the preacher. Class-meetings, held by the preachers in the early times of Methodism, and during all their continuance, beautifully and advantageously substituted pastoral intercourse with the church. And unfortunately, when class-meetings were first omitted by the preachers, and then virtually discontinued, there was no system of pastoral intercourse adopted whereby to substitute class-meetings: of course we became unacquainted with the spiritual condition of our charges, and they became unconscious aliens from us; and out of these accidents have sprung a family of Solomon's little foxes, that spoil our vine during the time it bears tender grapes.

But discipline has been neglected, not only in relation to class-meetings, but in relation to every law of membership contained in the General Rules, except those items of crime outlawed in a special statute. I may be allowed, I hope, while reviewing Methodism, and Methodist administration, in this semi-centennial discourse, to ask when and where the general rules of our Church have been enforced in their penal character against any one of their numerous violators? and by whom? A few cases for indulging in forbidden pleasures do come up sometimes, and are gently disposed of; and I believe persons could get out of the Church by a pertinacious obstinacy at this point. But what I want now is to make us all ask the question, What moral force do the general rules of the Church exert upon the members of my charge? and what risk do they run under my administration on account of their non-regard? O brethren, when moral and spiritual rules and regulations of the Church are made obsolete by the neglect of the pastoral officer himself, where will the evil end?

But there is a better day coming. Yes; the bright streaks of its light are already in view of the watchmen, who, with faces turned towards this spiritual east, have often cried with

holy impatience, "Watchman! what of the night?" and have at last learned, to the joy of their hearts, that the morning cometh.

While there are some things which to aged sentinels on the walls of Zion indicate decline in some of the most essential elements of Methodism, as enumerated already in this discourse, there are other things, second only to the presence and prevalence of personal piety, in which may be found the indubitable evidence of advance and improvement. Some of these we joyfully record. There is evidence of the sort in our church architecture: wherever new church edifices are erected, there is evidence of increased liberality, and of higher notions of what is due to God in these monumental offerings to the great, the high, and the Holy One. We are no longer contented to dwell in ceiled houses, while the house of God is in decay.

Again: there is evidence of improvement in a more liberal support of the ministry, as also in readier mind and will to make them comfortable in a home. But a still brighter streak of light in regard to our future now appears above the long-darkened horizon of our Church. We mean the growing disposition on our circuits to provide a parsonage, and have for the term of each preacher's services a settled minister, whose time shall be the property of his spiritual flock by ministerial support; and who, by ministerial obligation, shall be not a mere telegraphic preacher, but a positive resident pastor; and that whenever the preacher sent and so provided for shall decline going to his circuit to live, and thereby fails in his pastoral duties because he wants his people's time for his personal accommodation, he shall have no family allowance. This is the law, and this is Methodism in her economical polity. Heretofore, through a joint evil, the benefit of a resident pastorate has been informally sold for savings; but the Church begins to see a better way, and will adopt it. The stringent application of this allowance law to circuit preachers, might, by some who gained their notion of right under the miserable usages of late years, be considered rigid and unkind. No, brethren, it is as it ought to be. Let me remind you once more, that the office and the obligations of the gospel ministry are without conditions—peremptory and paramount. Neither we nor the stewards of our circuits can enter into any stipulations by which our appropriate work can be dispensed with; nay, my

brethren, I do not believe that even the neglect of the circuit and of the circuit stewards to provide for us, as they are both bound to do, can cancel or change the obligations of a preacher who voluntarily takes the care of souls upon himself.

My practice through life has been characterized by these views. It is true that I have not usually carried my family on my work with me, for in most of my time it was utterly impracticable: there was no home provided for me, nor any appropriation for me to provide one for myself. Some of my city stations lay a hundred miles from my family residence. To these I went and stayed a month, went home, saw my family, and returned between Sabbaths. When I filled a city station three hundred miles from home, I remained on my work three months at a time. But one says, "This is unreasonable." Well, brother, you must complain of the Saviour, if you will complain, and not of Methodist itinerancy. This is exactly what I believe the Saviour meant when he required of his disciples, and, as I believe, of the disciples called to follow him as preachers, especially, to leave wife and children—not to be divorced by law or practice—but go on in the work of itinerant evangelizing, as if untrammelled by a family. It was with me to marry, or to let it alone; but it was not with me to do my duty, or to let it alone. Passing by all the rest, according to my entries, taking the thirty-five years of my life immediately preceding the demise of my faithful and excellent wife, much the most important part of life, I spent thirty of them as to time away from my family, and in my charge. And now, my brethren of the Conference, allow me to say what no contemporary of mine will deny, I never neglected my regular work one hour in my life either to get home, or to remain there. I never felt that I had any moral right to one hour of time which by ministerial obligation belonged to the Church.

Once more, upon the evidences of advance and decided improvement in Church duties. In regard to the great interests of sanctified education for our children, and the children of the country in as far as they may be intrusted to our care, I am not sure but that within the last twenty years we have exceeded every other Church in the number and efficiency of our educational establishments, many of them, both male and female institutions, of a high and respectable grade. This timely



movement on the part of our Church, augurs well for her future. The time has fully come, when, if a Church—we mean a denomination—should cling to the dotages of the past, and deny to education its true value, it ought to, and would, become a reproach and byword in the earth. The Methodist Church will, as she is in duty bound to, attain to a more elevated position in the world; her weight will be more decidedly felt, and her worth more cheerfully conceded. The moral force of the Church in the country, with only the same amount of piety, will be greater. Folly may dispute, but facts have long since decided that intelligence wins the prize of human confidence. This move in education has worked well, both in its direct and reflex action. In its direct action it has wonderfully increased education itself, and multiplied the facilities of education. In its reflex action it has unsealed the fountain of benevolence, and instead of mere drops, that oozed along in lazy motion, the stream has deepened and widened until its liberal waters begin to irrigate almost every vale of life. To one whose knowledge runs back as far as mine, it may be allowed to say, that if it had not been for the hard and able begging of your agents for colleges, for the American Bible Society, and for missionary purposes—duties which led them directly to discuss the whole question of giving away money as a positive Christian duty, high and binding as Heaven's authority—we would have been to-day locked up in the northern ocean of a freezing avarice. But the spell is broken: the veins and arteries of Christian benevolence are now giving a free circulation to views and feelings which make that strange declaration, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," an experimental fact.

And now we close; but not without deep and solemn emotions. With Methodism we have had much to do for the last fifty years; and nothing has kept us from doing much for Methodism but the want of endowments, and Divine destination to that end. The will and the heart we have had all the time. What will be the fortunes and achievements of Methodism during the next fifty years, who can tell? Bright and onward, we hope. One thing we do know; and that is, that in most of that time we shall have no agency in the culture of Methodism. The sere leaves of life's autumn are too thick and premonitory upon us to let us dream of years to come.

Necessity has settled it, that even if we would be a safe and reliable trustee of this blood-bought trust, it must pass our hands into yours. Cherish this trust, brethren, as one dear to God as the apple of his eye.

To Methodism as a spiritual form of religion, and as a preferred organization of Church government and of ministerial operation, I have given all of myself that could be made available to it. This I do not regret; and if I could go back again to the beginning, carry with me all my present knowledge of what I would have to do and endure to help work Methodism up to its present glory, and all this at eighty dollars a year, chiefly in promises, as things were in 1805, when I travelled my first circuit, I would enter again.

Come, brethren, and let us take the old Jerusalem blade back to the upper chamber, and there with one accord continue in prayer to God, until we find it furbished with pentecostal fire; and then let us go forth and believingly wield it as Paul did, freed from all the artistic manipulations of self-equipped preachers, leaving God's truth to work out its own vindication in its own divine order, and sure as the doom of time is the certainty of our success. Oratory, rhetoric, fancy, imagery, poetry, philosophy, flowers of speech of every class, and all attempts to beautify or energize the word of God, do nothing to it, except to neutralize its native power. There are signs of healing: let us take courage, and, as Methodist itinerant preachers, let us work up to the Discipline; and if in any thing we have ministered to the negligence of our people by even a seeming negligence in ourselves, O let us at once close the breach by a return to duty. I see a better day coming only as I look in this direction.—Farewell!

## THE MINISTRY A SAVOR OF LIFE OR DEATH.

BY DR. DODDRIDGE.

PRAISE to the Lord on high,  
 Who spreads his triumphs wide!  
 While Jesus' fragrant name  
 Is breathed on every side:  
 Balmy and rich the odors rise,  
 And fill the earth, and reach the skies.

Ten thousand dying souls  
 Its influence feel, and live:  
 Sweeter than vital air  
 The incense they receive.  
 They breathe anew, and rise and sing  
 Jesus, the Lord, their conquering King.

But others scorn the grace  
 That brings salvation nigh:  
 They turn away their face,  
 And faint, and fall, and die.  
 So sad a doom, ye saints, deplore,  
 For O! they fall to rise no more.

Yet, wise and mighty God,  
 Shall all thy servants be,  
 In those who live or die,  
 A savor sweet to thee:  
 Supremely bright thy grace shall shine,  
 Guarded with flames of wrath divine.

## THE AGED MINISTER'S PRAYER.

BY C. WESLEY.

My God and Lord, thy counsel show:  
 What wouldst thou have thy servant do,  
 Before I hence depart?  
 How shall I serve thy Church, and where?  
 The thing, the time, the means declare,  
 And teach my listening heart.

Free for whate'er thy love ordains,  
 I offer up my life's remains,  
 To be for thee employed:  
 My little strength can little do,  
 Yet would I, in thy service true,  
 Devote it all to God.

Wilt thou not, Lord, my offer take?  
 Canst thou in helpless age forsake  
     The creature of thy will?  
 My strength is spent in the best cause;  
 Thy zealous messenger I was:  
     I am thy servant still.

Master, be thou my might, my mouth,  
 And send me forth to north or south,  
     To farthest east or west:  
 Be thou my Guide to worlds unknown:  
 Rest to my flesh I covet none,  
     But give my spirit rest.

My rest on earth to toil for thee,  
 My whole delight and business be  
     To minister thy word;  
 For thee immortal souls to win,  
 And make the wretched slaves of sin  
     The freemen of my Lord.

Witness and messenger of peace,  
 I only languish to decrease,  
     In trumpeting thy name:  
 I only live to preach thy death,  
 And publish with my latest breath  
     The glories of the Lamb!

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### THE AGED MINISTER'S PRAYER.

BY C. WESLEY.

LORD, I believe thy every word,  
 Thy every promise, true;  
 And lo! I wait on thee, my Lord,  
     Till I my strength renew.  
 If in this feeble flesh I may  
     Awhile show forth thy praise,  
 Jesus, support the tottering clay,  
     And lengthen out my days.  
 If such a worm as I can spread  
     The common Saviour's name,  
 Let him who raised thee from the dead  
     Quicken my mortal frame.  
 Still let me live thy blood to show,  
     Which purges every stain;  
 And gladly linger out below  
     A few more years in pain.

# CHARITY SUPERIOR TO KNOWLEDGE.

## A Discourse

DELIVERED IN THE CHAPEL OF CENTENARY COLLEGE OF  
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AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE

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BY THE

REV. WM. WINANS, D.D.



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PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

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PROFESSOR [Name]

## CHARITY SUPERIOR TO KNOWLEDGE.

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“And though I.....understand all mysteries, and all knowledge,..... and have not charity, I am nothing.”—1 COR. xiii. 2.

It was by no means the intention of the apostle, nor is it ours, to depreciate an understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, any more than to underrate great attainments in philology, the gift of prophecy, miracle-working faith, almsgiving, beneficence, or the martyr's devotion and fortitude. These, each and all, considered in reference to the purposes they are respectively fitted to accomplish, are of great value; and, so far as they are attainable, should excite the aspirations of every ingenuous bosom, and prompt to the most strenuous exertions for their acquisition. In particular, we would, on this occasion, urge the high claims which an understanding of the mysteries and knowledge which lie within the range of our capacity has upon our solicitude and earnest endeavor to secure it. Without such an understanding, our dignity, our usefulness, and our happiness will be restrained within limits contracted in proportion to our defalcation in this particular. It is not denied that, with very inferior attainments in this understanding, a man whose moral feelings are rightly directed may be respectable, useful, and happy; but we do not scruple to say, that he whose heart is right will possess a capacity for respectability, usefulness, and happiness, in the direct ratio in which his understanding is cultivated and expanded.

The apostle's object was, and it is also ours, to exhibit the very superior advantage of moral excellence over excellence in any other accomplishment—especially in that resulting from the most extended intellectual improvement. The sum of

moral excellence is expressed by the term charity. And so greatly more important does the apostle deem it that man should have charity than that he should understand all mysteries and all knowledge, that he considers those who boast the latter distinction, but are destitute of the former accomplishment, as nothing—deserving no estimation. To suppose man to understand *all* mysteries and *all* knowledge, is to put the case of intellectual acquisition in the extreme,—a supposition never yet realized even in case of the wisest and most learned among men. And if, without charity, he would be nothing who should understand all mysteries and all knowledge, what shall be said of those who arrogate much distinction to themselves for a very limited acquaintance with both the one and the other of these objects of intellectual investigation, while they not only have not charity, but consider any attention to its claims wholly beneath them? Are they not “less than nothing, and vanity?” In treating the subject, we shall speak,

I. Of understanding all mysteries and all knowledge;

II. Of having charity; and,

III. Of the apostle's meaning, when he declares that “though he did understand all mysteries and all knowledge, if he did not have charity, he would be nothing.”

I. In pursuance of the above plan, we are to speak, in the first place, of understanding all mysteries and all knowledge. To understand, is to have a just conception of the subject of which the term is predicated. It is to comprehend its entire nature, with all its relations. It does not import merely to conjecture shrewdly, or to reason logically upon the subject, but to perceive distinctly its exact character. How little is understood by even the most intelligent of mankind! How much, of almost all subjects of human speculation, lies beyond the clear ken of the most perspicacious investigator, or eludes altogether the most diligent and searching scrutiny of the most pertinacious inquirer!

It is probable, we suppose, that the apostle had in view especially those conventional mysteries which excited so much interest among the learned and the wise, particularly the Egyptian, the Jewish, and the Grecian mysteries. To understand these was, in the several countries where they set up their claims, a point of the most fervent ambition, and a mat-



ter of the most exultant glorying, on the part of men of the most distinguished intellectual ability. Initiation into these mysteries was deemed a privilege of vast importance. Men travelled far, submitted to many painful privations, and persevered long in the most arduous mental toil, that they might secure the advantages and the honor of such an initiation. Into the Grecian or Eleusinian mysteries, none were permitted to be initiated but citizens of Athens; and so important was the privilege of initiation considered, that men who, after their deaths, were regarded as demigods, submitted to become the adopted citizens of that city, that they might be admitted to an inferior degree in that initiation; for to the highest none but *native* Athenians might be admitted. Restraining the apostle's supposition to these mysteries, how strong even then the case which he puts! To understand all that is wrapped up in the sacred hieroglyphics of Egypt, in the signs and symbols of initiation into her mysteries, and those of Ceres at Eleusis, and to comprehend the cabala of the Jews, the treasured dicta of her long lines of sages, scribes, and doctors, would certainly, on ordinary principles of estimation, argue that a man was *something*—something distinguished much above the common intellectual standard. But we need not, nor would we be authorized thus to limit the apostle's supposition. Mysteries that excite the most restless curiosity, are found apart from these conventional and systematized enigmas. There is, indeed, no department of human inquiry in which mysteries do not abound. For instance, what law of nature is not a mystery, whether regarded abstractly or in its mode of operation? Who can tell the nature of attraction, or the means by which it operates its stupendous ministrations in the harmony of the solar system, and, probably, of the physical universe? What philosopher but will admit that these are mysteries which he has not been able to penetrate? What school of philosophy teaches the true doctrine in regard to the perception of objects external to the mind which perceives them? What physiologist pretends even to trace the connection between a volition of the mind, through the nerves, with the muscles, whereby an action, corresponding to the determination of the mind, is instantaneously produced? Much may be learnedly said upon these subjects; but it all amounts to no more than that the nerves and muscles are the

instruments by which the mind accomplishes its purposes. This mystery has its source in one still darker—the influence of spirit upon matter. Who was ever able to detect the points of contact between natures so dissimilar as spirit and matter? The fact of reciprocal influence, on the part of these dissimilar natures, is universally admitted by those who do not deny the existence of the spiritual nature; but *how* the one influences the other, who can even conjecture? And, admitting that there is no spiritual nature involved in the question, is the mystery any the less? Who can even conceive of matter as endued with thought, sensibility, and conscience? While volition, to be what its very name imports, must be free, that is, independent of all control, such is the influence that motive-causes exert upon its determinations, that many philosophers have concluded that those determinations *must be* the result of such influence. This conclusion, being utterly incongruous with the nature of volition, and utterly inconsistent with the moral accountability of man, must be rejected. But who can show, upon a simple analysis of mental phenomena, that it ought to be rejected? Beattie, in his “Essay on Truth,” affirmed that “every man knew it to be false, but that no man could prove it to be so.” Religion abounds in mysteries of the profoundest kind. Think of God, as “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” as everywhere present at every moment; as seeing all that is in the entire universe; as “seeing the end from the beginning,” and yet leaving *contingent* the conduct of moral agents. Think of him as *originating* matter, not giving it form merely; so that where nothing was, the material universe came into being, which he fashioned, according to the counsel of his own will, into the infinitely various shapes in which it is now beholden with wonder and admiration. After allowing the existence of these and innumerable other mysteries, in the Divine nature and works, which certainly are almost universally admitted to exist, shall we reject the mystery of the Trinity in Unity in the Godhead—a doctrine clearly revealed—only because we cannot comprehend it? Shall we stumble at the mystery of the Divine incarnation, in the person of Jesus Christ, only because it is a mystery which we cannot understand? This were as unphilosophical as it would be profane. Many more mysteries might be specified, as

within the scope of the apostle's supposition; but it is believed that these are enough to show the very high estimation in which he held that charity, without which he would have regarded himself as nothing, though he understood all these mysteries—not understood merely the existence of the facts which they affirmed, but the entire nature of those facts. For the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, for instance, is not understood by a mere knowledge that the Godhead *thus* exists—the *mode* of such existence is what constitutes the mystery; and, therefore, to understand the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, implies an understanding of the mode of such an existence. And so of all other mysteries: to understand them is to have an adequate conception of their whole nature, and of all that appertains to them.

All knowledge embraces every department of human inquiry in which certainty is attainable. Certainty is of two kinds—*moral*, and *mathematical* or *absolute*. The former rests upon testimony—the latter is either self-evident or the result of demonstration. These different kinds of certainty are equally satisfactory to the mind, and equally adapted to the purposes they are respectively intended and calculated to accomplish. The knowledge which rests on testimony, or moral certainty, is far more extensive than that certainty or knowledge which results from demonstration or is self-evident. It embraces, strictly speaking, all that is learned, whether under the teaching of others or in the exercise of our own faculties. It regards almost all we know of the earth and the heavens; of the various inhabitants of the earth, their natures, their habitudes, and their history; of providence, its bounties and its chastisements; of religion, its doctrines, its precepts, and its announcements. Exceedingly cursory must be our survey of this immense and various field. Of the structure of the earth, geology can boast but a very superficial knowledge—too limited, altogether, to warrant the presumptuous theories concerning its formation and its age which have been erected upon it. Scarcely have the profoundest explorers of its secrets been able to penetrate the mere rind of this massive globe. How absurd, then, to pretend such a knowledge as would warrant the establishment of such theories! Much, however, that is useful and important, is and may be known concerning the structure of the earth. Much more still may be known in

regard to its surface. By the pencil of geography, her seas, her lakes, and her rivers, her continents, her islands, her mountains, and her plains, her empires, her kingdoms, her republics, and her cities, are mapped and spread out before the eye of the inquirer; so that, without leaving his study, he may survey the face of the globe, with an accuracy and to an extent adequate to all purposes of ordinary interest. Botany has investigated and arranged the various vegetables which spring from the different soils and in the different climates of the earth, for its adornment and for the nourishment and the health of the animals which inhabit it; so that there is scarcely a leaf that trembles in the breeze, a flower that spreads its beauty to the sun, or a seed that has been matured by the influence of the seasons, which is not known to have been provided by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness either to relieve the sufferings of sentient beings or to minister to them sustenance and comfort. Zoölogy, in its various departments, has, in great measure, accomplished what Adam performed by intuitive wisdom or Divine inspiration, when he gave names to the various tribes of animals, so appropriate that those names not only continued to designate them, but, as is generally supposed, to express their natures and their habits. From the reptile which the unassisted eye is unable to detect, to the dragon-like serpents of the African deserts—from the diminutive mouse to the unwieldy elephant—from the insect, fluttering her ephemeral hour in the summer breeze, to the mighty condor, perched upon the lofty crags of the Andes—from the animalcule, thousands of which find ample verge in a single drop of liquid, to the enormous whale, whose gambols disturb the northern seas—human science has made itself familiar with their natures, their propensities, and their habits; has warned man of the dangers to be apprehended, and instructed him as to the benefits to be derived to himself from them.

Astronomy has revealed much important information concerning the heavens. Knowledge on this subject is partly derived from testimony, and is partly the result of demonstration. Phenomena have been collected by various observers and at various times and places. These phenomena have been made the bases of mathematical calculation; the results of which have been certain knowledge. Thus have the fixed stars and the planetary bodies been accurately distinguished

from each other; and the superficies of the latter, their weights, distances from each other and from the sun, their periods of revolution, both annual and diurnal, and the extent and figure of their several orbits, ascertained, with so much accuracy as to enable those versed in the science to determine the positions they will respectively occupy at any given future moment. Nay, so exact is the knowledge attained on this sublime subject, that Le Verrier was able to determine that there was a planet which never had been observed, and in what part of the heavens its position was to be found. Such a result could have been reached only by means of a minute acquaintance with the circumstances of the planetary bodies, and the influences those circumstances exert, and by an exact calculation of these influences. Thus was discovered the necessity for the existence of such a planet as was afterwards found existing in the precise position indicated by the astronomer. Not only can astronomy trace out the path and indicate the speed of these regular navigators, which sail in the *trade-winds* of the heavens, but she can also follow the eccentric ramblings of the untamed comet, as he sails through the mazes of celestial archipelagoes which his destiny compels him to thread in his devious course; so that, centuries in advance of his advent, the moment of his appearance and the point at which his progress will become visible are definitely declared by astronomical science. How stupendous such knowledge! How calculated to "raise man o'er man"—to "puff up" the unsanctified heart! How naturally do those who possess such knowledge glory in the distinction it confers upon them! Can they be convinced that they are what the apostle affirms that he, *without charity*, would be—NOTHING?

But there is a knowledge far more important to man than that which regards either the earth and its inferior inhabitants, or the heavens, in all their magnificence—the *knowledge of mankind*. This is a subject so vast and so various that it is impossible, in a brief discourse, to do more than to bestow upon it a mere glance. A lifetime devoted to the acquisition of this knowledge would leave much, that might be known, unattained; and volumes would be required to serve as the repositories of it, when collected together under the most concentrated forms of which it is susceptible.

As a mere animal, man is a study of great interest. No superior specimen of mechanism is anywhere to be found, if any equal to it be in existence. In the forms and articulations of the bones and the cartilages; in the employment and arrangement of the muscles and the tendons; in the functions and disposition of the glands and other secretory organs; in short, in the whole construction of the animal frame, there is displayed the most intimate acquaintance with mechanical powers—the most felicitous combination of those powers for obtaining the result contemplated, and the utmost economy, both in regard to the powers employed, and to the space in which they are to operate. Ease, efficiency, and harmony, characterize the operations of this machine in all its natural movements. Hundreds of *levers* simultaneously combine their forces to perform a given action; thousands of cords, crossing each other at every imaginable angle, draw towards the same result; yet in all this multiplicity and complexity of movement there is no jostle, no entanglement. All is so nicely adjusted, that the movement is as smooth and unembarrassed as if the mechanism were of the simplest possible construction.

Then, again, in man, as an animal, we see the distribution of a fluid throughout the whole frame, which serves the double purpose of impelling the mechanical powers to the required action, and of giving the promptest notice of any derangement of the machine, or the presence of any insurmountable or even hurtful obstruction to its operation. Of course, we allude to the nervous fluid; which, whatever it be, pervades the whole animal frame, and is everywhere the medium of sensation and the excitant to action. We also see ample provision for the conservation of the machine, and for the repair of the damages to which it is liable from the friction of its parts in motion, or from the action of external causes. This provision is found in the respiratory, digestive, and circulating processes. Daily, hourly, nay, every moment are these processes going on; and for many years together they are able to continue the machine in constant motion, without abatement of vigor, and, much of the time, with daily increasing energy.

But man, as an animal, is more than a mere machine. Nay, his mechanical value is wholly dependent on the presence of a

principle altogether different from and superior to any mechanical power or any combination of such powers—LIFE. The existence of this principle and many of its phenomena may be and are known; though its nature is among the mysteries that have never yet been penetrated by the eagle-eye of science. It is even probable that only He who is the Author of life *can* understand its nature. But the supposition in our text goes even to the extent of understanding this, among other mysteries. The Scriptures, indeed, say that “the blood is the life.” But we suppose that by this it is intended only that the blood is the chief instrument of maintaining and perpetuating life. That it is such, all who know any thing of the matter will allow. By means of the rapid and constant circulation of this fluid throughout all parts of the system, heat and nourishment, essential to life and its continuance, are distributed to all parts. But the blood, though the pabulum of life, is not itself life; as we see it, when withdrawn from circulation in the living animal, as destitute of all the attributes of life as is any other material substance whatever. It were hard to set limits to the discoveries of human research; but we greatly doubt the possibility of its ever attaining to the knowledge of what is life. Anatomy and physiology have collected vast treasures of knowledge with regard to the animal nature of man; and yet much remains unknown, or at least very imperfectly understood, by those even who are most eminently proficient in these departments of science. The supposition we are considering is, that all in relation to them is not only known but thoroughly understood. How vast, how interesting, how valuable such knowledge would be considered, we need not say.

The common opinion of mankind, in all ages and everywhere, has ascribed to man a compound nature, material and spiritual. A few profoundly metaphysical inquirers, who are never in their element but when they are in opposition to common opinion, have labored earnestly to repudiate the existence of spirit, as an essentially distinct component part of human nature. True, there are phenomena, in the operations of that nature, utterly incongruous with every received definition of matter, to all that is known of its qualities and capabilities; yet who knows but that matter, refined to the last degree and in some of its innumerable combinations, may

be capable of consciousness, sensation, reason, and moral agency? Yes: who knows? Not he, most certainly, who, rejecting the sober dictates of experience, reason, and revelation, follows the illusory guidance of a presumptuous philosophy, which, by close reasoning, upon very plausible data, can bring into question the existence of both matter and spirit, and prove that the whole universe is nothing more than a vast assemblage of ideas or images, drawn upon no canvas and reflecting no substantial existence. Such a one cannot know that matter, in no form or possible combination, can be capable of these functions. But it will be long, we presume, ere the popular mind can be imbued with a doubt in regard to a spiritual nature in man; that is, a nature distinct from and superior to his material frame. To this higher nature are attributed consciousness, sensation, reflection, reason, memory, and conscience, and a host of passions, to serve as springs of action, under the guidance of the intellectual faculties, together with a will, or power of self-determination, whereby a choice of course, among those indicated by the intellectual faculties and urged by the passions, may be freely and responsibly made. Whether the attribution of these to a spiritual nature in man be or be not just, it is, at any rate, certain that they exist in man; and the knowledge of them, it must be allowed, is an important branch of the science of human nature. Of these we must say a few words.

Consciousness, being restrained to what concerns the proper existence and the internal experience of the individual of whom it is predicated, ought first to be considered. By means of this faculty, the mind recognizes its own existence, and takes account of the various operations of its own faculties. It is cognizant of all that passes in the mind, though it is concealed from all else but the Omniscient, and, perhaps, other purely spiritual beings who are present at the moment of its passing. Consciousness is the great registrar of all our thoughts and our feelings, our hopes and our fears, our joys and our sorrows, our plans and our purposes. By this faculty they are collected, ascertained, and handed over to memory—the annals of our internal economy.

As consciousness takes account of all within man, so sensation apprises him of matters without himself. The senses are the media through which external objects communicate a



knowledge of themselves to the mind, by means of sensation ; and they are the only channels of such communication. If, as some philosophers affirm, they are unreliable, then the acquaintance of man with matters external to himself is utterly hopeless. If the information communicated by them in regard to these matters be false, there can be no corrective of the error they have propagated. But do these philosophers charge the senses justly with reporting falsely of the external world? We apprehend not. One of the senses may report a matter imperfectly ; and if the mind bases on this imperfect report an opinion in regard to the subject of that report in all its bearings, error will most probably be the result. Whereas, if the mind suspend its judgment, till other senses which have cognizance of the subject in question have rendered in their collateral report, error will be avoided, and the senses will be seen to be faithful reporters of the objects without the mind. Thus, when the sense of sight shall report of a tree, it can report only of the outline ; and, for aught that lies within its competency, the tree may be a perfect plane, with a breadth equal to its actual diameter, and may be in immediate juxtaposition with the organ of vision ; but when the subject shall have been examined and reported on by the sense of feeling, the tree will be found to be cylindrical, and to be at a distance from the eye. Many experiences of this kind will enable the mind to decide, on the report of one only of the coöcting senses, upon the true character of the object reported of. These remarks will, we think, be found to hold good in all cases where one of the senses, while in a healthful state, reports imperfectly of any matter. The correction, or, rather, the completion of the report will be found in some other sense, or in some other of the senses. Hence, though it is reason which ascertains the truth in regard to external objects, she does not do so by supplying the defects or by correcting the errors which exist in the reports of the senses, but by comparing those reports, and by supplying the defects in the reports of one sense from the reports of another sense or other senses upon the same subject. We conclude that the senses are worthy of entire confidence.

Consciousness and sensation furnish all the materials upon which the mind employs its energies in treasuring up know-

ledge. Upon these it reflects. It compares, combines, and analyzes them. One sensation is compared with another; and their agreement with or incongruity to each other is noted. Two things, alike in generic character, are compared, with reference to a specific quality, and a conclusion is drawn from their agreement that they belong to the same category. This is reasoning. Thus: "All animals having four feet and no more, are quadrupeds; but a horse is an animal which has four feet and no more; therefore, a horse is a quadruped." This is a familiar, say a homely instance; yet it embraces the whole scope of reasoning, in whatever form it may be presented. If the agreement is wanting, the conclusion is reversed. Mathematical reasoning proceeds upon exactly the same plan. Thus: "Things equal to the same thing are equal to one another; but," etc. And so, in all reasoning, a comparison of the known qualities of a partially known subject with the known qualities of a subject already well known, and conclusions drawn from their agreement or disagreement, are the entire process.

Sensations often repeated and carefully observed, enable the mind to determine the qualities of matter, and the laws to which it is subject, at least so far as is necessary to the purposes of physical science. Figure, or form, is seen to belong to matter, when existing in sufficient accumulation to be cognizable by senses so gross as those of man. *Extension* belongs to it, in its minutest form of existence; as no one can conceive of two particles of matter, how minute soever they may be, occupying the same space at the same time; and form belongs essentially to extension. Gravity, or weight, is also an indispensable quality of matter; as all will at once feel the absurdity of supposing the union of two particles of matter, without greater weight in the united particles than belongs to either separately. The absence of locomotive power belongs so essentially to matter, that, whenever it is in motion, the question naturally arises, in the mind of the observer, "What has put it in motion?" or, if the motion cease, "What has caused it to cease its motion?" No teaching of philosophy concerning the *vis inertia* of matter is necessary to the origination of these questions: they spring spontaneously in the minds of even children, so clearly is it perceived that locomotive power

does not belong to matter. Many other qualities of matter are discovered to the mind through the medium of the senses—heat, hardness, color, odor, sapidity, sonorousness, etc.

Now, philosophers, with all imaginable gravity, tell us that these terms express sensations in the mind, and that nothing resembling such sensations exists in matter; and they make a vast parade of their metaphysical acuteness and accuracy, in the important discovery—as if any sane man ever imagined that there was a sensation of heat in the fire; of hardness in the flint; of green, blue, red, or other color in the colored matter; of a pleasant odor in the rose, or an unpleasant one in the ointment of the apothecary, in which dead flies were engulfed; of sweetness in sugar, or of bitterness in gall; of melody in Jenny Lind's singing, or of discord in the sounds made by a sheet-iron band! Are we to infer that there are no qualities in material bodies which excite these sensations in the mind? Or does philosophy descend from its dignity, to quarrel with the names given to those qualities, simply because they are identical with the names of the sensations excited by them? We hold that this is mere logomachy—especially, as the philosophers themselves will as readily speak of the heat of the fire, the sweetness of sugar, the odor of the rose, etc., as the most unscientific clown that stands agape at the profundity of their wisdom. All that science is concerned with, in the matter, is the existence of the qualities themselves, and to distinguish between the quality and the sensation excited by it—not to determine the name of either the one or the other.

By means of sensations, repeated, collated, and compared, man has made himself familiar with the laws of matter, so as, to a very great extent, to become master of arts, letters, and science. The mechanical powers have been so arranged and combined by him as not merely to serve his domestic purposes, but have, in connection with chemical agencies, enabled him to traverse the ocean in vessels of immense magnitude, drawn through the waves by a few yards of canvas properly disposed, or impelled by the steam, collected from boiling water, directed upon a machinery constructed for the purpose. He can ascend above the clouds, and sail sublimely, with the speed of the air-current upon which he is embarked, through the trackless and chartless regions of ether. He has embodied thought, and rendered it tangible, permanent, and transmissible; so

that the remotest ages of the past and the most distant regions of the earth contribute to the stock of each man's ideas. The humblest man who has learned letters is put into easy communication with the sages, prophets, and lettered monarchs of ages long past; and their wisdom and knowledge become his rightful inheritance, on his entering into possession of them. Friends, separated by the intervention of oceans and continents, interchange at brief intervals those assurances of continued affection so dear to the loving heart; while whatever is useful or curious, in one hemisphere, is soon made known to those who read, in another. Nay, by means of the electric telegraph, thoughts are communicated with a speed which shows the earth a laggard in her diurnal revolution; so that a fashionable lady of New York, after having dressed herself *à la mode* in the morning, may instruct her gossip in New Orleans in all the minutiae of morning dress, in sufficient time for the latter to make her toilet, without meriting the character of a sluggard. The daguerrean artist, without pallet, brush, or paint, secures a *likeness* of the subject he wishes to represent, by simply directing the light of heaven upon it, and reflecting that light upon the plate he has prepared to bear the image sought to be perpetuated. The mathematician, seated in his study, can gauge the dimensions, ascertain the weight, measure the distance, and calculate the speed of bodies much larger than that on whose surface he is an almost indistinguishable speck, and whose distances from the earth are so great that they can scarcely be seen by the unassisted eye of man.

By means of consciousness and sensation, man can, to a great extent, understand his own intellectual and moral nature—the laws of mental operation. True it is that here, more than anywhere else, the perspicacity of man is often at fault. This, we are satisfied, is chiefly, if not solely, the result of a vain attempt to reduce mental operations under the dominion of physical laws, or, at least, of laws similar to those which regulate physical operations. Thus, metaphysicians seem to conceive the intervention of ideas necessary to the perception of objects external to the mind, because matter can act upon matter only by contact. Again, the constraining influence of motives, in order to volition, is deemed necessary, because matter can be put in motion only by an impulse from

without itself, and can only act according to the momentum of that impulse. Still, notwithstanding this peculiar tendency to err in regard to his own intellectual nature, man has attained to a vast amount of valuable knowledge upon this very interesting subject. - He has, in a good degree, ascertained the limits within which the mind may expatiate, without necessarily wandering into the mazes of error; and he knows that those limits define a field at once ample, various, and rich in its returns to the diligent explorer.

But, besides physical and mental faculties, man has moral powers, which, more than all else, elevate him in the scale of being. He only, we believe, of all mundane creatures, has any moral or religious sense or perception; while he possesses it to an extent adequate to all the duties, of both religion and morality, which can be predicated of a being constituted as he is, and sustaining the relations in which he is found placed. Strictly speaking, religion regards our duties to God, and morality those which are due from man to man and to other creatures, within the scope of his influence. The sum of religion is devotion of mind, heart, and life to the will of God. The sum of morality is justice, truth, and kindness towards all within the range of our influence, whether men or inferior sentient creatures. By the teachings of revelation, man can be made to know these duties, both as it respects their general spirit, and in the details appropriate to the various relations in which he may be placed. Moreover, in both religion and morals is included the certain assurance of rewards or punishments, accordingly as duty has been performed or neglected; and the scene of both the one and the other is laid in another state of being—subsequent to death, unmixed, changeless, and eternal. Thus, man, considered in regard to his physical structure, his mysterious vitality, his apprehensive organs, his mental powers, his moral relations and responsibilities, and his coming, eternal, retributive destiny, is a subject of most interesting investigation; and a proper knowledge of him constitutes a mass of science vast, various, and of surpassing importance; and such a perfect knowledge of man is supposed in our text.

Man, in society, presents a vast field for the acquisition of important knowledge. That man was designed for society, is evident equally from his adaptedness to and his invincible pro-

pensity to enter into and continue in it. The all-wise Maker's averment in regard to him, "It is not good that the man should be alone," is impressed in ineffaceable characters on the constitution of man's nature. Society is either domestic or political; either consists of families, or associations of men, united upon conventional regulations; and much of the solicitude which has been felt by good men in all ages, has been to discover the regulations which would best secure the common weal of these societies. Government is indispensable to the well-being, nay, to the very existence of society in any form or of any magnitude; and the great question which has occupied the attention and exercised the talents of philanthropic sages has been, "In what mode may it be exercised with the least sacrifice of individual rights?" Such a sacrifice, to a greater or less extent, is inevitable, where any form of government exists. We, the people of the United States, believe that we have solved this important problem—with more success than any other people, at least—in the establishment of representative governments, controlled in their operations by written constitutions, which they may not change, and beyond whose limits their acts are destitute of all authority; and by rendering distinct and independent of each other, the legislative, executive, and judicial departments, and placing the military force of the society under the strictest control of all these departments. Be this as it may, the science of government is vastly important, and may well be considered as a part of that mass of knowledge supposed in our text to be understood. Nor this alone is understood, but a perfect knowledge of all that would conduce to the well-being of society in any of its forms of existence—in what manner, for instance, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, should conduct themselves towards each other, so as to secure the greatest amount of felicity possible in these relations.

Finally, religion embodies an amount and a variety of knowledge well worthy the most earnest pursuit of the highest order of intellect; and some commentators on the Bible are inclined to limit the apostle's meaning, in our text, to the knowledge and mysteries in this most interesting department of human investigation. We have considered that meaning as of broader scope. However this may be, there can be no question that

the mysteries and knowledge proper to religion were prominently present to the mind of the apostle, and should be so to our minds, while we are endeavoring to understand the text. Religion treats of God; of the relation of man to Him, and of the duties and responsibilities arising from that relation. Three systems of religion have obtained currency among men—"natural, revealed, and eclectic."

*Natural religion* is that system of religion which has been formed by human reason, without any known assistance from Divine revelation. The basis of this system, under all its modifications, has always been, we believe, polytheism. We recollect no instance in which unassisted reason has attained to the sublime discovery that there is but ONE GOD. Socrates made as near an approach to this discovery as, perhaps, any other whose mind was not guided by the light of revelation; and yet one of the last acts of his life was to recognize the divinity of the healing god, Esculapius.

*Revealed religion* is that system which claims to have been communicated to man by Divine revelation. This system has for its basis the *unity* of the Divine nature. It has been presented before the world under two modifications, the Levitical and the Christian; the former imperfect and preparatory, and the latter perfect and permanent. They were circumstantially different, but essentially the same. These two systems—of natural and revealed religion—differed as widely in regard to the Divine character as they did with regard to the unity of the Divine nature. The gods of natural religion were subject to like *passions* and even addicted to like *VICES* with men. What distinguished them from men was chiefly, if not exclusively, simple amplification of faculties. They were only *indefinitely great* men. The God of revealed religion is wholly different: self-existent and independent, infinite in all his attributes, he is free from weakness, from passion, and from vice. Holiness is as properly an attribute of the God of revelation as is power or wisdom; and this holiness is an exact balance of all moral excellence, without any lack or excess in any quality.

Man's relation to the Divinity, and the duties and responsibilities growing out of that relation, were also strikingly dissimilar, in the showing of these two systems. We have no information that natural religion took any account of a

merely personal relation to God on the part of man. We know of no simply personal religious duties that it requires of man. Its whole scope seems to have been to subserve the interests of society. The heart might be corrupted itself, the life might be degradation, without incurring the censure of natural religion. And the expiation of recognized faults was easy under that system. Hume, if a sincere votary of natural religion, spoke correctly, when he said he could feel at ease with the gods of this religion. On the contrary, revealed religion considers man's relation to God as chiefly personal—as extending to his whole being. He may serve or disobey God in thought as effectually as he can in the most important social act which he can perform; and his faults against his relation to the God of revealed religion are of such malignant turpitude, that they can be expiated only by an atonement of which unassisted reason never could have had the faintest conception. Connected with this atonement, as we conceive, the revelation was made of the trinity of Persons in the unity of the Godhead. We do not mean that this trinity of Persons was in any way dependent for its existence on the atonement for man's sin; but we do suppose that the revelation of the Trinity was made to man with special, perhaps exclusive reference to that atonement, and to the plan of salvation dependent on that atonement. We do not deem it necessary to be more particular in our notice of these two systems which have been embraced by men.

The *eclectic* system of religion is that which has derived, whether avowedly or not, some of its leading doctrines from revelation, but has not scrupled to reject, or, what amounts to the same thing, explain away such parts of revelation as do not commend themselves to their notions of fitness. German Rationalism, Anglo-Saxon Unitarianism, and Deism, we are compelled to rank together in this category. True, Deism discards revelation altogether, while Rationalism and Unitarianism profess submission to its authority; but is it not well known that the best parts of *Deism*—all truly good, indeed—are derived from the Bible; and that whatever portions of revelation are found inconsistent with their creeds, are so explained as to mean just the contrary of their obvious import, by both Rationalists and Unitarians? Is it not mani-



fest that both courses tend to precisely the same issue—with this difference, however, that that of the Rationalists and Unitarians, being less open, is more mischievous than that of the Deists? A knowledge of all these systems is supposed in our text; and, what is far more important, a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong in each of them: in other words, a correct knowledge of the true religion. Can this knowledge be overrated? Add to this, the understanding of all other mysteries and all other branches of knowledge, and we can form some idea of the apostle's supposition in our text. We proceed, now,

II. To show what is implied in *having charity*. No scriptural term, probably, has been more perverted from its proper signification than *charity*. It is sometimes used synonymously with almsgiving; and at other times its import is found in an indulgent construction of the conduct and motives of our fellow-men. Now, that neither of these applications of this term does it any thing like justice, will be at once apparent to any one who will read the chapter from which our text is taken. Both almsgiving and indulgent interpretations of our neighbor's character are, it is true, characteristics of charity; but, then, they are not charity, any more than are truth and justice *morality*. They belong to charity, as justice and truth belong to morality; but being only parts, they should not be allowed to arrogate the honor due to charity as a whole. The abuse of this term has, we fear, been very mischievous in its effects upon the ethics of many individuals and even communities. Satisfied with having addicted themselves to almsgiving, or to indulgent views with regard to their neighbor, they have laid "the flattering unction to their souls" that they have that charity to which St. Paul here ascribes such paramount importance, and which in other portions of Scripture is not less highly appreciated. What, then, is CHARITY? It is that disposition of the mind which will display itself in those various virtuous qualities which, in this thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, are represented as characteristics of charity. Not that the delineation of charity is completed by these characteristics, but that they belong to it essentially. Charity has other and not less important features. The question, then, recurs, WHAT is charity? We answer, It is THE LOVE OF ALL MANKIND.

This will appear evident from the fact that all that the apostle here says of charity, is true of love, and that it is true of no other passion or state of the soul. This we shall proceed briefly to exemplify; and,

1. Charity *suffereth long, and is kind*. Long-suffering supposes protracted hardships or protracted provocations, proceeding from the party towards which it is exercised. It does not suppose indifference to such hardships or provocations: on the contrary, they are felt to the extent of *suffering* on account of them. Nor does it imply the absence of all well-directed effort to remove those hardships or provocations, or to lessen them, as far as practicable, if they may not be wholly removed. Long-suffering implies a patient endurance of its cause, whether hardship or provocation, though long-continued. See this often and strikingly exemplified in conjugal and parental affection. How patiently, and for how many years, does the wife or husband, whose hardships are occasioned by the improvidence or extravagance of the husband or wife beloved, endure a lot of incessant toil and of withering privation! See, too, the endurance of that wife or husband, under provocations from the evil habits, the disagreeable manners, or the perverse tempers of the collateral relative, which to all others seem utterly intolerable. Parents, too, exemplify our position, in the endurance, under the sustaining influence of love, of the wasteful extravagance of the child, who squanders by handfuls the hard earnings of their whole lives of toil, care, and economy; and who ministers hardly aught else but provocation, in courses of life known by him to be in direct opposition to the most sacred principles and the most cherished wishes of his parents. And not only does LOVE endure the hardships and provocations with long patience, but under them, and notwithstanding their existence, is *kind* toward those who have occasioned them. Kindness does not suppose indulgence to the wrongs of the beloved object, nor the withholding of any corrective of his faults—nay, it implies the contrary. But it does suppose a disposition to render any available service to the object beloved, even during the existence of those hardships and provocations which have proceeded from such object.

2. Charity *envieth not*. Envy is uneasiness at seeing those advantages which are valued by us possessed by others; espe-

cially if we are compelled to admit that they are possessed by those others in greater measure than by ourselves. Now, was it ever known that a husband, a wife, a father, a son, a friend, who loved the persons to whom they stood thus related, were rendered uneasy by the fact that the wife, the husband, the son, the father, the friend, were rich, endowed with personal beauty, intelligent, learned, or popular? Nay, did such ever repine at the *superior* wealth, beauty, intelligence, learning, or popularity of the loved ones? Was it not, rather, a matter of sincere gratification that those so dear were thus distinguished by the bounty of Providence?

3. *Charity vaunteth not itself.* To vaunt is to exult over others, on account of superior advantages enjoyed by us over them. This is the exhibition of vanity. No one who loved another, ever exulted over the loved one on account of any advantage, whether imaginary or real. Even the vainest coxcomb in existence, if by any chance he come to love aught save himself, will except from the humiliating comparison, which he is wont to make of others with himself, the object beloved. As, in the above particulars, it has been seen that charity and love are identical, so, if necessary, it might be shown in what follows; but we deem it needless.

4. *Charity is not puffed up.* To vaunt our advantages is in such bad taste, that many vain persons have too much good sense to allow themselves to be guilty of it; but they do without scruple indulge the feeling from which such vaunting proceeds. In the expressive language of the apostle, they are "puffed up;" swelled out beyond their proper dimensions; enlarged beyond their true measure. This tumefaction is, however, rather comparative than personal. They do not so much feel that their advantages confer upon them intrinsic importance, as that they enlarge their dimensions beyond the measure of their less fortunate, though, perhaps, really more meritorious neighbor. Charity is not thus affected by the advantages which adventitiously belong to its subject. It sees in the plain, the poor, the ignorant, the unknown to fame, a brother beloved; and, laying apart the consideration of these adventitious circumstances, appreciates the personal worth of the parties concerned. And, notwithstanding any of these advantages possessed by him, the man animated by charity may arrive at the just conclusion that his less fortunate neigh-

bor transcends him in worth even more than he exceeds him in the gifts of fortune. Or, if even worth be the subject of comparison, the charitable man who is conscious of superior worth is not "puffed up" or swelled out by even this excellence; for he remembers that he differs more, most probably, in the providential facilities and gracious helps by which he has been "led on and instructed," and by which he has been excited and sustained in his course of moral propriety, from his less virtuous neighbor, than he does in his moral attainments. At all events, there has been, within his consciousness, enough of neglect, of shortcoming, and of defalcation in his course to render his being "puffed up," on a comparison with others, too utterly preposterous to his own feelings and judgment to be indulged for even a single moment.

5. *Charity doth not behave itself unseemly.* In the intercourse where charity is the dominant influence, the fortunate do not behave themselves towards those less favored than themselves with haughty domination, with supercilious forbearance, or with contumelious kindness and patronizing assumption, but as standing on the even ground of common humanity; while the less fortunate do not behave themselves towards those more favored with crawling sycophancy or with defiant moroseness; but both, animated by the same principle, forget the difference in their circumstances, and meet as brethren, in cordial efforts to advance each other's happiness. Nothing could be more unseemly in man—absolutely dependent "for life, and breath, and all things," on the common Father of all mankind—than proud assumption on account of beauty, wealth, intelligence, or distinction; unless, perhaps, the equally proud, defiant, moroseness of those destitute of these advantages, towards those upon whom Providence has seen proper to confer them.

6. *Charity seeketh not her own.* By this we are not to understand that charity renders those who are animated by it indifferent to their own interest, or to that of those who are dependent on them. He that doth not "provide for his own, and specially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," says the author of our text, in writing to Timothy; and he therefore could not mean that charity induces a dereliction of self-interest. But it does prevent that engrossing regard to self-interest which receives

and deserves the name of selfishness. It permits not those who are influenced by it to seek their own interest, to the exclusion of a generous concern for and earnest efforts to advance the interests of others; and much more does it prevent their seeking of self-interest at the expense of the interests and rights of others. While prudently attentive to what concerns their own well-being, the charitable will solicitously inquire how they may best promote that of their fellow-creatures, and will employ their most vigorous efforts to accomplish the plans for that purpose which their benevolence has prompted them to adopt. In the performance of this, they permit no desire of indulgence in ease, no allurements of sensual or imaginative pleasure, no natural repugnance to hardship, to inconvenience, or to the contempt or scorn of the world, to obstruct, or even to embarrass them. They seek their own only in common with the interests of those who are the objects of their charity.

7. *Charity is not easily provoked.* The purest, meekest, and most benevolent men—such is the perverseness of fallen human nature—are often so maltreated, so scorned by the proud, so deceived by the false-hearted, so maligned by the malicious, and so misrepresented by the slanderous, as to afford them abundant matter for provocation. Thus was Moses, the meekest of men, outraged by those to whom he had rendered invaluable services. Thus, too, was the Saviour, though “holy, harmless, and undefiled,” and though indefatigable in well-doing to mankind, despised, rejected, traduced, and crucified by those whom he came to bless and to save. Is it not enough, if “the servant be as his master?” We may, then, expect to meet provocation, even though entirely conscious of not deserving it. Charity is not affirmed to be exempt from the proper influence of these provocations. Moses was provoked. The Saviour looked upon his disingenuous adversaries “with anger.” Charity, however, preserves from a *facility* of taking offence. Not every thing that can be construed or surmised into an offence, is allowed to ruffle the temper of the charitable man; nor does he permit himself to be aroused by slight though real affronts, nor by a first offence, though of considerable magnitude. He is not “*easily* provoked.”

8. *Charity thinketh no evil.* The existence of evil in the

conduct of others may force itself upon the *knowledge* of the charitable man ; but *suspicion* of its existence, where no evidence to that effect is presented to the mind, is not only not indulged, but, if it intrude itself or be obtruded upon the mind, is repelled, as a wrong done to the object towards which it is directed, and as an evil thought in the mind which harbors it. How much of the coldness, the malignity, and the discord of human society has its origin in groundless suspicion ! A merely unconsidered omission, a look, a tone, or an entirely offenceless action, is often construed by those who are disposed to *think evil*, into an intended affront, and acted upon as such ; and is made the basis of interminable quarrels and inveterate malice, or, at least, irreconcilable estrangement, between those who ought to be, and, but for this suspiciousness of disposition, would be, cordial friends. Charity allows of no such suspicion, but, on the contrary, admits with reluctant hesitation the clear evidence which compels a conviction to the prejudice of a fellow-creature.

9. *Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity.* When the conviction has forced itself upon the mind of the charitable man, that his neighbor—his rival or enemy, perhaps—has dishonored himself by some crooked, unjust, or degrading action, he receives no pleasure from such conviction. He cannot rejoice that his fellow-creature is infamous, even though his own virtue is thrown into bolder relief by the contrast thus presented to the public mind between his neighbor and himself, to his own advantage. Neither desire of gain, nor ambition of distinction, nor resentment for injuries received, can induce the charitable man to gloat with pleasure over the infamy of one for whom, in common with himself, the blessed Saviour purchased the privilege of attaining to eternal glory. But,

10. *Charity rejoiceth in the truth*—in the virtue, the integrity, the fidelity of every fellow-creature, whatever may be the relation in which such fellow-creature may stand to him in whom that godlike disposition is predominant. St. John declares that he has “no greater joy than to hear that” his “children,” or disciples, “walk in the truth ;” and the charitable man will feel like joy at the upright, truthful walk of every man ; for every man is the object of his charity, the brother of his heart’s warm affection.

11. *Charity beareth all things* annoying ; because it is *not*

*easily provoked—believeth and hopeth all things favorable, so far as possible; because it thinketh no evil, and is animated by kindness, and endureth all things that exercise patience and fortitude; because it suffereth long.*

12. Charity *never faileth*. Circumstances may arise, in the life of every man, which will render of no value every other advantage he may possess: their use may be superseded by other and better advantages, or they may be rendered valueless by the incapacity of the individual who possesses them to derive benefit from their possession. The former supposition was true of the prophecies and tongues, which distinguished the early days of the Christian Church, and which were superseded by a more diffusive and equally effective agency, in the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, enforcing the written revelations of the New Testament Scriptures. The latter supposition will be found often to hold good, in regard not only to knowledge, but to all that is esteemed good by man, excepting only charity. This regulator of our affections, this bond of society, this meetness for and foretaste of the purity and the bliss of heaven, will, in all circumstances, find proper scope for operation, and a capability, on the part of those whose bosoms are warmed by its influence, to profit by its presence. We may not amplify this point, and we need not. The characteristics of charity, already delineated, will render it sufficiently apparent. It remains,

III. To speak of the apostle's meaning, when he declares that though he did understand all mysteries and all knowledge, if he did not have charity, he should be nothing. The apostle could not have meant that, in the circumstances supposed, he should be nothing as it respected intellectual development, and the influence which enlarged capacity and great attainment insure to their possessor, among those with whom he is associated; nor could he have meant that he would be nothing, in regard to the admiration and applause of those to whom his extraordinary attainments and vast powers of mind should be known. In what respect, then, or in what respects would the apostle have deemed himself nothing, if, not having charity, he could boast unequalled mental excellence? Before answering this question, it may be well to remark that there is a kind of *reflective* charity in

the world, which, as far as it goes, has the effect to do away, so far as merely human judgment is concerned, the *nullity* of him who is without charity in fact. The courtesies, amenities, and benevolences which regard to public opinion often constrains the selfish themselves to practice, though springing from sheer pride or from motives of personal interest, go to the credit of charity, and influence the estimation in which the performer is held in accordance with this erroneous appreciation. We now proceed to show what we understand to be the apostle's meaning; and,

1. We suppose he means that, with the vast extent of understanding supposed in the text, he should, without charity, be nothing, **IN SO FAR AS THE PROMOTION OF GOD'S GLORY IS CONCERNED.** The glory of God, as the Creator of man, is best declared by the excellence of the creature he has made. His wisdom, his power, and his benevolence may by this means be rendered more strikingly apparent than by any simple description of those attributes which could be made to intelligent beings; and the glory of these attributes will be seen not alone in their individual manifestation, but chiefly as they harmonize in the production of some beneficial result. Now, though wisdom and power should be conceded to the creation of a highly intellectual being, destitute of moral worth, it is certain that benevolence and holiness would find no exhibition in such a creation; and, consequently, that God is not glorified by the most brilliant display of intellectual ability and resources, while charity is wanting to the direction of their operation and employment. Who would honor the mechanist who should produce the most complicated and noiselessly operating machinery, which could be applied to no useful purpose, but which, on the contrary, naturally tended to mischievous results, so far as its influence was permitted to operate? Who does not know that the brightest parts and the most affluent intellectual acquisitions do not manifest the glory of the Creator, when they are associated with impatience, unkindness, envy, boastfulness, haughtiness, unsuitable deportment, selfishness, a love of detraction, fretfulness, suspicion, and forebodings of iniquity, on the part of those upon whom even suspicion of existing wrong has not been able to fasten its poisonous fang? And yet the presence of at least some if not of all of this brood of vipers is argued by the



absence of charity. But is it important that man should show forth the glory of God? Who can question it, when it is well known that honor is claimed by the inventor, the author, the lawgiver, the teacher, and the parent, on account of what they deem valuable in what has been framed and fashioned by their skill, their care, and their effort; and that their claim is admitted, without hesitation, to the full extent of the worth found to exist in their several productions? And shall the principle not apply only in the case of Him who alone was disinterested in the performance of his work? Nay, can man boast a higher destination than that of showing forth the "praise of His glory?"

2. We suppose the apostle to have meant that without charity he would, though understanding all mysteries and all knowledge, be nothing AS A USEFUL MEMBER OF SOCIETY. Let it be recollected that, *so far as the influence we exert upon mankind is concerned*, reflective charity will, to some extent, produce the same effects as charity itself. These effects will most certainly be greatly inferior in amount and value to those which result from charity itself: still, a man with intellectual abilities may and will be useful to society in proportion as his conduct is in conformity to that which proceeds from charity. But suppose an individual possessed of the utmost intellectual abilities and attainments to act, in all things, in opposition to the law of charity—to be quick to take offence; cruel, or, at best, unfeeling, in his words and actions, towards those within the range of his influence; envious at the prosperous and the distinguished; boastful of his own advantages, or, at least, puffed up by them; haughty, if prosperous; querulous or insolent, if unfortunate; selfish; pleased to find causes of infamy in others; pettish; suspicious of evil where no evil is apparent, or anticipating such evil at a future period. We say, suppose this of any man, and CAN he be a useful member of society? The productions of his genius, the fruits of his knowledge, may benefit society to even a great extent; but will not the moral obliquities which he displays before that society more than counterbalance those benefits? Nay, is it not often seen that men of great talents are pestiferous to society, by the employment of those talents, and in proportion to the greatness of them? Who ever cursed society with such incalculable evils

as the great hero, whose military talents were not under the restraints of justice; the profound philosopher, whose moral views were perverted; or the splendid poet, whose imagination dressed up vice in a garb to fascinate and bewitch the unguarded heart? By these, and in proportion to the greatness of their several talents, has society been bathed in tears and blood, wrapped in flames or draped in mourning-weeds; has been sapped in its foundations and dislocated in its most important articulations; and has been poisoned in the fountains of its sentiments, its principles, and its enjoyments. So far from being useful members of society, men so gifted and so unprincipled must be reckoned among the greatest calamities which God has ever suffered to afflict mankind.

3. The apostle, we presume, may be understood as meaning that, without charity, no matter what his attainments in science, he would be nothing in point of PERSONAL RESPECTABILITY. It is true that such may enjoy the misjudging admiration and applause of their contemporaries, who look only or chiefly to the brilliance of their mental exhibitions; but when they dare bring themselves, or when they are brought by others to *any* established standard of respectability, they are found to be not merely wanting, but to deserve contempt, loathing, or abhorrence. In the loudest clamors of applause, a voice that will be heard tells them that

“All praise is foreign but of true desert—  
Plays round the head, but comes not near the heart;  
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,  
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels;”

that if the infatuated multitude could penetrate the brilliant haze in which they are enveloped, and see them in their true character, they would be the objects of hisses, instead of applause. And in this depreciating self-estimate the wise and good will fully concur. He who can be imposed upon by no exterior embellishments, who estimates men by the principles of the heart, has weighed them and pronounced them WANTING. Every award of value and weight is against their respectability. What right-minded intelligent being, whether in heaven or on earth, could look without pity, contempt, or abhorrence, upon a lofty intelligence fainting or fretting at every mischance; boasting or inflated on account of advan-

tages possessed, or envious of advantages enjoyed by others; regardless of the comfort of those upon whom he exerts an influence, but intensely selfish in all his plans and pursuits; rejoicing in the degradation of his fellow-men; suspicious of the apparently good, or expecting with pleasure their future abasement; without reliable principle, which may be calculated on in every future emergency? And such are those supposed in our text; and they must, therefore, be regarded as *nothing* in point of personal respectability.

4. We presume that the apostle means that the understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, in the absence of charity, CANNOT CONFER HAPPINESS. This point scarcely needs argument or exemplification; as who does not know that enjoyment essentially depends, not on the capacity of the understanding or the stores which it has accumulated, but on the intrinsic character of the moral affections and habits, and on their harmonious adjustment? Who does not know that the fretful, cruel, proud, envious, selfish man has in his own bosom the elements of inappeasable strife, of irremediable discomfort? No one source of real enjoyment is open to such a one. He must despise the admiration that is lavished upon him by the misconceiving multitude, who estimate him without a knowledge of or a reference to his moral character. He knows himself worthy of no respect, and feels so well assured of God's disapprobation as to shut his eyes, as far he can, to the responsibility he owes to Him. The past records for him no deed of high-souled virtue, no instance of patiently borne affliction, no song of the comforted widow, no grateful tear of the protected orphan. He has lived to low, sordid selfishness, regarding others only as they have been ministrant to his advantage. In himself alone, therefore, must he look for the means of enjoyment; and these cannot exist in a bosom where patience, kindness, joy in the good of others, humility and self-sacrificing benevolence are strangers. And if such are nothing, as respects the ENJOYMENT OF HAPPINESS, in the present state of things, their condition can certainly be no more favorable in that state where every enjoyment must, in the nature of things, be purely moral and spiritual.

We now hasten to bring this already too long discourse to a close, by a brief but earnest exhortation, not to omit the most diligent efforts to acquire the most exact and most ex-

tended understanding of the mysteries and knowledge which challenge your investigation, but to add to this, what is so much more important, the possession of that charity which alone can secure your attainment to the great ends or destinations of your being—the glory of God, the utility of your existence to others, true respectability and happiness, in time and in eternity. Charity, like science, must, if ever possessed, be acquired by effort and by discipline. It is not native to the human heart, any more than is a knowledge of letters or of the laws of nature to the human mind. The Bible and its expositors are the teachers of whom we must learn the lessons of charity; and the discipline to which we must submit, and which will be effective, consists in repentance for past sins, self-denial, unblenching and avowed devotion to the will of God, and believing prayer, that, through the merits of the great atonement, the grace may be afforded and the Spirit imparted by whose influence and aid we may be wrought to that conformity to God in which CHARITY will direct all our affections, control all our passions, and impress her own heavenly image upon our whole character. Thus only may we secure this highest of all qualifications which can distinguish man—this richest treasure that man can possess.

You cannot begin this noble enterprise too soon; nor will your most diligent application to it retard in any degree your progress in any other laudable pursuit. Those charged with the education and direction of the human mind cannot too earnestly coöperate in this surpassingly important enterprise. Allow me, then, to urge you that, *before* all, *with* all, and *above* all, you “put on CHARITY, which is the bond of PERFECTNESS;” and then shall “the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Amen.

THE  
G O S P E L M I N I S T R Y .

S U B S T A N C E O F A S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D B E F O R E T H E

M I S S I S S I P P I A N N U A L C O N F E R E N C E ,

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N O V E M B E R 1 4 , 1 8 5 4 .

B Y T H E R E V . W M . W I N A N S , D . D .

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“Who is sufficient for these things?”—St. Paul.

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P U B L I S H E D B Y A U T H O R I T Y O F T H E C O N F E R E N C E .

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1857.



## PREFACE.

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At the late Mississippi Annual Conference, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to wait on the Rev. William Winans, D. D., and present to him the unanimous request of the Conference, that a copy of the sermon which he preached before that body, during its session, might be delivered to the Committee for publication. The Conference also requested the Committee to have "two thousand five hundred copies" of that sermon struck off for distribution among its members; and expressed a desire to have it adopted as one of the Tracts to be published by the Tract Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The Committee immediately opened a correspondence with Doctor Winans, who promised, so soon as he could, to furnish a discourse within the "outline" of that delivered *extemporaneously* before the Conference; which pledge has been redeemed at a much earlier period than could have been expected, in view of the feeble health of its author and the indisposition of his family. We take the liberty to lay before the public an extract from a letter accompanying the sermon, which we consider substantially the same delivered before the Conference:

CENTREVILLE, AMITE, Miss., Dec. 12, 1854.

DEAR BRETHREN:

I send you herewith the substance of my sermon, preached before the Mississippi Annual Conference, at Jackson, La., Nov. 14, 1854. The "*outline*" of that discourse is, I believe, faith-

fully preserved. To fill up that outline exactly as I did in the *extemporaneous* delivery before the Conference, would have been utterly impossible. In some instances, I purposely failed to do it. I have, for instance, in this written discourse, elaborated arguments that were briefly stated, and extended descriptions that were merely glanced at. One characteristic anecdote—that in regard to Rev. M. Moore—was not introduced, I believe, in the spoken discourse. In my own judgment, the changes of which I am aware are not for the worse; and I submit the discourse to you, to be disposed of as you may judge of its deserts.

Affectionately your friend and brother,

WILLIAM WINANS.

Rev. Messrs. T. C. THORNTON and H. J. HARRIS,  
Committee of Publication.

The Committee in common with their brethren of the Conference heard that sermon, and believe now as then, that it will, if published, subserve the cause of *truth* and *evangelical piety*, and ought to be numbered as one of *our* "Tracts for the Times." We also believe that those who listened to the *extemporaneous* effort of Doctor Winans, so far from being dissatisfied with those "arguments" that are "elaborated," "descriptions" that are "extended," or a "characteristic anecdote," will, with the Committee, admit, that there is in the written discourse an increased weight of argument, that affords the greater probability of extensive benefit through the circulation of this excellent sermon.

T. C. THORNTON.

H. J. HARRIS.

SHARON, Miss., Dec. 26, 1854.

Committee for Publication.



## THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

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The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort all that mourn: to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.—Isa. lxi. 1-3.

THAT, in these words, the prophet personates, or speaks in the person of Jesus Christ, is manifest from the appropriation of them to Himself, by that Divine Personage, when He opened His ministry at "Nazareth, where He had been brought up," as we are informed He did, in Luke iv. 16-21. This is in perfect accordance with the whole teaching of the revealed truth of God; for, though it is true that "God gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," it is equally true, that all these, from the highest to the lowest, are subordinate agencies in the great work in which they are employed. Only as they follow His lead, as they repeat His instruction, can they lay claim to any authority in the ministry, or expect to confer any advantage by their ministrations. The greatest of all these subordinate ministers of the Gospel, upon a survey of the work, in all its magnitude and difficulty, exclaimed, "Who is sufficient for these things?" "Who,

then, is Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas?" Jesus Christ is the only Teacher in the Church having plenary power as such; and He cautions his subordinates against trespassing upon His prerogative in the matter, when He so earnestly charges them not to call any man on earth, or to be called of any, Master; assigning, as the sufficient reason, that "one is your master, even Christ."

But, though Jesus Christ is, in a peculiar sense—in a sense too high for any other—the Preacher of the Gospel, He should be regarded, in all points in which He can be so, as the great exemplar of all subordinate preachers of His word. Their authority must be derived from the same source from which His is derived, and must be attested by the same official sanction. The indispensable qualification which fitted Him for the work in so eminent a degree, must, in their measure, qualify them also. The same great truths which He proclaimed in His own right and with absolute authority, must form the subjects of their subordinate teaching; and, to the objects He was to accomplish, by His teaching, they must aim in theirs.

Our purpose is to consider the text in its application to Jesus Christ, only in so far as it sets Him before us as the exemplar of His subordinate ministers. We intend, chiefly, to confine ourselves to a consideration of what relates to that subordinate ministry:—The authority under which it acts—The qualification by which it is fitted to its work—The work in which it is employed, and the proper effects of that work—And the ulterior purpose of the work. In pursuance of this plan, we shall,

I. Endeavor to ascertain *the authority under which men are preachers of the Gospel*. Not all who lay claim to that office are to be considered as having any valid title to it. In all ages, there have been those who, though *unsent*, have gone forth as the messengers of the Gospel. Without authority in their mission, it is not at all strange that they "do not profit the people" to whom they minister. Two sources of authority have been mainly relied upon—Ecclesiastical and Divine. The *former* of these, so far as of any importance, is important *only* for purposes of social order, and can confer no proper authority for the work of the ministry. Its highest, and, indeed, its only function is to recognize an authority

already conferred. No Pope, Bishop, Presbytery, or Church has any right to confer authority to preach the Gospel; and any assumption of such right is an arrogant invasion of the prerogative of Christ, as the Head of the Church—as the King in Zion. When, therefore, any Church functionaries presume to invest a man with authority to preach the Gospel, on any other ground than the conviction that he has been already authorized by Jesus Christ, such functionaries not only confer no real authority, but deceive their client into a position of imminent peril, inflict upon the Church the mischief of a factitious appointment to office, and offer a flagrant insult to Him who has reserved to Himself the sole right of appointing the preachers of His own Word. Nor has there been a more fruitful source of calamity to the Church than the assumption of the right on the part of the Church, to appoint preachers of the Gospel, independently of any previous designation to that work by the Head of the Church. Spirituality has thus been sacrificed to human ability, and the integrity of Divine truth to the dogmas of a metaphysical creed, elaborated by human ingenuity. The mysteries of the Gospel have been repudiated because the “philosophy falsely so called,” taught in the Schools or Colleges, employed in clerical manufacture, found them too recondite for its penetration. Most Churches recognize the exclusive right of Jesus Christ to appoint to the ministry of the Gospel, by placing the interrogatory, “Dost thou believe that thou art inwardly moved *by the Holy Ghost* to take upon thee the office of the ministry?” among those which are put to such as are candidates for that important office. There is melancholy reason, however, to believe that many Church functionaries “hold this truth in unrighteousness;” or, rather, that, while they put this interrogatory to the candidate, they repudiate its import, as a relic of the fanaticism by which less enlightened and less rational ages were characterized. But all who, *ex animo*, subscribe to the import of this interrogatory, when they say to the candidate, “Take thou authority to preach the Gospel,” mean no more than, “We recognize thee as divinely appointed to the ministry of the Gospel, not by this act of recognition, but by a *previous* and supremely authoritative act of Him, to whom *alone* belongs the right of such appointment. This act of recognition confers no au-

thority, properly speaking.—Its whole effect is purely *ecclesiastical*—licensing the person, so recognized, to preach under the patronage of the Church, by whose functionaries the act of recognition was performed, but neither conferring nor completing authority to preach. Derived from Jesus Christ, that authority is as complete before and without the act of recognition, as it can be after and with its sanction.

But, if the authority to preach the Gospel is conferred exclusively by Jesus Christ, by what means does He make the appointment, and how does He convey, to the party authorized by Him, satisfactory evidence of his appointment to the work? We answer: ‘The authority of Jesus Christ Himself to preach the Gospel was conferred upon Him by the “Spirit of the Lord God being upon Him,” *anointing* Him for that work.’ We have already said that, in all possible cases, Jesus Christ is to be the great exemplar of all ministers of the Gospel; and, especially, that their authority is to be derived from the same source with His. As, therefore, the unction of the Holy Ghost conferred on Him the authority to preach the Gospel, so His subordinates in the ministry must be anointed with the Holy Ghost, in order to their being authorized. This is necessary, indispensably necessary; and, this *is all* that is necessary to their having ample authority to preach the Gospel. To suppose the contrary, is to suppose the power of Christ to confer authority in His own Church, imperfect:—is to charge the unction of the Holy Ghost with inadequacy to its object, or with being no more than a solemn farce, unless, indeed, human agency complete and give validity to its ordination. We have already admitted that, in view of *ecclesiastical order*, it is important that the authority conferred by Jesus Christ be recognized by Church functionaries; but, we contend that that recognition adds nothing to the authority, nor would that authority be either invalidated or placed in suspense by the want of such recognition. The unction of the Holy Ghost confers the authority independently and absolutely; and, that authority is complete, and irrevocable by any form of Church action, or refusal to act. So Paul, when anointed to the ministry of the Gospel by the Holy Ghost, “conferred not with flesh and blood;” sought no authority from Peter, James, and John; but immediately preached the Gospel, and continued to do

so for three years, without seeking human sanction to the Divine authority, under which he proclaimed the Gospel of the grace of God. No one will question the right of Jesus Christ to reserve to Himself the exclusive authorization of His subordinates in the ministry of the Gospel. None, surely, can question His power to confer such authority, without the intervention of any human agency. But, has He reserved that right to himself? The proper question would be, "Has He ever delegated it?" If he have not, He has, by fair consequence, reserved it to Himself. We say, then, without fear of successful contradiction, that He has not delegated this power to any set or description of men. The *fable*, of His having transmitted authority to preach, through a succession of ordinations, is as unfounded in Scripture, as utterly absurd as any theory that ever found place in the imagination of error-prone humanity. As an economical arrangement, such a succession, so far as should be found practicable and consistent with the substantial interests of Christianity, must be allowed to be the result of ecclesiastical wisdom; and it can claim no higher origin on any reasonable grounds. But, the history of the Church demonstrates how utterly unworthy the Divine wisdom it would have been to have made such a succession the channel—the only channel of conveying authority to preach through all ages. It was never—not for a single day—such a channel of transmission—the only channel through which authority to preach the Gospel has been conveyed, having always been the Holy Ghost.

It may be inquired, 'How can the Holy Ghost convey to the man whom he has anointed to preach the Gospel, the necessary evidence of the authority so conferred upon him?' We answer, in the language of our Blessed Saviour, on a kindred subject—"The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth—so is every one" that is set apart by the Holy Ghost to the work of the Gospel-ministry. He, who made the soul of man, can have no difficulty in communicating *directly* with that soul, in a manner so clear and so convincing as to leave no doubt of the import or truth of the communication. And if, in what concerns individual acceptance with God, the testimony of the Spirit of God, with the human spirit, is the ground of Christian assurance, and

is intelligible and trustworthy to the party concerned, what is to hinder the Holy Ghost, when He commissions a man, by His holy anointing, to preach the Gospel, from imparting to him the most reliable evidence of that important fact? Men, who are wanting to a due investigation of the character and tendency of the impression made upon their minds and hearts, may mistake, in regard to the character and cause of that impression, so as to consider themselves "moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel," when, in fact, their impression has resulted from a very different sort of influence. But, then, they are liable to the same sort of error, in regard to the witness of the Spirit to their acceptance with God. In neither case, however, is the error unavoidable. They, who carefully "examine themselves," and "try the spirit, whether it be of God,"—who scrutinize the character of the impression, its religious and moral influence and tendency, comparing all these diligently and cautiously with the word of God, may rationally and satisfactorily determine whether the influence which moves them to preach, or the testimony which assures them of Divine acceptance is from the Holy Ghost, or from some other agency. We are aware that, in this *rationalistic* age, we incur the hazard of being considered pitifully superstitious, for entertaining these views, it being now the fashion to *affect* the repudiation of any doctrine of religion, which transcends the scope of human reasoning. It is true, that, in other matters, men of the highest pretensions to reason are content to receive as truth what is entirely beyond the utmost stretch of their comprehension, as is the operation of the Holy Ghost upon the mind and heart of man. For instance: What philosopher of them all will question the existence and operation of gravitation and attraction in producing the physical phenomena of the universe; and, yet, who of them will pretend to a knowledge of their nature, or of the mode of their operation? Who will venture to define animal life; or pretend to a knowledge of the process by which life is sustained? Nay, in the simplest and most frequently occurring phenomena of every-day life, there are matters as utterly beyond the comprehension of the human mind, as any mystery revealed in the Gospel.—Such are the phenomena of voluntary motion, communication by speech, etc. The absurdity of rejecting religious doctrine, because i

transcends human comprehension, while equally incomprehensible doctrines, concerning the ordinary affairs of life, are admitted to be true, is too glaring to need any effort to render it apparent. The direct agency of the Holy Ghost, in individual regeneration, and in the appointment of men to the Gospel-ministry, is clearly taught in the sacred Scriptures, and has been matter of ample experience in the Church, in all ages of its existence. To reject it in either case, because the *modus operandi* cannot be scanned by human perspicacity, would argue an ignorance as profound as the arrogance evinced by such a course is insolent. To us, it is enough to know that, up to the close of the sacred canon, the *only* authorization of the Gospel ministry, accredited by the Church, was the designation of the party, whether apostle, evangelist, pastor, or deacon, by the Holy Ghost, to the work he was to perform. Whatever ceremonies were employed, in the recognition of their authority, by the Church, the authority itself was received from Jesus Christ, by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

II. *We next inquire into the QUALIFICATION, indispensable in a minister of the Gospel.*

We say, *indispensable* qualification; for, in our view, there can be but one *such* qualification. Much might be said of incidental and subsidiary qualifications; but a consideration of *these* does not enter into the scope of our present design. The qualification, of which we would treat, is that without which man may not rightfully be a preacher of the Gospel; and,

1. We cannot admit that any definitely determinable amount of intellectual capacity can be regarded as such a qualification. We have reason to believe that, in this respect, there was great diversity among the first ministers of the Gospel; and that a like diversity has characterized that class of men in all ages since. Nor are we prepared to admit that the usefulness of a minister of the Gospel will be in proportion to the amount of his intellectual capability. "The weak things of the world," in the operation of His plan of saving men, is often, by the Great Head of the Church, made to "confound the mighty;" and while the eloquence of Apollos, not unfrequently pleases the imagination of the hearer, and leaves his heart unmoved, the unpolished and

unpretending simplicity of John takes hold on the heart and conscience, and brings the whole man, subdued and repenting, to the cross of his Master. All else being equal, we doubt not that a man of superior intellect will accomplish more, in the ministry, than would be accomplished by one greatly his inferior in this respect. Still, we repeat, that no definitely determinable amount of intellectual capability is an indispensable qualification of a preacher of the Gospel. Neither,

2. Can we allow that any specific proficiency in human learning can be properly regarded as *such* a qualification. We confess to no little surprise that Churches, professing to be guided, as well in ecclesiastical regulations as in Christian and moral duty, should require, as preliminary to a recognition of ministerial authority, a specified knowledge of learned languages, and a prescribed course of theological training. Do they not know that, of some eighteen primitive ministers of the Gospel, concerning whom we have information, only *two* can be reasonably supposed to have had any pretention to scholarship, when they were chosen to that office *directly* by Jesus Christ, or by the designation of the Holy Ghost? The rest, we have the authority of St. Luke for saying, were "unlearned and ignorant men!" The main reason for this sort of selection, assigned by the only very learned man in the early ministry, was not peculiar to primitive times, but will remain in force, as long as a disposition to infidelity shall continue in the world. It is that, from the inadequacy of the ministry, in human estimation, "the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men." Were all the preachers of the Gospel men of superior attainments in letters and science the presumption, that the success of the Gospel was the result of priestcraft and human advantages, would be strong and prevailing. There are other reasons which justify the wisdom of this early employment of "unlearned and ignorant men," in the ministry of the Gospel, and which indicate the importance of continuing to do so, as long as the mass of mankind continue *unlearned and ignorant*. It is a well known fact, that those who have received a learned education, are not readily understood by the masses, even when there is nothing pedantic and little that is technical in their style of speaking. And this is seldom the case with recent graduates of learned Institutions,



whether literary or theological. At least, those masses much more readily understand those who have arisen from among themselves. There is an idiom—a dialect peculiar to each class—which, though involving no radical difference, is practically very different from that of all other classes, in the impression it makes on the class to which it is appropriate. Habits of thinking and feeling, moreover, are greatly different in the liberal scholar and in the man from the masses; and the congeniality of those of the latter with those of the multitude to be instructed and moved by the Gospel, gives the unlearned preacher an advantage, which more than counterbalances the advantage of a learned education. One great cause of the unparalleled influence, wielded by Napoleon Bonaparte, was that he rose from the ranks of the people—could address them in their peculiar idiom—knew, and could act directly upon their habits of thought and feeling. Besides this, the *esprit du corps*, which always exercises great influence on men in society, renders *the man of the people* peculiarly effective *with the people*, as well in the ministry of the Gospel as in other departments of social influence.

The *proportion* of learned men in the primitive ministry of the Gospel—say *one-ninth* of the whole number—was, doubtless, adequate to the demand for that description of preachers. If it had not been so, infinite Wisdom would, no doubt, have increased the proportion. And, we give it as our decided persuasion that that proportion has ever been and *is now* fully adequate to not merely the necessity but to the expediency of the case. Our reasonings on this subject might mislead us; but, we have had practical demonstration that the conclusion at which we have arrived is reliable truth. The Methodist ministry have, like the first apostles, been mostly, in the beginning of their ministry, “unlearned and ignorant men.” And yet in the little more than one hundred years, in which they have been preaching the Gospel, God has accomplished by them greatly more than by any sect, which required its ministry to be learned. Mr. Wesley, in the outset, as was perfectly natural, believed that classical and theological training were *indispensable* to a preacher of the Gospel. Hence, when he heard that Thomas Maxwell was preaching the Gospel, he determined promptly to forbid him. His mother, in whose piety and good judgment Mr.

Wesley reposed great and deserved confidence, learning his purpose, very earnestly and solemnly admonished him to beware what he should do; adding, "God has as certainly called Thomas Maxwell to preach as He has you." He, thereupon, changed his purpose, resolving himself to hear Maxwell, and to be governed by circumstances. The result was, that he not only sanctioned Maxwell's preaching, but adopted, as a leading part of his system, the employment of *unlearned* men, whom he regarded as anointed by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel. Not only Methodism, but the world also, has had cause to rejoice at this return to a distinguishing usage of the primitive Church of Christ. Men have thus been found, *prepared* by early habits and by congeniality of feeling with the people, to go everywhere and preach the Gospel *appropriately* to all classes of the people. The colliers and other miners in England, the hovel-tenants of Ireland and the ever-spreading inhabitants of the American frontiers have, in their own style of thinking and feeling, been taught the truths of the Gospel, and have been moved by them to repent and turn to God.

The British Wesleyans have, to a great extent, forsaken the course adopted by their wise founder. They unwisely concluded that they must be like other Christian sects, in the scholastic preparation of their candidates for the ministry. They accordingly have their theological schools, in which they train men, whom they believe called of God to the ministry, in theological lore; and they now have, and glory in having, a learned body of preachers. Meantime, as a consequence of *this* and of their having splendid churches, with organs and pews, *Ichabod* is written upon the front of their pulpits.—By their own confession, "They have ceased to be, *par excellence*, the preachers of the poor." Their "glorying is not good." They have surrendered the brightest jewel in their "crown of rejoicing," for what *they* ought to have known was, at best, of doubtful advantage. And, is there not too much reason to believe that there is a growing predilection for the same folly, among American and even *Southern* Methodists? True: we, in the South, are not yet prepared to adopt theological institutions *in form*, and to name them so before the Church and the world. But, are not measures contemplated, desired and urged, by leading men among us,

that would incur all the evils of the system, without securing all the advantages it may confer?

Theological institutions accomplish their object in one of two ways, both of which appear to us exceedingly reprehensible. They either select youths, who are deemed by those who have superintendence in the matter, to be suitable persons of whom to make preachers of the Gospel, but who, nevertheless, have given no evidence of their Divine vocation to that office; or, they select young men, who have given satisfaction, in regard to their being "moved by the Holy Ghost" to preach the word of life; and these persons, so selected, are trained up in classical learning, if not previously thus taught, and in a theological course. On the first supposition, is there not abundant reason to apprehend that many will be obtruded on the Church, as ministers of the Gospel, whom God has not "anointed with the Holy Ghost," for that work? On the second supposition, God is practically notified that He does not understand His business—that, it is true, He has poured out His Spirit on these young men, and anointed them to preach the Gospel; but, they are not qualified for the work—that these institutions will considerably supply the lack, which seems to have been overlooked by Him; and, *then*, they will recognize the authority He has conferred upon them—but, *not till then!* Thus: from three to six years, of that brief life-time, which God Himself had consecrated to the preaching of the Gospel, are sacrilegiously diverted to a purpose which has no countenance from the Word of God. We should feel as fully justified in suspending *any* law, or opposing *any* purpose of God, for an equal length of time, as to thus hold back a man, whom we believed God had bidden to "go, and preach the Gospel," that, forsooth, we might supply him with qualification! Most sincerely and earnestly do we entreat that God will preserve our Southern Methodism from theological institutions, and from every arrangement, which, under whatever name, would have the same deleterious tendency!

It may be tauntingly asked, "Are you, then, in favor of having an ignorant ministry!" We answer — 'By no means!' Nor, will it result, that such will be the character of a ministry, from the fact that "unlearned and ignorant men" are admitted into it. There is no situation in which a man can

so well acquire the knowledge proper to a minister of the Gospel, as in the frequent practice of preaching that Gospel, combined with diligent study of the Gospel to be preached. We would here say, that no man is fit to be a preacher, who is not thus diligent in study. He who thus preaches and studies, all other things being equal, will be, at the end of the scholastic term of the student in a theological seminary, a much abler preacher than his learned brother, and will always retain that superiority. Though the disadvantages in regard to study, under which early Methodist preachers, in every country, have had to labor, have been very great, we hazard nothing in affirming that no abler ministry of the Gospel than the Methodist has existed, cotemporary with them, in any Christian community. It is readily admitted that other bodies of clergy have known more of philology, of science, and of philosophy than they knew; but, then, a knowledge of *these*, however desirable and important, enters sparingly into a qualification for the Gospel ministry; while an undue attention to them, the temptation to which, in a scholar, is very strong, may operate deleteriously upon such qualification, by engrossing too much of the time and thought of the preacher.

We have heard a graphic and deeply interesting account, from the celebrated John Newland Maffitt, which we consider so apposite to the views we have been presenting, that we shall give an outline of it here. An Irishman, named Thomas Brown, was converted to God, and was called of God to the ministry of the Gospel. But he was ignorant, not only of classical literature, science, and philosophy, but even of the elements of his own language—he did not know the Alphabet. He was so strongly persuaded that it was his duty to preach the salvation which he had experienced to his fellow sinners, that, though discouraged and repulsed several times, by those under whose sanction he wished to discharge the duty, he could not be prevailed upon to relinquish his purpose. He finally, after much earnest entreaty, obtained leave to address the Irish Conference on the subject. He began his address, by confessing his total ignorance of letters, but claimed to have a knowledge of Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He avowed his vocation to the ministry, and his intense desire to engage in the work. He supposed that

there might be some position in the Conference so dark, so abounding in wickedness, and withal so poor, that none of the preachers would be willing to receive their appointment to labor in it, and begged earnestly that, if there was so forlorn a position, he might be employed to occupy it. Such were the strong sense, the fervent piety, the ardent love to God and to souls, and the deep humility evinced by his address, that the Conference consented to *try him*; and he was assigned to a circuit, answering pretty accurately to the kind of one he had supposed in his address. As soon as he knew that he was employed by the Conference, he went to a bookseller, and procured a *spelling book*, a dictionary, and a grammar; and, with these, hastened to his field of labor, where, by mingling intense study with fervent prayer, he made such rapid progress that, by the end of the year, when he preached a *trial sermon* before the Conference, he was judged capable of sustaining himself in an enlightened community, to which he was accordingly appointed. In the meantime, God had blessed his word in the region of darkness and poverty in which he had labored, in the awakening and conversion of many blood-bought immortals. And, in about an equal term with that employed in preparing a man, under theological training, to enter the ministry, this man, so utterly illiterate when he commenced preaching, had effectively and usefully served some five or six circuits, had been the instrument of salvation to, perhaps, hundreds of souls, and had made such progress in ministerial qualification, that he took rank among the ablest ministers of the Conference, and was well fitted to preach the Gospel to the most enlightened and even fastidious audiences. We, ourselves, have known *many* cases, similar in nature to this; though none, perhaps, quite so strongly marked. Not a few of the ablest preachers in American Methodism, have been, when admitted on trial in our ministry, scarcely able to spell out a hymn or a chapter in the Bible. That they were doing the work assigned them by the Great Head of the Church, was evident from the eminent success of their labors from their very commencement. While, at the same time, the rapid improvement they made, in ministerial qualification, showed, unmistakably, that they were at school in the very best sort of theological seminary for making ministers of the Gospel. We cannot, therefore,

admit that any specific amount of literary or theological education, taught by man, is an *indispensable* qualification for preaching the Gospel: but,

3. We do consider the unction of the Holy Ghost *such* a qualification—a qualification, without which no man, whatever may be his natural talents or his education, is prepared for this important work. With this qualification, we hold that he is prepared for that work, whatever be the grade of his intellect, or however deficient he may be in mental culture and acquisition. For we consider it too plain a truth to be questioned, that, if God calls a man to any work, He either finds or renders him qualified for that work. To suppose otherwise, is to impugn the Divine wisdom. The “unlearned and ignorant” apostles were commanded to delay their preaching of the Gospel of their risen Saviour. But it was not commanded them to delay that they might be qualified by human teaching for the work, but that they might receive, according to the Divine promise, the effusion of the Holy Ghost; and, thus, “be endued with power from on high.” We have no intimation in the sacred volume, that God ever did or ever will “pour out the gift of the Holy Ghost” upon any man, with a view to a *prospective* ministry of the Gospel. So far as we have any intimation on the subject, it is the intention of God that, when His Holy Spirit moves any one to preach the Gospel, he shall immediately engage in the work. One man said to Jesus, doubtless influenced to do so by the Holy Ghost, “Lord! I will follow thee;” but added, from views of his own, “Suffer me first to go and bury my father. “But, Jesus said to him, let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Gospel.” When Jesus, soon after making disciples of the twelve “unlearned and ignorant men”—fishermen, publicans, fullers, etc., ordained them to be His apostles, and sent them forth to preach, how, think you, would He have received a remonstrance from them, in the spirit of *modern* preparation for the ministry? Had they said to Him, ‘Master! we are not qualified. Allow us to spend some three years, at least, under the tuition of some approved doctor, in acquiring literary and theological preparation for the work’—what would probably have been his reply? Would He not, most probably have replied to them kindly, but reprovngly, ‘It is for you to obey—it is mine to judge of the qualifica-

tions you need, for the work I have assigned to you. I will be with you; and, "unlearned and ignorant" as you are, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or to resist." At any rate, we feel assured that any application of this kind, on the part of the apostles, would have been promptly declined by the Saviour. They, however, had too much confidence in the wisdom of Him, from whom they received their appointment, to make any such application.

One of the most remarkable instances we have ever known, of dependence on the "unction of the Holy One," as a qualification to preach the Gospel, was in the case of the Rev. Mark Moore. He affirmed that he never could preach with any success, unless he was conscious of such an unction *at the time*. We have heard him often, when he was without this consciousness; and, on such occasions, he was wanting in every thing requisite in an able preacher of the Gospel. His mind was dark, his intellectual operations slow, hesitating and inconclusive—his manner was vapid, unimpressive and tiresome in the extreme. There was no life, no energy, no efficiency in his discourse. But, when, as was generally the case, he came before an audience, assured of his heavenly calling, few, that we have ever heard, could be compared with him, in clearness of conception, rapidity and closeness of connected thought, life, vigor and effectiveness of manner. We have seen thousands entranced, overwhelmed, aroused, kindled and carried away, by the resistless force of his inspired eloquence. On one occasion, especially, at a Camp-meeting, held at Bethel Camp-ground, we saw a congregation, of from four to five thousand, moved, in a manner we have never before or since witnessed, by one of his discourses, delivered under the influence of a present unction of the Holy Ghost. His discourse, on this occasion, was like the spear of Ithuriel. At its touch, every man, in that large congregation, was made to exhibit his true relation to the religion of the Gospel—every man but one. One poor stolid sot seemed wholly unmoved, as "being past feeling." With that one exception, all were moved—appropriately moved. Those, who came to the ground thoughtless, were now absorbed in deeply interested concern: the guilty paled and trembled with fear: the penitent was earnest in supplication for mercy;

and the "saints shouted aloud for joy." The unction of the Holy Ghost, we regard as an ample qualification for a preacher of the Gospel—the only indispensable qualification, but by no means excusing the preacher from STUDYING to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. We proceed now to consider,

III. The *work*, to which the Holy Ghost is said, in the text, to have anointed the Messiah, and to which all the subordinates of the Messiah, in this office, are anointed by Him. This work properly consists of two parts—To *preach good tidings to the meek*, and *the acceptable year of the Lord, to the human race in general*—and to *proclaim the day of vengeance of our God*. To each of these, and to the purposes to be effected by them, we shall now invite attention. The first part of the work, committed to a minister of the Gospel, by the unction of the Holy Ghost, is the *preaching of good tidings to the meek and the acceptable, or propitious year of the Lord to mankind generally*. That which we regard as the first thing that demands our present consideration, is the description of persons to whom *good tidings are to be preached*, by the minister of the Gospel. They are *here* called "the MEEK."—In the Gospel, where this prophetic passage is appropriated to Himself by the Messiah, their designation is "the POOR." The meaning conveyed by one appellative is, doubtless, the meaning proper to the other. But, who are the *meek*—the *poor*—to whom the good tidings are to be preached? We presume, from the purpose to be accomplished by the preaching, they are the *poor in spirit*, the penitent for sin, the humble-minded and submissive; who ask, in the language and spirit of the awakened, humbled and penitent Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—who pray with the earnestness and humility of the Publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" The propriety of supposing that such are the persons, to whom the good tidings are to be preached, will appear, we think, from the effects ascribed to such preaching; and to these we shall presently invite special attention. But, we must first inquire what these good tidings are, which the minister of the Gospel is to preach to the *meek*.

These good tidings are, in general, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son—to be a pro



pitiation for the sins of the whole world"—that this Son "tasted death for every man"—that "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree"—that "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," and that, "by His stripes, we are healed"—that "He died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification"—that, after he had risen from the dead, "He ascended up on high, led captivity captive and received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious"—that "He ever liveth, at the right hand of the Father, to make intercession for us;" sending down, thence, "the Comforter, the Holy Ghost," who is the great and only competent agent, in the regeneration of lapsed moral nature, and the only reliable witness to man of pardon, adoption and acceptance with God—that, through the agency of this Spirit, and by virtue of the merits and intercession of the crucified, risen and interceding Saviour, Jesus Christ, the sinner may attain to pardon, regeneration and sanctification—may be restored to the Divine favor and image, and to the glorious and incorruptible inheritance of a son of God. *These* were emphatically *tidings*, when first announced. For who could have conceived the possibility that a holy and just God, grievously offended and insulted by human transgression, would, on any consideration, receive the rebel back to favor? Much more strange it must seem, that He, Himself, moved by His own love for the offender, should devise the plan of man's restoration, and most wondrous of all, that this plan should be based upon the surrender of His only-begotten Son, to humiliation, ignominy, suffering and death. Is it wonderful that angels desire to look into a scheme so utterly unimaginable till revealed? *These* were *tidings* emphatically—news to heaven and earth, not dreamed of in the philosophy of either. And, as they were emphatically *tidings*, so they were, beyond all comparison, all human hope or imagination, *GOOD tidings*. Man, wallowing in degradation and corruption, overwhelmed with guilt and in prospect of eternal woe, is, by these *tidings*, shown a way of escape from the "horrible pit," into which he had fallen—an expiation of the guilt, which he had incurred; and the means of preservation from the damnation of hell, deserved by him. Not only are these things revealed to him, but he is kindly and with importunate iteration urged to "lay hold upon the hope set before him," in the ample provision made for his salvation by Jesus Christ.

*Goodness* devised the plan of man's redemption—*Goodness*, Oh, what matchless goodness! carried that plan into execution, through humiliation, and tears, and blood, and death—*Goodness*, too, revealed that plan to man, in his outcast, forlorn and hopeless condition. How *good* are these tidings! But, their goodness will be more clearly seen in the effects produced by them, to which we now invite attention; and,

1. The first effect to be produced, is to *bind up the broken-hearted*. Excessive grief, no matter by what means excited, is very generally expressed by the phrase *a broken heart*. The penitent, who sees himself a rebel against God, drinks the very dregs of the cup of grief. In every aspect of his case, there is cause of bitter sorrow. He against whom his sins have offended is infinitely greater than the greatest of all creatures—is infinitely better than the best—and has laid man under the weightiest obligations, to which he could be subjected, to render gratitude, devotion and obedience to Him. He, therefore, finds himself inculpated in the lowest grade of the basest and most degrading vice, of which a moral being can be guilty—of *ingratitude* towards a munificent Benefactor. “A man may sustain his infirmities; but, a wounded spirit, who can bear?” Who can endure the goading reproaches of his own conviction, that he has thus debased and dishonored himself? Who can bear the thought that he has rendered himself an object of pity, or of scorn to the intelligent universe?—That all may point at him, and say, *That is an INGRATE?* Above these, he must rank the just appreciation of his degradation, by that infinitely perfect Being, towards whom his vile ingratitude has been directed. And who, with a strong conviction of all this, but must feel inexpressible grief, that he has thus degraded himself? But the penitent not only sees himself thus debased and humiliated in the eyes of all, but that he is a mischievous disturber of the order and harmony of the moral world, on which its happiness absolutely depends. When God brought the world into existence, and pronounced it “very good,” universal order and harmony prevailed. Every department of the great whole was not only the scene of beauty and felicity, but, relatively to every other department, moved on, not only innocuously, but with subsidiary influence: so that all parts ministered to the beauty and happiness of the whole. But sin came; and “harmony was jangled out of tune.” Dislocation and opposition of

parts prevailed. Disorder, confusion, hostility and conflict raged. And earth became, what it has still continued to be,—a scene of outrage and woe. And, what heart can fail to feel intense anguish under a conviction of participation in so much mischief? Again: the penitent is convicted in his own conscience of rebellion against *rightful* sovereignty—a sovereignty not rightful merely as being vested in one who justly claims it, but which is exercised, in all things, upon the strictest principles of right; and, especially, is administered for the greatest good of the subject. Opposition to usurped authority, especially where that authority is wielded to the oppression of the subject, deserves not merely indulgence but praise; but, everywhere, rebellion against rightful sovereignty, righteously administered, has ever been considered a most heinous and detestable crime. And of such a crime the conscience of the penitent sinner finds him guilty—a circumstance well calculated to agonize the soul! But, the aspect of his case, which occasions the most heart-piercing sorrow to the penitent, is the humiliation, suffering and death which his sins occasioned to his compassionate Redeemer. The utmost enormity of sin is seen in the agonies of the Son of God as He hangs on the cross, oppressed by the weight of a world's transgression. The heart of the penitent, bruised by a sense of his degradation, as an ingrate towards Divine munificence—by a conviction of the deleterious influence his sin has exerted, in disturbing the order and harmony and destroying the happiness of the world—by the conscious guilt of rebellion, against the authority of his rightful and righteous Sovereign, breaks, outright, when the consequences of his sins, in the tragedy of Calvary, are brought home to his conviction. This is finely expressed by the poet—

“I saw one hanging on a tree,  
 In agonies and blood:  
 Who fix'd his languid eyes on me,  
 As near His cross I stood.  
 “Sure, never, to my latest breath,  
 Can I forget *that* look—  
 It seem'd to charge *me* with His death;  
 Though not a word He spoke.  
 “My conscience felt, and own'd the guilt,  
 And plung'd me in despair.”

Newton.

It were utterly vain to attempt a description of the grief,

which agonizes the bosom of the penitent, under these accumulated convictions of his delinquency and degradation. The text, in calling him *broken-hearted*, expresses more than could be expressed by the most elaborate and graphic representation of which we are capable. We shall not, therefore, dwell further upon the subject.

To heal a broken heart, transcends the skill of man. All human attempts at consolation, in cases of deeply-seated sorrow, are always unavailing, and often fall, upon the heart of the sufferer, as grating discords upon the ear. Shakspeare was aware of this, when he made the Doctor, in *Macbeth*, to acknowledge his utter incapability to

“Minister to a mind diseased—  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow—  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;  
Or, with some sweet oblivious antidote,  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,  
Which weighs upon the heart.”

It is true that, where guilt does not rankle in the wound, time and favorable circumstances, the sympathy and kindness of friends especially, may heal the lacerations of the heart, and soothe the troubled bosom into tranquillity. But, the presence of guilt and self-reproach will baffle all human appliances and all the influence of time, in healing the broken heart. But, what cannot be *thus* achieved, the *good tidings* are intended to accomplish, and will, most certainly, accomplish, if those tidings are properly received and acted upon, by those to whom they are addressed. These tidings announce a Physician, whose skill is fully adequate to the difficulty of the case, and whose remedies are of infallible efficacy. All He requires of the broken-hearted, in order to their cure, are firm trust and confidence in His skill and in the efficacy of His appliances, and a strict observance of His directions. He will bind up the broken heart, with the *propitiation*, which He provided, when He wove the web of man's redemption, and will pour into its wounds the balsam, which exuded from the Tree of Life, when it was bruised on Calvary. Healthful actions shall thus be restored; and the heart, thus made whole, shall pour the tide of life and joy through the whole moral system, renovating it into the image of the Creator.

2: The second effect of these *good tidings* is the *liberation of the captive from his prison-house and his captivity*. Our blessed Lord says, *John viii. 34*, "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin;" and the Apostle Paul asks, *Rom. vi. 16*, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" The captivity and imprisonment, spoken of in the text, must, therefore, be understood as the thralldom to sin. Of this thralldom, the unawakened sinner has little, if any, consciousness. The corruptions of his heart, falling in readily with the promptings of sin, there is no painful collision, to render him sensible of his slavery. "He is led captive by the devil"—the great embodiment of sin—"at his will," unresistingly, with the persuasion of entire freedom in the course which he is pursuing. But, when the sinner is brought to a knowledge and sense of his true condition, he finds that the "good which he would, he does not;" and that "the evil which he would not, that he does." He now finds himself a captive, endungedoned in vile corruption—fettered by evil habits, strong as adamant—a lawful captive, having voluntarily yielded himself a slave to sin. He would fain break forth from his hateful prison-house; but, its stronger than brazen gates resist successfully his most vigorous efforts. His struggles entangle him more and more inextricably in the vile fetters, which sin has fastened upon him. He would challenge his freedom as a right; but, the law, stern in its exactions, spreads before him the indenture, by which he has sold himself under the dominion of sin, and claims that this instrument shall be cancelled, before liberty can be obtained. In the anguish of his soul, now utterly desperate of his own resources, the penitent exclaims, "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" The *good tidings*, sent to the poor in spirit, respond, in the person of Christ, to this agonizing cry, "I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save!" "In me is thy help found." Such is the voice of Jesus, proclaimed in the good tidings preached to the meek. He ransomed these captives, by laying down His own life in their stead. By this ransom-price, the indenture of their slavery is cancelled, or transferred to Him: so that He now claims them, as bought with an adequate price. Hence, the law may no

longer assign them to the dominion of sin. Having a valid claim on these captives, He will see to it that no power in the universe, save that with which He Himself has endued them—their own moral agency—shall prevent Him from setting them free—free from the dominion of sin, of moral corruption and of evil habit. Before His presence, the gates of their prison-house open of their own accord. At his touch or word, their fetters unlink and fall off. At His command, the sentence of their captivity is reversed. “Whom the Son shall make free, they shall be free indeed”—being transferred to the “service of God,” which “is perfect freedom.”

3. The third effect of these good tidings is, *to change the mourning and heaviness of the penitent into beauty, joy and praise.* That the *heart-broken, the prisoner and the captive should mourn and be in heaviness*, was naturally to be expected. That this mourning and heaviness should wane the complexion, emaciate the features and destroy all sprightliness of expression, and, thereby, destroy the beauty of the human countenance were inevitable. But, when the broken-hearted was bound up and healed—when the prisoner, unfettered, was led forth of his prison-house—and when liberty was proclaimed to the captive of sin—when the dominion of sin was exchanged for the service of God, and its guilt replaced by assurance of justification, the *mourner* was comforted—his sorrow was exchanged for joy, and his heaviness, under which he had been bowed down, was cast off, as a clothing of sack-cloth, and the garment of praise was assumed in its stead. How soon, in such circumstances, would the beauty of the countenance be restored! Who has not seen this effect produced, almost instantaneously, by the comfort which mourners received, when the sweet voice of the good tidings has proclaimed liberty to the captives; and, when the soft, skillful hand of the great Physician has bound up and soothed the anguish of the broken, bleeding heart? We have rejoiced to witness this, in hundreds of instances. We have seen the countenance, haggard with grief and cast down with heaviness, lighted up, in a moment, by the comfort thus imparted to the soul. We have seen the beauty of joyous expression instantly replace the lines of anguish and horror, which had marred the countenance of the penitent. Thus, are not only appointed, but actually given to them “beauty, for ashes—

the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." And, must their gratitude burn silently and unseen, in their own bosoms alone? Oh, no: let them publish, to all around, the goodness of their Saviour! Let them wear His praise, as a garment — as an ornamental garment. Let them cry to all around them, "Come hither, all ye that fear God, and I will declare unto you what He hath done for my soul!" Let them "shout unto God, with the voice of triumph," and say, "O, Lord! I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Shall this be censured, as indecent and disorderly? God forbid! Nay, on the contrary, let all encourage them to "break forth into joy, and to shout from the tops of the mountains — for praise is comely for the upright" — for such as, having been cast into the lowest pit, overwhelmed with sorrow, heaviness and guilt, are brought forth to liberty and joy, and set upright on their feet, and established in their goings, in the way of righteousness. "A new song is put into their mouth" — "Let them sing aloud unto God, in the height of Zion."

4. The fourth effect intended to be produced by the preaching of these *good tidings* to the meek is, that *they may be called "trees of righteousness — the planting of the Lord."* To be called, in Scripture phraseology, is often of the same signification as *to be known to be*. Thus: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor," etc. "Therefore, that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." This form of speech is too well known and too frequent in the sacred writings to need to be insisted on farther. The meaning of this part of our text, then, we take to be, *that they may be trees of righteousness — the planting of the Lord, and known as such*. This is figurative language; but, we suppose, there can be no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the figure. When the Saviour "spake of making the tree good," his meaning was, doubtless, the same that is here intended. That meaning is, we suppose, that man is brought, by the influence of divine grace, into a good or righteous state in which he may bring forth good fruit — the fruits of righteousness — fruit unto holiness; or, plainly, that he may perform good works acceptable to God. The whole tenor of New Testament teaching, as well as that of *our* Articles of Religion, is, that

“the condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own strength and works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.” Hence, *trees of righteousness*, of the fallen race of Adam, can be such only by the *planting of the Lord*. That is, they cannot do that which is good, till they are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” When, therefore, the preaching of *good tidings to the meek* is represented as bringing them into the state in which they are to be called “trees of righteousness—the planting of the Lord,” we are to understand that they have been *converted*—made *new creatures*—“created in Christ Jesus unto good works”—that they are “born again”—“born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” In this state, they may maintain a good conscience—“a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man”—may “walk before God to all pleasing.”

The other branch of this first part of the work, to be performed by the preacher of the gospel, is to *proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord to mankind generally*. By acceptable year of the Lord, we are to understand a protracted season of grace, in which it is acceptable to God for sinners to embrace the overtures of salvation made to them in the Gospel—a *propitious* season, in which God is willing, waits and entreats of the sinner permission to be gracious to him:—in which he exhausts every resource of warning, threatening, entreaty, and exhortation, to bring the sinner to repentance, and to return to himself, that “he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in his time of need.” The effort to accomplish this merciful purpose, commences with the solemn admonition, “Awake, thou that sleepest! and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light,”—announces to the sinner, in the person of the compassionate Saviour, “Behold! I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” It expostulates with him, in the most earnest manner—“As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Turn ye! turn ye! for why



will ye die? It urges the love of God, the compassion, suffering, and death of the Son of God, as motives to engage the sinner to repent, and to seek the salvation of his soul.—It reminds him of the patience, the forbearance, and the long-suffering, with which God has endured their neglect, their opposition, and their hostility—intending, by this great “goodness, to lead them to repentance,” to gratitude, and to submission—and, it warns them faithfully of the danger of quenching the Spirit, and of exhausting such riches of mercy as God has invested in the enterprise of their salvation.

That the acceptable year of the Lord is to be proclaimed to *mankind generally*, admits of no question, if the Scriptures are to be understood according to their obvious signification. The prophet Isaiah, speaking in the person of God, says “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth!” Our blessed Saviour, when he sent his Apostles forth, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, bade them to “go into all the world, and preach his Gospel to every creature,” informing them that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” The grounds of this are given by St. Paul, who, speaking of God, says, “Who will have all men to be saved;” and who declares that Jesus Christ, “by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.” To all men everywhere, therefore, is the *propitious* season to be proclaimed. The angel, whom St. John saw “flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” represents, we suppose, not an individual celestial being, but the *Gospel ministry*, diligently, zealously, and successfully spreading abroad among all nations and in all languages, the news of salvation through a Redeemer, and the gracious and urgent invitations of God “to all men everywhere,” to accept that salvation while the propitious season continues.

The second part of the work, assigned to those who are anointed by the Holy Ghost to the ministry of the Gospel, is to *proclaim the day of vengeance of our God*. This, though far less agreeable than the other part of their work, is equally important to man, and equally due to God. The poet has truly said, “A God all mercy, is a God unjust.” Man ought to know that, if he permit the propitious season, of offered

mercy, to pass unimproved, he must meet and endure the day of God's righteous indignation. He ought to know it, that he may determine prudently. "The prudent man," when he "foreseeth the evil, hideth himself." The same divine instruction, to the Apostles, which directed them to announce that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," contains an equally strong assurance, that "he that believeth not shall be damned." Reasonable beings might well be expected, with "life and death thus set before them," to seek the former and shun the latter. At least, if they do not, they will not only be without excuse, but they will have no one to blame but themselves for the destiny of woe to which they shall be assigned. God has done all he could to save them, unless He had *unmanned* them, by doing violence to their moral agency; and, this He could not do, without abandoning 'His noblest purpose' in creation — that of making creatures in His own image — capable of high moral excellence, and the happiness resulting from the performance of moral duty. He would not, He could not, without ceasing to be "without shadow of turning" thus reduce man to the condition of a mere animated machine, incapable equally of virtue and vice; for, we cannot conceive of a created and subordinate moral being, who is capable of the *former* and incapable of the *latter*. We have said that it was due to God, as well as important to man, that *the day of vengeance of our God should be proclaimed by the minister of the Gospel*. It is from God that every human being is to receive his assignment to eternal felicity or eternal woe; and, it would dishonor God to suppose that He had permitted man to "work out his own damnation," without giving him warning of what would be the end of the course he was pursuing. All righteous governments make the penalty of transgression equally public, as the law of which it is the sanction. Besides, if *the day of vengeance* were not declared in connection with *the acceptable year of the Lord*, God might be understood as assuring salvation to all men, whether they should or should not comply with the terms on which it was offered. Thus would man be fatally deceived, and God greatly dishonored. However painful it may be, therefore, the preacher of the Gospel must proclaim to the world that there is coming a day, in which "indignation and wrath, tribulation and an-

guish shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil" — that rejecteth the overtures of the Gospel. Let it be remarked, that the season of mercy, the propitious time, is *a year* — *a protracted* season: while, the time of vengeance is *a day*. Vengeance is God's strange work, reluctantly performed, delayed to the last day: so that, though "judgment and justice are the habitation of His throne, mercy and truth go before His face." Long and patiently, He seeks to save — late and reluctantly, He punishes the finally impenitent.

IV. It remains to consider the *ulterior purpose of the ministry of the Gospel and its effects* — *That God may be glorified.*

To glorify God, should be the ever present, ever prevalent purpose of every man, and, especially, of every one whom, by the unction of the Holy Ghost, He hath set apart to proclaim the Gospel to his fellow-men. To this, every other interest should be strictly subordinated or sacrificed. Ease, wealth, friends, health and life should be regarded and enjoyed, only as they may be subservient to this paramount interest. By glorifying God, we are to understand not only honoring Him in our own appreciation of Him, but, more especially, commending him to others, by displaying the excellences of His character — His 'wisdom, His goodness and His faithfulness;' His righteousness and His truth; His power, His holiness and His justice. All these attributes are remarkably displayed in the preaching of good tidings to the meek, the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God, to the whole human race, and in the purposes to be accomplished by such preaching. What could, more strikingly, exhibit the wisdom and goodness of God, than the plan of salvation, whereof the *good tidings* are an exhibition — in which, without sacrificing the claims of law and justice, the rebel, against the sovereign authority of God, may be restored to the Divine favor, and be reinstated in the happiness forfeited by his rebellion? Or, what could more illustrate the faithfulness, the righteousness and the truth, the holiness, the justice and the power of God, than the complete accomplishment of that plan, by the gift of His Son, "by the agency of His Spirit and by the ministry of His Gospel? The result of this plan is that the dead in sin, are made alive to God, the guilty are pardoned, the impure are cleansed, and

those that mourn are comforted and filled with joy — those, who were slaves to sin, are made free, by being “created in Christ Jesus unto good works;” and the obstinately wicked are warned that, if they repent not, and do not receive the Saviour, by a faith, which “worketh by love, purifying the heart,” there is no alternative, but that they must be “destroyed, with an everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, in that day, when He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired of all them that believe.” “God has so arranged matters, in regard to the scheme of Redemption, its publication and its results, that He *will* be glorified, let man purpose or act as he may; but, to man himself, and particularly to the minister of the Gospel, it is of the highest importance that he should act, in all things, “with an eye single to the glory of God.” The highest honor, to which man can aspire, is to promote, among his fellow-men, the manifestation of the glory of God. None are placed in a more favorable position for this than is the minister of the Gospel. It is strictly speaking, HIS *high calling*; for, when he is most effectually ministering to the salvation of his fellow-men, by his preaching, he is most successfully serving the purpose of Him, by whom he is called to this great work.

How diligently, then, brethren! should we exert ourselves to this end! How patiently endure the hardships and privations, incident to our sacred vocation! Ours is a great work; and, if we shall faithfully acquit ourselves in it, great will be the reward. “Them, that honor me,” saith God, “I will honor.” “They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever.” Whatever else we may lack, may we receive this honor; and thus shine, in the reflected glory of our divine Master, when earth, itself, with all its glory, shall have passed away; and when the bright sun shall be lost in perpetual darkness! To God be all the glory, now and evermore. Amen.

# MINISTERIAL ABILITY:

## A SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

South Carolina Conference,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, DEC. 2, 1855,

BY WILLIAM M. WIGHTMAN, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF WOFFORD COLLEGE.

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## MINISTERIAL ABILITY.

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“Our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”—2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

THE term *New Testament* sets the gospel dispensation in contradistinction to the law, which was the Old Testament. Both proceeded from God, the author and revealer of true religion. The first was but a preparatory dispensation, leading the way to the second, revealed in the fulness of times, at the advent of Jesus Christ. It answered its temporary purpose, and, with its ceremonial service, it grew old and vanished away, as the light of the stars fades and is lost on the rising of the sun.

The New Covenant embraces an office of ministration. What that office comprehends may be readily determined from the nature and design of the gospel dispensation.

The ministers of the New Testament are *not* a priesthood. They have no sacrifice to offer up. They wait around no altar with sacrificial rites. They serve in no temple made awful by the presence of bleeding victims, and mediatorial offices for the rest of men. Nor are they a sacerdotal caste, tracing up their connection with some priestly fountain, by genealogical descent. The gospel knows of but one Priest, the great High Priest of our profession—of but one sacrifice, the offering of Christ “once for all”—of no altar but the cross—of no temple by eminence and built by human hands: its temples are the hearts of holy men, dwelt in by the Holy Spirit.

The central fact of the New Testament revelation being redemption by the sacrifice of Christ; and in that fact there being a distinct manifestation of God’s method of showing mercy to a fallen world—pardon and renewing grace being thus offered to all who believe—it follows that a ministry is

necessary to proclaim the "glad tidings." In order that the world may hear and believe, obviously there must be preachers. And the speciality of their office consists in this very thing: they are preachers that they may deliver a spoken, clear, emphatic, living testimony, before the face of all men. Such an office and function enters as a necessary element into the constitutional scheme and grand design of the New Covenant. Without it, the gospel makes no progress in the world; and Christianity, in its practical influence on mankind, varies much according to the character, zeal, devotion, and intelligence of its preachers.

This being so, we may observe that God has not left to the chances of human things the origination and perpetuation of this ministry. At first, the primitive preachers were called directly by Christ in person. Since his ascension, it is the office of the Holy Spirit to move men inwardly to take upon them this ministration. A Divine call is necessary to the authority of the ministry. Who has any right to intrude into such an office? to take it up as he would a learned profession? or, simply on the ground of ecclesiastical authorization, to consider himself invested with the rights which belong to the sacred office? Who gave thee this authority? is a fitting challenge to all who minister in holy things. Christ has not delegated to the Church the prerogative to call men; but only to judge of the proofs furnished of a Divine call, and, if satisfied, then to send out the preacher.

The sufficiency of the Christian ministry, thus appointed, is distinctly and peremptorily of God. In several respects may this be noticed.

1. The *intellectual* fitness for the work of preaching is of the highest consequence. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." It is not so much that learning, power of abstract thought, keenness and subtlety of philosophic vision, strength of masculine grip in argument, or lofty sweep of imagination, are required for this work. These rare faculties may indeed be pressed into the service, and become valuable auxiliaries. But I wish to observe that these, or whatever other intellectual faculties may be brought to this ministry, cannot of themselves render a man fit—*sufficient*. To preach the gospel aright, a man must understand it. To understand it, there must be a *love of truth* awakened in the soul—of the truth which even



condemns—of the truth which casts down all lofty imaginations, and brings them into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Now, this is the result of a direct operation of the Spirit of truth upon the soul. Not only then is the body of revealed truth a gift of God—which no research could have found out apart from direct revelation—but a clear and sound understanding of the truth is a spiritual endowment; the spirit of a sound mind being as distinctly a gift of God, as the spirit of power, or of love.

But, secondly, this is made more obvious by the consideration that the processes of experimental religion are indispensably necessary to such a comprehension of the doctrines, motives, influences, and sanctions of the gospel, as shall make one an able minister of the New Testament. How shall he warn the sinner, who has never felt the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and found out the plague of his own heart, or had vivid discoveries of the awful consequences of sin? How shall *he* press home upon the conscience the necessity of repentance, who has never yet himself repented?—or lead the awakened conscience, thoroughly alarmed, to the cross, directing the wandering destinies of the soul to the ground of settled peace and stable confidence, who has not himself been pardoned? These are the things of the Spirit of God: the natural man cannot discern them: they demand a spiritual vision; and this is the result of a direct visitation of God upon the soul. Let the preacher lose this—lose his hold upon God, and how speedily does dimness gather over his spiritual eyesight! How quickly does his zeal abate—his tenderness pass away—his love for souls decline—his faith become a mere intellectual process, instead of a living, mighty, glowing realization of eternal things! Now, these are the special elements of character that go into the constitution of a true, able, successful minister of the New Testament. You see how impossible it is that an unconverted man should be such a minister: how impossible that a backslidden man should succeed in such a work: how dependent we are upon God, every day, every hour, for our sufficiency! The intellectual grasp of a giant in mind, apart from these sources of sufficiency, is as the weakness of childhood, for the accomplishment of the great ends of the Christian ministry. Eloquence and learning of the highest order fail, where unaided human ability attempts the task. As soon might the

strains of military music wake the dead who sleep their long sleep on some hard-fought field, on the warrior's last bed of rest, as the words of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument, but who has no hold on spiritual influence, on the invisible sources of celestial power, wake the slumbering conscience, and rouse the sinner from his fancied security. A special accompanying influence from the Spirit of God is necessary to render the ministrations of the gospel vital and effectual.

Our sufficiency, then, is obviously of God. Divine influence must be *in* the word preached: must be upon the spirit of the preacher. His mind, whatever its native breadth of capacity, whatever its acquired fulness of knowledge, must be in vital connection with the Source of all truth, in direct communion with the Spirit of God, who originally gave the word, and who now makes it "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow." God makes us "able ministers." This will further appear from the *nature* of the New Covenant. Ministerial "ability" must be judged of from the character of that dispensation which puts under contribution the services of Christian ministers. What is this? The text graphically informs us. To perceive it fully, we must contrast it with the Old Covenant. That was the ministration of *law*: it stood mainly, and of necessity, in the *letter*. By minute prescription, Divinely authorized, it laid down a variety of external services. These were to be scrupulously performed: ablutions, sacrifices, varied rites of worship, an imposing round of ceremonies. The whole system was rudimental in its character, and not ultimate: adapted to the childhood of man's religious nature, rather than its full development: in a word, it worked *ab extra*, inwards. See how different the case is with the New Covenant. In opposition to the former, it begins from *within*, and then works outward. A deep consciousness of sin leads to repentance: this carries the soul on to faith in the "sacrifice once offered:" faith leads to justification and adoption; and regeneration is the result. Holy affections are produced in the soul; and obedience, from a sincere, renewed, and loving heart, is the final product. This is the sum and substance of the matter. The service of God, then, stands not in the oldness of the letter—in forms, and rites, and out-

ward things, done *for* a man, or *by* a man; but in the newness of the Spirit—in the renewed tempers of the heart, which with freedom, spontaneity, the gush of devout joy, the spirituality of inward conformity to the Divine will, consecrate the soul to God. “This is the Covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”

2. The Old Covenant was the ministration of “condemnation”—of “death.” It was written and engraven on the two tables of stone. It laid down a law: it gave a rule of life: to fail in obedience was to incur the penalties of that law; and these penalties were death. It contained no provision of pardon. Its language was, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” “And the law is not of faith; but the man that doeth them shall live in them.” On the other hand, the emphatic proclamation of the gospel was pardon for sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: pardon for a reason: pardon not by works or sufferings of our own, but by faith in Christ crucified; and pardon so administered as to secure righteousness, both on the part of the Divine government, and also on the part of the justified sinner. Emphatically is it the ministration of righteousness. On this pivot turns the whole system: to this point converge all its forces: here concentrate all its advantages. Its divinity shines out precisely here. The fulness of glory rests in effulgent beam upon this aspect of the gospel. Other religions may build temples more magnificent; may parade rites more gorgeous; sweep pontifical processions more august and imposing; may boast of a higher philosophy, more powerful eloquence, more secular strength and influence. None, no not one, pretends to accomplish for man what his solemn and urgent wants demand: none offers a *righteousness* worthy of the capabilities of his soul: a righteousness adapted to his condition as a fallen sinner: a righteousness piercing to the inmost core of the moral nature: rectifying all the disordered elements of that nature: cancelling the sense of guilt: plucking out the sting of remorse: inclining the will to the choice of holy obedience: turning into sweet humility the proud rebellion of the heart: purifying the conscience: ennobling the affections: restoring

the balance of moral forces: a righteousness which can and does

—“Control

The earthquakes of that universe, the soul:  
Pervade the depths of passion: speak once more  
The mighty mandate, guard of every shore,  
Here shall thy waves be stayed: in grief, in pain,  
The trembling poise of reason's sphere maintain.”

3. The Old Testament was *temporary*: and, in striking contrast, the New Testament is the perfected, permanent form of the dispensational fulness of grace. The discipline of the Law, and the appointments of the Levitical ritual, tended necessarily, in the case of the pious Jew, to the conviction that the character of his dispensation was only preparatory to some higher manifestation of truth. He could not fail to see that the “gifts and sacrifices” of the Law “could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience;” but the clearer his insight into the true nature of the service of God, the stronger must have been his persuasion of the necessity of a “better covenant, established upon better promises,” and offering a more available atonement than the blood of bulls and of goats. The prophetic revelation carried his mind forward still more clearly from the region of symbol and outward prescription into a sphere of religious influence of a more spiritual and interior character. Thus the system, by its own tendencies, showed its temporary nature. It served its purpose—to prepare the way for Christ; and then it waxed old, and was ready to vanish away.

On the other hand, the gospel proclaims the *real atonement* for sin made by the death of the Son of God. Its provisions looked to the purification of the heart, symbolized by the sacrifices and lustrations of the law. Its great promise was the “promise of the Spirit:” the source of inward illumination, renewal, and sanctification to all true believers. This dispensation is *final*. It points to nothing in the future more available to sinful man, for all the moral wants of his nature. It contains no elements of decay: it anticipates no ampler discoveries of spiritual truth: it gives no intimation of augmented blessings in store for man on his pilgrimage to eternity: it precludes no new gospel holding in reserve clearer credentials. Its testimony is sealed, and its sublime verities

are so settled and fixed, that no vicissitude can affect, no time outgrow them. In its dispensational fulness of grace and promise, of revelation and rule, "it stretches itself out to the utmost limit of mortal interests!" It shall endure coevally with man. Every breath we draw, every moment we exist, every step we take, is beneath this dispensation of grace. To us it calls, and it shall accent the last syllable of recorded time. Its trumpet of jubilee shall never be silenced, save by the trumpet of judgment: its light shall never fade, but in the embers of the last conflagration: its "joyful sound" shall never die, except in the uproar and crash of dissolving worlds: its "lively hope" shall only be buried in the grave and under the wreck of the universe. All things must be destroyed, ere it lose its power or abdicate its claim. It lasts while the heavens and the earth last. It only ceases when the mountain sinks, when the ocean dries, when the poles refuse to turn, when the skies shrivel up like a burning scroll, when heaven and earth shall flee away. And even then, its dispensational form alone is affected: its principles are invariable and indestructible—are of the things which cannot be moved, and shall extend through a more congenial medium and worthy economy, whose sphere is the highest, whose glory is in light, and whose consummation is "God, all in all."

This being the general character of the gospel, as contradistinguished from the law, it is not surprising that St. Paul lays such stress in the text upon the "spirit," in contrast with "the letter." It is a vital point in the subject. As Christianity when compared with Judaism is the spirit in opposition to the letter, so in Christianity itself—in the Scriptures of the New Testament—there may be observed a "letter" and a "spirit." Christianity as an intellectual system has its *theory*: it teaches certain doctrines: these may be scientifically arranged, expressed, and sought to be understood. Its theology may be turned into a mere philosophy—matter for speculative inquiry—matter for system-building—matter for keen dispute among thinkers. The interpretation of its records may give play to the science of hermeneutics; and the resources of profound erudition may be laid under contribution to establish the genuineness of those records; and the process in both cases may be nothing more than the exercise of critical skill.

Or, secondly, inasmuch as Christianity has its forms of religious service, its ordinances, its ritual, especially its sacraments, these, by a Judaizing tendency of the human mind, may be fixed upon as subjects of special and paramount interest and importance. Or the *Church idea* may develop itself—that, namely, which invests the visible Church with a sacramental character, as if it were in itself a depository of grace, and possessed the privilege of spiritually quickening those admitted by sacramental ordinances to its pale. Thus it is claimed, not merely that the Church, ministerially and instrumentally through her custody and preaching of the word, and by perpetuating the apostles' testimony concerning Christ, holds an important office in relation to human salvation—the true doctrine—but, more than this, it is claimed that she has the power to render the means of grace effectual to salvation: that union with her is the primary means towards union with Christ, and precedes instead of following the living faith which saves the soul.

Now, such views as these carry us back to Judaism, somewhat improved and amended, but still Judaism: an external institute, working from without, inwards, the formative instrument of the inward life. We are brought round to the operation of the old principles once more—a ritual worship, and a legal or ceremonial righteousness: that is, we are still in the region of “the letter which killeth.” The spectacle is a touching one, to see multitudes of our fellows living in the midst of the appliances and means, the calls and motives of the gospel, and unaffected by them all: passing from youth to maturity, and to the sere and yellow leaf of life, busied with the things which perish, but allowing themselves no time to heed the things which make for their peace: alive to the ephemeral interests and pleasures of time, but dead to all the stupendous realities of their immortal being. To them the gospel is hid: the god of this world hath blinded their minds. I confess that I am still more affected by the case of the worshippers of the letter, who, after all, fail to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. There have been men of various and extensive erudition, who have spent years of hard study, and produced folios of acute criticism, on the sacred text. They have ransacked libraries, museums, and monasteries, in search of ancient codices, and been at infinite pains to calculate vari-

ous readings, and note minute discrepancies. They have busied themselves with what one of them calls "the problem of the criticism of the evangelical history:" just as men of secular learning have expended similar labors on the problem of the authorship and construction of the Homeric poems. But in regard to how many of them are the words of Jesus as just as reproving: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!" Man's great business with the gospel is to find a Saviour there: to learn how the favor of God may infallibly be obtained, and the awful futurities of his being made happy. How deplorable is the result when Christianity becomes a mere matter of scientific and philological speculation—its *letter* scanned and studied, measured and weighed, its living spirit unobserved, uncaught: its saving health unfelt, its renewing influence never sought, its true glory veiled; and these worshippers of the letter content under the shadow of the eclipse.

For a monitory illustration of all this, I might refer to the case of the younger Michaelis, one of the most celebrated of modern German scholars and biblical critics. In his Introduction to the New Testament—a monument of prodigious learning and philological research—there is manifest a deep-rooted antipathy to all spiritual religion. Scorning the pretensions of more illiterate Christians to a gracious influence from the Holy Spirit, he avows it as his experience that he never felt any special influence from the Holy Ghost during the whole of his life. Dr. Chalmers's remark on this case is worthy of being repeated: "The most profound acquaintance with the letter of Scripture, even though carried to its minutest and before undiscovered niceties, is no guaranty whatever for the respect in which we hold those great and momentous doctrines which are accessible to all, and the property of all; and thus our veneration for an accomplished philologist and critic, may invest with a most dangerous authority his contemptuous allusion to such articles of faith as enter into the very life and substance of the New Testament."

Not less wonderful is the folly of mere formalism, when such a system as the gospel is in our hands. "We conclude, then," said St. Paul, at the close of one of his masterly trains of argumentation, "that a man is justified by faith without

the deeds of the law." That conclusion was the death-blow to superstition, whether in its moods of terrific asceticism, or its goodly round of ceremonial observances. Why need I grope in the dark to find God; or carry the case to priestly negotiation, or seek *pseudo* mediators, or bind myself to painful and costly ritual observances, when the gospel scheme of justification offers me pardon and peace, and all the attributes of the justified state, as the result of simple faith in Christ? Salvation is in *Him*, not in *them*. The "letter" has answered its great purpose when it has led me into the presence of the "Spirit which giveth life."

The ability of the Christian ministry must be judged of by the foregoing facts and principles. The extent in which it is subservient, in the scheme of Divine mercy, to the accomplishment of the ends contemplated in the gospel, is the measure of its ability.

He is an *able* minister of the New Testament, who so feels that his dependence is *on* God, and his sufficiency is *of* God, as to maintain a vital and constant communion with the Source of all light and power, life and strength. This dependence on God, this humble seeking of the promised aids of the Holy Spirit, is indispensable to a ministry which aims at lifegiving results. Our strength lies not in the logical force, the symmetrical arrangement, the ornate illustration, the mighty, methodical march, of compact ideas, or the far-flying range of an imagination whose pinions never droop. The deep and powerful preaching which moves the heart of man, comes from the heart itself—deeply moved by spiritual influence: by vivid realizations of eternal things: by the consciousness and sensitiveness of the moral life in full play: by the emotions of compassion and love, born of that inner essence which lies deeper than the rational faculty, and with the perceptions of which the imagination does not intermeddle.

He is an able minister who carries into his preaching a genuine and vigorous *faith*. Is his sufficiency of God? Is he positively sure that the message he delivers is the word of God? Has he a real hold on unseen, spiritual strength—upon the energy of the lifegiving, renovating Spirit? This man comes forth prepared to find the gospel ministry, in his hands, a remedial function. He stands at an immeasurable distance above the position of him who makes his office an organ of mere de-



lection to a listening audience—a Sunday recreation to which intelligence and taste, argument and rhetoric, are brought to furnish the banquet. Over and above the natural fitness which earnestness and impassioned feeling on the part of the speaker possess to move his listeners, we need not hesitate to affirm that the preacher's *faith* is the grand conductor of spiritual influence to his congregation. Let it be a *loyal* faith, which cleaves to the truth and puts honor upon the cardinal peculiarities of the New Testament: let it be a *realizing* faith, which sees "Him who is invisible," and feels the vivid impression of heaven and hell: let it be an *intrepid* faith, which marches with firm foot, and unfurled banners, wet with the dews of Calvary; whose battle-word is "Christ for the world, and the world for Christ;" which quails not in the face of the world's greatness or beauty, its intellectual pride or hoary sins;—and that faith becomes the vehicle of Divine power: vivifies the gospel testimony: opens a way for it to the hearts of the listeners; and makes it a savor of life to them that believe, or justifies in the sinner's own conscience, who rejects it, the final doom.

He is an able minister who does not content himself with the knowledge or experience of former years, but, magnifying his office, and reading aright the signs of the world's progress, and pondering the new developments of hostility to the truth thrown up from the fermenting mass of modern society, seeks an ever-fresh baptism of spiritual power: puts his mental activities into intense action: "covets earnestly the best gifts:" goes down, year by year, deeper and deeper to the foundations of truth, both in nature and revelation: traces principles in their remote relations: strives to obtain comprehensive views as well as large sympathies; and thus puts himself in connection with the age in which he lives, and keeps abreast with the men of his time. Abreast, I repeat, and not behind: remembering that the "wisdom of winter is the folly of spring." This must be done, or the ministers of Christ must be content to relinquish the hold which their office as public teachers gives them upon the mind and public opinion of the time and country. Their reading should be various, their reflection profound. They must be men of study, as well as observation. Whatever early advantages they may have enjoyed, must be improved by habits of after application; and

in the absence of special scholastic advantages, redoubled zeal and activity should be put forth. If ignorant men should presume to think that by their want of mental improvement they are specially honoring the riches of the Divine grace, you, my brethren, have only to say to them, in the pithy words of South: "If God hath no need of our learning, he can have still less of your ignorance." What! Is this work of preaching your Heaven-designated vocation—the dignity of which warranted Jay in saying, "I would rather preach the gospel than blow the resurrection-trump!" Is the pulpit you occupy a secret place of thunder; and the themes of redemption you handle, so glorious, so gigantic, that a "Sanhedrim of archangels might listen to them, uncovered of their golden crowns?"—and will you not make that work the very business and problem of your life: binding yourselves to it, pressing into its service every energy of mind, every susceptibility of taste, every throb of consciousness? Will you not place it first and foremost among those thoughts which hold court in the high places of human intellect, and seek, by every possible accomplishment of solid reasoning, exact method, and eloquent delivery—by industry, order, dogged perseverance, and habitual decision of character, and especially by a spirit of constant and fervent piety, to make full proof of your ministry?

There may be found, perhaps, young preachers, who have fallen into a mistake not unfrequently observable in the walks of literature and science: that, namely, which supposes that preëminent distinction is the result much more of genius and talent, than of patient painstaking and unflagging industry. These are day-dreamers, the victims of revery and self-deceiving musings. They are to scale the heights of divine philosophy by a single leap; and set the world to wondering at their eloquence, by the *afflatus* of inspired genius, caught off-hand, from the sight of some vast crowd of listeners. They affect magniloquent words, which cost no trouble, and an inflated pomp of expression, which is the flimsy drapery of poor ideas. They drink in with greedy ears the pretty flatteries of small admirers; and are almost astonished at their own imagined greatness. Presently they are surprised, not to say indignant, that they are not intrusted with the first posts of responsibility; and complain that distinguished ability like theirs

has been overlooked by Bishops and Presiding Elders. Now let me just say here, that men of first-rate ability are too much needed in the Methodist Church, to allow a moment's apprehension that they will or can be overlooked. Such men always, in our system, take the rank to which their real efficiency entitles them. It is an impossibility that masculine strength and genuine power should be undervalued in the practical working of our itinerancy. But it is not by any means impossible that a man of showy but superficial parts should be mistaken as to his own claims. The Church wants men who, by God's blessing, have made themselves *able* ministers by steady intellectual labor, and by patient and systematic application to self-appointed tasks: men who break resolutely through the spells of self-flattery, and the slothful drivel of day-dreams: men who know that the price of eminent ability and distinguished usefulness is nothing less than invincible labor, and are willing to pay that price, and summon their energies to the work—and *succeed!*

I state results: before this audience it is unnecessary that I should do more than just advert to the law by which, in the great procedures of the spiritual life, Divine influence goes along with, but does not supersede, the most strenuous human effort. You, my brethren, are accustomed to trace the working of this great law, in the more elementary processes of repentance, prayer, faith, in the every-day experience of Christian life. It holds good in the highest applications. Our sufficiency is of God, who makes us able ministers. But this sufficiency is realized only to the extent in which we coöperate with the Divine agency. God makes us able ministers, but this ability comes not by chance: not by the operation of an inscrutable Divine sovereignty: not as the premium upon an indolence which folds its arms and waits the good pleasure of the ascended and glorified Head of the Church: it comes as all other spiritual endowments come—by God's blessing crowning our best exertions. And the practical rule by which we work in the highest departments of Christian effort, as well as in the most elementary, is to do our utmost, just as though we had every thing to accomplish by our own agency; and to pray, and believe, and depend on Divine aid, just as though *we* had nothing to do, and the Divine agent every thing. This is the law of the composition of forces,

human and Divine, no less true, no less applicable in the spiritual world, than the law of the centripetal and centrifugal forces in the natural.

Ministers of the South Carolina Conference: the past year has been remarkable in our annals. It has witnessed the death of four superannuated and two effective preachers, members of the Conference, besides the death of one of the Bishops, long identified with this body as a co-laborer. We look around, and miss the familiar faces of our departed brethren. We mark the unusual chasm which the lapse of a single year has made in our ranks. Their graves admonish us that the time both of preparation and effective work is short and uncertain. Could they speak to us from the azure fields of immortality, with what thrilling emphasis would their words of fire exhort us to diligence and faithfulness—how would their celestial accents heighten the grandeur and urgency of our work!

Of this group of departed ministers, there are several who present aspects of character which justify a special mention, and render appropriate the brief and affectionate tribute to their memory with which I shall close the present discourse.

All that is mortal of WILLIAM CAPERS rests beneath the shadows of that church in which we last saw him and heard him. In all the elements which make up an able minister of the New Testament, he was preëminent. A deep personal experience of Divine things lay at the foundation of his ministerial character. Upon his spirit rested an "unction from the Holy One," and he "knew whereof he affirmed." He had realized the words of Christ to be "life and power;" and with life and power he delivered those words to the thousands who hung upon his eloquent lips. To preach Christ crucified was the sole business of his long and useful life. He surrendered to this the full strength of an acute, cultivated intellect, which would have achieved fame and fortune in any of the secular walks of professional life. He possessed a broad knowledge and keen observation of the world, that had been carried over a tolerably wide range of conditions. His diction was felicitous, embracing a rich and copious flow of appropriate words, and a delivery so chaste and finished, that the most fastidious ear could detect no violation of the canons of good taste in any of his discourses. His face was classical, his voice full

of music, and his gesticulation eminently appropriate to the oratory of the pulpit. Grace, elegance, and refinement, penetrated with force and fire, were his characteristics. He never courted or cared for popularity, though it always attended his steps. Long an unquestioned leader in the Conference within the territorial limits of which he was born and died: honored with the highest office in the gift of the Church he had served so long and so efficiently, he went to his rest in the fulness of years, and amid the tears of sorrowing thousands. He has put off the harness of war in the Church militant, to wear the crown in the Church triumphant.

JAMES DANNELLY, too, meets with us no more. Peculiar in appearance, manner, and voice; unique in the structure of his mind and the mould of his genius; dauntless as a lion; bravest of the brave—his was the ministry of mighty rebuke to popular vices. To the clerical eye, human nature usually presents its Sunday side. We see it in its dress of decencies, and in the demureness of conventional proprieties. Dannelly had looked upon its week-day, darker side: had scanned its frailties, watched its wretched perversities, and taken the gauge of its deepest depravities. When he stood forth to reason of “righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come,” his was no idle pomp of words, no holiday parade of bugle and banner and blank-cartridge. Stern, sententious, hitting, his words blistered as they went, and his denunciations tore with terrible effect through the ranks of Heaven-daring sinners. His merciless scourge sounded, like the reverberations of thunder, after the retreating steps of vulgar iniquity. His sarcasm, keen as the spear of Ithuriel, pierced the bloated mass of whitewashed hypocrisy. In the spirit of the Tishbite, he hewed in pieces the sophisms of the scoffer and unbeliever, and routed the baffled priests of Baal. William Capers was the keen, polished, Damascus blade: James Dannelly was the ponderous battle-axe. They stood, in many respects, at opposite poles, each a master in his own sphere. Each followed the bent of his native genius: both were needed in the sacramental host.

I have dwelt upon the prominent trait in the mental and moral development of Dannelly: you must not understand that the “spirit of power” in him was antagonistic to the

“spirit of love.” Both of these endowments are necessary to ministerial efficiency; both proceed from the same Divine Spirit, and exist in the higher unity of the spiritual life. The power of rebuke was levelled, in Dannelly’s case, against the sin; while a yearning pity and love went after the sinner, that fain would “pluck the firebrand from the flame.” At times, how touchingly tender and eloquent! We have all heard his apologue of the old man in the tottering house, waiting for the signal of its fall, then escaping from the tumbling ruins, and hastening with glad and speedy steps to enter his kingly home. Ah! well may we apply the moral of the story to his own case now. That mutilated body, so long the seat of aches and pains, that earthly house of his tabernacle, lies a darkened ruin: he has entered “the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Of the five other ministers of the Conference who have died during the present year—all of them in the faith of Jesus, and in sure and certain hope of life everlasting—I must ask the liberty to make brief mention of the youngest—Harris, who has finished his course while yet in the greenness of his young and flourishing life. I do this because he furnishes to the junior preachers of the Conference a fine model of an able minister of the New Testament, although not distinguished, as the venerable men I have just referred to, by eminent endowments, or marked peculiarities of genius. His greatness lay in his fitness for plain, constant, hard work. He belonged not to the kid-glove, maiden-voiced, *petit maitre* school of delicate young clergymen, fastidious and nervous, and afraid of soiling their broadcloth in a camp-meeting altar, and extremely skittish on the subject of a “hard circuit.” Harris, on the contrary, was a man of all-work—good in the Sunday-school cause, good to beg money for missions, good to preach day or night, to many or few hearers, Sunday or week-day, wet or dry; and O how good as an intercessor, to plead with God in mighty prayer when the penitent and heart-broken knelt around him! His zeal led him into labors beyond the measure of his strength, manly as it was. He put his full mental and physical energy into every sermon, as though some intimation prophetic of an early close to his ministry was ever present with him. And he fell in his early prime and pro-

mise—a martyr to his work, surrendering, without a sigh or regret, life itself, to that noble cause in the service of which alone life was felt to be valuable to him.

Come forward, ye scores and hundreds of souls who have been brought from darkness to light, from the burden of sin and sorrow to the knowledge of salvation and the unutterable hope of heaven, through the instrumentality of those honored and laborious ministers who have fallen during the present year, and tell this congregation whether these true successors of the apostles acted wisely and well, in leaving all to follow Christ? Tell us whether the true Wesleyan breed of men still survive? Tell us whether money or politics, influence or fame, crowns or kingdoms, are worthy to be mentioned by the side of the true and lofty and fadeless glory which girds the brow of a faithful and able minister of the New Testament? You will tell it ere long, in the face of a burning heaven and a dissolving world; when “the great white throne”—

“Rolling on wheels of burning fire,”

makes its appearance, and the dead, small and great, stand before God! In the revelations of that great day when the Divine plan and purpose in the framing of the world shall be made manifest; and it shall be seen that more was designed in the fiat which created, and the power which wound up its mighty springs, than merely to set another gem upon the flashing brow of the firmament, and to rear another home for an intelligent race: it shall then appear that creation was but a magnificent platform for redemption—that as all things were made *by* Christ, and *for* him, this earth was meant to be the theatre of his advent when manifest in the flesh, the arena of his humiliation and his triumphs, the monument of his power to save to the uttermost, and the focal point of interest to the universe. Then, too, it shall be seen that, rising in importance and moral majesty above all the investigations of men of science, and all the proud achievements of warriors, and all the sagacious diplomacy of statesmen, and all the bright, immortal productions of men of letters—preëminent above them all in the heraldry of the universe, in the concentrated glory of noble achievement and enduring result, is the ministry of the gospel of the ever-blessed God! Then “they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

## A FISHER OF MEN.

WRITTEN BY C. WESLEY, BEFORE PREACHING IN CORNWALL.

TRUE Witness of the Father's love,  
 Celestial Messenger Divine,  
 Come in thy Spirit from above:  
 The hearts which thou hath made incline  
 Thy faithful record to receive,  
 That all may hear thy voice and live.

Send forth the everlasting word,  
 The word of reconciling grace,  
 That all may know their bleeding Lord,  
 The freely proffered gift embrace,  
 Hang on the all-atoning Lamb,  
 And bless the sound of Jesus' name.

Jesus, thou only hast the key,  
 Open the great effectual door,  
 Extend thy line from sea to sea,  
 And glorify thy mercy's power:  
 Redeem the wretched slaves of sin,  
 And force thy rebels to come in.

Now to thy yoke their spirits bow,  
 Thy way into their hearts prepare,  
 Be present with thy servants now,  
 With me, thy meanest messenger,  
 Who humbly at thy bidding come,  
 To call my fellow-exiles home.

Fisher of men ordained by thee,  
 O might I catch them by thy love!  
 Thy love be first bestowed on me,  
 And while the pleasing power I prove,  
 My tongue shall echo to my heart,  
 And tell the world how good thou art.

Teach me to cast my net aright,  
 The gospel-net of general grace;  
 So shall I all to thee invite,  
 And draw them to their Lord's embrace,  
 Within thine arms of love include,  
 And catch a willing multitude.

O might I every mourner cheer,  
 And trouble every heart of stone;  
 Save, under thee, the souls that hear,  
 Nor lose, in seeking them, my own;  
 Nor basely from my calling fly,  
 But for thy gospel live, and die.



SERMON

ON THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY;

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Kentucky Annual Conference,

IN WINCHESTER, KY., SEPT. 18, 1856.

BY THE

REV. T. N. RALSTON, A.M.



Nashville, Tenn.

PUBLISHED BY E. STEVENSON & F. A. OWEN, AGENTS,

FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

1857.

Received of the  
 Treasurer of the  
 State of New York  
 the sum of  
 \$ 1000000  
 for the  
 year ending  
 31st Dec 1870

This receipt is given in  
 full for the amount  
 of the  
 Treasury of the  
 State of New York  
 for the year ending  
 31st Dec 1870  
 and is not to be  
 taken as a receipt  
 for any other  
 purpose  
 Witness my hand  
 at Albany this  
 1st day of  
 January 1871  
 Governor

# S E R M O N

ON THE

## C H R I S T I A N M I N I S T R Y .

---

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”  
—MARK xvi. 15.

CHRISTIANITY is an institution *Divine* in its origin; and all *offices* and *ordinances* legitimately belonging to it derive their sanction from the appointment of God. The *Christian ministry*, the theme of the present discourse, is an institution essentially connected with the gospel system; and so far as human instrumentality is concerned, it is one of the most indispensable and powerful levers for the accomplishing of the glorious ends which the gospel proposes. Christianity being of *Divine* origin, it necessarily follows that the *ministry* which it involves, as one of its prime elements and most efficient agencies, must also derive its existence, character, functions, and prerogatives, from the appointment and revelation of God.

If the position here assumed be *true*—and we think it cannot be disputed—it necessarily follows, that in the investigation of the great questions pertaining to the subject proposed, human authority, and principles of expediency, dependent on mere human wisdom or reasoning, are not to be trusted as guides. For all our reliable data, in relation to the Christian ministry, whether we speak of its origin, qualifications, duties, or prerogatives, we are entirely dependent on the teachings of Scripture.

1. Our first inquiry relates to the *origin* and *appointment* of the Christian ministry. Does this ministry exist as a Divinely constituted *office*, pertaining to a *specific class* of persons, regularly selected and consecrated; or may the duties pertaining to the ministry be performed by all Christians, according to their respective abilities, and as circumstances may render it convenient, irrespective of any peculiar appointment or consecration?

If we open the Bible to learn what have been the plans of Jehovah on this subject, throughout all ages and dispensations, we find a perfect uniformity of procedure. In the patriarchal dispensation, we may see in the mysterious appearance and shrouded history of Melchizedek, a type of the sacred character of Heaven's ordained priesthood. Abraham, the father of the faithful, representing in his own person the Jewish Church, did homage to the institution of Heaven, by the payment of "tithes of all that he possessed." And although Melchizedek more properly typified the Son of God, in the fact of being "without father and without mother," that is, without genealogy in the priesthood, yet, in a broader sense, he rose upon the patriarchal age as a light in the wilderness, to show to the ancient people of God that Divinely selected ministers should wait upon the altars of religion.

If we come down to the days of Moses, we find in the person of Aaron the selected stock from whom was to descend a race of priests to officiate, in regular succession and by Divine appointment, at the Jewish altars, during the entire continuance of the Mosaic economy.

The New Testament clearly shows that the Old dispensation was typical of the New. The ceremonial law—the priests and their functions—the temple and its services—the altar and its sacrifices, were all shadows or adumbrations of "good things to come." Again, not only were the priests of the Jewish religion a distinct class, Divinely chosen and consecrated, but God at the same time, and throughout the entire dispensation, specially called and set apart select individuals as his *prophets*. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." These facts may bear upon the question of the Christian ministry in two ways. First, they show what was God's plan under the Old Testament economy; and, reasoning *à priori*, we may erect a presumptive

argument to prove that such would be his plan under the gospel. Secondly, from the *typical* character of the Mosaic institution, we are authorized to expect something plainly analogous between the type and the thing typified; hence, on the ground of correspondence between the type and the thing typified, we may reasonably infer, that as the ministers of religion under the law were a *peculiar class*, Divinely called and consecrated, so they shall be under the gospel.

We have not gone to the Old Testament, or appealed to the Mosaic dispensation, because our principal reliance for information on this subject is upon that source. We may go directly to the origin of the Christian institution. The teachings of Christ and his apostles on this subject are ample and explicit, and we appeal to the New Testament revelation.

Soon after our Saviour commenced his personal ministry, he *called, ordained, and sent forth* his *twelve* apostles, and at another time *seventy* disciples, to serve as his ministers in working miracles, and preaching the gospel in his name. After his resurrection from the dead, he appeared unto his chosen *twelve*, enlarged their commission, and commanded them to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," assuring them of his accompanying presence, "alway, even unto the end of the world." In carrying out the grand commission of spreading the gospel, and establishing and organizing the Christian Church in different parts of the world, the apostles *ordained* and set apart various other individuals, as *evangelists, elders, deacons, pastors, teachers*, etc., as officers to aid them in the great work of the Christian ministry.

From the record in the Acts of the Apostles, as well as from frequent reference to the subject in the apostolic Epistles, it is beyond controversy that these ministerial officers were intended to be *perpetual* in the Church. Hence, we are led to the conclusion that the *Christian ministry*, according to the original institution of the Church, and the inspired teachings of Scripture, consists of a *distinct class* of persons, selected and set apart as officers in the Church:

2. The next point to be considered is, *the method by which they are selected, and inducted into office.*

From what has already been said, it is clear, that from the

very commencement of true religion in the world, through all ages and dispensations, the ministry has not only consisted of a *peculiar and distinct class*, but they have been *selected and set apart to the work*, by the *agency and appointment of God*. Such was unquestionably the plan under the Mosaic economy. When our Saviour went about the establishment of his own everlasting kingdom, he pursued a similar course. His apostles were chosen and ordained to their work *by himself*. He sent them forth, in *his* name and by *his* authority, to do *his* work. When he called and commissioned, they durst not hesitate, delay, or demur. They at once left the "dead to bury their dead:" they abandoned their calling, whatever it might be, for their higher vocation: they arose forthwith, took up their cross, and went about their Master's work. When Saul of Tarsus was arrested amid his zealous career of persecution, and converted, and called to the ministry, he immediately "conferred not with flesh and blood," but went directly to his work: "Straightway he preached Christ." His language was: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel:" "A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me:" "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ:" "No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron:" "How can they preach, except they be sent?" Our Saviour, in discoursing with the disciples in reference to the Christian ministry, says, "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that *he will send forth* laborers into his harvest." He commissions his apostles, and their successors in the ministry, to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature:" promising to be with them, "always, even unto the end of the world."

St. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, speaking of the ministry as established by Christ, says, "He gave some *apostles*, and some *prophets*, and some *evangelists*, and some *pastors* and *teachers*, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Here we may remark that two things are evident from the language of the apostle. *First*, these apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, were Divinely chosen for the work. Christ

“GAVE” them. *Secondly*, they were consecrated as *permanent officers in the Church*. They were “for the work of the ministry;” and this is no temporary work. They were “for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ:” a work needed in the Church alike in all ages. From which we learn that the selection and specific designation of the ministers of Christ’s kingdom, is a work which God has not intrusted, primarily, to any man or set of men—to any council, synod, conference, presbytery, or session; but has reserved this sacred prerogative in his own hands.

3. We next speak of *the qualifications of the Christian ministry*.

(1.) The first item we would name under this head is that of a *Divine call*. We have already shown, in our commencement, that this call is essential to the *scriptural validity* of the ministry. We now assert that it is essential to its *proper exercise* and *due success*. We will not, however, deny that one may be inducted into this office by the Church authorities, being led thereto, either through sinister motives, or an honest misapprehension of the nature of the calling or of his own proper position, and be, to some extent, useful. The dissemination of gospel truth must, in the nature of things, be productive of good; and God *may*, and often *does* bless his word, by whomsoever proclaimed, to the conversion of the sinner. But unless the minister be really *called of God* to this work, (and be himself truly converted, which this call necessarily presupposes,) his ministrations must lack those elements which are essential to extensive usefulness.

*First*, they cannot possess and exhibit that unaffected *earnestness*, that unremitting *diligence*, that untiring *industry* and *perseverance*, which a consciousness that the vows of the Almighty are upon him is calculated to inspire. A sense of the high responsibility, of the sublime grandeur, of the supreme and overwhelming importance of this mission, resulting from the conviction that it is chartered by the authority of Heaven, is that which invests “the man of God,” in his public ministrations, with a majestic power and authority not his own. It fires his heart with a “live coal from off the heavenly altar;” it gives edge and point to his words, a gigantic firmness to his movements, and causes “the sound of his Master’s feet to be heard behind him.” It was this conscious-

ness of acting under the authority, and of being blessed with the accompanying presence of God, which gave to the apostles their firm confidence, their intrepid daring, and their astonishing success. It was *this* that gave to the martyrs the power of triumph, in the midst of danger and in the presence of death. It inspired Luther with an invincibility of character, bidding defiance to kings and emperors, cardinals and diets, popes and devils. It armed Wesley with a perseverance and devotion which no difficulty could thwart, no opposition overcome. It fired the soul of Whitefield with a pathos and an unction, before which convicted thousands melted and fell like grass before the mower's scythe. It baptized Summerfield with a heavenly atmosphere, which none could breathe without wilting under the holy influence. It is this recollection of the promise of Him who hath called us, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," still living in the ministry, that is bearing the gospel to distant lands and savage hordes; and that still, like "a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day," shall lead on the armies of our spiritual Israel to conquest after conquest, until the crimson banner of the cross shall wave, in victorious triumph, over a united Church and a converted world! May God speed the day!

(2.) The next important qualification of the Christian ministry to which we call attention, is *an extensive and correct knowledge of the Scriptures*.

We do not urge the absolute necessity of such a degree of biblical attainment as to be able to solve all the profound mysteries of revelation. This, we humbly conceive, is an attainment beyond the reach of the human intellect in this world. No man has ever yet reached it, and perhaps, in this life, where we can only "know in part and prophesy in part," no man ever shall reach that lofty pinnacle. But still, the great facts and leading doctrines and precepts of Scripture, and especially the plan of salvation revealed in the gospel, are presented in a style so ample and explicit, that every accountable capacity, by care and attention, may readily acquire a clear, correct, and satisfactory knowledge of the subject. For any Christian who can read, to be destitute of this, is to give evidence of shameful negligence: for a minister, it is unpardonable. The Scriptures are the charter of religion,



and the constitution of the Church. They constitute the heavenly magazine from which our supplies are to be furnished. The man who undertakes the practice of a worldly profession without a competent knowledge of its principles, is denounced as a quack or an empiric. He who undertakes to teach the gospel to others without a competent understanding of the subject himself, is guilty of daring presumption and arrogant folly. No amount of science or general literature, no degree of philosophical or classical attainment, in the minister of the gospel, can atone for a lack of what we would term, Bible training. This is the kind of instruction the people need. It alone can probe the heart; arouse the conscience; rend from the eyes the veil of ignorance; point to the cross; convert the soul. This is the kind of instruction the Church requires. The young converts need "the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;" the maturer Christians need to be furnished with the bread of life from Heaven's own storehouse. In a word, a minister of the gospel going forth to preach, destitute of this important qualification, like a soldier entering the field of conflict without his armor on, must be driven back with discomfiture, at the first onset of the enemy. But if the minister is "mighty in the Scriptures," and his gospel bow is well bent by the strong arm of faith, it will send the arrows of truth thick and fast, to the hearts of the king's enemies. Let but the young David select from the gospel brook of Shiloah the smooth pebbles, and from the shepherd's sling, propelled by the strong arm of faith, they shall enter the head of any bold Goliath who may defy the armies of the living God.

(3.) The next qualification which we mention as necessary to the success of the gospel ministry is, *diligence and industry*.

An idle, lounging minister—one who will "sit all the day idle," because "no man hath hired him," is not recognized in the gospel chart, and he must have derived his credentials from some other source. Of all the callings under the heavens, none so imperiously demands our utmost diligence and industry as this. The man whom God would thrust out into his harvest, has no time to "tarry in all the plains." He will have need to be "always employed." Look at the example of the apostles. How active and how untiring in

their labors! The wide world is their parish; salvation is their theme; onward is their watchword; and success is their reward. They go from city to city, from province to province, by land and by sea; they are "in journeyings often—in perils of waters—in perils of robbers—in perils by their own countrymen—in perils by the heathen—in perils in the city—in perils in the wilderness—in perils in the sea—in perils among false brethren—in weariness and painfulness—in watchings often—in hunger and thirst—in fastings often—in cold and nakedness." Such was their diligence and industry, amid discouragements and trials; such was their untiring perseverance; and success was their reward. And such is a picture of what the minister of the gospel should be. If God has called him, he has called him to labor for souls. He must "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." He must cease not day and night to warn, to reprove, to comfort, to encourage, and at all times he should endeavor to follow in the footsteps of Him who "went about doing good."

(4.) Another qualification intimately connected with this, is *zeal and thorough devotion to God*. The minister should feel that he is given up to God and his holy cause. "The love of Christ should constrain him." The word of God, burning in his heart, like fire in his bones, should kindle a holy ardor, and inspire a quenchless energy. Drinking at the same stream, he should rise with the inspired Isaiah, when he exclaims, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." He should be baptized into the same spirit with St. Paul, when he exclaims, "None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." The minister of the gospel should be "a man of one work;" and to the interests of that one cause he should bring to bear his whole soul and mind, and body and energy—his time, his talents, his life, his all.

We have a few things to say in reference to the connection of the ministry with *the educational interest*. On this point we must be brief. There are two questions belonging to the

subject. The first relates to *theological schools proper*. By such schools we understand, institutions originated and sustained for the express purpose of preparing young men for the ministry. On this question a radical change has taken place in our own views within the last few years. This change has been the result of a closer study of the Scriptures, with special reference to the question. We now view the whole scheme as a radical innovation upon the apostolic plan. Which of the apostles organized an establishment of the kind? Which of them ever wrote one word in recommendation of it? Where, in all the Bible, has God commanded any such thing? To ask these questions is to answer them. Paul instructs Timothy to "study"—"to read;" but did he direct him to suspend his work for that purpose? Far from it. *While* doing "the work of an evangelist," he was to seek further qualifications. But the great and the radical defect in this plan is, that it ignores or entirely repudiates the doctrine of a Divine call to the ministry. These theological seminaries (technically so called) are either intended to train young men for the ministry who *are*, or who *are not* yet called to that work. If intended for those who *are not* called to the work, then this plan usurps the prerogative of God. It predesignates and sets apart the men who are to be the ministers of the Church; and goes upon the presumption that Heaven will confirm the judicious nominations. Now, suppose it shall turn out that when these young men have finished their collegiate course, God should not call them to the holy ministry? It may be as it was in the days of Samuel of old. When the young man that you train as a candidate for this work is presented before the Lord, "the Lord may not look on his countenance, or on the height of his stature;" but may "refuse him; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." "Abinadab, Shammah," and "seven more of the sons of Jesse," may all be presented; and God may choose none of these. He may yet command to send to the sheepfold for the young David.

But it may be said that these theological schools are not intended as a machinery for the manufacturing of preachers; but merely as a means of qualifying those whom God has already called. If this position be taken, the matter is only

rendered seven-fold worse. First, it admits the Divine prerogative of selecting the ministry. Secondly, it admits that God, in the exercise of this prerogative, has made the selection; but it sits in judgment upon the wisdom of that choice, and actually breaks the Divine decree! It admits that God has said *Go*, but it corrects or modifies the command, and says, *Stay*. God has said to Timothy, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" but this theory says, *Go, sit* in the academical shades, and learn to decline *penna* and to conjugate *tupto*; or go *sit* at the feet of Gamaliel, and learn that *homooosios* is *orthodoxy*, and *homoiousios* is *heterodoxy*! The calls and commands of God are not in the *future* but the *present* tense—not in the *subjunctive* but the *imperative* mood. If God has said to Timothy, *Go into my vineyard to-day* and work, who dare tell him to wait till next year, and then he may go, *Deo volente*—he may go then, *perhaps, should he live so long, should he become qualified, should circumstances all be favorable, should no more inviting enterprise present itself, should he find nothing else to do!* Is this the way to "obey God rather than men?" When the voice of God says, "Samuel, Samuel!" is this replying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth?" Is this replying, "Here am I, send me?" If God calls me to preach now, and I fail to respond to that call till next year, and immortal souls perish through my neglect, at whose hands will their blood be required?

One of two things we *must* do: we must either renounce the doctrine of a *Divine call* to the ministry, or we must relinquish all idea of establishing and sustaining theological schools for the specific purpose of training young men for the ministry, as a human invention, and return to the apostolic platform.

But it may be objected that we would *depreciate learning*, and plead for an *uneducated ministry*. To this we reply, that our position leads to no such conclusion. We would prize learning highly; we would promote it both in the ministry and the laity, by all means in our power; but still, we are not at liberty to deify this goddess, and annul the ordinance of God, that we may worship at its shrine! Our plan is to educate all the children of the Church; let all our schools and colleges be *theological* as well as *literary* seminaries; let all the

boys, and all the girls too, be taught Bible theology as well as heathen mythology; (I had like to have said *instead of* heathen mythology, and I almost wish I had.) Let *this* be done, and then, whether God shall designate as a herald of the cross, Samuel, or Joseph, or James, or John, "loose him," at once, "and let him go;" and "as he goes," let him "preach;" and "as he runs," let him "read," and "study," and learn, and pray! and by this method, "knowledge shall be increased," and "the world shall be turned upside down."

Let the Bible be introduced as a text-book, and its sacred truths taught as a science, in all our schools and colleges, and we shall have no need for theological schools proper. We know that some are opposed to having any special religious instruction connected with school education. But what good reason can be given for this opposition? In a Christian land, in schools originated and sustained by Christian patrons, and superintended by Christian teachers, and often by Christian ministers, must every thing else be taught but the religion of our fathers? Must the fabulous legends of Homer, the obscene pages of Horace, and the blood-stained Commentaries of Cæsar, be the every-day study of our youth; but the annals of Moses, the epic of Job, the pastorals of David, the sublime poems of Isaiah, the irresistible logic of Paul, the angelic ethics of John, and the divine philosophy of Jesus—are these to be interdicted? Must *they* be thrust aside, or only brought incidentally to view? Is it perfectly *right* to teach heathen philosophy and pagan mythology in our schools and colleges, but is it sacrilege to introduce Christian philosophy and theology?

But there is another aspect in which the subjects of the ministry and of education are connected. That the Christian ministry should lend their influence and take the lead in getting up and sustaining schools and colleges; that they should superintend and foster this interest, and bestow upon it their zealous support and patronage, we fully believe. But *can* they, consistently with their calling, "leave the work of the Lord," and sit down on the stool of a mere academic professorship? When God calls a man to the ministry, as the great business of his life, especially when, in his ordination vow, he has solemnly sworn before high Heaven that he will "devote himself *wholly* to the work," can he make it a mere

*secondary affair*, while a *school*, a *farm*, a *store*, a *shop*, or *fishing-net*, shall be the principal concern? But if it be said that education has become *one department* of the *appropriate work of the ministry*—our ministers are *appointed* as professors in colleges—if this be, in sober truth, a department of the *ministerial work proper*, then a minister may *do this work*, and this *alone*, and be a proper minister of the gospel. That is, he may, consistently with his vows, be an “unpreaching prelate,” or, in Bible phrase, “a dumb dog that will not bark.” We would not go so far as to intimate that the minister should never *teach* or *work* on the farm or in the shop; that he should never participate in any calling outside of his sacred vocation. But we do insist, that the propriety of making a mere secular calling the main, the principal business of a minister’s life, is more than questionable. Paul, as a temporary relaxation, might occupy some of his odd intervals by “working with his own hands,” lest he should become burdensome to a poor and a persecuted Church; but what can be conceived more preposterous and absurd, than the idea of his making that his principal business! Had all the interests of human learning and philosophy pertaining to the Roman empire been concentrated in one metropolis, and the presidency been tendered to this “legate of the skies,” what, think ye, would have been his reply? Would he not have exclaimed, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!” Look at Wesley: he wrote books, he founded schools, he read, he studied, but his *great business* was to “blow the gospel trump,” and cry to all, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Could all the able and eloquent men, now immured in colleges and schools throughout these United States, have their places filled by laymen, and they, released from their bonds, be sent out as blazing torches over the length and breadth of our country, “determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified,” how astonishing might be their influence! They could form an indomitable host, to charge upon the ramparts of infidelity and sin, and the good they might accomplish would be told by the battle-cry of victory on the side of the Lord, floating upon the breeze, and swelling with gladness the hearts of the saints!

4. We next inquire, *What is implied in the work of the min-*

*istry?* It is a maxim no less true than trite, that whatsoever is worth doing, is worth doing *well*; and the very first requisite to enable us to do any thing well, is to understand clearly and distinctly *what* it is we have to do. (1). The Christian ministry is not a work of human appointment or devising. It is neither a discovery of philosophy, nor an invention of science. It traces its paternity neither to the edicts of kings, nor to the enactments of states; neither to the bulls of popes, nor to the decrees of councils. It is emphatically a work of God. Descending from heaven, in principle and character, in basis and superstructure, it is superterrestrial and Heaven-ordained. St. Paul says, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The whole system of the gospel being Divine in origin and character, we are dependent entirely upon the word of God for our knowledge of the work of that ministry which Heaven has instituted for its propagation and success.

We are not "sent to warfare at our own charges." We have, it is true, a high mission—we are invested with a sublime and lofty trust; but our bill of instructions is both ample and explicit. Our duties are Divinely prescribed, and authoritatively enjoined. The *Bible* is our directory—the *gospel* is our charter. "To the law and to the testimony" we must go. "We are ambassadors for Christ." We must preach the preaching he bids us. Our mission is *to* men, but it is *from* God. Our work is not to deliver essays upon human science and philosophy, but to proclaim the message of salvation to sinners, as we have received it of the Lord Jesus. Not that we dare claim inspiration, direct from Heaven, as did the apostles; but we are furnished in the New Testament with the apostolic teachings. The mission of the apostles was, to "teach all things whatsoever (the Saviour) had commanded them." Ours is, to teach "all things whatsoever (Christ and his apostles) have commanded us." Hence, our work is a Divinely prescribed one. Its metes and boundaries are charted upon the record. Like him of old, we may exclaim, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I can-

not go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind ; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak." Our work is, to declare the great *facts* and *precepts* of the gospel—furnishing the matter of Christian faith, and the measure of Christian duty ; and appealing to the hopes and the fears of all men, to urge them, by the glorious promises and the fearful threatenings of the Divine word, to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and to do "all things whatsoever he hath commanded them." In the discharge of the high trust with which we are invested, our first and great inquiry is, What hath God required at our hands? Falling in the dust at the feet of the Redeemer, we should exclaim, with the young pupil of Gamaliel, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" If we feel that the Divine behest requires it, we must be willing to depart instantly, though it be to the uttermost verge of the green earth. Not conferring with flesh and blood, if God require, we must go out into "the hedges and the highways," or "far hence to the Gentiles." The mountains and the plains—the hills and the valleys—the rough places and the smooth, are all alike to the herald of the cross, when "the love of Christ constrains him," and he feels that he has "a message from God" to men. Knowing that God demands his services, he should be ready, at once, to leave "the dead to bury their dead ;" and, casting himself upon the altar of God, he should be ready to devote himself fully to the great work of preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and holding forth the words of reconciliation, as Christ has prescribed them in his gospel.

(2.) The work of the ministry is a *spiritual and a heavenly calling*. It partakes not of the elements and attributes of a mere worldly avocation. It is radically and essentially distinct and variant from every species of mere human pursuit and enterprise. It relates not to the husbandry of the earth, but to the culture of the spiritual vineyard, into which the heavenly Husbandman hath commanded his servants to "enter and to work." It is not a mission to "dig in the earth and hide our Lord's money"—to manage the farm, to drive the plough, to sow the seed, to graze the herds, to reap the harvest, and pull down the old barns and build greater, and to "lay up much goods for many years"—this is no part of the ministerial calling ; but it is a mission to cultivate Immanu-



el's fields, to break up the fallow-ground of the sinner's heart by the ploughshare of gospel truth, to sow the good seed of the word, that it may bring forth fruit unto holiness, and "that the end may be everlasting life;" to lead the spiritual flock of the Saviour by the still waters of that river "whose streams make glad the city of God," and cause them to lie down in the green pastures of Divine promise; in a word, it is a mission to thrust the gospel sickle into "the fields which are white unto the harvest," and gather immortal souls as ripe sheaves for the heavenly garner. Peter and Andrew must leave their fishing-boat and nets, that they may become "fishers of men." James and John must leave their father Zebedee to mend their broken nets as best he can, and take up their cross, and follow the Saviour. Matthew, the publican, must leave his table at the receipt of custom, and straightway become a follower of Him who called him. Luke, the physician, is no longer to practice his nostrums upon the human body, but he must take upon himself the "cure of souls." Saul, the accomplished graduate and the finished architect, has no further use for his diploma received from Gamaliel, or his letters from the high-priest, but straightway he enters upon his new vocation of preaching Christ. The work of the ministry is not a mere *trade* or *profession*, by which to gain an easy competence or acquire an honorable position; but it is the devotion of the strength and energy of body and mind—yea, a *lifetime* service to the interests of humanity and the cause of the Redeemer, though labor and toil, hunger and weariness, peril and persecution, bonds and dungeons, or even martyrdom itself, be our only earthly reward! It is not a magnificent scheme of speculation, or of mercantile enterprise, by which to amass a fortune, or to "lay up gold as the dust, and the gold of Ophir (or California) as the stones of the brooks;" but it is a voluntary enlistment of ourselves, with all we have and are, in the cause of Him who "had not where to lay his head," that we may bear the cup of consolation to the mourner, that we may "preach good tidings to the meek, bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," though we ourselves should be doomed in this world to a life of extreme poverty and hardship—pilgrims and sojourners, as prophets and apostles have been before us, having

not so much as a cottage in the wilderness! This ministry is not a device of worldly ambition, by which to wreath the brow with the green but fading laurel of fame, or to ascend to the dizzy heights of earthly distinction and renown; but a consecration upon the altar of God and of religion, though our names on earth "be cast out as evil," and we be "esteemed the filth and the offscouring of all things." It is a Heaven-inspired resolve, by which we "count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord." In a word, the work of the ministry relates not to temporal and earthly, but to heavenly and eternal things. Founded in connection with a system of heavenly revelation, having to do with doctrines of heavenly birth and heavenly tendency, its aims and agencies, its motives and movements, its conflicts and conquests, its arrangements and achievements, all point upward to heaven, and forward to eternity. It looks not at things temporal, but at things eternal; and it "endures hardness," because "it sees Him who is invisible."

(3.) The work of *the ministry is infinitely important*. Things derive their real value and importance from the magnitude of the interests with which they are connected, and the good they are calculated to effect or secure. As a radical principle connected with our subject, it should not be forgotten that "the good that is done in the world, the Lord doeth." "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." Therefore, whatever good may result from the work of the ministry, is to be attributed, not, in any degree, to its own intrinsic and underived virtue or excellency, but to the appointment and blessing of God. "The excellency of the power is of God, and not of us." In the present discourse, we assume that the gospel ministry is the Divinely instituted means for the proclamation of the gospel, and the delivery of the message of salvation to the world. For aught we know, God might have selected other agencies than he has for the revelation of his truth, and the proclamation of the word of reconciliation to man. For aught we dare affirm, he might have dispatched the holy angels that stand around his throne on this sublime mission. It is enough for us to know that he hath committed "this treasure to earthen vessels." It hath pleased him to commis-

sion for this work, "men of like passions with ourselves," and "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." It follows, therefore, that in the same proportion as the gospel itself, and the salvation it proposes, are deemed valuable and important, so, likewise, must we appreciate the work of the gospel ministry.

Let us look, then, at the subject-matter of this gospel message. It comprises the whole range of the revelation of God's will to man. How important the message! How comprehensive and how lofty the theme! It reaches back to the birth of creation: it tells of our origin; of the birth of all things around us; of the fall of man, and the promise of a Saviour; of the history of the patriarchs, and the giving of the law; of the captivities and the triumphs, the various fortunes, and the remarkable history of God's chosen people for multiplied centuries. But, above all, it unfolds the glories of the gospel proper. It proclaims the birth of the long-promised, the glorious Messiah, the Saviour of the world. It traces the history of his spotless life, his astonishing miracles, and his vile rejection by the Jews. It opens our eyes to the mighty wonders of his hands: we see the water made wine, the lame made whole, the blind eyes opened, the deaf ears unstopped, the sea-storm quelled, and the dead raised to life at his bidding. It opens our ears to the sublime doctrines that fell from his mouth; we listen to his Sermon on the Mount, and exclaim, "Never man taught like this man!" What pure morality, what unearthly benevolence, what heavenly wisdom distilled from his lips!

This gospel message reveals the sublime glories of the cross. It exhibits to our view the lamblike meekness, the mild composure, the sublime grandeur, and the godlike firmness of the Redeemer, amid all the tragic history of his trial, sufferings, and death! It proclaims his resurrection from the dead, his glorious ascension to the mediatorial throne in heaven, and the opening up and commencement of the perfected gospel dispensation on the day of Pentecost.

But let us look at the vast interests involved, in its direct appeal to man. It comes, as the mouthpiece of God, with a message of love to every human soul. It comes, an embassy from the skies, to treat with man of interests boundless as the universe, and enduring as eternity. Thrones and scept-

tres, crowns and empires, are empty baubles, compared with the interests here involved! It reaches forth the olive-branch of peace to a rebellious world. Its mission is to open to the perishing nations of earth the fountain of eternal life. It comes to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. It finds the prodigal feeding on husks in a strange land, and leads him back to his Father's house. It gives light to those who are sitting in darkness—joy to the disconsolate—imperishable riches to the poor, and heaven to all who will seek it. Not the perishing body—not the fictitious trappings of honor—not the imposing charms of wealth—not the impious banquets of pleasure—none of these things of earth; but the immortal soul—the eternal destiny of man—heaven and hell, are the themes of the gospel ministry! Did the tallest son of glory, did Michael the archangel ever fly on an errand more sublimely important, than when he came to earth to minister to an heir of salvation? And yet, he was only a co-worker with the humblest minister of the gospel that ever dropped a tear on his Bible! Is this the lofty dignity, the overwhelming importance of the gospel ministry? And hath Heaven “counted *me* faithful, putting me into the ministry!”

(4.) If such be the *importance*, how *fearful must be the responsibility* of this work! Well may we exclaim, “Who is sufficient for these things?” The responsibility of the minister grows out of his relation to Him who has invested him with the trust, the value of the thing intrusted, and the importance of the interests involved.

Who then, we ask, has called us to this high vocation? It is not the dying charge of a father delivered to his son concerning his bones, amid the solemnities of the deathbed scene. It is not a commission from the court of a king or emperor of earth; it is a mission from the high cabinet of Heaven—from the great God and Saviour of the world. Shall this high honor be contemned, or this lofty trust be betrayed? If the Saviour has so loved the world, as to empty himself of the glory he had with the Father before the world was, and submit to all the indignities, the insults, the cruel mockings, and malignant taunts of the mob, with all the agonies of the cross, what must be the responsibility of the minister who shall falter or prove unfaithful in bearing to men the message of pardon from his lips? If, through the

unfaithfulness of the minister, the death of Christ should prove of none effect, even to a single soul, what must be his responsibility?

Look at the important interests involved in this work. Souls immortal are exposed to the damnation of hell, and the minister is sent to snatch them as brands from the fire. Should he prove unfaithful, and should their destruction be the result, "their blood will be required of his hand." How appalling must be the hour of reckoning to the unfaithful watchman! The man who betrays his country, and recklessly suffers her interests to fall into the hands of the enemy, is justly despised as a traitor, and hanged in disgrace. But the unfaithful watchman betrays the trust of his God; and permits the souls of men to perish through his neglect: what retribution, therefore, should infinite justice visit upon him at the judgment day?

There are numerous discouragements and difficulties in the way of the gospel minister. Under the influence of these, even good men may falter for a season. But the scenes of the final judgment will rend the veil from our eyes, and exhibit these matters in a far different light. Then, every thing shall appear in its real character. Then shall we understand the insignificance of our most formidable pleas for negligence or unfaithfulness in the high calling of the ministry. Standing at the bar of God; called by the Saviour to an account for our stewardship; witnessing the bitter wailings of multitudes, perhaps, sinking down in hopeless despair, and, with fiendlike curses, charging upon our unfaithfulness their eternal ruin—what rocks or mountains can hide from the face of Heaven our shame and guilt? And when the once crucified Redeemer shall call on us to deliver up the souls for whom he shed his blood, and for whose salvation he commanded us to preach—should they have perished through our neglect—to which of the now current pleas and every-day excuses for ministerial delinquency will we then resort? Will Demas then plead the "love of this present world?" Will the poverty and distress, the hardships and labors, the persecutions and afflictions, the scoffs of the profane, and the frowns of false brethren—will any of these things then be so much as named? No, verily, the truant watchman will then be speechless. Then shall his eyes be opened to the

accursed emptiness and folly of his most cherished excuses! Let me perish with the children of Admah, and be swallowed up with the inhabitants of Zeboim; let me be driven into hell with "the nations that forget God;" let the atheist and the deist—the gambler and the murderer—the lewd and the profane—the prodigal and the licentious—the thief and the robber—the filthy and the abominable, *all* be my fellows and companions amid the fearful retributions of eternity; and let all the woes that yet linger in the cup of the Divine vengeance be poured upon me, rather than should fall on my head the *withering*, the *burning*, the *damning curse* of unfaithfulness in the Christian ministry! If "in the *lowest deep*" there still be a *lower*—if in the *hottest* hell there still be a hotter, that deep and that hell will be the home and the reward of the recreant watchman! God of the watchman, save us!

One word in reference to the *rewards of the ministry*.

In this catalogue, the emoluments of earth are entirely omitted; unless it be in the shape of its frowns and its scoffs, its derisions and its persecutions, its toils and its trials, its pains and its perils. But, as an abundant compensation for all these, we have the comforting presence and love of God, the fellowship of his Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. The heart of the ambitious, when he reaches the long-sought pinnacle of fame; the heart of the brave general, when, at the head of his troops, he beholds the vanquished foe retreating in dismay, while the shout of victory, like the noise of many waters, rises and rolls along the serried lines of his hosts—*these hearts* may have tasted joy; but it was earthly, fleeting, and mingled with anguish! I have often thought, yea, I have *felt*, that if ever *bliss*—pure and unalloyed, celestial and immortal, ever-living and godlike in character—was found on earth, it was that which thrilled the heart of the humble herald of the cross, when, under his feeble ministrations, he saw the tear in the eye of the penitent, the glow of rapture in the countenance of the saint, and, standing by faith on Pisgah's top, gazed afar off upon the glories of heaven! Give me *one* such glance of heavenly day, one draught of such superangelic bliss, and *one* star in my crown at last, and victors' wreaths and monarchs' gems I'll trample in the dust!

We cannot now dwell upon the fulness of the minister's

reward. It is laid up in heaven, beyond the reach of all the storms and convulsions of earth. It is rest from labor and toil; it is a blissful and eternal *home*: angels and archangels, prophets and apostles, martyrs and saints, and all the Church of the first-born, will be there to greet him! Could we now pierce the intervening veil, a moment's glance at the robes and palms, the harps and crowns, the riches and the radiance, the grandeur and the glory, the songs of joy and the shouts of praise, would be more than we could witness and live! But of all the scenes of interest and displays of rapture amid the effulgence of the opening heavens, of what can we conceive more overwhelming, than the welcome which the humble and faithful minister of the cross shall then receive from his glorious Master! In the presence of all the principalities and powers of heaven, he will "bid him enter," and share with him in his joys; he will lead him to the living fountains; he will show him his glory, and then say unto him, "All this is yours, and I am yours, and you are mine for ever!"

I have thought of a beautiful world—

Where the eye never weeps, and the heart never sighs,  
 Where the storm never howls, where the clouds never rise,  
 Where foes ne'er molest, where friends never part,  
 Where sorrow and grief ne'er sadden the heart.

There Paradise blooms, and the tree of life stands;  
 No grave e'er was dug o'er all the fair lands:  
 There, *there* you must go, if e'er you behold  
 The riches of heaven in grandeur unfold.

Ye servants of Christ, go work for your Lord,  
 And soon shall be yours that endless reward:  
 As stars in your crown, the souls you have won  
 Shall cluster as gems, outshining the sun.





# CLAIMS

OF THE

# GOSPEL MINISTRY

TO

A S U P P O R T .

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A Prize Essay.

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B Y S . H . B R O W N E .

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE Louisiana Conference of the M. E. Church, South, at its eighth session, offered a prize of two hundred dollars for the best essay upon Ministerial Support. Of five essays that were submitted to the Committee appointed to make the adjudication, several were deemed worthy of publication; but the prize was unanimously awarded to the following; and the Louisiana Conference, at its ninth session, held in Franklin, La., December, 1854, instructed the Chairman of the Committee, C. G. Young, M. D., to request that it may be issued as one of the publications of the Tract Society of the M. E. Church, South.

In this essay, the author has aimed, in an impartial manner, to show the relative claims and obligations of the ministry and membership of the Church, particularly the M. E. Church, South. His motive has been to know nothing between the parties, save justice in the sight of God and in the eyes of all honest men. To determine advisedly whether success or failure is the result of the effort, the reader must examine for himself. Read with a desire to know what is just, with a purpose to decide impartially, and with a resolution to comply with the decision.

# SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CLAIMS OF A GOSPEL MINISTRY TO A SUPPORT.—GENERAL.

WHETHER the claims of a gospel ministry to a support be just or unjust, they deserve examination. If these claims are just, they should be acknowledged and satisfied; if they are unjust, they should be repudiated. The justice of these claims must be sought in *the grounds upon which they are based*. The claims are as valid as the grounds are just. This indicates the court before which the case is to be argued. Some might think the case would be a proper one for the court of *Humanity*, basing the claims on an appeal to the feelings supposed to be possessed generally by human beings, and showing the inhumanity of suffering ministers of the gospel to perish in our midst, while laboring for us, that we may not perish for ever. Others would carry it to the crowded court of *Charity*, and represent the case as deserving benefaction or alms-giving, and “beg” a support. It is proposed to have these claims examined before the court of *Justice*. If they cannot be established here, no appeal shall be taken. The question is, *Are these claims just?*

Let it be premised: 1. That the ministers of the gospel are men of like passions and wants with us. 2. They are called of *God* to the work of the ministry. 3. They have, in accordance with the demands of the work, given up the common secular pursuits, from which other classes obtain a support, that they may give themselves wholly to their vocation.

The ground of claim to a support, which no one questions in other departments of labor, is, “The laborer is worthy of his hire.” This axiom was applied by *Divine authority* to the support of the ministry. Christ’s first *corps* of ministers went out at his command, authorized to claim the observance of

this hitherto unquestioned common law—now Divine—in obtaining their support. It was just then: it is so now. Christ now calls men to the ministry as he did then. He has made no change as to the manner in which they are to be supported. It is now as it was then, by the decision of Christ — “The laborer is worthy of his hire.” That this provision for the ministry was not intended only for the first who were sent out, or to close with the personal ministry of Christ, Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, written thirty years after the death of Christ, quotes the same “*scripture*,” “The laborer is worthy of his reward.”

The force of this axiom, as applied to the ministry, is seen: 1. That they are, in a peculiar sense, the property of Christ. In obeying the command to preach, they consent to be his in a more unqualified sense than those who, though converted, are not called to preach. 2. In fulfilling the command of Christ, *they labor for us*. They are the servants of Christ, with regard to the *authority* under which they are laboring; but the servants of men, with regard to the *benefit* of their labor. “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves *your servants* for *Jesus’ sake*.” 3. The nature of the work which these men perform. It is a work done for our souls—a work which is profitable to us in the life that now is, and infinitely more so in that which is to come. As the claims of the soul are of greater moment than those of the body, so the work of the ministry is of far more importance than any work which has reference to the wants of the body. 4. The work of the ministry is set round with sanctions of Divine authority, which are not found in any other position in life. A minister, when called of Christ to preach, dares not set up in competition the lucrative or honorable prospect of some other business, and choose whichever may suit his inclination most. He *must preach*, or meet the judgment due the disobedient. It is not a matter of choice, but necessity is laid upon him; and such are the awful sanctions which God has connected with this call and this work, that the man feels, “Wo is me, if I preach not.” These men are in the discharge of duty to God, his Church, the world; and, since their own salvation is involved, they are in the discharge of duty to themselves. Now, if the faithful discharge of this duty so far removes the ministry from secular callings

as to deprive them of a support from these sources, it is clear that they deserve to have applied to them the axiom, "The laborer is *worthy* of his hire."

2. Consistency on the part of the Church requires the acknowledgment of the claims of her ministry to support. The Church sanctions and confirms their call to preach, and sends them out to do a work which she knows will take them out of the usual employments for support. She holds them accountable at her tribunal for the performance of that work. They are punished if they do not work. It is as little as she can do (yet as much as is claimed) to give them a support, while laboring for her and under her authority.

3. The analogy between the priests in the Mosaic, and the ministers in the Christian, dispensation, in respect of support, corroborates the claim of the latter. God had a Church then : he has one—the same—now. He *then* chose certain men to officiate in holy things. He *now* chooses certain men to minister in spiritual things. He then made provision for their support by special statute. He now ordains, "that they which preach the gospel shall live of the gospel."

The examination of this scripture with the context will close this chapter. In 1 Cor. ix. 7-14, the claims of the ministry to a support are presented in plain terms. While the apostle waived his own right to a support, "lest his glorying should be made void," he taught them that he had a right to be supported by the Church. "For who," says Paul, "goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written : that he that plougheth should plough in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are we not rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of

the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Let it be observed: 1. The right of the ministry to be supported is not questioned. 2. It is not, in the apostle's judgment only, right that the ministry should be supported; but by the law, delivered in the time of Moses, it is written, "*for our sakes,*" "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." And as they which ministered about holy things lived of the things of the temple, and as they which waited at the altar were partakers with the altar, "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

To make manifest the equity of the law which ordains the support of the ministry, as illustrations, it is stated, not as *questions*, but as cases so free from doubt, that, for the sake of force, they are put, without danger of misapprehension, in the interrogative form, "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges?" *i. e.*, No one does it. What less could a government do than defray the expenses of her soldiers while fighting her battles? Again: "Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" If the vinedresser eat not, pray who should? "Who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" The shepherd has a right which has never been questioned, save by "the wolf" and a few other kindred spirits. These are illustrations of *equity*; but it is not meant that the "*living*" which is given the ministry is equivalent to the benefit received; for the apostle, as if forestalling the objection of some *stingy* spirit, who thinks *nothing* is received in exchange for his money, unless it is something which he can see, or put in his stomach or pocket, says, "If we have sown unto you *spiritual* things, is it a *great* thing if we shall reap your *carnal* things?"

The gospel ministry is instituted by Christ. Its claims to a support are confirmed by ordinance of the same authority. The ministry, and its claims to a support, are united. We cannot, as just men, have the services of the former, without giving the latter. "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

## CHAPTER II.

## SPECIAL SUPPORT. THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

THE general claims of a gospel ministry to a support were presented in the preceding chapter. The *special* claims of the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are to be examined in the present chapter. It is not contended that there are really any distinct grounds of claim to give them support, which are not *involved* in what has been said; but that the peculiarities of the itinerancy are circumstances which give a special force and direction to the *general* grounds of claim. Itinerancy is a *bold* system. It is based upon *much faith in God*. To work well, God must perform a part, which the organization assigns Him. It is bold, also, in the faith it has in the people. It assumes that the people, without *contract*, will voluntarily support ministers whom they have not tried, and with whom they are not necessarily even acquainted, and who have been *sent* to them. The special claims of the itinerant ministry to a support, will appear more fully, if we examine briefly the peculiarities of the system.

1. The ministry do not wait to be called. The people having waived their right to choose a minister, and the ministry having given up their right to choose a charge, they leave the decision of these points to the well-advised judgment of a third party—the bishop. The ministry hold themselves in readiness for any work.

2. The system requires those who enter it to give up secular pursuits, and, consequently, the support and gain which might be obtained from those sources, to an extent beyond any other system. Here is a sacrifice made at the initiation of the itinerant, which throws him for a support upon the people whom he is appointed to serve.

3. Here is something, though not capable of being measured by dollars and cents, yet something *felt*; *i. e.*, disengaging from home, kindred, tried and loved friends, and all other associations, however strong and tender, which are inconsistent with the changing life of an itinerant preacher.

But suppose the itinerants and their families found a home furnished and ready for their reception, on entering annually their new fields of labor, (to which there are very many exceptions,) the demands of the work leave the minister but time to give his family occasional visits. He and his family are thus as strangers to each other in a strange community.

4. Besides the unavoidable pecuniary sacrifices sustained in the annual removals of the ministers from one place to another, they are exposed to a class of disappointments and casualties which, I trow, experience could best reveal.

5. The amount of labor performed. Some do more and others less, and the same minister more or less this year than last; yet the system demands labor. It is *hard* labor. That it is hard, some may doubt; but an observation of facts—as the number who have broken down in youth and manhood, the worn-out, the supernumerary, the number, who, thinking, as some others do, that it was an easy work, that have, after a few years' trial, located and gone to some easier work—ought to satisfy those who will believe without trial, that it is a hard work.

6. The itinerants go out whithersoever it is judged best for the good of the work in general, whether that be far or near, to a healthy or a sickly section, to the rich or poor, to the learned or ignorant, to white or colored; and this, too, without any previous agreement, with those whom they are to serve, as to a support. But does not the Discipline provide for giving them a certain allowance? This is more properly the rule of settling with different ministers in proportion to their several claims. The fixing of the amount of support for the ministers, is the work of the stewards (laymen). The getting of that amount is another question—one dependent on the voluntary contributions of the people. If the amount *be* given to the minister, he is but supported. If it *be not*, he suffers the deficiency; and, if appointed, returns next year, to fare, very probably, no better; or, on account of the drafts which the minister has made on his own resources, (if any he had,) to supply the place of former deficiencies, he may be forced to ask a location. Alas! what losses to the Church on this account! What a volume that would be which contained an account of the struggles of the ministers of the Most High with poverty, their dread of future want, their concern for



wife and children, if they should be called away, the causes and consequences of location; and all this, too, while laboring for a people who lived free from want themselves, and were able to give a *comfortable* support to their ministers.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### WHAT IS MINISTERIAL SUPPORT?

PERHAPS no small portion of the difficulty in supporting the ministry is found in the difference of opinion as to what answer should be given to the above question. The rich man had a sumptuous support: Lazarus had one at the mercy of the dogs. What should a *minister of the gospel* have? The Bible does not answer this more definitely than to call it a "living." But Lazarus had a *living* as well as the rich man. The support of the minister should not be like the one or the other. The support should be suited to the *office*. The contribution of a man is an index to the *sort* of living he wishes his minister to have, to the *value* he sets upon the gospel, and, generally, to the influence which the gospel has made upon the contributor's heart. How much shall the minister have? The amount allowed several years ago would not do now; nor can it be said that the amount required at present will be that which will be required fifty years hence. Neither can the amount consumed by some extravagant minister, nor the pittance which necessity or parsimony may induce another to subsist upon, be adapted as an answer to the question. The appropriation for a support, which some rich or proud church or board may make, and the pinched-off pittance, which some poor or stingy one may make, cannot be received as criterions. Neither can the amount necessary for living in a certain place, where provisions are dear, nor in one where they are cheap, be adopted as a general rule. The amount required for the support of a minister one year may be more or less than will be required the next, even in the same place. The determination of this question, and the management of this interest, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is en-

trusted to certain officers, called stewards. In addition to the last chapter, see the Discipline. The Discipline provides that the answer to the question, "*What is ministerial support?*" shall be given by the Board of Stewards in each circuit and station, respectively. Nothing more can be done by me in answering this question, than to give a few general rules, by which the stewards should be guided in determining the amount for ministerial support. Let them consider: 1. The size of the minister's family. 2. The particular—there may be *peculiar*—wants of the family. 3. The cost of living in the particular place where the minister is to reside; also, the probable deviation from that cost by the abundance or scarcity of supplies for the current year. The *style* of living which it is expected the minister shall observe, will be sufficiently pointed out in the appropriation. The Apostle Paul, with regard to the style of living, says, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### OBLIGATIONS TO SUPPORT A GOSPEL MINISTRY.

THE claims of the ministry to a support, general and special, having been considered, and the circumstances to be observed in determining what is implied in ministerial support having been pointed out, *the Duty of contributing to the support of the ministry* now claims our attention. If the grounds of *claim* to a support are just, consistent, and of Divine appointment, it will be unnecessary to enlarge on the duty of contributing. The *obligation* to meet the claim is the natural counterpart of the claim. If there is a *claim*, there is an *obligation*. The two cannot be separated. If the claims of one party are based on justice and Divine authority, the obligation is fastened on the other by the same principle and power. The admission of the existence of the claim, involves the acknowledgment of the duty to satisfy the claim. And in proportion to the *validity* of the claim, is the *strength* of the

obligation. As impartial umpires, we should examine both sides of this question deliberately, thoroughly, and in the spirit of candor. If, then, the establishment of the claims of the ministry to a support involves the obligation to give that support, the argument in the whole case might, in fairness, close, leaving nothing more to be done than to ascertain *who the persons are* against whom these claims stand; for it would be a reflection on the integrity of a man, if, after he acknowledges the justness of a claim against himself, you should undertake to prove to him that he is in duty bound to pay it. From the same arguments which establish the claims of the ministry to a support, the obligation to give that support is easily and clearly inferred. The same text of Scripture which proves the right of the ministry to a support, proves, also, the obligation to give that support. Neither does the existence of the claim or the obligation depend upon the *number* of texts, but the *appropriateness* and *explicitness* of those adduced; *e. g.*, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." It is not necessary to show that the same text is found in Matthew, and Paul's Epistle to Timothy, to give it force. It would have as much authority if recorded but once, as it would if recorded a thousand times, or as if it were the *only* Divine declaration ever given to the world. The only questions are: 1. Is it *appropriate?* *i. e.*, does it belong to the subject to which it is applied—the support of the ministry? Of this there is no doubt. 2. Is it *explicit?* *i. e.*, is the meaning *clear?* It is: "The laborer is worthy of his hire"—*the minister deserves his support.*

The *existence* of the claims, it is presumed, none will deny; but *against whom* do they exist? Against God? angels? devils? Elijah's ravens? widow of Zarephath? No. The proper ones are not found yet. Against "*them.*" Whom do you mean? "*They.*" Who are "*they?*" Well, the claims are against "*us.*" That will do, provided your *individuality* is not absorbed in "*us,*" or dwindled down into a dwarf with a full-grown *poor mouth.* But you have been thus circuitously catechised, as though you would evade the issue. It is enough for you and many others to know *for whom the laborer works.* That is all that is necessary for the laborer to obtain his hire, of which he is "*worthy.*" But there are others who care for none of these things. They know not

from choice whether the minister's home (?) is on earth, in Paradise, or Pandemonium; whether he eats angels' food or black-gum berries; whether his clothes wear out like theirs, or whether he has been so lucky as to inherit an old suit, worn by some son of Jacob in the wilderness. I have a notion to erase the last few lines, but as that class will hardly read this essay, you need not mind it, but just hand them over to that brother in the Church, who so faithfully "trims" and "rakes" the preacher. And if you should be annoyed at camp-meeting, by his shouting "glory to God for a free salvation," etc.—not an uncommon case—just whisper in his ear "preacher" and "money," instead of "Providence" and "mercy," and you will be troubled as little by his "glory" as the preacher has been by his "money."

Those for whom the ministry labor are the persons whose duty it is to contribute for their support. This obligation rests with greatest weight upon the *membership* of the church; second, upon the *attendants* of church; third, upon those *benefited* by the ministry.

To give this chapter its proper form, as the counterpart of the chapter on the general claims of the ministry, I shall do little more than enumerate the several obligations, answering to the corresponding claims in the former.

1. The first ground of claim was that of service rendered by the ministry. The labor being performed for us, creates and lays on us the obligation to support the ministry.

2. As the ministry are held accountable for the performance of their duty, laboring for us and under ecclesiastical authority, consistency demands that we should perform our duty to them—give them a support.

3. As the priesthood of the Church in the Jewish dispensation were supported by the people, so it is our duty, to whom the gospel is preached, to support those who preach it.

It may be observed in this connection, that the ministry are in the discharge of a duty to God, the Church, the world, and themselves, which they cannot perform, unless we coöperate with them in giving them their support, and thereby discharge our duty in the same respects. The path of duty is plainly marked for them and us—they to preach, and we to support them—and serious will be the reckoning of that man who leaves the path of duty himself, or, by neglect, obstructs the

path of others. The ministry can be driven as effectually from their appropriate work to the plough or shop, by withholding their support, as by barring the doors of our churches and dwellings against them, and, with a mob, beat them back to their own threshold. Stop the supplies, and the work is done. While persecution, heat, cold, sickness, misfortune, and continued hard labor, have failed to "move" the devoted soldier from his post, *necessity*, created by the parsimony of those whose battles they were fighting, has compelled hundreds and thousands of the veterans to turn from the "good fight," and, with sad hearts, to take off the panoply of Heaven, entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, and, with other burdens, endure, the remainder of a dispirited life, *our censure* for being worldly-minded! Their support is in our hands, and should be given them as their due. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?"

4. It was shown that God hath ordained, the ministry shall live of the gospel. Not by standing and literally preaching food into his mouth, and clothes upon his body, but by receiving these things from the hands of those persons to whom he preaches.

It is to the *interest* of the Church to support the ministry. The Church is the light of the world. Connected with the existence of the Church is the knowledge of the Bible, if not the existence of that book itself, the observance of the Sabbath, the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist, the preservation of the worship of the true God, and a sound code of morals, the preservation and appreciation of civil and religious liberty. It is not possible for us, who have lived all the while in Christendom, to form a just conception of the social and political advantages which the world and Christendom particularly receive from, and through, the Church of God. It is difficult to conceive how the Church could exist without the ministry, as much so as to conceive how a government could exist without officers. The Church is *God's own* institution. He has enacted certain laws for its government. He calls certain men to teach and administer these laws. So far as the existence and benefit of the Church depends on the ministry, so far it is to the interest of the Church and all who are benefited by it (and who is not?) to support the ministry.

By assuming the support of the ministry, we relieve them

from that care and anxiety which otherwise would unfit them for the ministerial work. We also remove them from the temptation to engage in secular business, by which many, it is to be feared, have not only left the ministry, but the Church of God. A minister cannot do effective work if he is "entangled with the affairs of this life." As the ministry stand, as it were, between us and heaven, to point us out the way, so we should stand between them and the world, to prevent the cares of the world from rushing upon them, and thereby disqualifying them for the great work to which Heaven has appointed them. If we thus perform the work assigned us by the Lord, the ministry are prepared and induced to serve us more willingly, cheerfully, affectionately, and profitably. Oftentimes the minister is blamed for a want of zeal, for engaging in secular work, for devoting too much of his time to his home and family—a reproof which, in many cases, he may deserve. But we should not censure hastily, any more than rashly. Doubtless, if, in many cases, we knew the concern of the minister's heart about a support for himself and family, which our inattention has produced, we would often pity, where we now blame.

The interests of the ministry and Church are *mutual*. In giving our ministers a support, we are but working indirectly for our own good. Can we not believe that it is for our *temporal* interest to support the ministry? That degree of temporal interest which, on the whole, is best for us, attends an upright walk: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and *all these things* shall be added unto you." "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Do, reader, pause one time. Does your heart receive this as the truth of God? While Israel was faithful to the Lord their God, he blessed, with other interests, their "basket and store." When they forsook him, "he cursed their blessings." Although this is so clearly taught in the Scriptures as a principle of the Divine government, and so many instances of its practical manifestation are recorded, and even our own observation tends to the same conclusion, how culpably reluctant is the heart of even professed believers in Christ to receive it as *truth*. In proportion to the growth of grace in the heart will this truth be received. When God is *in* the heart, he is believed and trusted. That temporal

prosperity is connected with the discharge of duty in the very particular now before us, *i. e.*, the support of the ministry, I shall prove by one precept and one example. The precept is, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Prov. iii. 9, 10. The example is found in Malachi, c. iii. In his time, Israel departed grievously from God; and, as in the case of backsliders generally, they diminished, or wholly withheld, the minister's allowance. In this they are charged with robbing *God*: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." For this they were "cursed with a curse." God then directs, in accordance with his law in providence and with their former experience, how to turn away the *curse* and secure a *blessing*: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." "Freely ye have received, freely *give*." "It is more blessed to *give* than to *receive*."

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## CHAPTER V.

### SUPPORT OF THE ITINERANT MINISTRY.

IN a previous chapter, the special claims of the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, were briefly examined. Let us present some of the corresponding obligations to give them a support.

1. We are never without a minister, except during the time consumed in attending the Annual Conference, and even then the system provides for filling up the time by the local min-

isters. It is uncertain, in the congregational system, what minister they will eventually get, although there is much boasting of "republicanism." It is uncertain *when* they will get him. It is uncertain *how long* they will keep him, and uncertain *how long, after he is gone*, before they get another.

2. In the Congregational system, the minister must *please* the people; or he is dismissed. Thus, the system tempts the ministry to "crouch" before these "*republican*" churches, and say, "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." To get his bread, he must stay in the office: to remain in the office, he must please those who put him in: to please them, he often displeases God. The temptation to this is far less in our system. The minister comes, remains, and leaves, according to the regulation of the Church, managed by the Bishop. A faithful discharge of duty is as certain to make the minister unpopular with an easily defined class of people, as the opposite course would secure their favor. The system is far more free from temptation to corruption in this particular than the boasted republican, which virtually possesses the power of putting a minister in the pulpit who shall preach to please *God* or *man*, according as *man* may choose.

3. In our system, the minister comes and labors the year through, without a previous stipulation as to salary, leaving the stewards, the agents of the people, to estimate the allowance for the minister's support. In the other system, the amount to be given the minister has no little influence in making a call effectual in bringing the minister, and in keeping him after he comes.

4. Itinerancy, connecting, as it does, poor societies with rich ones, a sparsely populated section with one more populous, gives, in the former case, the poor people and feeble societies the services of the same minister who serves the rich; and, in the latter case, the gospel is preached in a "wilderness," where *Congregationalism* could not live, because there is not a sufficient number of people to make a "*congregation*" that could call loud enough to be *heard*!

5. The annual systematic changes which are made, give every portion of the Church, more or less, the benefit of the variety of talent, as well as the different kinds of talent, in the ministry of a Conference. We have the doctrinal one



year, the practical the next, the experimental another, and so on. This variety, with the novelty attending the entrance of the new minister on his work, awakens an interest which otherwise would not exist, and to which, with the blessing of God upon the minister's labors, we attribute, in a great degree, the revivals of religion for which the Methodist Church has been notable. Though all classes may be edified to some extent under the preaching of a faithful minister, yet every minister is peculiarly adapted to preach the Gospel with greater efficiency to a certain class, than other ministers of a different kind of talent, though the latter may be even of a higher grade. And out of that certain class of the people, that minister is instrumental in bringing souls to Christ and members into the Church. A Paul, with his logical powers, shows to the reflecting that the cross of Christ is the wisdom of God. A son of thunder storms the fort of another company, and leads them willingly, with shouts of victory, to be marshalled under the ensign of Immanuel. An Apollos enchants and weds to the cross many noble hearts. A John, through love, conquers a number who had withstood all the others.

In all that has been said concerning the special claims of itinerancy, the intention was to do no more than to set it forth as an agency of great power, and of evangelical adaptation, to comply with the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Let *all the glory* settle with increasing effulgence and grand enlargement around Him to whom it is due, and who has thus far, according to his promise, been with his militant host, and who will be with them to the end of the world. Under the blessing of the Head of the Church, the secret of the wonderful success of the system is doubtless to be found in the near approach it makes in adjusting itself to the model required for carrying out the great Commission, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. From the beginning, the system has worked well: it works well now, and will continue to work well. Once in a while it is ascertained, by the screaming heard, that a wheel has been put in which belongs more properly to a mill or gin, than to an evangelical locomotive. Another one, taking up the notion that it is not in its proper place in the machinery, runs furiously awhile forward and

then backward, and, finally, to *blow up the whole establishment*, it loses its balance and drops out—that's all. The machine runs on as though nothing had happened—even better. Many obstructions have been thrown in its way. Many arrows, lances, balls, and bombs have been showered with righteous (?) aim upon its parts, but *it still goes*. "Alackaday! How hard to stop it!" After expending the magazines without effecting destruction, or even any serious damage, to cover in some fashion a mortifying defeat, the enemies hoist a white flag, rather dingy, to signify *sincere* peace, and eulogize Methodism as it *was*, prophesy of the Methodism that is *to be*, and, to save pain in the eyes, if not in the heart, ignore the mighty Methodism that is *now*. These latter-day seers of the school of Isaac Taylor, in looking in the past, see nothing under the guidance of Heaven as great as Methodism: in looking forward, they see something else: in looking at the present, they see nothing, although the top and branches of the Methodist "mustard" tree reach higher and extend farther than any other. Mr. Taylor required so much of the world to stand on, that there was little left for him to look at. Being unable to see through his feet, and not acclimated to the spiritual atmosphere of Methodism, we can readily account for the caricature which his heart, more than his eyes, has given to the world. Methodism still lives. Its roots are deeper, and its texture firmer and sounder now than ever before. And when I say, *Let it live*, the supplication is not addressed to its foes, for it has always lived *in spite* of them. It lives as well, if not *better*, under their frowns than under their smiles. But, dear brethren and friends, to *you* it is said, *Let it live*. For it to live, our ministers must work. To work, they must eat. "The workman is worthy of his meat." Let us let our ministers live as God has ordained—"of the gospel."

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE MEASURE OF THE DUTY OF CONTRIBUTING.

How much ought we, ought I, to contribute? Who is to decide? You. By what rule? By that which says, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Although the "goods" are yours, and the rule is correct, and you are the man to apply it in measuring off the portion which belongs to the minister, yet there is a possibility of laying the rule in the wrong place. Why is it there seems to be a general fear of giving too much, while there seems to be little fear of giving too little? Is it so? Or is it the best practicable way of hiding that selfishness which will give an emphatic "*amen*," to "Get all you can, and save all you can;" but when it is said, "*Give* all you can," he ties his purse-strings, and says, "Charity begins at home;" and, it may be added, it continues and ends where it begins. A selfish man was the author of the false adage, and *selfishness*—so mean that its father would not give it its own legitimate name, but stole a name from heaven—begins at home.

The Jews gave a tenth. Some observe the same proportion in supporting the ministry: some give the same to the ministry which they pay in taxes: some few give the produce of a certain piece of ground: some give the same one year with another: some give one year, but not the next: some give to one minister, but not to another; some give just what is *pulled* out of them: some give prayers: some do nothing at all but scandalize the Christian name: others will put a ten-cent piece into the hat at a public collection, and when asked to aid in supporting the minister, will say, with ten times ten-cent's worth of assurance, "*I have thrown in*"—taking good care not to say how much. You are not urged to adopt a *liberal* or *charitable* measure, but a *just* one. Let us first be *just*, and then *liberal*. The question is, *What is the measure of the duty of contributing which justice prescribes?* Let us lay down the premises to be kept in view in deciding this question—made difficult only by the want of information, and the

selfishness of the human heart—and leave every man to answer, as a just judge between himself and his minister, what he should give. Let him not forget, throughout the investigation, that God is an interested witness of his reasoning and measuring: that the answer he gives will be approved or condemned in the day of judgment, by Him who has said: “He that is unfaithful in a little is unfaithful also in much;” and who will say, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to *me*.”

Supposing you have surveyed the character, office, and work of the ministry, observe, 1. The consideration which you and yours have received and continue to receive—the services of the ministry, the privileges of the Church, and all the attendant benefits. 2. The amount necessary to support the ministry, as made known to us by the Stewards. 3. Many of the members are poor, others are stingy, and, to prevent the *minister* suffering the consequences, it will be necessary for you to add something more to what you may regard as being already a just amount. 4. The ability which God has given you to support his servant, and that you are but the *steward* of what is called *yours*, and that God requires you to give as he hath prospered you, *i. e.*, give as God has given you. 5. That a false balance is an abomination to the Lord—that with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. Now, although in this country, and in the Methodist Church, *you* have the power to say how much you *will* give, and to act accordingly—an appeal to your sense of *honor* as well as of justice—yet there is an amount which you *ought* to give. What is it? Presuming you have thoroughly and impartially considered the premises, and that you are ready to give the answer, *i. e.*, the amount you ought to give to the support of the ministry, just let the minister take your place, and you take his, with the golden rule—“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them”—in one hand, and your pen in the other, and while *you* are the *minister*, make the [“Thou, God, seest me”] figures. How much is it?

## CHAPTER VII.

## LOCAL MINISTRY.

No special reference to the local ministry has been made as yet. It was believed best to reserve it for a separate chapter. Except in certain cases, no disciplinary provision is made for aiding in their support. The reason for this has been misapprehended by some, who are unacquainted with our economy, and possibly thought insufficient by others. That the relative position of the itinerant and local ministry may be manifest, let a brief comparison be instituted, showing the points of agreement and difference, and conclude by giving the reason of that difference.

First. The points of agreement :

1. One has no power, by *divine right*, which the other has not. The entire Christian ministry, in every section of the Church, stands on the ground of perfect equality as to *divine right*.

2. The call to preach is the same. The question whether a man is to preach in a local or itinerant sphere, is outside of the call to *preach*. He may remain local, or, if inclined, may itinerate, provided the Quarterly and Annual Conferences judge him fit.

Second. The points of difference :

1. The pastorate of the Church is committed to the itinerants: the local ministers are included in the flock.

2. The Annual and General Conferences are composed of itinerants. The local ministers are not members of either: they are, however, elected by the Annual Conference to Deacons' and Elders' orders, and have a right to appeal to the Annual Conference from the Quarterly Conference.

3. Provision is made in the Discipline to support the itinerant ministry. None is made for the local, except in certain cases.

All these differences are of human arrangement. Although there exists this numerous, respectable, and useful class of ministers known as local, much more numerous than the

itinerant class, and though the Discipline provides for their license, ordination, etc., in like manner as it does for the itinerants, yet, in the original organization of the Methodist Church, none were placed in the *premises* from which the conclusion—*itinerancy*—was drawn, which was to be the controlling feature in the entire economy, but the itinerants. The local ministry came into existence in the working of the system, in subservience to itinerancy; and with respect to *licensing local preachers*, it is done without infringing upon the controlling constitutional principle of *itinerancy*. To carry out the design of the system, it is plain to every thinking mind that the support of the local ministry could not enter into the arrangement; for this would be a drawback upon the system, so serious as to uproot the foundation. It is hoped that the local ministry will neither suppose that they are regarded as inferior to the other class in *any respects*, except such as are of entire human arrangement, and which they, of choice, yield for the good of the Church; nor that it is believed they desire any provision to be made for their support, further than is already made, *i. e.*, to leave them to support themselves, giving to the Church such portion of time as is consistent with their temporal interest. The reasonableness of this difference, we presume, is apparent and satisfactory to the local ministry. But that it may appear to others, let the first and second points of difference be waived, as they do not fall within the design of this essay, and let it be observed:

1. That in addition to the labors—in many cases extensive and useful—and their own contributions to the support of the itinerancy, the local ministry do not ask for any such disciplinary provision to be made. There are some few discontented spirits, who meet with the disapprobation, if not the rebuke, of the local ministry as a body.

2. The local ministry are already supported as well, if not better, than the itinerancy, *i. e.*, they support themselves as well, or better, than the Church supports their itinerant brethren. Indeed, many of the latter locate annually to get a support.

3. The itinerants, by withdrawing from secular pursuits, and giving their whole time to the Church, thus become, in a stricter sense, the servants of the Church, and should be supported by the Church.

There are already a sufficient number of causes operating against the support of the itinerant ministry, without adding this one, which would effectually and immediately break down the system from one end to the other. The itinerants can but live on what they now receive.

But shall the local ministry receive nothing? There is no statute against it, nor any provision for it. Instead of there being any objection, it would be commendable for those who have been served for years by a local minister, to give him a substantial testimonial of his life and work as a minister. They deserve it. There are cases where a local minister has lived and labored for a score of years, and those for whom he has labored have not given him so much as a Bible. The support of the itinerancy is no reason, with people who will not rob Peter to pay Paul, for this disrespect to the local ministry.

The local minister who thus serves the Church of Christ for *Christ's* sake, may say, in his gratuitous labors for the Church, "I have used none of these things, but have made the gospel without charge, lest I should *hinder* the gospel of Christ." Let the itinerant not overlook the labors, suffering, and expense of the local minister, given in devotion to the Church; neither let the local minister forget that, notwithstanding the provision which the Discipline makes for the support of his travelling brother, he often fails to get it, and has, in a measure, also to labor and suffer like himself for the Church at his own cost. And let both the itinerant and local ministry, as *one*, fix upon "the glory of God" as the motive in "whatsoever" they do, which *alone* can preserve harmony, and which alone can be done by the *Spirit of God* dwelling in their hearts, and pointing to the "glory of God:" and with respect to their labors, sufferings, and losses, which they perform and endure, not for making one or the other greatest in the kingdom of God, but that God may be glorified, let them say, individually: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE SUPERANNUATED — THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS.

BESIDES the *effective* ministry, whose support we have been considering, there is an *ineffective* detachment, who *have* labored, but are unable to work any longer. The superannuated are either those who, though able to work, are not able to do full work, or those who are unable to do any work—they are “*worn out.*” The widows and orphans are the wives and children of those ministers “who have died in the work,” *i. e.*, in the itinerancy. The Discipline provides that those preachers who have not obtained their regular allowance of quarterage on the circuits, shall have a right to present their deficiency along with the claims of the claimants just noticed. As those preachers who are deficient seldom present their claims, and seldom get much when they are presented, the claimants may be set down as virtually embraced in the caption.

These claimants are allowed a claim for quarterage only, corresponding in amount to what is allowed the effective ministers, their wives and children. They are allowed nothing for table or family expense. To meet their claims, each preacher in charge is required to take up a “conference collection” in every appointment. But the amount collected has been so far below what was required, that the claimants have been settled with at a discount from forty to sixty per cent. The causes of this discount may be set down as two: 1. An indifference among the preachers as to making the collection. Whether this indifference be attributed to “forgetfulness,” or “press of other business,” or as a consequence of concern for other collections, it certainly should receive the attention of the Annual Conferences. 2. The temporal circumstances of some of the claimants induce many to give less than they otherwise would, and others to give nothing at all, and, doubtless, create some hesitancy in the preacher’s mind as to pressing the collection. If a becoming discretion is not exercised by the class of claimants referred to, it is hoped the



Annual Conferences will not fail to exercise the discrimination allowed them by the last General Conference. If the Annual Conferences attend to these two points, the claims of the needy will be fully met every year.

How painful it is to see this afflicted detachment of the travelling host dropped by the way, and so nearly forgotten by both preachers and people! Their battles are behind them, but not their wants, nor all their sufferings. They are worn out, or made widows and orphans, and have become poor, in laboring for others—*us*—in spiritual things. Age, infirmity, and poverty have driven them to a private if not obscure life. Their case suggests the proverb, “Out of sight, out of mind.” But shall it be so? No, no. We are not presenting them as beggars or paupers. They are the servants of the Most High, worn out and placed in their present position by their services to the Church. The facts that their claims are not met, and that, if they were paid in full, they would not afford a support, should *stir* our hearts and hands to do our duty. “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.” “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

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## CHAPTER IX.

### EXCUSES.

ALTHOUGH the support of the ministry is so clearly a *duty*, yet excuses are given—rather *made* and *offered*—for neglect of that duty. How very anxious some persons are to obtain an answer to the polite and humble petition, “I pray thee have me excused.” And after satisfying others that their prayer is reasonable and should be granted, it is possible their own consciences in a quiet hour condemn them for not doing their duty, and for the invalidity of their excuse. If a man of that class were to write his excuse in legible characters, and place it before him at his dinner-table, at his toilette, when harvesting his crop, and counting his money, and on Sabbath, with it on his breast, sit in front of his minister, and, while

praying for his minister in secret, lift up his [clean] hands, and utter to the Lord the same excusing prayer which he has given to the steward, there would be little need of this chapter on excuses.

There is a class who pay off the preacher in a peculiar way, *i. e.*, by long, cheap prayers and "amens" from those who have never taken up the cross. They pray like a storm, and when they get to the highest pitch of concern for the preacher's welfare—"O Lord, give him souls for his hire." There are objections to this—not to praying for the minister, but substituting prayers for money: 1. It is disobedient. 2. It is dishonest not to pay the laborer. 3. It is insulting to send the laborer to one for pay who does not owe us, and to pay in other people's souls. 4. Souls are of more value than worlds, yet they cannot be changed into raiment, or be made into bread. 5. The prayer is heterodoxical: there is no scripture to authorize it. 6. It is dictatorial. There is no danger of *the Lord's* failing to pay the minister, and that of the proper substance. The Lord intends that *we* should give the minister what is necessary for the living of *his body*. He has so ordained. He has given us the means of doing it. What right have we to pay off *our* laborer with a draft on the Lord to be paid in other people's souls?

Knowing the *convenience* with which excuse-makers can act Proteus, it is not expected that they will acknowledge the invalidity of their excuses. It is not so much the change of *opinion* that is lacking, as the change of *will*. For you may

"Refute a man against his will,  
He's of the same *volition* still"

Excuse 1. "The minister does not need it—he can live without it—he is well enough off now."

This excuse implies, 1. You *know* the state of the minister's temporal affairs. 2. You *know* how much is necessary to support him. 3. In your judgment—probably a *purse-guarding* guess—the minister is able to work for us and support himself; and, 4. That he *ought* to do it. Such is the *soul* of your excuse, when undressed.

2: "The minister is better off now than I am."

With respect to that part of this excuse which is not answered in the reply to the first, it may be observed: 1. You

have compared your wealth or poverty with that of the minister, and have ascertained clearly that the minister has more wealth or less poverty than you have. 2. The fact that you are worth less than he is, justifies you in giving nothing for his support, while laboring for you. (On this principle, you are under no obligation to pay a man worth more than you, who has wrought for you a whole year, even in increasing your worldly gain. And all that is necessary to outstrip your neighbors in acquiring wealth, is to hire men to labor for you who are worth more than you. If you are worth one thousand dollars, and your laborer is worth a thousand dollars and twenty-five cents, he deserves nothing for the service he has rendered you.

3. "If every member would give as much as I do, the minister would get his allowance."

Do you mean that if every one would give *in proportion to ability* as you do? Or have you counted the poor, the females, the children, and possibly the colored members, and then guessed at what the preacher in your judgment should live on, and then divided the amount among the entire membership of the society or circuit, without regard to ability, and taken one portion yourself? Remember, a man is required to give according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not. Apply this rule in your own case, and not a different one in the case of others.

4. "Others more able than I am give nothing, and I will give nothing."

It is admitted that such a case as you mention is discouraging and disgraceful—too much so, for you to make a respectable excuse out of it; and I rather dislike to expose the principle involved in your excuse. Let us see if this is not it: *Others will not do their duty; therefore, you will not do yours.* Certain men, for whom a laborer has wrought, not a day, nor a week, but months, will not give him his hire; therefore, he shall receive nothing for laboring for me. The reason assigned in the excuse for not giving is a strong appeal, not only to our sense of justice to give the minister what is due him from *us*, but also to our liberality, *i. e.*, to increase our contributions beyond what justice requires, and thus prevent the minister from suffering from the injustice of others. The obligation to do our duty does not depend on the performance

of duty by others. Instead of doing as they do, let us do *our* duty, and endeavor to get them to do theirs. If they perform not their duty, to their own Master they stand or fall. "Every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God." Nearly allied to this is another :

5. "The minister should be supported by the rich, or those better off than I am."

While the excuse is warm, let it be moulded into English thus : *Others should pay my debts.* If the "rich" pay their part and yours too, all is well ; if they do not, it is equally well. You sleep sound in either case. It is hard to tell what is best to do for you, as your creed is not to pay your preacher any thing until those better off than you are pay for themselves and you, until they are reduced in ability to a level with you ; and then, it is probable, you would have another excuse—hope a *better* one. Let me point out a certain character to you, that, when you find him, you can read this to him. When he expects a collection to be made, from "being so busy," "not very well," or "forgetting the appointment," he stays at home. Or if he go, having taken a previous vow "never to sign any paper," and having left his purse at home, he gets back home without "involving" himself. Or if caught, when there is no chance of getting out without *too much* shame, he will give a pistareen for a quarter, which is his quarterage, or *annualage*. From his looks, you would suppose he was both sick and sorry. *You* are able and bound to do *your* duty. Disdain to receive the services of your minister at the expense of others, and say, with David : "I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost."

6. "The minister gets too much."

*He should not do this*, any more than he should get too little. How much does he need ? How much does he get ? How often has he got too much ? How *much* over the proper amount does he get ? Has he never got too little ? What then ? From whom does he get too much ? You ? Has he received from you what you ought to contribute ? Probably this declaration of yours has been made without sufficient knowledge of the case. Are you *afraid* that he will get too much ? Admit your excuse is true : is it a valid reason for not giving your part ? If it be so with one minister, is it so

with another? If so with one minister this year, is it so with him next? Was it so with him last year? If you are certain the minister gets too much, and if that *is the reason* you do not give him any thing, consistency demands that you follow him up at the end of the year, and see without doubt that he gets *enough*, though it be at your expense.

7. "I have given as much as I can."

What a pity that all do not do the same noble part! If you have, like the poor widow, "cast in *all*," or, like Zaccheus, "given the half of your goods to feed the poor," and proclaim a willingness to restore fourfold to any man whom you have wronged, you have given what *justice* requires. Reëxamine and be certain. Place what you *give* by what you *retain*, and, before repeating the excuse, remember very few can sincerely use your excuse: remember that a great number give nothing, others much less than they can: that it is probable your minister will be deficient—you may have reason to believe he will—unless some add to their contribution. Inquire what you have purchased, or intend to purchase, which is not as necessary to you as the minister's support is to him, and remember the words of our Lord, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive:" then, if you cannot give *something* more, you may claim what few in this respect can, the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

8. "I am in debt."

This is a common and specious excuse. To whom are you in debt? Do you owe the Lord nothing? or his ministers, your constant servants, nothing? Your excuse implies that, if the minister has any claims against you, your indebtedness to others is a sufficient reason for refusing to satisfy them. For what are you in debt? Is it for the *necessary* things of life—something as necessary as the services of the ministry? Or is it not for gain? For *whose* benefit have you incurred this debt? Was it not for yours? If so, the excuse might be a reason why you should not spend your money or extend your credit for *yourself*, but not a reason for not paying your minister. How much are you in debt? Is it so much that you are not able to pay it and your minister also? Is it a debt which you are *morally* bound to pay before that which you owe the minister? or to the repudiation of the minister's claims? "But I am in debt more than I can pay for several

years, and I am paying interest." Is there not in this something really wrong? Have you made some purchase through ambition, pride, or desire to gain, and as a consequence withhold the minister's allowance, stop your *religious* paper, complain of having so many calls for money, say short prayers, or none at all, and work your servants and mules as near death as your *interest* will allow you? If this is your case, are you not in *danger*? If this is not the case, is not this "debt" a small amount in proportion to your ability? May it not be worth the *interest* as an excuse? Aside from the moral principle which possibly may be involved in this "debt," and in the accompanying excuse, do you not make this indebtedness rather a convenient and profitable arrangement? Is it not an excuse for striving to attain the stakes which avarice has set up at a distance before you? Are you in debt because you could not avoid it? Could you not pay out at present, or in a short time? But, ah! what would then become of your excuse? What would you do for a theme in your long talks with your avaricious competitors? and what would you do for an apology for your greediness after the world? Does your indebtedness make you a poorer man? Did you not prefer the property for which you are in debt, to the money you owe for it? Are you not, in your judgment, as well if not better off "in debt," than you would be out of it? Is it your sincere desire to be out of debt? If you were out, how long would you remain so? Do you wish to get out and keep out of debt? How long has this been your theme? Is it not with a degree of pride that you speak of being in debt? Do you not often speak of it when there is no use for it? *Is no one in debt to you?* Probably your assets are greater than your liabilities, and yet you have not said a word about that. Some men, with thousands at interest, will speak of being in debt, if they owe no more than the blacksmith's or shoemaker's account. Would you offer this excuse for the nonpayment of the account of your physician or teacher? You pay them and others accounts, which the law of the land would compel you to pay, and say you pay your just debts, and claim thereby to be an honest man. There being no law in this country to compel you to aid in the support of the ministry, (there should be none,) the payment of your minister, the justice of whose claim is sanctioned by Divine authority, is better proof of an honest man

at heart, than the payment of a debt which the law would recognize as just, and which the debtor would be compelled to pay. Was it in accordance with uprightness so to involve yourself, (if, indeed, you have done so,) as to be unable to give your minister his due? This matter has been pressed as near as it is advisable. The validity of the excuse is left to be determined by your conscience.

9. "He is not the minister I wanted," or, "I don't approve of some things which the minister has done."

The substance of both is, you are not satisfied with the minister. Neither in those churches which profess to have the power of choosing their own ministers, any more than in ours, does every church, much less every member, obtain the minister desired. In those churches, it is very seldom the case the members *unite* in calling a minister. Some are disappointed and dissatisfied. The majority may fail also, because the minister may have a more *effectual* call from another church. If he *come*, the dissatisfied members must endure it just so long as the majority and minister agree. In our system, the same preference prevails. The minister you desired may have been desired by several others. It is evident that but one can be accommodated—indeed, if it be not thought best to send him to some place where he is not sought after. You would not say that you should have your own way in a matter where probably half a dozen others had an equal right with you, in a matter, too, which, by uniting with the M. E. Church, you have agreed to leave in the hands of a third party, the Bishop. You have not chosen the minister, nor has the minister chosen you; but he came according to the well-understood economy of the Church. Is not your excuse, on reflection, unreasonable? Consistency would lead into another communion, or into acquiescence with the economy of our Church. Possibly he is the minister that you need. Those who receive and support the minister sent, seldom, if ever, fail to be profited by his services; and if they have no partiality for him in the beginning of the year, the close generally finds them in love with him. If we knew what the probable difficulties which attend the appointment of the ministers of an Annual Conference are, and the trials which the ministers endure in reaching their fields of labor, we certainly would not add an additional trial, by refusing to aid in their

support. It may be observed, with respect to your disapproving the course of the minister, that if he has done something which would justify your refusal to aid in his support, he can be reached by a penalty of a disciplinary and of a more manly character, and which would give him what no man should be denied, an opportunity to defend himself. But you would try, condemn, and punish him privately at your own tribunal, without giving him a hearing, and leaving him no opportunity to explain, or obtain redress. Would not a different course exhibit more of the Christian, and also of the man? But you did not say he did *wrong*, but that you do not approve of his course. He is not infallible; neither do you claim to be. If he did wrong, are you satisfied he intended it? Whether it were intentional or not, are you doing right in your course? What has he done? There is a class—I hope you are not in it—who strongly disapprove of the course of the minister, if he enforces the Discipline in neglect of class-meeting, dram-drinking, circuses, dancing, etc. And it is “horrible” if he should sprinkle some hellfire in the cup of pleasure, on the storehouse of the rich fool, or on the bed of adultery. The minister is to be judged by God, so are we all.

10. “The minister is proud.”

No apology is offered for his pride. If he is proud, any other place would suit him better than the ministry. Why do you think he is proud? Not because he may “go finer” than you? Many might say the same of you. Do you think he is proud because he has not spoken to you? Have you given him an opportunity? Have you spoken to him? You knew him and his name when he first came. Have you met him as he came out of the pulpit or altar, and made yourself known to him, and invited him to go home with you? If prior engagement or some other cause prevented him from accepting your invitation that time, have you invited him again, or requested him to say when he could go with you? Or have you, after one invitation, kept at a distance, saying, you asked him once, and he wouldn’t go, and if he go now he may do so without asking, and then you take up a notion he is proud! In this way, many get the impression that the minister is proud. But, nine times in ten, a better acquaintance will disabuse their minds—especially at your fireside. But if, after all, you believe him to be proud, how should he be



treated? *Starve him*, says the excuse-maker. Will the prescription cure? Is it intended for the *benefit* of the patient, or is it pride physicking her sister? Would not prayer, counsel, and your example do better? And to pave the way for a successful approach to the minister, would it not do well to convince the minister of your desire for his welfare, by giving him something to live on? If contact with the means of support tends to *augment* pride, it will also *induce* pride. Is there no danger in the case of others? no danger in your own case? Have you ever tried the starvation recipe in your own case? Suppose you should cure the minister by this prescription—so cheap to you and so dear to him—would there be no danger of the physician taking the same disease in a malignant form, in addition to the existing one of *injustice*? Naaman would be healed, but Gehazi would be leprous.

11. "I work for my living."

That's right: "For if any will not work, neither should he eat." You are the man. Your hard and sunburnt hands—good sign of an honest man—are proof that you work; and, although you are in suspicious company, I am glad to meet with you. I *like* that excuse of yours. It shows that you *work*, and that you *live* by your work. Your creed and practice is just what every man should adopt, and is exactly what is contended for in behalf of the minister of the gospel. *He works*, and should, like you, *live* by his work. "The workman is worthy of his meat." His work is not the same *sort* as yours, yet it is *work*, "the work," "the work of the ministry." It is a work more perplexing, responsible, important, and—will you admit it?—harder than yours. It is a work performed, not immediately for himself, as yours is for yourself, but for others—for you, for your family and neighbors. It is a work of greater good than yours. While *you* are working for *your* BODY, *he* is working for *your* SOUL, and the souls of others. And such is the demand of this work, that, if the minister attend to it as he ought, he cannot do the *sort* of work which you are doing, and, consequently, cannot obtain a living from that source. Your excuse, then, which a little more reflection would have induced your honesty not to make *as a plea for not supporting the ministry*, is the rule which should prevail, and which, by Divine authority, is appointed to prevail, in the support of the ministry. As we live, like all honest men

should and do live, by our *work*, so let the minister live by his work; for "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel *should live of the gospel.*"

The Gospel Ministry, with their claims, now are left at the tribunal of justice. May the disposition which is made of them be approved by an enlightened conscience, and confirmed by Eternal Justice in the day of judgment.

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### PLAN FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY.

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BEFORE giving the plan for operation, let us premise some general rules which must be kept in view to insure success:

1. Let the ministry do their work *faithfully*. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." This has no little influence in obtaining a support. It is true that some will give nothing, let the minister work as hard as he may, and others will give just so much and no more. Yet there are many who will contribute to the support of the minister that works faithfully, who otherwise would not, and others will contribute more largely.

2. Let the people be instructed in the duty of supporting the ministry. Expediency might require this to be done by others rather than the ministers. Yet there is no valid reason why the ministry should not instruct the people in this duty as well as in any other. And those disposed to learn and do their duty, would exhibit no more drowsiness or restlessness, under a sermon of that sort, than in listening to one on a commandment in the Decalogue.

3. As far as practicable, let the obligation to support the ministry be made to rest sensibly on *every* member of the church. Let each member, however poor, be taught to feel, and, according to ability, induced to respond to, the claim of the minister to a support. Let the wife and each child, especially those in the church, be represented, to their knowledge and consent—better done personally—by the contribution of the

husband or father. The usual plan, the husband giving a certain amount against his own name only, leaves the family not to know, neither of necessity to care, whether the minister is supported or not. Though the total contributed by a family be the same, by being thus divided, and though the husband or father give the wife and children the money to pay for themselves out of his own pocket, yet how different is the result on *them*, and how different will be their notions, feelings, and actions respecting the support of the ministry, after the husband or father is dead! They are thus taught to think the minister is *theirs*, his support *their* concern, and also to aid in that support by their own hands. And, more than all, a *habit* is formed, which will authorize the church to *depend* on them, which will prevent them from *forgetting*, and measurably from *neglecting*, the minister; and it will not be found necessary to reason them out of a dozen flimsy excuses, to obtain their aid in supporting the ministry. If this (the support of the ministry) is what *adults* should do, should not the children be *trained* to it? "Train up a child in the way he should go" after he becomes a man, "and," such will be the strength of habit thus formed, "when he is old, he will not depart from it."

4. Have the right sort of men for stewards, or have no more than the Discipline compels us to have. The fewer of the wrong sort the better. No plan will work well in inefficient hands. It requires just such men as the Discipline describes: "Let them be men of solid piety, who both know and love the Methodist doctrine and discipline, and of good natural and acquired abilities to transact the temporal business." The slack, unmethodistic fashion of many stewards, not only *prevents* the minister from obtaining his allowance, but gives the membership of the church a false idea of the claims of the minister, of the duty of a steward, and of their own duty. Let no one suppose that any thing more is meant than to show the importance of having the right sort of men in this office: the benefit of good ones, and the damage of bad ones.

5. It is a bad rule to put more men at any work than are necessary to do it. There is a way of appointing a "*committee*" to do what a *man* will do better and sooner than a committee. Especially is this bad policy in the financial interests of the Church. In proportion as you increase the number beyond

what is necessary to do the work, you multiply the chances of not having it done at all.

6. Define, with as much particularity as possible, the exact limit of each member's work, as well as that of each circuit and class steward. To know what is to be done, and who is to do it, leaves but one more step till you arrive at the *will—how* to do it. To have the work specified, and apportioned to persons who will work at all, insures, in much probability, the performance.

7. Begin in time. It is not meant that you should *admit* that it is *best* to begin in time, and there stop, but begin not to talk about beginning; but begin to *work*, and the work will be measurably finished before the time that it is now generally commenced. Who does not know the blustering, begging, failing, etc., which frequently crowds in the close of the year? Put off, put off, until a part of the minister's allowance is put out of his reach, *i. e.*, it is not collected. This is the case year after year. There is a "fifth quarterly meeting," or stewards' meeting, to do what should have been done at the first, second, third, and fourth. Indeed, the stewards and people, in many circuits, count on nothing else at the beginning of the year than to have a stewards' meeting. *Begin in time.*

With these general rules—faithfulness in the ministry, instruction of the people, individualizing the obligation, filling the steward's office with proper men, no more than just enough at a work to do it, marking the limits of each man's work, and beginning in time—before us as a rule of conduct by which this duty may be best observed, money collected and the Church supported, it is proposed to adopt the following

#### PLAN.

##### 1. *For the Superannuated, Widows and Orphans.*

1. Let the Stewards of the Annual Conference, or, which is preferable, a standing Joint Board of Finance, composed of one circuit steward from each presiding elder's district in the Conference, and as many members of Conference, ascertain the whole amount of claim against them, and apportion annually the same to the several circuits and stations in the Conference, and let each preacher having charge of a circuit or station, furnish his successor with the amount apportioned to his charge.

2. Let the Conference collection be taken up as early in the year :

practicable, and let each preacher make all necessary efforts to collect the amount apportioned to his charge by the board.

### 2. *Presiding Elders.*

1. Let the board of district stewards be a standing board for four years: provided, nevertheless, should any vacancy appear in the board, let such vacancy be supplied by the Quarterly Conference.

2. Let the district steward be charged with collecting the amount apportioned to the circuit or station where he resides.

### 3. *Circuit and Station Preachers.*

1. Let the preacher in charge of each circuit (at the close of the conference year) fix the first appointment for his successor at the church nearest the parsonage, (or place of boarding,) and allow him thereafter at least one week to arrange for the year: during which time, (the day to be fixed the preceding year by the preacher and stewards,) let the stewards hold the first meeting at the parsonage, or place of boarding, and let it be the duty of each steward to attend.

2. Let the board of stewards ascertain the whole claim against the circuit, for the current year, both for quarterage and travelling expenses, as definitely as possible: then make an estimate of the family expenses of the preacher or preachers of the circuit, including servants' hire and house-rent, (if a house be rented.)

[If thought better, let the following be substituted for the plan given for P. E.]:

3. Let the preacher in charge lay before the stewards at the first meeting, besides his own, the claims of the presiding elder and junior preacher, which can be furnished him at Conference.

4. Let the entire claim against the circuit for the current year be apportioned to the several congregations composing the circuit.

5. Let the stewards divide the congregations composing the circuit among themselves, and immediately inform the several congregations in their respective divisions of the amounts they are expected to raise, and make all necessary efforts to collect the same.

6. Let the stewards, in connection with the class stewards, open subscription-books in each congregation, to meet the current claims. And if the stewards deem it necessary, let them cause public collections to be taken up for the same purpose.

7. Let the stewards so arrange the subscriptions, that they may settle with the preachers quarterly. To do this, it will be necessary to visit their congregations, by appointment, once a quarter.

[The author has adopted, in part, the financial plan of the Joint Board of Finance of the South Carolina Conference.]

It is proposed to adopt some form to be observed by those who keep books, and to some who do business without plan and form. Let the following be the form for the board of district stewards:

*Form for the Board of District Stewards.*

Estimation of the support of W. O., Presiding Elder of X District, for the year 1854, by the District Stewards.

<i>District Dr.</i>		<i>District Cr.</i>			
	\$ cts.	1st qr. \$ cts.	2d qr. \$ cts.	3d qr. \$ cts.	4th qr. \$ cts.
Quarterage,.....					
Family Expenses,...					
Travelling Expenses,					
Total,.....					

Assessment of the charges in the district to meet the above allowances.

	\$ cts.	1	2	3	4
STEWARDS.					
Stafford Circuit,					
Green Station, .					
		J. T. Williams,.....			
		H. Jones,.....			

REMARKS.—One line across the page or book shows in the estimate the quarterage claim, and what of it is received each quarter. So of the other items. The line "total" shows the entire claim, also the amount received by the P. E. each quarter.



*Form of a Steward's Own Book.*

Assessment of 1st Division of Stafford Circuit, for the current year 1854, William Jones, Steward.

	\$ cts.	1st qr. \$ cts.	2d qr. \$ cts.	3d qr. \$ cts.	4th qr. \$ cts.
Bethel, .....					
Zion, .....					
Shiloh, .....					
.....					
.....					
.....					

*Form of Class Steward's Book.*

Assessment of Bethel Congregation by the Board of Stewards, for the support of the ministry on Stafford Circuit, for the year 1854.—Fifty dollars.

NAMES.	SUBSCRIPTION. \$ cts.	1	2	3	4
A. Hopkins,.....	5 00	1 00	1 00	2 00	2 00
Mary Hopkins,.....	2 00			50	50

A correspondence between the four books will be seen readily. The plan of each is similar, and the utility of each is apparent. The cost of the books is, separately, a trifle. The time and trouble to keep them is less than any other, careless way. These are all matters of record, and should be preserved. Let every one have his work, his book, and understand the plan.



THE

# Divine Assessment

FOR THE

SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY.

BY THE

REV. R. ABBEY.



Nashville, Tenn. :

PUBLISHED BY E. STEVENSON & J. E. EVANS, AGENTS,

FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

1857.

## Note.

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THIS argument was contributed, in numbers, to the columns of the Nashville Christian Advocate. Its republication was called for by the following resolution of the Board of Managers of the Tract Society of the Mississippi Conference in July, 1855.

*Resolved*, That Dr. Hamilton, the General Tract Secretary, be, and he is hereby requested to have published, with the advice and assistance of Dr. Summers, the Book Editor, in the form of a tract or tract volume, for the use of the Tract Society, a series of articles which appeared not long since in the Nashville Christian Advocate, on "*The Divine Assessment for the Support of the Ministry*, over the signature of "Censor."

H. H. MONTGOMERY, *President*.

J. A. LIGHT, *Secretary*.

SHARON, MISS., July 25, 1855.

# THE DIVINE ASSESSMENT FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SCRIPTURE LAW.

IN introducing the following pages to the reader, and in discussing the subject set forth, it is manifestly appropriate that the Scriptures should be in the first place brought forward, upon which the reasoning is founded. We must first make ourselves acquainted with the law of God on the subject. The mere opinions of men on this or any other theological question, are but of little or no value. The *law of God* is the only basis we can recognize.

If the law of God has made an assessment upon our property, it is binding beyond any obligations we can create in our dealings with men. If this obligation is imposed for a specific purpose, and if such purpose looks to the greatest conceivable human benefits, then the importance and binding force of the obligation rises in inconceivable degrees.

That many of us, many good people, of no small quantum of real or supposed piety, have got into loose habits of thinking and acting in reference to this subject, is the well settled convictions of the writer. And it shall be the object of this and the following chapters, to point out these errors for our mutual benefit, and for the glory of God. Friends, let me have your attention : the subject is important, the issues are momentous.

And, as already intimated, the reader will pardon the introduction of several passages of Scripture, which shall form the foundation for the remarks which may follow. Let it be particularly borne in mind, that all of us are very much prone to forget and neglect the laws of God, especially those which command us in reference to those delinquencies and temptations which steal most silently and imperceptibly upon us. Let each one remember that he himself is but a man, very likely to err, and that error is sure to make inroads upon him, sooner or later.

We will, then, first quote a few passages which set forth, generally,

#### THE CORRUPTING TENDENCY OF PROPERTY.

Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses and dwell therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold are multiplied; then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God.—Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. Deut. viii. 11–14; xxxii. 15.

And his name (Uzziab) spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. 2 Chron. xxvi. 15.

In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Ps. xxx. 6.

The turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.—Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. Prov. i. 32; xxx. 8.

There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. Eccl. v. 15.

I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear. Jer. xxii. 21.

Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me; therefore, I took them away as I saw good.—By thy great wisdom, and by thy traffic, hast thou increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches. Ezek. xvi. 49, 50; xxviii. 5.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, 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. Matt. xix. 23, 24.

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. Mark iv. 19.

Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich, fall into temptations, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some covet after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness. 1 Tim. vi. 8–11.

#### THE INSTABILITY OF ACCUMULATED PROPERTY, AND COMMANDS AGAINST THE EAGER PURSUIT OF IT.

Labor not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.—A faithful man shall abound with blessings; but he that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent. He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.—Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away, as an eagle toward heaven. Prov. xxiii. 4; xxviii. 20; xxiii. 5.

Vanity of vanities saith the Preacher: vanity of vanities, all is vanity.—Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. Therefore, I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for

all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. Eccl. i. 2; ii. 11, 17-19.

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth. Isa. v. 8.

#### THE SCRIPTURAL USE OF PROPERTY.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, and that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Matt. xvi. 26.

#### LAWS AGAINST HOARDING AND PARSIMONY.

Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days. Eccl. xi. 1.

Freely ye have received, freely give. Matt. x. 8.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.— If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees, also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him. Luke xii. 34; xvi. 11, 13.

I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts xx. 35.

Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Gal. vi. 9, 10.

To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such services, God is well pleased. Heb. xiii. 16.

#### REWARDS OF PIOUS LIBERALITY.

Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his seed is blessed. Ps. xxxvii. 3, 25, 26.

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.—There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered himself. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.—There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. Prov. iii. 9; xi. 24–26; xiii. 7.

The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand. Isa. xxxii. 8.

Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed. Mal. xxx. 9–12.

Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. Luke vi. 38.

This I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

LAWS BEARING MORE DIRECTLY ON THE SUPPORT OF THE  
MINISTRY.

And this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee. Gen. xxviii. 22.

And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. Lev. xxvii. 32.

And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thy inheritance among the children of Israel. And behold I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.—And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households; for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. Num. xviii. 20, 21, 31.

And that we should bring the first-fruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine, and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.—And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them; for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil unto the treasuries. Neh. x. 37; xiii. 10-12.

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Mal. iii. 8.

Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat. Matt. x. 9.

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; and commanded them that they should take nothing



for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse; but be shod with sandals, and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, when ye depart thence shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. Mark vi. 7-11.

And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.—Carry neither purse nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Luke ix. 2, 3; x. 4, 7.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. John xiii. 20.

Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same, also? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we, rather? Nevertheless, we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 1 Cor. ix. 7, 8, 11-14.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. vi. 6, 7.

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.—And we beseech you, brethren, to know them

which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. 1 Thes. ii. 6; v. 12.

For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the laborer is worthy of his reward. 1 Tim. v. 18.

Without quoting extensively, I have here endeavored to present a few texts, which bear most directly and plainly on the several phases of the general question to be treated of in the following chapters. They abundantly establish *the law* on the subject.

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## CHAPTER II.

### WHAT IS THE SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY?

THAT a divine assessment for the support of the gospel ministry is made upon our property, is as clearly established from the foregoing quotations from the word of God, as any Christian doctrine can be established from the Bible.

In order that we be prepared, and be kept prepared, for a performance of duty in this regard, we are very forcibly instructed as to the *corrupting tendencies* of property, when accumulated beyond the point of mere comfortable subsistence. Subsistence is the end of property.

We are also instructed, most cogently and powerfully, with regard to the *instability* of property, when possessed beyond the actual, reasonable wants of life; and we are commanded, at the peril of our soul's salvation, against the *eager pursuit of it*.

The true, proper, lawful, and *scriptural use of property* is also set forth, in terms so plain and unmistakable, that any man may read and understand, *if he will*. *Laws against hoarding and parsimony* are as plain, positive, and determinate as the laws against falsehood and licentiousness.

The *rewards of pious liberality*, too, stand out in noble and bold relief; and are intended, by our merciful Judge, to win us away from the stealthful seductions of Satan on the other hand. Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, is the

soft, soothing, affectionate promise, as well as the imperative mandate of the Lord God Almighty.

And then, too, we have the plain, direct laws on the *support of the ministry*. The laws which require the support of the ministry are as specific, mandatory, and peremptory, as those which enjoin prayer, repentance, or any other duty. The support of the ministry, performed according to the spirit and meaning of the law, is the worship of God. And the worship of God, in any plainly prescribed manner, may not be dispensed with.

To look more particularly into this law, and apply it to the practical details of every-day life, is the task which now lies before the writer and the reader. May self or selfishness not be suffered to interpose between our eyes and the truth!

God's providence consists in a number of *laws*, with an efficient executive power. The end of all is—so far as any thing out of God personally may be considered—the salvation of man. All the laws of God's grace and providence look to this end in as direct a manner as the nature of the case admits.

Religion and government, parts of providence, are the great twin aspects of human life. In order for either or both to be healthful, they must harmonize and interwork with each other. And in order for them to be *true*, they must also, each and both, be precisely adapted to the constitution and circumstances of mankind.

If we assume that Republicanism is the *true* form of human government, we contend that it is the only form that is exactly adapted to the nature of man. And if we say that Protestant Christianity is the *true* form of religion, we mean thereby that it is the only religious principle which harmonizes with man's moral make and mechanism.

Religion and government, therefore, are not only the two great twin supporters of each other, but the co-workers in supporting both religious and political truth. Hence, if the ministry of the gospel is to be supported according to truth, it must be done according to the true principles of both government and religion.

Now, there are two, and only two modes of supporting the gospel ministry: 1. By means of what is called a religious establishment; and 2. By the voluntary principle. The error

of a religious establishment is, that it regards the support of the ministry as an end: whereas, it is only the means to an end. The most certain and efficient way of supporting the ministry, most unquestionably, is by civil taxation.

But what have you gained by this? You have raised a revenue. And what will you do with the money? Support a corps of ecclesiastics, build churches, and keep up a regular discharge of official duty therein. And what good will result from all this? Most likely, none. The probability is, that considerable harm will result. In a country, however, where public morals are at a very low ebb, and where, in consequence, the people are ignorant, and given to superstition, you may, probably, by this means, superinduce a servile reverence for the clergy; and if the laws follow out the principle they commence with, and require of the people stated attendance upon the ministry of the clergy, and certain obeisance to be paid to them, you may, probably, to some extent, repress gross outward immorality. But religion will suffer.

The support of the gospel, *in this way*, will propagate an order of clergy who will take the lead in refined and genteel idleness, effeminacy, self-importance, extravagance, and worldly-mindedness. And the people among the higher orders will be proud of their clergy, proud of their money, and proud of themselves. Among the lower orders they will be dissatisfied, resentful, wicked, and unhappy.

The distinction between the higher and lower orders of society cannot be avoided: for this mode of supporting the ministry will not fail to establish it. All this, however, is a mere worldly arrangement, entirely outside of the gospel.

One of the strangest things in the establishment of American liberty, was its escape from this great European error. And whether this was the result of a wise forecast and true friendship for religion, perhaps need not now be very critically inquired into. It is perhaps enough for us to know, that religion was, in the formation of our government, left to stand upon the only true basis, the voluntary principle. It is no new thing, however, for religion to derive great benefits from its enemies, who, in coöperation with its friends, or otherwise, do the gospel and the truth great service.

Dr. Baird was mistaken when he said, "The foundation of the voluntary principle is to be sought for in the character

and habits of the people of the United States." It is rather to be looked for in the nature of man's constitution. The occasion of its establishment, only, is to be looked for in these habits and local circumstances.

The voluntary principle is part of the divine scheme. Not that there can be no ministry or no salvation without it, but that it works for both—is much more perfect with than without it.

Let us now, for a brief space, turn our attention to the inquiry, What is the support of the ministry?

It is, perhaps, proper, that what is meant by the support of the ministry be explained.

God governs the world and carries forward his providence in pursuance of laws which he has previously established. He governs the world by the laws of attraction, gravitation, coherence, vegetable growth, animal life, etc. In the moral world he governs according to laws equally determinate, though not quite so palpable.

The moral laws of God, so far as we are acquainted with them, look directly or indirectly to the salvation of the human family. This, so far as we see, appears to be the great end of God's moral government.

An integral portion of this great moral code has respect to the ministry of the gospel. It prescribes that certain persons shall, from time to time, be selected from the mass of the world to minister the gospel to the rest. And another integral portion of the code provides for their maintenance.

Now, in order for human happiness and final salvation to be secured, it is of course necessary that these laws be understood and observed. If not understood, they will most likely be violated. A child will put his fingers to the candle, not knowing the laws of fire and of sensation.

The particular law in question is, that a minister, called of God to preach, together with his family, shall receive, from those to whom he ministers, his support. The workman is worthy of his meat.

The true and scriptural doctrine of ministerial support keeps clear of two dangerous extremes. The ministry is to be supported, not to be disabled, either with poverty or riches. High living and splendid equipage violate the divine law

Large salaries, which are held out as a bait to invite and secure showy talent and acquirement, do but degrade the ministry. It is a mere worldly arrangement, outside of the Bible. It is sometimes the case, that the minister, like the lawyer or the artisan, is put up to the highest bidder. The salary does not graduate to the principle of support, but is regulated by the wealth, pride, and worldly-mindedness of the congregation. It is not regarded as the equivalent of the ministerial labor performed, but as the price of worldly blandishments, fashion, and gay decoration of the community.

All this is in direct violation of the divine arrangements respecting the ministry of the gospel. It is the offshoot of pride, gayety, and fashion. It is the tinsel and show of new and fashionable modes of being pious. It is *Churchism*, the deadliest bane of Christianity that true piety has ever been called upon to encounter. A ministry supplied with money beyond the point of support, beyond the equivalent of labor performed, is not or may not be unjust or dishonest, as between the two parties. It is, however, the same kind of an arrangement as the hiring of costly opera performers, or expensive dancing-masters, or the keeping of a king's-fool. It is a fashionable, worldly arrangement, which is merely baptized by an unlawful baptism, but which has no other connection with the Christian religion than the mere etymological relationship which centres upon the word "Church."

Incidentally there may chance to be piety in the minister, and perhaps some piety in the employers; and there may be correct theological teaching, and, upon the whole, some good may be done. But these things come up in spite of the irregularities in question, and not in pursuance of them.

And, on the other hand, a half-impooverished or half-supported ministry is equally unscriptural. Here we have a degree of niggardliness, parsimony, injustice, and spiritual suicide, which we will endeavor to look after a while.

The doctrine of ministerial support is not, however, so exclusive that a minister may, under no circumstances, attend to any secular business; for St. Paul labored with his own hands, and in this way, at times, partially supported himself. Incidental or local circumstances, such as great lack of worldly means in the Church, a very small membership in a particular

church, occasions of general distress arising from any cause, or any such like stress of circumstances, may occasion exceptions to the general rule; but still the divine rule is in force, and means precisely what it says.

Common sense and common prudence will dictate that a minister's support should be such as to enable him, and his family, if he has one, to live not only in comfort, but in a position of external decency which will conform, in a reasonable degree, to the outward circumstances of those to whom he ministers. And all this implies that he himself must be prudent, frugal, and economical. He has no more right to handle lightly or spend loosely the means thus furnished, than the others have to withhold it wholly or partially.

"Support" includes not only a house to live in, with furniture to use, food to eat, and clothes to wear, but the education of his children. Surely the education of children is as necessary a part of family expenses as food or clothing. That is to say, it is presumed we have not settled down upon the doctrine that the children of our ministers are to be brought up in ignorance

It is a great error to suppose that a salary sufficient to cover, with reasonable prudence, all these expenses, will be found more difficult to raise among the congregation than a smaller sum falling below the Scripture standard. Right here lies a very great popular error. The common notion is, the smaller the sum, the easier it is raised. Very far from it. We are not undertaking to graduate ecclesiastical expenses to suit the notions or opinions of men. We are not trying to work up to a fallible standard. We are endeavoring to work according to infallible truth, not in opposition to it. We are endeavoring to work up to the Bible, the divine standard, which is and must be infallibly right and true. To work, in any department of God's providence, *according* to God's laws, is to go easily, smoothly, and without difficulty. But to work—no matter where, or in relation to what—contrary to God's laws, either his laws of nature, as we call them, or his laws of morals, or of grace, is to work to disadvantage—is to incur unnecessary friction, difficulty, and expense.

Put the compensation of ministers down below the Scripture standard of *support*, and you derange the system; for this standard is a part of the system, and therefore necessary

to its well-being and well-working. The machinery of Christianity will work well or ill, as men do or do not conform their conduct to it in all its parts. Withhold from the ministry its *scriptural* support, the divine assessment, and the consequence is, a crippled, dispirited ministry, a mercenary Church, and a worldly-minded people.

And so, if you raise the compensation of the minister quite above the divine rule, what follows? Can piety and religious healthfulness follow? If so, then the laws are wrongly made: the Bible ought to be re-written, at least in this particular. A mercenary and worldly-minded ministry, and a gay, fashionable, and graceless people, are the *natural* results of high salaries and ecclesiastical extravagance.

The scheme of salvation was planned *right*. We cannot better it if we try. The easiest, as well as the best way, to work the ecclesiastical machinery is, to work it according to its own plan, as it was intended to be worked. If any one thing in the entire scheme requires money to be raised, the ministry, for instance, in order to its support, then no other thing objects to the raising of precisely this sum of money. It is easier to raise that sum than a less amount, or to raise none at all, if you work the machine right.

The scheme of salvation is a *harmonious* and not an *inharmonious* scheme. Therefore, that which is a benefit in one part, is and *must be* an advantage in all other parts. If the ministry is so planned by divine wisdom as to require money for its support, then the nature and hearts of the people are so planned as to be benefited by the giving. The lack of the money-raising will, therefore, work as great a disadvantage in the one direction as in the other. Hence, if you wish Christianity to work easily, and smoothly, and profitably, you must set the money key, as well as every other key, precisely according to the divine model.



## CHAPTER III.

## MINISTERIAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS.

LET us now spend a few thoughts respecting the MUTUAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MINISTER AND PEOPLE.

We have seen that the laws of God by which he purposes to save the world, require on the one hand, that certain persons be set apart for the public ministry of the word—that it is their duty to preach; and, on the other hand, that those who thus receive the gospel, and who till the ground, and otherwise provide the world's subsistence, shall share with the ministers in worldly goods to the extent of comfortable subsistence.

Then, according to the laws of God, whose of right is the fruit or produce of all this property around us? Does it belong exclusively—the property itself and the proceeds of it—to the persons whose names it bears respectively? Most assuredly not. For men so to consider and so to use the proceeds of their labor and their property, is as plain, as direct and open a violation of the law of God, as men are capable of. According to the *law of God*, considered by itself, apart from the opinions and popular notions of men—if we are to be governed by the former and not by the latter—the minister has as much right to his support out of these profits and proceeds as each man has respectively to his support out of the same. Hence, it would be no more or no greater a violation of God's law for the minister to deprive the man of his portion, if he had by chance the power, than for the man to withhold from the minister the portion which, by the law of God, is assessed to him. It is a *law* respecting the several rights of parties. It may be a common thing, but it is not a light thing to transgress the laws of God.

Mutual dependence is the law of the universe. To live independent is to fall into ruin. This law pervades creation. Inter-dependence is seen in every thing. In outer nature the principle is acted upon universally. By it the dew-drop displays its beauty upon the opening violet at early morn, and by it the mountain billow heaves to the tornado. The tall oak holds his staunch and brawny limbs against the pressure

of the storm, because the faithful earth hugs him closely at the base. Vegetable growth and reproduction are the results of a thousand confluent and conforming causes. Let but one single property of the atmosphere refuse to comply with the general law, and animal and vegetable sickness and death are the results. Each thing is dependent upon every thing.

And in the human family this law seems to have undergone a refinement proportionate to the superiority of man over blank, inanimate nature. The first human falsehood was violative of this law. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes. And Cain was cursed, as well because he "kept" not his brother, as for the positive injury he did him. Every man is his brother's keeper; and is, at the same time, himself in the keeping of his own brethren. Every thing is held together by the attraction of mutual dependence and influence. The writer and his subject, the workman and his tools, the pastor and his flock, the tithe of the husbandman's fruits and the necessities of the minister, God's laws and God's people, all, all are held together by the gravitation of mutual dependence and relation.

Truth itself, the grand focal centre of the moral universe, could scarcely be said to possess an independent, vital principle, if there were no *things to be true*. Nothing is abstract. There is but one universe, and it is a complex universe of dependences. And every other system, or scheme, or fact, or principle, is but an integral system of mutual and interchangeable dependency, forming, at the same time, a part and a whole. Every thing is dependent upon the whole, and every whole is dependent upon every thing.

This is God's law of relation. Let it not be violated! We may as well expect to see the moon course her way in the heavens, with her uniform exactness, without the assistance of gravitation to hold her to the earth, as to look for the accomplishment of God's mercy scheme, in violation of his law of relation and dependence in this particular. The money of the money-maker is as necessary for the salvation of the people, as is the gentle rain of summer necessary for the healthfulness of the earth's verdure.

God's laws are parts of God's scheme, and there is no superiority of one above another. Gravitation is a law of God—vision is a law of God—grace is a law of God. These

laws are equally immutable, equally potent, equally important, in the prosecution of God's great supervisory providence. The apple upon a tree will not gravitate to the earth so long as it is held fast at the stem. The eye malformed, or the atmosphere malarranged, vision cannot be performed. Every thing may be in place but one—that violation frustrates the scheme. So of God's grace. Let God's minister be deprived of his legal rights, under the gospel economy, uniformly, and Christ's death were in vain.

God's revelation were vain, without both the means and the use of the means of its publication. He said, "Go and preach," in vain, without either providing a raven or *some other* means of support. These *other* means he has provided; and there is a man, a mere man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and who dares to ROB God of these means, for the mere reason that for the present moment they chance to be in his fist! By the blessing of that God whose rights we are now attempting to vindicate, we will pay our respects to that man by and by.

If from these remarks touching the general question of ministerial support, we come down to the practical details of the case in every-day life, we would hastily dispatch a few words touching the domestic circumstances of a pastor and his flock.

We recognize the principle in morals, that the obligation to perform a specific duty is not increased by a promise to perform such duty. Nor, on the other hand, is a claim any better founded, or a right rendered more valid, by the admission of the adverse party that such claim or right is well founded or valid. The *right* of the Christian minister to support, must be shown to be valid, therefore, if valid at all, by the law of God. This has been done, for the Scriptures plainly and incontrovertibly guarantee such right. Still, the division of society into small integral portions, the division of the Church of Christ, as a whole, into what the New Testament writers call churches, viz, single congregations or bodies of Christians worshipping under the same ecclesiastical jurisdiction or single specific pastorate, renders the *application* of this right, on the one hand, and the duty of discharging the obligation on the other, a question of much practical importance. To this specification let us devote a few thoughts.

There is the minister, and there is his church or pastoral

charge. If it were the general duty of this minister before to go into all the world and preach the gospel, it is now his specific duty to preach and minister to this particular people. The general duty has become specific by a compact with these persons. He has now no right to labor generally elsewhere throughout the country; but he is bound to locate his ministry, for the time, in this particular place, and to this particular people.

And a corresponding change of circumstances takes place with the other party. Their duty to support the gospel is no greater nor any less now than before this compact was entered into. But, to the extent of the claim to support of this particular minister, they are now bound to give this particular direction to so much of this gospel fund.

The contract is fairly made between the two parties, and they mutually enter upon the fulfilment of it. It is as much the duty of the minister to perform the service, as it is that of the people to furnish the compensation. This specification of the general question of ministerial support is, so far as these particular parties are concerned, a mere contract about money and labor. The labor, it is agreed, shall be performed: the money, it is agreed, shall be paid.

Let the reader understand carefully. It is no more the duty of the people to support the gospel ministry now than before this arrangement between a pastor and congregation took place. Neither is it any more the duty of the minister to preach the gospel now than before. But this arrangement changes the obligations so far as to make them specific, whereas before they were general.

But it is said that a divided responsibility is no responsibility; and the remark is sometimes applied to one of these parties. That depends entirely upon the question whether the men are honest or not. Honest men will specify and assume among themselves a divided responsibility: others are not likely to do so.

Upon supposition that the minister discharges his obligations, his right, either to "support," as we will endeavor hereinafter to specify, or to the particular sum, immediately attaches to the persons and property of his employers in gross. If, however, the specified sum should be greater than "ministerial support," the excess over and above that point

ranges beyond the specific law of the gospel, and attaches under the civil law, as a mere civil contract.

In either case, however, *his money* is in the pockets of his employers. How shall it be got out and restored to its rightful owner? This is a puzzling question. If the said employers are willing to obey the law of the gospel, they will take it out voluntarily, and deposit with its proper owner. But experience proves that this is uncertain.

But it must be remembered that the law of the gospel is the law of the land in this happy, Christian country of ours. And the law has a maxim, that where there's a right, there's a remedy. But the aid of Cæsar never ought to be invoked to enforce ecclesiastical obligations.

The right of the minister to his compensation is founded, then, first, in the general right to support from the Church, or from those persons to whom he ministers; and secondly, in the specific undertaking in this particular case. And a right supposes a corresponding obligation.

The ministry of a regular Church is of two kinds: First, in regard to the persons who are members of the Church, and secondly, those who compose, generally, the congregation. Unconverted people do not, for the most part, regard the obligation to support the gospel any more than they do other such like laws of God. We must get along with them as best we can, until we can prevail with them to believe the truth.

But the members of the Church, though they are all under the same obligations to God to obey all his laws, occupy a somewhat different position, as respects their relation to each other and to the minister.

Each man is a member of the Church by his own choice, and as such, he has agreed with the Church that he will do and perform certain things, and abstain from doing certain other things. And the Church, on its part, agrees to furnish him spiritual assistance, religious help, protection, etc. Here is a complete contract, binding and valid. One of those things specifically agreed upon, and which binds the Church member, is to *pay the preacher*. The obligation is precisely the same as with a schoolmaster, or any other public agent. The *obligation*, we say, is the same, though the means of enforcing it may be different. He has not only promised the

Church that he will share fairly with them in this and other expenses, but he has promised the preacher, personally, either in terms or otherwise, it matters not, the same thing. No man can be a member of the Christian Church without sustaining these obligations.

The question of distribution is quite another matter. To this the minister is not a party. It matters not to him how they distribute the payment among themselves, so that he gets his money.

But the right is not, by any means, all with the minister, and the obligation all with the people. The doctrine transposed is quite as powerful and weighty. For the minister is under the same pressure of obligation to discharge his duty, that the people are to discharge theirs. The contract is mutual, and so the rights and obligations are mutual.

It is as much the right of each person that his family be occasionally visited by the pastor, his children instructed in religion, his family prayed for and with, as it is that of the minister to expect and receive his compensation. And a default on the part of the minister unquestionably releases the corresponding obligation on the other hand, so far as that minister is concerned.

It is a very mistaken notion, indeed, that the right of the minister to compensation arises from his appointment to or acceptance of that particular pastorate. The performance of pastoral labor is the foundation of his claim. Sickness, or such like casualty, will, of course, occasion a slight relaxation of this rule.

The Scripture rule does by no means create a sinecure. The *laborer* is worthy of his *hire*. *Hire* means compensation for services rendered. No services, therefore, no pay: no right to pay.

In chancery phraseology, you must do equity, before you can demand equity.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE DUTY OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL.

1. *Its neglect deranges the Christian scheme of salvation.*

WE come now to notice the duty of contributing to the support of the gospel. If we have heretofore established the *right* of the ministry to support, under the grant of the gospel, we have necessarily established the corresponding proposition—the *duty* of the Church to furnish such support; for the one necessarily attaches to the other. It has also been attempted to be shown, that the furnishing of means for this ministerial support, is a distinct part of the divine salvation-scheme, and that a failure or derangement here, works derangement throughout the whole scheme, and, therefore certain disadvantage to all persons concerned in it. The person, therefore, who withholds from the Church its due, according to divine assessment, inflicts as great loss upon himself as upon the Church.

If we believe the truth of the gospel, we believe in the divinity of the scheme of the gospel—that it is precisely fitted and adjusted in all its parts, so as to work the greatest possible amount of good in *every* direction. No one thing is intended to benefit any particular thing exclusively; but each distinct thing is calculated and intended to work mutual and reciprocal advantage to every particular thing throughout the entire system.

The furnishing of support for the ministry, for instance, is not intended to benefit the *receiver* more than the *giver*, or more than those who occupy any other position. It is intended to keep the machine in healthful operation, that every thing connected with it may be benefited.

Suppose one man in a church refuses to work up to the divine assessment upon his property, in furnishing support for the ministry. To the extent of his delinquency, he deranges the scheme in this regard, and so cripples the operations of the church. Outside of and apart from himself, he injures the minister, cripples his ministry, sets a bad example to others, by which he, in most cases, deprives the treasury

of more money, indirectly, than by the direct withholding, and works other outward disadvantages which would be tedious to enumerate. But is this all the evil produced by this act of withholding? It is not the half. The greatest amount of harm works back upon himself. Look into his own heart and feelings, and see what havoc is wrought there?

The results of such conduct lie so upon the surface of observation, that all men know that such so-called Christians are a sickly, wilted, drooping class, whose *religion* is scarcely worth the ink and paper of which *it is made*. They seek to be religious *otherwise* than as God has appointed. They may as well undertake to contravene God's law of gravitation, as his law of grace. Omnipotence has guaranteed the execution of both.

And now, let two men in a church pursue such a course—or five, or ten, or a hundred—and what is the consequence? So uniform and so certain are these consequences, in both directions, outward and inward, that the first man you meet can tell you as much about it as the most wise and observing. You may as well look for warm snow, or dark sunshine, as for a faithful, thriving, mercenary and withholding Christian; or for a thriving church among influences which seek to frustrate the mercy-scheme of the Almighty.

A pill of poison in the human system, is no more likely to produce unhealthiness, than a pill of poison in the Christian system. Let the pill be large enough, in either case, and the patient will die.

The scheme of salvation is a LAW OF GOD. It is as specific in all its parts, and as certain in its operations, as the law of vegetable growth, the fluidity of water, or the recurrence of day and night by the motion of the earth. To violate it, is to cut off its results.

2. *The principle of mutual and interchangeable influence, dependency, and advantage in the Christian system.*

The Christian system, as a system, must be looked at analytically and synthetically. The parts of the system are integral parts. It is a hundred perfect systems, all of which combined compose one grand or perfect system. So that no one of the several integral systems can be made to work advantageously, otherwise than in harmony with the one whole, and with each part.



Benevolence is one of these integral systems, and is, at the same time, the compound or aggregate of several other integral systems. Benevolence is the opposite of selfishness. And yet benevolence will promote the same thing which selfishness in vain tries to promote—viz : one's own personal good.

Does any one ask, "Where shall I find happiness?" Let him listen to the whispers, nay, to the thunders of Christianity, while it answers, "*In the happiness of others.*" And does he inquire, "How shall I promote my happiness?" The same voice answers, "By promoting the happiness of others." Selfishness is the enemy, not the friend of a man's self. It injures its possessor more by trying to injure others, for its own advantage, than the injury which it really inflicts upon others. Selfishness is wrong—benevolence is right. Selfishness is *against* the laws of God—benevolence is *with* the laws of God. The propelling paddle-wheels of selfishness are *set the wrong way*. The more they work, the farther off you get.

Property was made by God. He made it and gave it to us in order to the salvation of our souls. Every thing he has done to us, or in regard to us, is for our salvation. He, of course, however, intended this property to be used by us within the scope and purview of the Christian system, and not exclusive of it. *Within* the system it ministers good—*without* it, it ministers evil.

Selfishness, inside of the Christian system, is only another name for benevolence. Selfishness, attempted to be exercised for personal advantage, in disregard of the Christian plan, is the selfishness of the world, against which we are animadverting. The question is not whether one's own personal good shall or shall not be promoted to the greatest practicable extent? The question is whether it shall be truly and successfully promoted, according to the scheme of Christianity, or whether the attempt to promote it shall be a failure, because falsely prosecuted—because attempted to be prosecuted in contravention of God's laws?

Now, let a man attempt to promote his own personal advantage to the utmost possible extent, and let him work according to God's directions to this end—let him work *according* to God's laws, and not *against* God's laws—let him avail himself of God's knowledge, if he thinks God is wiser than he.

and now let another man set himself to the promotion of the happiness of others, leaving himself almost entirely out of the question—that is, the promotion of his own personal advantage—and let him also work according to God's plan for this purpose, and you will find these persons both pursuing the very same course.

God has ordained—and he has enstamped his ordination upon the moral, mental, and physical nature of man and his habitation—that justice, benevolence, liberal feelings and actions, are the only promoters of our own personal good, and, at the same time, the only promoters of mutual and reciprocal good among the community. Man is constantly trying to annul this ordinance, and to put himself up by pulling others down; and he is constantly failing.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

The plain, simple truth is—and we may as well listen to and profit by it—that God has arranged the Christian plan of salvation upon the basis of mutual dependence and influence. No man can rise by himself; nor can any man fall entirely by himself.

There are many ways to make money. Any fool can do that. Numskulls oftentimes succeed best. Many make it to their ruin. Thousands in the Church are *already ruined* by money-making. God oftentimes intimates to us the estimation in which he holds money, by bestowing it, by the thousands, upon the most worthless and vicious of the race. This is not the question.

The question is, How shall money and money-making be turned to the best account? God declares to us, in the most unmistakable language, in and out of the Bible, that our personal salvation is suspended upon the condition of our doing all we can for the salvation of others. If the salvation of others requires our property, within the measure of God's assessment, we cannot be saved and withhold it. Whatever God requires of us, the withholding of it will surely result in loss to us.

The burdens and the blessings of Christianity are indissolubly linked together. He who would have the one, must bear the other. The man of property who seeks to get along

in the Church and be a Christian, and sees her expenses paid by others, or without his adequate proportion, may think he is merely, by a little adroitness, taking advantage of the good nature of his fellows—that no matter who pays the expenses, so they are paid—such a man may think this little delinquency is a matter only between himself and his fellow church-members; but God thinks differently. God says differently. God will act differently.

It is not enough that the Church expenses be paid. This is not the most important question with you, reader. The question is, How far do *you* share in these expenses? In ten thousand instances, not far enough to *save your soul*. God will deal with you *as you sought to deal with him*. You have the price of the pottage; but where is your birth-right?

3. *We have no right to use the money which God puts into our hands, otherwise than as he directs.*

Every man who knows any thing of Christianity, knows that the relation he sustains to God in respect to property, is analogous to that of a steward to his master. God is the only absolute proprietor of any valuable thing. We own property as between ourselves and other men, but surely not as between ourselves and God. This is so plain and common a principle in Christian ethics, that we need not spend time with quotations. Our property is God's property. It has been put into our hands by God's providence. We have acquired it, say, by our industry, frugality, and perseverance; but all these things are but parts of God's providence.

God's providence has produced the money and the property, and it has been distributed in parcels, here and there, in unequal portions, in the course of the same providence. The several owners are owners in the subordinate sense above—as respects the claims of each other—but all are the stewards of God. Men have a *right*, therefore, to use this money and property only as God permits.

If any man denies this principle, in the broad and absolute manner in which we lay it down, we have no argument with him. He is not a Christian in belief, and our object at present is not to attempt to prove the divine authenticity of the Christian precepts. We take the Bible as we find it, assuming it to be true.

Now God has ordained an assessment upon this property,

equal to the wants of the ministry, as previously set forth. He does not require men to *give* money to the ministry which does not belong to the ministry. He requires that we pay over to it its own. The Church is not an object of charity: it is an institution with *rights*. We are discussing the rights of the Church, not its needs. The man who regards the Christian ministry as a very genteel and respectable system of pauperism, has grown up to manhood to little purpose. The ministry may be pauperized by justice, and so may a millionaire.

The money-question presented to a person, is not, "Will you *give* to the Church of your substance?" It is, "Will you *pay over* the church-money in your pocket?" The delinquency of which we speak, is the appropriation of church-money to our private uses. There is a man who has church-money in his pocket, which has been gathered together from a dozen different sources, say from the collection-hat, after its tour through the congregation—has he a right to keep that money, and appropriate it to his own use? Just as much right as that other man, who failed to put in the dollar he ought to have put in, to keep it.

"But I have paid," says the delinquent, "as much as I thought I ought to pay." Who authorized you to *think* about a matter upon which God has pronounced his mandate? Men's thinking should close where God's utterance begins. Naaman thought that some other way was as good as God's way; but God's prophet taught him that his thinking was quite unnecessary.

Let every man go according to his own thinking, and we have an end of Christianity, unless such thinking be in accordance with God's word. The richest loafer in the Church will tell you he thinks he has done wonders towards supporting the ministry. We are far more interested in what the Lord *says* on this subject, than what men choose to *think*.

Thousands and thousands of men among us will tell you they think they have supported the ministry, when the carpets they walk on, the carriages in which they ride, the servants that move at their bidding, and the delicacies they in part subsist upon, were purchased with *church-money*! Ah! the rights of the Church! Who vindicates the rights of the Church?

How can a man undertake to think he has paid the Church its due, until he first looks into the Bible carefully, and examines, and thereby determines what the dues of the Church really are? The Bible is the arbiter, reader, between the Church and yourself, respecting this claim as to the rights of property. God has made the law, and has written it in a book; and all we have to do in the premises is to apply the law so written and published. Be careful, reader, how church-money jingles in thy pocket! It will harden thy heart, and stiffen thy religious feelings, and blunt the impressions the gospel may have made, and stupefy thy spiritual susceptibilities, and paralyze the quickenings of the spirit within thee, and deaden thy hopes of heaven, and leave thy soul incarcerated in sordid money!

There is a rich man, walking in all the high walks of social respectability: his name is honorably mentioned, and his social influence is considerable. A charge of fraud against him to the amount of a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, upon the funds of the Church, would grate harshly upon his ear. "Why! what!" he would reply, "I give the Church a hundred dollars a year, besides many other little incidental things not counted—I a defaulter!"

Poor mercenary delinquent! A "robber" of God! A delinquent at the altar! Peculation has become so common as he has been growing rich, conscience has been so thoroughly bribed, that the performance is a mere common-place! And yet he talks gracefully about Christianity, and dreams fondly about heaven! What he calls *his* income last year, was *twenty thousand dollars*. And how much of that went to the Church? *A hundred dollars*.

The salvation of that man is *impossible*. Ordinarily it is simply impossible, because it supposes the abnegation of all the money-laws of the Bible. I will not, however, undertake to pronounce, that extraordinary ignorance and gross stupidity of mind and conscience, might not, by possibility, admit of his salvation. If possible at all, it would be one case in a thousand *I would not be in his shoes to-day for the wealth of nations!*

The possession of money is one thing, but the rightful ownership of it, or right to use it, is quite another. If you have your neighbor's money, and refuse to pay over, he

will send the sheriff to rectify his wrongs. But the Lord's bailiff comes but *once*.

Thousands of men have grown gray in church-delinquency, and in the end bequeath church-money, by hundreds and by thousands, to their children after them, who oftentimes suffer much more by the inheritance of the wrongs which gave them the money they have no right to, than by the blight and curses which the money itself entails.

Terrible close of a miscalled religious life! The last act signs away the Saviour's rights, and wills them to another! Pieces of silver ill gotten, or illegally withheld, by which the rights of the Saviour are invaded, have not materially changed their character these eighteen hundred years past.

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## CHAPTER V.

### DUTY OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL, CONTINUED.

4. *The scheme of Christianity contemplates the use of men and money in the evangelization of the world.*

The salvation of men upon mere prerogative is, in the nature of the case, impracticable. Exemption from punishment would not be salvation, unless the heart, the affections, the moral feelings, bring man's free agency into coöperation with God's willingness to save. The brutes and the trees are exempt from punishment, but they derive no advantage from such exemption, because they are *conscious* of none.

God, in the exercise of his mercy, therefore, had something more to do than merely to *save* men. It was necessary he should so save them, as that they themselves would be practically benefited thereby. It became necessary, therefore, that he should approach them with motives, inducements, incentives, hopes, fears, and helps, so as to cause man to work out his own salvation. Having previously arranged all the moral feelings and susceptibilities of man, and all the properties and characteristics of external nature, as well as the moral and physical laws and connectives in regard to both, he set himself about the task of salvation.

One of the greatest difficulties in the way—nay, the very greatest—was, the perversion of the principle of personal advantage and benefit, so that man now, in his impure and unholy condition, continually sought for happiness in the wrong direction. This perverted principle is called selfishness. To counteract this, or, rather, to assist man in counteracting it, is the great design of the gospel.

God works, of course, not directly, but through an agency. Man is the agent, in the hands of God, in the work of salvation. Now, if man can be induced to believe that God understands the matter perfectly, and acts in good faith, then man will inquire after the means of happiness, or self-advantage, not of his own perverted feelings and prepossessions, but of God; and he will readily work up to the plans of God, believing that they are best, rather than follow after his own erring and perverted notions in the premises.

There is a man who is a careless sinner. He strives only for his own aggrandizement, in the way *he thinks* will best promote it. He cares nothing for God's directions on the subject. He lets God and his word alone, and lives for himself. And thus, working in *his own way*, he is continually frustrating his own designs, and unwittingly defeating his own ends and purposes. And so, instead of getting better and better, he is continually getting worse and worse. He is incessantly and eagerly looking for success, but continually suffering defeat. Now what is to be done for him?

This is the way in which God approaches him: He brings Christian people along-side-of and around him, that they, by their Christian practice and lives, may show him his error. He is induced to participate in these practices, and to observe, to some extent, the divine laws—the money-law among the rest. An act of justice—or liberality, whichever any one chooses to call it—excites his benevolent feelings, which stimulate to further action. His internal emotions correspond with the external laws of grace—his benevolence stimulates his benevolence—his acts of justice excites his sense of justice—the eyes of his selfishness open, and he sees his error. He now discovers that justice—that is, working completely up to God's money-law—is the best policy. Every dollar paid out brings back a good return in some shape. He is gainer and not loser—a God-serving and happy man.

God has so arranged the Christian scheme as to require money for its prosecution. And he has further so arranged the scheme as to make the payment of money necessary to its development. The *payment* of the money, on the one hand, is as useful as the *receipt* of it, on the other. If the ministry be benefited by the use of money—is thereby rendered more efficient and useful to the Church—the other parts of the scheme are correspondingly arranged, so that equal advantage is derived, on the other hand, by this very necessity which requires the disbursement. A man cannot be saved without being a Christian—he cannot be a Christian without being a benevolent man and a just man—he can neither be benevolent nor just without performing acts of benevolence and justice. His acts of justice and benevolence, therefore—that is, his working up to God's money-law, is absolutely necessary *for himself*, no matter what becomes of the money after it leaves his fingers. This one thing—the getting rid of the money according to God's law—is what every man is bound to see to for his own good. He cannot be saved without it.

Now, look at the worldly church-member, and see how he frustrates this law, and how sadly he suffers by it.

He affects not to understand, or not to regard God's law of salvation in *all* its parts. He appears to think that if some of its enactments are attended to, others may be neglected. Salvation, he says, comes of repentance, and faith, and holy living—not of money. Money is too sordid—too earthly—too base—to be moulded into an instrument of salvation. Again, he cannot possibly see how the payment of a hundred dollars, or a thousand, can advance his spiritual and temporal prosperity. What virtue is there in the payment of money? And thus, so far as he is concerned, he utterly frustrates the plan of salvation, and then wonders why his religion is so dead, vapid, and useless. His religion is dead because he violates God's religion-scheme. How could it be otherwise? We may as well violate God's mercy-scheme of salvation in one place as another. It is *the law of God*, and to violate it is certainly, to say the least of it, to miss of heaven. This violation may as easily be effected in the Church, as in or out of any thing else. And its violation is quite as destructive after we have been twenty years in the Church, as twenty days. All violation of God's law implies distrust of God.



God says to us in his word—and this saying is abundantly and daily exemplified in practical life—“Pay the money I have assessed to you: this is part of the plan—the scheme cannot go on without it; and I have also arranged that you shall be none the loser—the very paying shall inure to your advantage: don’t frustrate one part of the scheme, or you disrupt the whole: trust me—I will bring every thing out right: all this is necessary: work up to my plan—don’t be afraid—I am the Lord.”

But the pious man shrugs up his shoulders and says, “Tell that to the marines. Not quite green enough to believe all that. Reckon I know the value of money, and the rate of interest—two per cent. a month, easy. I belong to the Church.”

And so the poor miserable man of money clings to some loose splinters on the outside of the Church, until his fingernails are well-nigh worn off, and it is difficult to tell which glistens with most fiery brightness, the silver and gold in his pocket, or the curses of God in his soul! “*Belongs to the Church!*”

We have many men amongst us who seem to understand the worthlessness and earthly character of money most theologically, when its direction is from them to the Church; but when its movings are towards their own pockets, it changes its character wonderfully.

And thus it is that damnation, in the Church, has become an article of commerce. So much money for so much ruin! The heirs of the “pious” man of money, after he has been—of course—sufficiently lauded and eulogized in the public obsequies, gather around his tombstone and clamor for the spoils, which are the price of his soul!

But is the current of damnation once set a-going to stop here? Will such inheritors of such spoils use the money any better than they were taught? Let any man walk as far as the first corner of the street, and open his eyes for an answer. What is the common course which such money takes? Will God’s law cease its operations at this point? or will He not rather continue his course of providence, and thus teach the world that He loves virtue and hates vice?

Ah! the current value of perdition—cent per cent—is less than many might suppose. The same money may purchase a

place for more than one! The children of rich church-members, who grew rich in part by withholding, are the most truly unfortunate persons amongst us. Their legacy of ruin is two-fold—the canker of the pocket, and the canker of the heart!

The fruits of sin usually become the instruments of punishment. Let any man who has lived to mid-life, look back and around, and inquire after the money and the fruits of the money which rich church-members bequeathed to their children. In nineteen cases out of every twenty—let any man count—the bequest was a bequest of misfortune, of pain, loss, and sorrow. In nine cases out of ten the bequest was poverty, immorality, infamy. These results followed immediately. They did not even wait for a second generation.

It is beyond all question—a very large amount of the dissipation, licentiousness, disreputation, idleness, and prodigality in this country, is *the fruit* of property inherited by the children of so-called pious people. And it is equally true, that, if such descent of property were brought to the straight-edge of the Bible, rather than the loose and disjointed code of a vitiated public sentiment, it would be seen that the will of God did not accompany it.

The unrepealed enactments of God's law required that that money, much of it, or most of it, should go to carry the gospel to the poor, at home and abroad, everywhere, in a thousand ways. But its *owner* resolved otherwise. Here now, is a contest of power. Man appears for a moment, to succeed, but God cannot be defeated. *God is not mocked.*

His purposes will ripen fast.

And the poor man, and his poor wife, and poor children, made poor in any one of the hundred ways in which property makes men poor, will, if cursed with sufficient discernment, be compelled to suffer the further infliction of the knowledge that their worst earthly enemy was their fond, doting, mistaken, self-willed, and mercenary father, who vainly sought to "rob God" with impunity. I appeal to *truth* in and *facts* out of the Bible!

5. *To withhold from the Church its due, is a violation of our professions and solemn engagements.*

The measure of our obligations to the Church for the support of the ministry, is a question we will look at after a while. We are now considering the point as established, that the Church and its ministry are justly entitled to a portion of the money we earn; and we are supposing that that portion, or a part of it, may be withholden, as it notoriously is, every day, all over the country, in the Church and out of it. And this withholding, we now suggest, is a violation of our professions and solemn engagements.

It is true that an engagement or promise to perform a duty does not create that duty, nor make it obligatory. The obligation existed before, or the promise was unwittingly or improperly made, and is therefore not a promise. It is the duty, therefore, of every man, in the Church or out of it, to contribute to the support of the ministry when it is practicable, because the ministry is for all men.

Still, the position occupied by the church-member is somewhat different from the man who is not. By his professions and undertakings he at least proves that he is fully aware of the nature of his obligations. And though it is the duty of the man of the world to support the gospel, it is not, for that reason, certainly, any the less the duty of the man who has specially promised to do so to fulfil his promise.

He has promised that in every possible way he will assist and encourage the minister in the discharge of his duty. And now he violates this promise by throwing obstacles and discouragements in his way. Every man knows that a minister cannot perform his duty to his congregation and the public when his mind is harassed about his temporal wants, and the conveniences of his family. He does not cause his pastor to feel, as he promised, that his brethren are ready to gather around him and bolster him against the frowns and adversities of a graceless and selfish world.

He forfeits his obligations to the other members of the Church; for, in consequence of his non-support, the minister is compelled partially to withdraw his labors and care from them. At this very point, the question assumes an aspect of fearful responsibility, which locates itself somewhere. The Church has half a ministry—sinners are neglected—pastoral visits are neglected—children are neglected—sermons are partially prepared—prayer-meetings have half the zest and

influence they should have—class-meetings are less searching and profitable than they would be—the world is making inroads upon the Church, and the Church grows cold and spiritless.

Now why all this? It is owing to the faithlessness of that local preacher, of that steward, and of that private member. The income of the one is ten or twenty thousand dollars a year, and he puts the preacher off with the pitiful pittance of a hundred dollars, and all his other church-contributions are scarcely treble that sum. The income of another is two thousand, and his contributions, all told, per annum, would scarcely pay for the silk in which his wife rides to church. The other is in thrifty business, and his payment is five or ten dollars. The heaven of such men is not the heaven of the Bible.

He also forfeits his promises to God. He has promised the Lord a hundred times that he would be a faithful steward, if, in his providence, his property should increase. And the increase of his property has almost kept pace with his increasing faithlessness and falsifications.

He has promised that he would set a good Christian example in the Church. And his example is parsimony, illiberality, covetousness, niggardliness, closeness, want of interest for the Church's prosperity, and injustice to the ministry!

A quaint and humorous old sinner we wot of, who had a pious wife, went one day to pay her "quarterage." "Want to pay for my wife's religion, if you please, Sir—I am told religion is worth nothing unless paid for." (Pity but some of our professors had heard the same thing.)

We profess to have given up all for God and his cause. Given up what? *Given up!* What have we *given up?* Let us hold still a moment, and look at this matter; for here is something we have—some of us—not thought of lately.

He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. Then said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever shall save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Then

Peter began to say unto him, Lo! we have left all, and have followed thee. Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Lo! we have left all, and followed thee.

For whom were these Scriptures made? For the men of this generation? Surely there is a fault somewhere.

We profess to love God, and to feel a great interest in his cause. Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

Actions speak louder than words.

We profess to use our money to the best advantage. But we calculate badly sometimes. Profligacy enough to ruin a son who is trying to get out of his *teens*, generally costs from five to fifty thousand dollars; when a like sum will go far towards Christianizing a nation. Jewelry enough to turn a daughter's head foolwards, will cost as much—as the market generally is—as to send the preacher's children to school a quarter, or himself twice round his Circuit.

“Dost thou renounce the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, *with all covetous desires* of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow or be led by them?”

No, *sir!*

“Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.”

At the rate of about fifteen per cent. per annum.

“Freely ye have received—freely give.”

Well, what is the rate, and what is the security?

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Some men's hearts are easily found then, in bank hours.

“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Well, we intend to try it, anyhow.

“If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”

The merchant and the negro-trader.

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

That's Greek—can't understand it.

“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on”—*all they can get.*

We have, in the most solemn manner of which we are capable, renounced covetousness in all its forms, and yet who does not know that covetousness is this day the great leading master-sin of the Church? We have given ourselves, with all we have and all we are, to God; and yet we withhold from God all we have, and vainly try to appropriate it to our own personal and exclusive advantage.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE JUSTICE AND EQUITY OF THE CASE.

WE must now look at this subject from a point of observation a little different from that which we have heretofore occupied. We have endeavored to maintain the doctrine, that if God required a man to pay money from his earnings to support the ministry, it was, at the same time, every way an advantage for that man to do so. Every Christian duty is performed, not for the benefit of God, nor solely or even chiefly for the benefit of other men, or of society; but first for our own benefit, and secondly, for the benefit of others; because the scheme is so linked together in its several parts, that the good of the whole is contemplated in every provision. We have, therefore, urged the performance of this duty for our own personal advantage, as well as for the healthful performance of the system in all its parts.

We now look at the EQUITY of the case, as between the individual and the Church; for God has also incorporated this principle into the scheme, as well as the others.

All that the Scriptures require in this matter is that we act upon the principles of *justice*, and not *injustice*.

The Christian religion is not an institution separate and distinct from the laws of social life. It is the refinement and enforcement of those laws. It enjoins strict equity and even justice, not in one or two particular places and relations, but in all our several relations. Then let us look at this question of equity as it stands between the individual professor and the

religion, the Church and the ministry with which he stands connected.

Look, first, at the general condition of the agricultural, the commercial, the mechanical and laborious world we live in: mark its elevation—its prosperity—its ability to make money and keep the world lifelike and buoyant. To what is it chiefly indebted for the means of this prosperity, and the opportunity of using those means?

To the Christian religion, most unquestionably.

To what are we indebted for our civil institutions, the protection of our property, the security of our persons and families, the means and opportunities of educating our children, the privilege of celebrating the holy day of rest, opportunities and privilege of free intercourse with our fellow-citizens for business or pleasure—for, in a word, all, or nearly all, that renders life useful or desirable?

To the Christian religion, most undoubtedly.

And as the case is with the country generally, so it is with each individual person. Let the proposition be made to the day-laborer, to the student, to the professional man, the farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, the banker, the man of business of any and every calling: What had been your profits and earnings to-day, in the absence of the Christianity which surrounded you yesterday?

It were a fragment of what it really is now. The labor of a day would be paid with a dime, instead of a dollar. One man in five hundred would possess the property of the country, instead of its being distributed as it is. And the profits of the people—all except the overgrown wealthy—would be a tithe of what they now are.

It has ever been necessary, in all civilized society, and it will so continue until the world shall become Christianized far beyond what we have yet seen, to employ, at the public expense—that is, at the private expense of each person—a considerable number of public officers, of various grades and duties, from the high jurist to the constable and turnkey. These officers *produce* nothing—they live entirely off the earnings of others; and their duties are necessary to society, only because men are vicious and immoral. These officers are more or less necessary, and therefore more or less numerous, in different countries. In some places the people are taxed

one-twentieth, in others one-tenth, one-fifth and one-half their earnings to support these officers. What causes this difference? Injustice to the claims of the gospel. Invariably, where the gospel is best supported, there political burdens are lightest. Look at the condition of Russia, Italy, Spain, or our nearer neighbors, Mexico and the Island of Cuba. In these countries they have no gospel ministry, and, for this reason, the people pay from a fourth to a half or more of their earnings to the support of a public police in a variety of forms. In proportion as men deal wisely and justly with the gospel, those burdens are lightened.

In this country, we pay for these purposes one dollar in fifty of our earnings: a less proportion than is paid by any people else on earth. The reason is, we support the gospel better than any other people. And were we to double our payments for the latter purpose, we would lessen the expenses of the whole by a very large per cent. All experience shows, that one dollar paid to the support of an evangelical gospel ministry, for purposes of necessary expenses towards public safety and morals, will go as far as ten or twenty paid to courts, penitentiaries, alms-houses, and the like. And this is upon the principle of the quaint old adage, that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Let any man pause and soberly reflect upon his real indebtedness to the gospel for the property and peace he possesses. Our civil liberties and wholesome laws are supported by the gospel. Our very form of government could not probably survive the extinction of Christianity a single twelvemonth. Certain it is, that liberty without the gospel would be the greatest and most deplorable of public calamities ever known amongst men.

Once and only once, in the history of the world, was this experiment fairly tried. Look at France—"beautiful France." No country on earth was more highly endowed than she. She thought she could do without religion, and publicly and legally repudiated Christianity and its Bible. And what was the result? Public and private, and national and social discord, confusion, anarchy, disruption, pillage, unchasteness, bloodshed and carnage, such as never tarnished any other page of this world's history. Human blood ran down the streets of Paris like water. Life or property had no more security than in



the wilds of Sahara. And, what is still more strange, the softer sex became the leaders in ferocity, barbarity, and infamy. Murder was almost as common as any other kind of salutation. Marriage was virtually abrogated, and chastity laughed at.

This state of things *could not* have continued. But for a speedy return to Christianity, even in a much corrupted form, the nation itself would have suffered dismemberment, and soon would have tumbled headlong into total disruption and revolutionary ruin.

But let us bring this question of *justice* and *equity* a little nearer home. Let us get into the Church, and talk to the members. Here is a man who earns a dollar and a half a day by some kind of labor or other; if he has a family, they are well supported—live comfortably—children go to school—neighbors visit him, etc. This is all right, and is owing to your industry and frugality. But were these things always so? No, sir. I knew you, a few years ago, when you were drunken, lazy, and worthless. Why and how this change? When and where did the preacher find you? To what did he lead and introduce you? Your change of circumstances, then, is owing to—*what?* Blush and answer.

That young man is indebted to the ministry of the gospel for his employment, for his sobriety, for his respectability, and for most or all of what he is. And what *return* does he make for those valuable bestowals?

I knew that physician when he had no practice almost, and could scarcely get along. Now he belongs to the Church, and “gets most all the Methodist practice,” and is doing well. And what *return* does he make to the ministry for a living thus put into his hands? He may or may not blush while he answers.

And now, as we seem to be making a kind of class-meeting business of this, let us go through and examine some more of the members, at least partially.

That lawyer makes a thousand, and that one five thousand dollars a year from the Church, in various ways, not a dollar of which would either receive, but for his connection with the Church. And they pay back for the support of the Church—perhaps the sum had as well not be stated, for lawyers don't like to blush in class-meeting.

Those persons who are in public office, are indebted to the

labors of the ministry for the moral fitness which gave the qualification for the positions they hold, as well as, in many cases, for the votes which placed them in office.

This merchant would have been bankrupt, or at least in a very poor business, long since, but for the help he has received—mediately and indirectly, of course—from the labors of the ministry. He, in fact—and it is no matter through what means, or in what way, so it is but honestly done—but in fact, he makes thousands every year off the Church, and in consequence of his relation to the Church. Not a dime of this money would ever have felt the darkness of his pocket, but for this very ministry about which we are speaking. And now, since this ministry is greatly in need of money, and since the Almighty has assessed money for its support, that more and other men may become respectable, religious and prosperous, has he a right to withhold the last dollar almost, and see his donor penniless and bereft, while he rides in ease and lives in luxury? No! The genius of Justice would grapple the pious and mercenary delinquent by the throat and say, “*Pay me that thou owest!*” Is court paid to Justice, and Equity made to poise her scales, out of the Church; and may she be defamed and trampled under foot, her fair name cast out as evil, and she made to blush for very shame, within it! Maybe the shrewd *business man* may succeed in the end in overreaching God, and in financiering Justice to silence—and *maybe not!*

There is one man whom I ought to know better than any other—I allude to the person who is now holding the pen which is marking these lines. I knew him many years ago. He was ignorant of the world—knew nothing of its difficulties and dangers, was proud of himself, and to say the least, was very ill prepared to pursue the path of life. I know when, and how, and where the Church found him. But for this, it is impossible to tell what his future course would have been. My belief is, however, from the best lights before me, that, but for the Church, he would long since have been in profligacy, drunkenness and ruin; and most likely in a neglected and forgotten grave.

Those planters make from one hundred to five hundred or a thousand bales or hogsheads, and have been in the Church for years. I would like to see these rich men stand up and

talk. "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" *Cipher* it out. How much have you received? And how much have you paid? You were poor once—now you are rich. Your annual income is twenty thousand dollars. How much did you pay the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ last year, for the evangelization of this world? *One hundred dollars*; and perhaps you yourself may be a minister of the gospel; at least you profess to be a Christian. And *at this rate*, how long will the ministry survive, to say nothing of its prosperity? It will very soon starve out and become almost extinct.

Sir, your miserable hundred dollars—mean money at best—given grudgingly, for it *cannot* be otherwise given—is a disadvantage to the Church. Go home and keep your money—the ministry will do much better without you than with you; for, *as you give, in such proportion will others give*—your "*subscription*," as you call it, has lessened the aggregate receipts considerably. This is the most effectual of all possible modes by which a man may

—"damn with faint praise,"

and contract for the ministry degradation and poverty at the price of his own ruin!

In all sincerity and fairness, then, we say, keep your money. *That kind* of money inflicts disadvantage upon the Church, and the giving of it works no sort of advantage to yourself. For mammon's sake, then keep it. It is not the *kind of coin* that can do the Church any good. God loveth a cheerful giver. Yea, and God loveth a just man.

We are not indebted to the gospel in the full amount of all we have received, directly and indirectly, through its instrumentality, in the sense which requires us to pay to the Church a full equivalent. If we were, justice would require of every man to pay over all or nearly all he has, forthwith to the Church. To do this, or any thing like it, would frustrate God's providence and do the Church a great injury.

The money is placed in our hands in the course of Providence, for us to keep, use, take care of, and increase, in order that it may be disbursed, in the continuous windings and workings of the same Providence, for the glory of God and the good of mankind.

Our natural selfishness, however, is in justice compelled

occasionally to pause and cast up accounts with the Church and ministry. We must look upon ourselves not only as *stewards* in the service of our Master, but if selfishness causes us to regard ourselves in the light of *proprietors*, we must settle up accounts occasionally.

Now let us see: How much money have you received from or through the instrumentality of the Church? Set it down. Now how much interest, or annual compensation, do you pay the Church for the use of this money? The reckoning in this form must be met. Is it six per cent.? Is it two and a half per cent.? Is it one per cent.? One per cent. on ten thousand dollars is one hundred dollars. Two per cent. on a hundred thousand dollars is two thousand dollars. The calculations are not very difficult to make.

The same rule will apply to the man who has not a large amount of accumulated property, but whose profession, or calling, or business furnishes him a regular or irregular income. *How much* of that income belongs *of right* to yourself, and how much to the Church?

Let any man look at himself as he is, and then judge as best he may, what he would have been without the gospel ministry. We must judge of ourselves as we would of other men. If you would judge rightly, place yourself out in the foreground with others, and take your position at a distance in front, and look at yourself in the crowd. You are about like other men. The farther men are from the influence of the gospel, as a general rule, the more worthless, profligate and unfruitful they are. This would be your condition. The ministry found you—perhaps not very immoral, but you were proud, unthrifty and unpromising. These plantations and these thousands would, in all likelihood, never have been yours but for the gospel ministry operating upon you in many ways.

For what would you change conditions, and step in a moment into the precise situation you would occupy at this time, unaided by the ministry of the gospel? Though you are respectable now, most likely you would step into a drunkard's or profligate's grave, which has been filled and overgrown with briars these many years—or, mayhap, into poverty and toil. A hundred chances to one, your property would be a tithe of what it is now.

God—the God of justice and equity—has placed this

property in your hands for something. How long you will continue to thwart his purposes and give his increase to another, cannot now be foretold. One thing is certain—you cannot measure arms successfully with God's providence.

O, I love a rich man—rich in feeling—rich in principle—rich in noble and generous deeds—rich in largeness of heart—rich in money and plantations. But those rich men who can be shut up safely in a quart coffee-pot, and whose homœopathic deeds of generosity are so infinitesimal as to tighten a man's brain to think of them, are not worth the ink that would further write them into notice. They have made money, and in return money has *made* them. They could not assist a poor preacher, struggling with adversity and the cares and toils of the Church, because, forsooth, "I wish to purchase another tract of land." They claim to be the sole and independent proprietors of their property, and hold it alike against the claims of God and man! Benevolence depends upon the rate of interest and security!

A hundred dollars grudgingly given to the Church, is not merely a hundred dollars, as it would be ordinarily, from another person. It is two hundred dollars. See if it is not. In a year he can turn and twist it so as to make it yield twenty dollars. In two years it is a hundred and forty-four; in three, a hundred and seventy-two—and so on; so that his charities are immense.

In all this, the Bible, the teachings of the Bible, the laws of the Bible, are closed, sealed and bolted, lest their intrusions should interfere with these estimates and calculations, and bestowals and withholdings. And all this time the poor man regards himself as a man of prayer and of worship. He forgets that prayer can only reach the ear of God by passing through all the principles and windings of every precept and doctrine in the Bible; and that true worship must also accord with all these things.

There is no communication with God but through all these avenues. Clog up any one, and the conference is suspended. Those laws which enjoin *paying*, are as imperative and absolute as those which enjoin *praying*, as a condition of salvation. Individual salvation is very intimately connected with the healthfulness of the ministry, the progress of the gospel, and the salvation of the world. He who would save his life, *shall lose it*. But the man who lives for God and his Church, lives for himself truly, and for heaven finally and surely.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE MEASURE OF THE DUTY.

THE parable of the talents is a mere dictate of common sense or moral philosophy. Where much is given much is required. The proportion of investment is the rule of requirement.

But the extension of the principle into the doctrine of the parable of the widow and the two mites, is sublime beyond the reach of human conception. Unaided by revelation, the full idea would probably never have been grasped. Here we see the justice of philanthropy grasping covetousness by the throat, and saying, "Pay me that thou owest." Here is the very pith of the gospel and the key to Christianity.

The covetous man is the man who works his money figures below the gospel standard. Within the rules of the gospel we may possess money; but beyond these rules our money possesses us. Our money-making, and money-using, and money-keeping, and money-saving, inside of the rules and requirements of the gospel, are not only fair and right, but *real* and *true*, in contradistinction to that which is false and illusive. But in so far as we carry our finances beyond the lids of the Bible, we are ourselves like the man who,

"Throws up his interest in both worlds,  
First starved in this, then damned in that to come."

We may look around and console ourselves with the idea that we are in a large company, but we are, nevertheless, in bad company.

A man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Wealth and happiness are synonymous and convertible terms. I pay quite as much as my share towards the support of the gospel. Surely, God is just—no respecter of persons. Why should I be required to pay so much more than neighbor Sypendax? The world is as wide before him as before me. If I am worth ten times as much as he, that is my good luck and his fault or his misfortune. God is no respecter of persons. What a blessing! The in-

justice of money-holding becomes sometimes almost truly eloquent.

Harris says: "By unwearied diligence, the art of *acquiring* money has been well-nigh brought to perfection. Nor can we think of the thousand ways in which it is squandered and dissipated by artificial wants and worldly compliances, without deploring that the art of *wasting* it by the most expeditious methods, should exhibit, as it does, the finish and completeness of the system."

But Dr. Harris was mistaken. Acquiring money and spending it, do not complete the system quite. For then so many would not be ruined by its inheritance.

The scheme of Christianity is a comprehensive scheme of universal justice. Nothing infringes upon Christianity but injustice. "According to several ability," is the perfection of justice. Fitness, equity of distribution according to several ability, is the rule of every thing, except when man's selfishness interposes to arrest the general harmony. The great oak supports his immense burden, because of the corresponding ability of his trunk. The rivulet is filled to its capacity as full as the river or the ocean.

There is in the New Testament no absolute, specific, and fixed *measure* of Christian duty. In this respect it differs from the Old. This difference seems necessarily to result from the enlarged and universal policy of the former. The new economy prescribes a religion of the heart and feelings. It addresses itself to the inner man. The Jewish economy was a "schoolmaster." It was only intended to take the world through the alphabet and primer. It taught positive, specific things. The enlarged policy teaches principles and truths. The partial policy prescribed, Thou shalt do and not do this and that. The full policy says, "Thou shalt not think or feel wickedly." It enters the naked and open chambers of the soul.

In reference to the question in hand, the Old Testament required the payment of *ten per cent.* upon the entire earnings. The Christian economy requires a *liberal support* for the ministry. And so of other Christian duties. In regard to prayer, it required the doing of specific and definite things: now we are required to pray always; or, in other words, to pray largely and liberally. The Jews were required to meet for worship

at certain times and places. We are required not to neglect or forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

Christian duty is intended and calculated to have a direct and a reverse influence. The direct influence is outward and forward, and rests upon something beyond ourselves. The reverse is reflex, and rests back upon ourselves.

The measure of the duty of ministerial support is illustrated, not prescribed, in the instance of the payment of the two mites by the poor widow. She paid "more than they all." In what sense? In this, most assuredly: she paid a larger proportion of her property; she paid until she *felt it*.

What is the payment of five or ten dollars for a large purpose of this kind, for a rich man? Nothing. But in respect to the result of the reception of the money, it is as much as the same sum given by a poor man.

But why, in the one case, is it an act of niggardliness, and in the other of Christian liberality? Because in the one case it is a proof and a test of benevolence, and in the other it is not.

How may we know any man to be benevolent? Surely, not by his giving this or that sum, either for ministerial support or for charity. If the giving any particular sum cost the giver neither pains nor inconvenience—as for a rich man to give a trifle—it is no evidence of his benevolence, or philanthropy, or Christian liberality, for we do not know but the money will be withheld the moment it costs the giver the least sacrifice or privation.

How may any man know himself to be benevolent? There is no way possible, except by acts of liberality, made until they are felt as a sacrifice and personal inconvenience. The satisfaction, therefore, which it is the peculiar province of benevolence and liberality to impart, can only be felt as the result of actual benevolence and liberality.

In the absence of the performance of the duty of ministerial support, or of any other Christian duty of the like kind, the man is obliged to know himself to be devoid of benevolence, and, therefore, to be not a Christian. And just so in regard to any other Christian duty. The man who does not pray, has the strongest possible evidence that a man can have, that he is not a Christian; and he can but feel his destitution.

The measure of this duty, then, is like unto that of most



other Christian duties. The reason, the judgment, the good sense of the man must regulate its precise measure. It must be performed until it produces, in most cases, a large reflex influence upon the heart and feelings. Prayer that costs a person no sacrifice—that does not tax the feelings—is not the prayer that does any good, or that complies with the law of prayer. Humility that does not restrain the inclinations and curb the rising of self-consequence, is not the humility enjoined in the Scriptures. Almsgiving that is not felt as a giving, in proportion to the magnitude and necessities of the case, is not the almsgiving of Christianity. Attendance upon the ordinances of God's house, which the least inconvenience suspends, is not a Christian duty. It is a mere church-going, prompted by custom or convenience.

And just so of the particular duty in question. It must be performed until it is *felt*; or, at least, an entire readiness—a perfect willingness to feel sacrifice and privation, under the acts of giving, or paying, must be manifested.

Let us illustrate this point a little farther, for it is deemed of great practical importance.

There is a man who proposes to himself the duty of prayer. He has hitherto failed in this respect to come up to the divine requirements; and he is therefore unacquainted with both the privation and the joys of prayer. For both these things attach to every Christian duty. To come up to what his judgment and conscience teach, as to the measure of this duty, requires sacrifice, privation, and submission. These feelings *must* be overcome. He must drive himself, as with a lash, up to the point and through the performance. If he does not overcome his natural withdrawings, and force himself forward in opposition to himself, he has not performed the duty. But notwithstanding this contest and victory, in the actual performance of the duty he feels much of the reflex influence of enjoyment and satisfaction.

As he continues the performances on the one hand and the submission on the other, the privation, the reluctance, the unwillingness diminishes, and the returning satisfaction increases, until the former soon dies away entirely, or measurably so, and the man now performs the duty from choice. Still, though he takes the greater delight in those duties, the same *principle* is maintained which he has set out with. That is,

he does not suffer himself to be impeded in the performance of these duties, because of any objections or difficulties which may arise from self or from the world, be they any, or be they little or much.

In this sense, then, the man who is accustomed to duty, up to the largest measure of Scriptural requirement, feels but little or no cross in the performance of it. This, however, is a point of considerable attainment in Christian experience.

This is precisely an illustration of the duty of ministerial support, or, in fact, of any other Christian duty. Christian duty without a cross, is no Christian duty at all.

In performing the duty of ministerial support, we must force ourselves beyond the point of convenience, of ease, of our dispositions and wishes. We must feel the urgings of God's mandate, and pay out money until we feel it a privation and a sacrifice.

In riper years of Christian experience, however, in performing the same, or even a greater measure of duty, the heart and conscience may be so schooled to it, and the risings and back influences of satisfaction may be so great, that the cross becomes greatly lessened; or, what is the same thing, its influence is overcome by the satisfaction we feel in the performance. Such is the philosophy of Christian duty.

It is by this course of reasoning only, that we may suppose the sacrifices and privations of the celebrated Howard had in them less of the balance or aggregate of sacrifice, than those of the man who performed a hundredth part of them.

This principle ranges through the entire realm of Christianity: from the sufferings of the Cross down to the smallest duty known to the system. It is the very essence or vital ingredient in Christian philanthropy or benevolence. *Without a cross it is nothing. But the cross must be overcome.*

Suppose a man pays money for ministerial support—as many Christians do—measuring their payments by considerations of this kind. Here is his soliloquy. My means are known to be about equal to those of A, B, and C, and are greatly superior to those of D, and E. I cannot conceal this fact. Now, if I do not come up in my subscription pretty near to A and B, if I come down to D or E, or below them, it will make against me in the end. My position in the Church will not be sustained. They'll talk hard about me.

I'll make my ability appear as small as I can, and get off with as little as they will regard as being respectable.

This man, whatever else he may be, is a transparent sinner. He no more performs the Christian duty of ministerial support than he regulates the motion of the moon. This duty implies sacrifice—self-denial. You must give until you feel the pressure of self-denial. Below this point, neither of the two grand purposes of God in enjoining the duty will be answered. It will neither supply the wants of the ministry as to the receipt of the money, nor the wants of the soul as to the giving of it. The several parts of the scheme are so perfectly adjusted, that the performance of the duty fully, precisely answers both these ends. Let it be frustrated at one end, and you derange it at the other.

But the miserly man who doles out a few lazy, reluctant dollars, sighing as they go, may reply that he, too, feels the pressure of giving. Verily he does. And the only difference between this and the pressure above described, is this: The one is the pressure of Christian self-denial, and the other of niggardliness and sordid parsimony. This latter falls short of the condition. The covetous man cannot get his hide-bound avarice baptized into the Church. There is a wide difference between the cross-bearing and self-denial of Christianity and the grudgings of covetousness, though they both, in some sense, tax the human feelings.

The poor widow in giving the two mites, "gave more than they all," as respects the reflex influence of duty performed upon herself. She invested more sacrifice and self-denial, though not so much money. And consequently her reward—the reward which duty performed always gives—was the greatest. God deals with every man precisely upon the principles of that transaction.

Christianity is a system of self-denial. Nor will it suffice that this be recognized in a few convenient particulars. It must enter into every duty. It is not only necessary that self-denial be made an ingredient in every act of duty, as between the Christian and his God, that his act may be recognized as an act of obedience, but there are other important reasons for this in the divine economy. God not only designs the salvation of that person, but of all the world; and the means he is using to this great end is, in part, the acts of that man's life.

Every act of obedience we perform, not only facilitates our own salvation, but in a degree the salvation of all others.

The world is disposed to forget that Christianity has a cross in it; and what is better calculated to fix and stereotype this unchristian principle in the minds of the multitude, than to see the professor shun the cross and steer clear of self-denial? And in what particular will the cross of Christianity be likely to enstamp its principles upon the mind of the sinner, by the discharge of duty on the part of the Christian, so forcibly and indelibly, as to see him pay money to the quick, for the advancement of Christianity? Men of the world esteem money highly, and they suppose Christians to place a like estimate upon it.

So plain and so natural is this principle, that it is just precisely impossible for any man to impress those who know him, with the belief that he is a true Christian, until he exhibits his self-denial in the payment of money for the Church and to advance Christianity, in a manner proportionate to what they believe to be his means. A true test of self-denial is a true test of Christianity. The absence of self-denial in the entire round of Christian duty, is most assuredly the absence of Christianity.

Can any man do more to injure the reputation of Christianity in the world, than, while he professes its truths, to refuse to advance its interests at the mere cost of a few dollars, to furnish a liberal support to its ministry? Can any man more effectually bar his own religious enjoyment or advancement, than by refusing to deny himself in the mere matter of dollars? Can money be appropriated so advantageously, as for the advancement of Christian truth and principles?

Infidelity, and infidelity alone, teaches the doctrine that the more money paid to the Church, the greater the loss: the more we withhold, the greater the advantage. But every voice, and every whisper, and every principle of Christianity teaches directly the opposite. Some there are, who knowingly, and many more unwittingly, heed and follow the false teaching, and suffer consequent leanness and misfortune.

But the teachings of the Bible are *right*, viewed in any aspect, or directed to any end.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## MINISTERS' LIABILITY TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRY.

THERE is another consideration respecting this general question of ministerial support, which must not be lost sight of, for justice and fair dealing require its presentation. The doctrine has been, thus far, in this essay, supported, that the just and fair expenses of the ministry are to be borne by those to whom the gospel is ministered, *according to several ability*. This ability arises from the income of each person, or head of family, or what his income might be, or ought to be, with frugality and industry. This income is the direct result of labor, or the profits or increase of property. Conditioned as the people for the most part are in this country, *property* forms the basis and measure of this "*ability*."

At least, it is the liability of property in the hands of its respective owners, creating the obligation to support the ministry, which will occupy our attention in the present chapter. And we find that a part of this property is in the hands of ministers themselves.

In the course of things, in one way or another, it occasionally turns out that ministers, like other men, become possessed of property in considerable amounts. Sometimes they are rich; sometimes they are well off; sometimes they are in comfortable or independent circumstances.

Now, nothing is more certain, more fair or legal, according to the Bible, and according to common sense, that the possession of property on the part of the minister, be it much or little, does not, in the least, release the Church or the people from their obligation to pay him his support. To relax this rule, would throw the whole scheme into disorder—would depart from the Bible rule, degrade the ministry, deprive the people of the reflex benefit arising from a compliance with the money laws of the Bible; and the assent to such a course, on the part of any minister, would, in addition to the above-mentioned evils, do great injustice to other ministers.

It is very apparent, on a moment's reflection, that if a minister were to consent to a relaxation of this rule in his own

case, in whole or in part, because he could get along without support from the Church, it would tend to injure both the Church and the ministry. It would tend to infuse into the Church and among the people a spirit of non-payment of regular scriptural, ecclesiastical dues. It would tend to injure other and succeeding ministers, by making their support more difficult, and by creating a caste between dependent and independent ministers; and would tend greatly to the injury of the Church and people, by removing from them—either partially or wholly—one of the divinely instituted means of grace and instruments of salvation.

But at the same time that the minister is justly entitled to his support, in every just view which may be taken of the question, either in regard to his own rights and interests, the ultimate good of the people, or the stability and healthfulness of the Christian scheme, still, this does not answer any questions respecting the minister's own property—whether it is or is not justly taxable, like other property, for the support of the ministry.

Now, if the writer is not mistaken, it *sometimes* happens, and perhaps not *very* unfrequently, that property in the hands of ministers, especially those in regular pastorate employment, is considered, in some way—practically at least—exempt from the common ecclesiastical responsibilities.

This, I hesitate not to say, is as gross a violation of the gospel rule, as the same withholding on the part of any other property-owner, would be. And not only is it as much a violation of the Scriptures as any other case of withholding, but there are peculiar reasons why it does, generally, more harm to the Church and ministry than another similar case.

Let this chapter be dispatched with a few explanatory observations in support of both these propositions.

*First.* The minister in question occupies a twofold position or relation to the Church and to society. In the first place, he is a minister; and, as such, he is subject to all the responsibilities and liabilities, and entitled to all the benefits and considerations, of a minister of the gospel. In the second place, he is a property-owner; and, as such, there is no reason upon earth, that can for a moment be suggested, why he is not, in like manner, in the same position, as to liability, responsibility, or advantage, as that occupied by any other

property-owner. His property is in the same relation to society, and in the same relation to his family, as the property of any other man. It was never dreamed of for a moment, by any one, that the property of a minister of the gospel should not be subject to civil taxation. His property is not ministerial property. It is he himself only, personally, that is the minister. Neither does the Church know of his property in any other light than as the property of a member of the Church. Alas! in some instances, the Church does not, in a very important sense, *know of* his property at all. It is common property—has no more sacredness attached to it than attaches to the property of his neighbor, and is therefore subject to all the money laws of the Bible. This position is so clear, that it can require no more than a suggestion.

*Secondly.* The withholding of property from its scriptural subjection to support the gospel, where such withholding is done by a minister, has peculiar disadvantages, over and above the ordinary disadvantages connected with it.

Suppose a lay member of the Church were to withhold the Church's rights in the same way? Every one sees in a moment that he is a clog on the wheels. It were better for the Church if he lived in New Zealand. And suppose the same course to be pursued by a steward, or other officer, whose duty it is to gather the Church-dues: he would ask for these dues with a bad grace, when he himself is, that moment, and every other moment, in the act of practically repudiating the principle he is trying to enforce.

And, to rise a single step higher with the same principle, suppose the minister himself to be guilty of the same delinquency. It looks like an awkward business, indeed, to see a steward or collector collecting Church-money from the Church and the public, for the maintenance of a minister who himself lives, every day, in the open and practical repudiation of the very principles upon which such collections are made.

Surely this is hitching the leader to the hind end of the wagon to pull the other way.

The minister who does not himself live up to the doctrines he preaches, to the full extent of his recommendations, labors, to say the least of it, to considerable disadvantage. The minister, therefore, who does not himself, practically and conscientiously, live up to the money laws of the gospel, in re-

spect to the support of the ministry, as well as every other just and proper requisition, cannot, to say the very least of it, complain very loudly, with a very good grace, if some of his congregation, or the whole of them, should pay him in his own coin, or turn upon him his own principles.

This, however, would be just as wrong in them, as though there were no delinquency in the first instance. A second wrong doubles the evil, without in the least degree operating as a remedy. Each man is bound to do *his* duty in whole, irrespective of the faithfulness or delinquency of others.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### PECUNIARY ERRORS AND MISFORTUNES.

IF the foregoing arguments be sound—if they accord with the Bible and the truth—then there are some considerations, respecting the fortunes and misfortunes arising from the possession of money, which are not generally considered. Neither time, space, nor inclination, at present, favors a general discussion of the uses and abuses of money; but in so far as the question stands connected with the support of the ministry, a few observations which are found lying upon the surface of the subject, may not be out of place.

In the first place, there is scarcely one man in a thousand who ever takes the time and trouble to pause and seriously consider and calculate how money and property can be turned to the best account—how it can be used, or directed, or managed, so as to bring out the largest amount of real, true advantage to its possessor and his family.

If this be true, it is a most strange and wonderful feature in the human constitution. And yet it is a fact so palpable, that it stares every man in the face. We never *think* about money, and yet money occupies our whole thoughts. No, it does not occupy our *thoughts*; it occupies the morbid cravings of the mind in its continual cries of “Give, give, give!” But why? for what purpose? for what advantage? to what good



end?—these are questions which are never suffered to intrude. More money, to buy more property, to make more money, to buy more property, to make more money—is the incessant, illogical, inconsiderate din, day in and day out, from the opening until *very near* the close of life. And then, just as the light of eternity and the gleams of reality and sober truth begin to loom up in the distance, a forced and involuntary “O Lord, have mercy on me!—what a fool I have been!” It’s all over, and the man is dead!

That is a fair history of the lives of nine-tenths of the men around us.

And that is either the most outrageous slander that was ever perpetrated upon the human kind, or one of the most extraordinary truths ever written. Which is it? I ask any sober man, which is it?

The proper *use* of money is a question that ought to be soberly and philosophically inquired into. Why not? Can any man tell why this question should never be inquired into? Is it not a question in the philosophy of morals, in which we are all deeply interested? Why has the question never been discussed? Is there any bar to its investigation in the Scriptures? Is there any thing in ethics which forbids it? And yet scarcely an essay on the subject was ever written in human language!

I know we have occasionally read to us a homily on the “worthlessness” of money—what sort of “trash” it is, and how very sinful it is to have or to want it; but these lectures have been very poorly patronized, perhaps for the reason, in the first place, that they were not true. Money is not *trash*, neither is it *worthless*; nor yet is it sinful to have or to make it, in abundance. It forms a most important link in our social economy. And a thousand times more than all this, it forms a most important and valuable segment in the scheme of human salvation. It is a part, and a most valuable and necessary part of God’s providence. It is *good*, and not *evil*; it is *right*, and not *wrong*. Money is a means of grace. It gives influence, it creates power, and promotes good fortune. Look at the good it is capable of doing. Lessen its value, and you lessen the means of evangelizing the world. By what means are our families supported, children educated, churches built, ministers supported, missionaries sustained, Bibles printed,

newspapers and books published, commerce carried forward, agriculture promoted, government expenses paid, and a thousand valuable enterprises kept in activity? Turn money into "trash," and make it the enemy of man, and you in the same act turn society into anarchy, dissolve the Church, extinguish Christianity, and throw the wise and merciful providence of God into disruption and disgrace.

Money is the friend of man, the friend of religion, the friend of the orphan, the friend of the poor, the friend of Christianity, the friend of God. Few things, if any, in the world, have been more misused, more abused, or more slandered. It is, however, like many other good things in the world—it requires to be *used* according to truth and sound philosophy.

Food is a friend, and not an enemy of man. And yet it may be so used, by taking it in too small or too large quantities, or at improper times, that it becomes an instrument of disease or death.

Clothing, by using it too profusely, or too sparingly, may be made to gender disease and misfortune, and even carry a person to the grave. Medicine, judiciously or injudiciously used—that is, used according to truth, or according to error, may be made to kill or to cure.

What is there that our eyes may see, or our hands handle, that may not be so abused or misused as to bring forth suffering, misfortune, or even ruin? God in his providence places many things in our hands, and in three different ways teaches us how to use them so as to make them minister to our comfort and advantage. In the first place, he teaches us in the Bible how to use these things; in the second place, he teaches us by exhibiting their relations to himself, to each other, and to ourselves, in the system of nature around us; and, thirdly, he teaches us by experience—that is, by showing us repeatedly, and under various circumstances, their fruits or results.

Now, place a man, blindfold, in this magazine of varieties, and how will he get along? And a man may as well be blindfold naturally as wilfully. A man who cannot see, and a man who will not see, will make about the same kind of headway in the management of steam-engines, fire, powder, edge tools, printing offices, libraries, lace shops, etc.

And this is about the kind of headway that might be ex-

ected, in any department of life, where blindness takes the lead, and folly holds the helm. And hence it is the kind of headway really made, in the control and management of money, by most men around us, every day, in and out of the Church. They make headway to their own ruin, and their children after them! They do not wisely consider the proper *use* to be made of the thing. Their philosophy is the insatiate cry of—"More, more, more!" For what purpose? "More, more, more!" How is the additional supply to be made to minister to your good, or to the good of any one? And their dictionary, and their logic, and their Bible furnishes no other reply than, "More, more, more!"

But really and truly, it must be said, this is not very good logic. And yet it is the current, popular logic of the day. Give, give, give—more, more, more—are the six words that make up the vocabulary, and, in the connection in which they are stated, they make up the creed, the logic, and the philosophy of most of the money owners of the age in which we live!

The plain, simple truth is—and we might as well know it as not—the truth is, money in possession—not money intrinsically—but the possession and ownership of it, is of such a nature, in connection with the moral and mental constitution of man, that its strong tendency is to exert a false, deceiving, corrupting, blindfolding, and vitiating influence over the heads and hearts of men. And there are few men who, by the combined influence of mind, morals, and grace, are able, even in some tolerable degree, to make head against this powerful tendency. The proportion of persons thus wise and pious, among what might, in a moderate degree, be considered men of property, varying from moderately good-livers upward, within the experience and observation of the writer, is one in ten thousand of the whole mass! I may be in error, but this is my deliberate judgment. If any man can judge better, let him do it. But my impression is, that in doing so, he will base his opinions on the popular pulsation, to some extent, rather than the written word of God.

Rich men, however, are of considerable benefit in the world. They uphold and carry forward the various enterprises of the day, wonderfully. But to the Church they are of precious little use. Nay, to tell the plain truth, they a great disadvan-

tage. I speak of rich men generally, in and out of the Church. There is no marked difference between them—none worth naming. Oftentimes the Church fails by an accumulation of property in the hands of a “wicked” man, rather than a “pious” man. The reverse, however, in a very small degree, is generally the case.

Rich men, almost universally, are a great disadvantage to the Church, from this very simple consideration: There is a man worth fifty thousand dollars: there is another worth a hundred thousand; and a third worth two or three hundred thousand. It would be disgraceful to civilization, as well as to Christianity, to name these persons, and set down, respectively, to the name of each, the sum he annually pays to the Church—and so we need not do it; nor would it strengthen the argument. This is the shape in which the question must be put: If this one hundred thousand dollars had not been gathered together into the hands of one man, it would be distributed among, say ten, or twenty persons. Now, the question is, what is the proportion between the annual payment of this hundred thousand dollar-man, and the aggregate of what the same property would yield to the Church in the hands of ten or twenty men? Generally it is less than one half. Generally it is less than one quarter.

It is well known to be the medium men—the men who are neither rich nor poor—who support the gospel.

Now, therefore, if men are thus unfaithful to the just requisitions of God in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to their trust the true riches? *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

The reply to this is, “I know most men cannot, but I am very sure *I can.*”

“Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.”

In the providence of God, one man is permitted to gather together in his own hands the property which would be otherwise distributed among five or twenty, or a hundred, for wise and benevolent purposes. But these purposes never aim at the personal gratification of that man: they always—they must certainly—aim at the salvation of the world. The whole providence of God is directed, ultimately, to this great end.

All intermediate things and steps, of whatever kind, are merely subsidiary to this final purpose.

Then what *right* has any man—merely because he *can*—to gather together property, and divert it from the merciful channels, looking to the extension of the Church and the support of her ministry, in which God has placed it?

“Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me.” Malachi iii. 9.

And yet we have men among us, and in the Church, too, who continue to hoard—continue to grow rich, richer, richer, and live and die worth one, two, three hundred thousand dollars, and who currently pay less money for the support of the gospel, than for the support of their State Government!

I know we are all bound to pay a certain *court*, according to taste, civility, and complaisance, to rich men; but I am now writing about the *truth*, in the fear of God, as I find it written in the Book. And I say I cannot understand these things. Other men may be able to reconcile them, but I confess my inability. I can smooth over the matter very easily when I merely feel the public pulse, and inquire of public taste, but I cannot reconcile them with the Word of God.

Let any man look into the Scriptures, and read the plain directions and imperative mandates of the Lord God Almighty respecting the ownership and use of property, and let him mark the promises and the threatenings attached thereto; and then let him look at the Church. Let him look soberly and fairly at the condition of the Church in his own town or neighborhood—at the condition of its ministry—its publishing and missionary interests: let him observe the ministry of the Church to the colored population of the South, the poor of the North, and the Red Man of the West: let him look at the Roman Catholic population of this country and of Europe: let him look at the condition of the Jews, of China, and the whole East: let him, then, as well as he can, forget for the moment, the popular opinions, views, and customs of society, respecting the hoarding of property, and the social *position* of the wealthy; and then let him again look into the Bible, and ponder well the words of the Judge of quick and dead. And after he has done all this, soberly and fairly, let him look at the spectacle of a man, intelligent, well-read, and a professor

of the very Christianity of the Bible, living and dying worth several hundred thousand dollars!

I have but one single thing to say, and that I desire to say right here. Whatever may be the views or opinions of others, I know not: I alone am responsible for what I think and say: I cannot—cannot—I have tried—pondered—thought over the subject in every point of light practicable—I *cannot* reconcile these things. *I wouldn't die rich for any earthly consideration!*

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## CHAPTER X.

### PRO RATA DISTRIBUTION.

IN the foregoing chapters we have treated chiefly of the pecuniary relations subsisting between the Church, or congregation, or people, as a community, on the one part, and the minister on the other. We come now to make some observations respecting the relation between the several members of the Church or community to each other. If it be the duty of the whole to support their minister, and the ministry of Christ generally, what is the duty of each one? This brings our remarks to a very practical bearing, for men act individually—not collectively.

There are some general, and some particular duties that might be spoken of.

The more general duties are these: It is the duty of each individual person to labor to bring about a coalition, which will work in concert and harmony in the premises. This coalition must be organic in the best practicable form, so that by means of suitable leaders or officers, the object in hand may be the more easily and certainly accomplished. No man has a right to hold himself aloof from this movement, with the mere promise or understanding that he will cooperate when the organization shall be set on foot; because, if

one may be relieved from this duty, then all may. It is the duty of each to see that the thing is done; and unless it is properly done, no man is blameless.

The community must act together, in harmony and concert, and in such a spirit of fairness and equity among themselves, that no one will be led to suppose that he is bearing any greater burden than that which fairly and properly belongs to himself.

A plan for the proper distribution and collection of these revenues, such as might properly be adopted by any Church, Conference, Synod, or district of separate jurisdiction, should be simple, plain, easy of comprehension, and easy in its practical working. But, above all, it should be plainly and palpably equitable in its operations.

In this country *the means* of supporting the gospel may be said to be almost superabundant. The only thing lacking is, that we make the business of paying, and of pro rata distribution among ourselves, *part of our religion*. This pro rata distribution among ourselves—this paying “according to several ability,” in contradistinction to joint ability—is part of the religion of the Bible, and may therefore be dispensed with on the same terms, with the same probable or certain losses, as any other religious duty—that of prayer, attending church, or reading the Bible.

This doctrine of *several ability* is a mere following out of the plain indications of Providence, while it is also the doctrine of common sense and simple equity. Where much is given, much is required. To one he gave one talent; to another three; to another five.

The difficulty in supporting the ministry arises, for the most part, from an unwillingness of some to make a fair pro rata distribution. In every Church we find some who are more liberal, religious, and honest than others; and who not only pay their own proportion, but a part of that of others. And then we find those who hang back, grieved at the burdens of duty, grieved at the high taxes and poor pay of God's salvation scheme.

These persons disturb the harmony of the money laws of the gospel, which works disturbance in the whole economy of God's grace, and thus a crippling influence is felt throughout

the entire system of religion. Now, what we need in the way of a plan of financial operations, is something that will at the same time excite his sense of religious obligation, spur him to equity and fair dealing, and stimulate his sense of character, and nobility of bearing, and demeanor among men.

In this country—I mean in the South—visible, cutright parsimony is quite below par. Illiberality is, by the public sense, regarded almost as mean and degrading as pilfering. The public standard of generosity and honor is high, and none but the noble man is regarded as a nobleman. No man can live here without feeling this influence; and if he does not live up to it, the stings of self-reproach and lashings of self admonition, especially if his delinquency be known and recognized, are far from receiving any thing like a just compensation from the rewards of avarice or the plaudits of mammon. To be niggardly and mean in this country is to be *very* mean indeed. And to this few men are willing to submit.

Men who profess to be governed by the laws of the gospel—the laws which relate either to the tithe or the offering—are not willing to be publicly rated below par. Hence we need a *standard of par value*—something which will operate as a test of fairness, and a test of delinquency. In the absence of any test of this kind—in the absence of any publicly exposed gauge, by which liberality and fairness may be measured at a glance—the really delinquent may huddle along in the crowd without having public note made of his failings; and being thus unapprehended, unarraigned, and unobserved, he is unpunished. For the notice of the public eye—the recognition of his delinquency is the punishment and the corrective.

Now the question is, How can we fix a common standard of easy recognition, which will establish the *par* of action on the subject in hand, below which men are seen to fall, and up to or above which men are seen to rise; so that a man cannot fail to know, and know that every one else knows, the measure of his faithfulness or his unfaithfulness? We want a visible *test* of delinquency.

We need this test of delinquency, for two reasons. First, that the man himself may be informed distinctly of his duty, and of the measure of it. Men will seldom fail to perform



plain, distinct, and palpable duties, when they blur over half-performed duties which are not so plain and distinct. Secondly, we need a plain test of delinquency, to be seen by others, in order that they, by the watchful eye which they always have over us, may silently spur us on to duty. This seems to be a part of God's providence. Most of us—all of us—would be more delinquent than we are, but for the watchful, tacit supervisorship which our friends and our enemies always exercise over us.

Now, how, where, at what point do we fix the Church-rate liability, in a pro rata distribution of the whole amount of money to be raised, among the several persons composing the Church or congregation?

Let us answer this question.

And, first, it must be conceded on all hands, that a *perfectly* correct distribution, either according to several ability, or in any other way, cannot be made, and need not be looked for. All that can be looked for, is a rule that will be certainly correct, as a general thing—that will approximate even justice and equity near enough to meet the reasonable wishes of reasonable and fair men—so that every one shall know that with certainty it is not far from exact equity.

And, again, we must be reminded of the condition of that portion of the community who are not members of the Church. It is very true, that they are *liable*, under the laws of God, to the full extent of the liability of any other persons. They will not, however, acknowledge their liability, or discharge their religious obligations—neither that which requires the paying of money for the support of the ministry, nor that which requires the discharge of other religious duties. So long, therefore, as they will remain in this condition, we must get along with them as best we can. If we cannot prevail upon them to discharge all their duty, we must get them, if we can, to discharge a part of it, and still hope that they may do better. Such partial discharge of their duty, however, as we can induce them to perform, lessens the joint obligations of the Church members, so far as the general question before us refers to the expenses of the particular pastorate to which they belong.

The question, therefore, of equitable pro rata distribution,

now before us, properly belongs only to the Church members, or to them and such others as are willing to acknowledge their subserviency to the laws of God, after deducting from the whole sum to be raised such amount as may be depended on from other sources.

With these explanations, we come now to answer the question, What is the best, fairest, easiest, and most practicable test of delinquency, or rule of pro rata distribution?

*Several ability* is the basis divinely placed under this question, from which we must not depart. This ability arises in two ways. In the first place, and chiefly, it is rated according to the amount of property possessed by each. And, secondly, according to other means we may have of making money, the direct compensation for services, etc.

So far as *property* furnishes the ability, we have already before us a table of pro rata distribution, to the general equity and correctness of which we all assent, and by which we are all voluntarily bound. I mean the civil tax-list. This distributes the expenses of the State and County among the several members, according to several ability, according to the best judgment and discretion of the most discreet men we can select.

The Legislature does not always tax *all* property at precisely the same rate. *Some* property is not even taxed at all. It takes into consideration the state of the country, the condition of property at the time and under the circumstances, the profitableness of the several engagements of the several classes of men, and then establishes a tariff, or tax-table, which, applied to each individual case, will show his liability. This is changed from time to time, as changes in the times and condition of things require, so as to *keep* to the principle of several ability, as near as human judgment and sound discretion will allow. It answers the reasonable expectations of all fair men. It is the judgment of the whole mass of men expressed through its delegates, and is confessedly a fair, equitable distribution.

Now, the civil government is precisely in the condition of the ecclesiastical government, so far as this matter is concerned, with this only difference: the civil law has immediate

compulsory process, and the divine penalties are reserved for a season, to afford time and space for repentance.

There is, then, no reason—no pretence—no shadow of a reason why the same rule should not apply, in the same way, in both cases. The man who would complain in the one case, and not in the other, is guilty of palpable inconsistency and transparent unfairness. In the one case he submits, because the laws will not allow him to evade or postpone the payment of his just dues. In the other case, he does not submit, because the sword of God's justice is not at once immediately and visibly raised over him.

But Christians profess to be willing to do right, without the intervention of a sheriff. Then, if their professions be sincere, the support of the ministry is secure.

The exception to this general rule, and the only exception worth noticing, is in cases of professional men and laborers, whose income is the direct result of their services, rather than the profits arising from property. In every Church or community there will likely be some few cases of this sort.

And here the same moral principle is to be maintained and carried out. The process is exceedingly simple and easily carried out. For instance, the tax of A. is forty dollars, and his gross income is two thousand dollars. B. is a professional man, or mechanic, and his income is also two thousand dollars. Very well, then his Church-rate is as though his tax was forty dollars, though he may have very little or no taxable property.

Adjustments with regard to these plain exceptions to the general rule are easily made, where there is a *uniform disposition* to do so.

Church-rates are laid not upon our persons, or our names, but upon our *several ability*; not upon our joint ability, but, in order to reach every person individually, it is placed upon our *several ability*. And our ability arises from our property or our labor.

A man worth ten thousand dollars, and who pays a hundred dollars, is exactly in the category of the man who is worth a hundred thousand dollars, and pays a thousand dollars a year, so far as the property is to be considered.

The principles of pro rata distribution are easily learned,

easily understood, easily comprehended. And the only difficulties which lie in the way of their complete application and illustration in the support of the ministry and the enlargement and upbuilding of the Church, the glory of God, and the salvation of the world, are those set forth very briefly in the eighth verse of the third chapter of Malachi, and in the eighth commandment.

## THE USE OF TOBACCO.

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[This Essay was first published in the New Orleans Christian Advocate. It has been revised and enlarged by the author; and the Board of Managers of the Tract Society of the Mississippi Conference have forwarded a request that it be published as a tract for general circulation. Other brethren—some of them devoted to the weed—favor the suggestion, which, considering his own views in the premises, cannot very well be opposed by the Editor.]

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THE following essay is prepared as a religious duty. It is intended for the reading of religious men, or of those religiously inclined: they will be likely to appreciate it. It is written in kindness and Christian love, and not in a spirit of fault-finding. It is an humble attempt to vindicate God, and sustain the truth. It is a sober, thoughtful man addressing sober, thoughtful men. And the writer expects—he thinks he has a right to expect—the candor and sobriety in return which he offers to others. An attempt at a laugh or a joke will not be willingly received in reply.

The writer is a professor of religion, and writes in no other than a religious spirit. In common with his fellow-Christians, he has solemnly dedicated himself and all he has—life, person, health, talents, money, character, energies, feelings, habits, wishes—all, all, to the propagation of Christianity.

The evangelization of the world is the appropriate work and calling of the Christian. Any thing which in much or in little tends to advance this object, a Christian man may do. But any thing which in much or little tends to retard that object, he may not do. This is the simple covenant.

recorded above. I do not understand how any man can be religious, truly and properly so, without laboring in this cause, "so much as in him is."

The writer asks his fellow-Christians to read the whole of his little essay, and he hopes it will be read in the spirit and temper in which it is written. Readers will then, of course, make such disposition of it as they choose—in the fear of God.

The writer believes the subject to be one of the most important within the range of religious discussion, at the present day, in this country.

1. DIFFICULTY OF APPROACHING THE SUBJECT.—Those who indulge in the practice under consideration endeavor, whether wittingly or unwittingly, to forestall discussion, to treat it with an air of contempt, and raise themselves above the question of its right or wrong. In this they have succeeded in a most remarkable degree. They put pious opinions at defiance by a forced openness and notoriety which they give to the practice. They place themselves among and alongside of men of acknowledged standing in the Church; as though the standard of men could successfully countervail the principles of Christianity.

This false position—this grossest of all sophistries, is perhaps the chief reason why the practice has so long gone unrebuked. In truth, it is greatly difficult, because of those things, to approach the subject in that fair and unbiased manner which truth and justice require.

And as the sun of Christianity rises, and its light exposes to view more and more of its principles, and brings into action more of the moral and mental energies of man, and as its warmth sinks deeper and deeper into the intelligence and soul of men, the responsibility increases in the premises, with all men. As "talents" increase, additional "improvement" is required. A Christian gentleman will not be judged by the same law which applies to a Christian Indian.

2. LET THE MINISTRY BE KEPT PURE.—We all know that the Bible and the Bible alone is the rule of conduct for all Christian people. No man is to follow a minister because he is a minister. Yet such is the power of association and the force of habit, that most men, perhaps all men, are considerably influenced in their conduct by what they see others do.

And especially in regard to the ministers of the gospel: much of the conduct of the world is what it is because the minister does so. It has long since gone into a proverb that "actions speak louder than words." No minister can preach as loud as he acts.

Hence every minister is bound to see that his example is such as other people, young and old, ought to follow, and such as they will be benefited by following.

It is the same thing for a minister to go into the pulpit and preach a sermon occasionally in favor of any custom, practice or habit, and to exhibit that habit in his conduct out of the pulpit.

A pure minister is the life-blood of the Church. Impurity or indiscretion of any kind in the ministry does vastly more harm to the Church and to society than most persons are aware of. It is not a very uncommon thing for a minister to preach well, and then unpreach nearly or quite all he preaches.

If the social and individual acts of the ministers of this country, performed out of the pulpit, were performed with "fear and trembling before God," they would weigh double, triple, quadruple what they do now weigh in real, practical influence.

3. SMALL MATTERS.—There is great danger in estimating the size of moral things. Moral things can only be estimated by the results they produce. Nothing is in a moral sense, in itself, great or small. Many things which appeared to man the most trivial were really the corner-stones, the starting-points of great events in the world's character and history.

A mother taught her little boy that a degree of reverence was due to the minister. She explained to him how it is, and why it is, that the word "Reverend" is usually prefixed to the name of a minister. Every thing the minister did was of course exactly right in the eyes of the boy. The boy became a smoker and chewer as he entered his teens: his excuse referred to his Reverend exemplar; and the mother's mouth was stopped by her own teaching, which she intended as pious teaching. And she deeply, deeply regretted that the minister had ever been an intimate visitant in her house. And when the boy became a man, and found a habit

fastened upon him which he despised, and being of feeble nerve, and, as he thought, incapable of resistance, he cursed that minister in his heart with every removal of the quid, and with every dollar expended to make himself, as he considered it, a fool and a third-rate gentleman.

On this particular point a book comes looming up before me, and demands to be written. But I must be content here with a mere index-finger pointing to the book, and suggesting an examination of it. We must not forget that

Tall oaks from little acorns grow.

4. "DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD"—First Corinthians x. 31—is still in the Scriptures, however practically it may be expunged by however many people. Whatsoever ye do—eating, drinking—whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. This doctrine is as broad as the language in which it is set forth. It is broad, plenary, patent.

It is a sin to "do" any thing that is not conscientiously intended to glorify God. This doctrine is the more especially applicable to such things as are done knowingly, wilfully, and by premeditation.

How can a Christian habitually do that which he knows and is compelled to acknowledge is not for the glory of God?

I am not speaking about the sentiments or notions of individual men: I am speaking about the plain, positive declarations of God, and of necessary deductions therefrom. Do all to the glory of God is an injunction as plain, direct, positive, and universally binding as any other command of God given to man. There is no difference in the size of commandments.

How far, in rare cases, a wrong prepossession, a blinded imagination, a thoughtless infatuation, the power of custom and the fetters of association, may in part operate as an excuse or a palliation, is not for me to determine. No man is responsible to me. But I read the Bible as I find it.

If tobacco can be chewed and smoked and dipped and snuffed to the glory of God, why, be it so: if not, it is sinful. That is a short argument, but its truth no man will attempt to gainsay.

5. DECENCY OF BEHAVIOR.—A minister is presumed to be a gentleman. Nay, more, he must be a gentleman. He



must be not only what might by possibility pass loosely by that designation, but he must be found always in the fore rank of gentlemen. A gentleman is distinguished from other men by his behavior.

It has already been most justly and beautifully said, that, "As it is the part of justice never to use violence, so it is the part of modesty never to commit offence."

Tully says, "Virtue and decency are so nearly related that it is difficult to separate them from each other, but in our imagination."

Addison says: "As the beauty of the body, with an agreeable carriage, pleases the eye, and pleasure consists in that we observe all the parts, with a certain elegance, are proportioned to each other, so does decency of behavior, which appears in our lives, obtain the approbation of all with whom we converse, from the order, consistency, and moderation of our words and actions. This flows from the reverence we bear toward every good man, and to the world in general. For to be negligent of what any one thinks of you, does not only show you arrogant, but abandoned."

Several ministers met on the sidewalk. One of them, a highly distinguished minister, said to another, "Step this way—let us walk into this store." And as they walked, he remarked, in a firm tone, "I will not, I am determined I will not, appear in company and associate with a minister on the street with a cigar in his mouth."

"I commend you most heartily," was the reply; and a conversation on cigar-smoking ministers ensued, which was highly creditable to the ministers in question.

"Husband," said a pious lady, in time of Conference, at whose house several ministers were staying, "do try, if you possibly can without direct and open offence, do try to prevail upon that man, Brother ——, not to smoke and spit tobacco juice so terribly in the parlor and about the fireplace. Do try. I am tired: I am sick: I don't know what to do. You know, husband, what pains I took to put the parlor in neat order for their accommodation. I have had it cleaned up every morning after the gentlemen have left, but I can't keep it clean. That terrible smoke upon the curtains, and that spitting about the fireplace! What shall I do?" "Well, my dear, I hardly know what to do. I dislike to

offend the man. He is regarded as a very prominent and talented member of the Conference. Perhaps we had as well bear it. You can renovate and renew things afterward. But I promise you this, most certainly: The next time Conference comes here, if I live, 'smokers and tobacco-chewers excepted' is the law of my house."

A minister I wot of, considered by some a very genteel and leading member of his Conference, was, during the sitting of Conference, in the house of a person whom I know to be one of the most perfect gentlemen I have ever met—a highly respectable and pious member of the Methodist Church: the minister was about to light his cigar, when the gentleman took him by the arm: "Excuse me sir, you must really excuse me, but we cannot allow smoking in the parlor."

The degree of mortification with which the cigar was otherwise disposed of did not come to my knowledge.

"Well, brother, you are highly favored this year, with one of the best preachers."

"Yes, sir, we have certainly one of the very best in the Conference. His sermons have never been surpassed in our pulpit."

"And you are all highly pleased this year?"

"No, sir, not entirely. His tobacco and cigars, and cigars and tobacco, are quite offensive to many, and abridge his usefulness very materially."

"Our washerwoman," said a good sister to her husband, "complains considerably that the linen of Brother — is very much bespattered with tobacco juice. What a pity that so young a man, and otherwise so agreeable and genteel, should be liable to such complaint. Do talk to him about it in some mild and fatherly kind of way; not about the linen, for the world, but about the tobacco. He is young, and can and ought to quit it!"

One of the filthiest places I ever saw in my life was the inside of a pulpit in a Methodist church, in a country town supporting a male and female college, both of respectable size and standing. I chanced to be present when some repairs were being made which caused the removal of the floor. There were literally shovels-full of filth, mostly, or perhaps I might say, entirely, old worn-out tobacco quids, deposited there in the last ten years, by some persons, I know not whom.

“Well, my dear,” said a Methodist gentleman to his wife, just before Conference was to meet in their town, “we are to take five preachers.”

“And welcome—and welcome,” was the reply. “And we might, if necessary, take six or seven. But, see here, do see Brother —, and try and not have any chewers and smokers.”

“Really, it seems a hard case: somebody must take them.”

“But there are places where they chew and smoke themselves, and they won’t mind it. But try, husband, and not have any sent here, if you can.”

“Cigars have *ris!*” said a wag, in time of Conference. “I’ll put a dozen of them preachers against any twelve crack smokers in the city.”

Two Presbyterian ladies, of wealth and refinement, were in a store, shopping. Two Methodist preachers were in the store, one stationed in the city, and the other from a distance. The preacher residing there came out of the store, exclaiming to me, as he met me on the sidewalk, “I’m sick! I’m sick! I am disgusted! I am disgusted! Brother — is acquainted, it seems, with one of those ladies, and there he stands talking to her and puffing smoke into their faces. The ladies are trying to get rid of him, two of the clerks have given him a hint, and there he stands, puffing for life. Let us get away from here. I don’t want to see the man again.”

“I thought,” said a lady to her husband, “I thought you told me that Brother — was going to quit chewing. But judging from the appearance of his chin and the corners of his mouth, at the dinner-table, I should think you were mistaken.”

“Your preacher, I am told,” said a minister to a steward, “is a very able preacher, but not a first-rate pastor.”

“First-rate preacher, but no great hand to visit. Nor, to speak plainly, are his visits, as a general thing, very desirable.”

“Why, what!—why so?”

“Smoke, smoke, smoke! Chew, chew, chew! Spit, spit, spit! wherever he goes. Very annoying, not to say disgusting, in some of our best families.”

The above-mentioned circumstances, with many others of a like kind, that might be named, are ALL FACTS that have come under my personal knowledge within no long time past.

6. EFFECT OF MINISTERIAL TOBACCONIZING ON THE RISING GENERATION.—That the education of the male youth of this country is greatly and very deleteriously affected by the smoking and chewing of ministers, is notorious. A minister that does not carry a moral influence around him of a very lively and moving character, and cause, in a good degree, the habits and education of youth to conform to his habits and practices, ought no longer to remain a minister. A minister whose conduct does not carry a weighty influence around and with it, is no minister at all. The sooner he quits, the better.

I never knew a smoker or chewer, a man of any reflection, who did not himself despise the practice, and regret, deeply regret, his slavery to the habit; and as deeply regret the association and example that had fastened it upon himself. He throws back the blame on a mistaken father, a thoughtless, careless brother, or a man whose sacred profession and calling it was to "feed my lambs."

The boys who are growing up around us men, and who imbibe the same habit from the same source, will of course, I suppose, feel and speak and think in the same way.

A company of persons were sitting together, not long since, and a Methodist preacher was puff—puff—puffing, when a remark was made about the "fast" boys in the town. "Yes," said the preacher, "I never saw the like. You may frequently see the little rascals, ten, twelve, or fourteen years old, with a cigar or a chew in their mouths, smoking and chewing. I never saw such a set of boys. What will they come to?"

Not long before the battle of Monterey, Gen. Taylor saw one of his captains who was not quite captain enough for him in the times he anticipated, and he said to another officer, "Take that captain out and drill him three hours a day for six days."

Thinks I to myself, on the occasion referred to, I wish I were an ecclesiastical Taylor. I would have that minister drilled three hours a day for six days. If he had been a sober-

thinking, rational-minded man, I would have asked him a few questions like the following :

Do you esteem it wrong for boys to smoke cigars and chew tobacco? If it is wrong in boys to do such things, what is the proper age for pious youths to commence? Does smoking and chewing by boys of the ages of ten to fifteen lead, or is it likely to lead, to idleness, drinking whisky, swearing, quarrelling, and such like conduct? Is the present state of bad morals on the part of the boys in this town attributable, in a good degree, to the habit of chewing and smoking? Is the habit in question, on the part of these boys, a source of great regret, mortification, and sorrow on the part of all pious parents, and also of all other parents who think and act with any sort of moral correctness toward their children? When these boys grow to manhood, and become fully awake to the evil of a bad habit entailed upon them, will they be likely to bless or curse the minister who, in all likelihood, did much more to fasten the habit upon them than any other person? Considering the great power of example which the ministerial calling gives a man, is there a person in this town—are there any five persons in it—who have done so much to propagate the habit of smoking and chewing upon the part of the boys as yourself?

I would have liked to ask that young minister—for he is a young man—these and some other similar questions, if I had not seen that his conduct in the premises gave evidence of a lack of capability on his part properly to appreciate them.

Boys of the age of ten or fifteen years are not presumed to have the discretion, forethought, and judgment of grown-up men. They follow carelessly, and almost instinctively, such example as is set before them. A minister of the gospel has, by his profession and calling, attained a position in society as an exemplar of youth, that other men need not aspire to. Children that are piously and morally brought up, are taught to look to the preacher as an exemplar.

But, alas! alas! the truth forces the acknowledgment that this is sometimes very bad teaching!

It is by the law of the Methodist Church made the duty of ministers, in pastoral visitings, to “pay special attention to the children: speak to them personally and kindly,” etc

But the law does not say whether he is to teach them to smoke or not, though it is oftentimes so construed.

7. THE EFFECT OF TOBACCONIZING ON A MINISTER'S OWN CHARACTER AND HABITS.—What is it that makes up a man's character? It is the several things which he does.

Each thing which a man does is a brick or a nail in the edifice. Incidental things are small bricks, but habitual things are large timbers. A man is what he is, because of the things he did yesterday and other past days of his life. There is precisely as much difference between a chewer and smoker and a non-chewer and smoker, as there is between chewing and smoking and the absence of it. A man's character, then, is to a considerable extent *made of tobacco*—that is, some men's characters.

It is well known, too, that there is in society a variety of classes of conduct, the exhibition of which serves to the observer as a thermometer to measure the character of the person. In this way we inadvertently measure men as we meet them on the street and in promiscuous society. In this measurement we are almost never mistaken, even at the first glance. No man can mistake a dandy for a gentleman at first sight. The *cut of the jib* indicates the character, on the land as well as on water. These considerations are both inherent and instinctive with all men.

Now, the man who wears a "long nine," or any of its concomitants or appendages, throws himself into that channel, and the irrefragable laws of association are such that it is impossible for him not to imbibe the character and take on the spirit of his fellows.

"Birds of a feather flock together;"

not so much because their inclinations lead them together, but because their flocking together, their wearing the same livery, causes them to take on the same feather.

A minister is, therefore, by a law of nature, partially moulded into the character of a *b'hoy*, because he apes him. It matters not whether he intends to do so or not: if he does so, the law will work its way.

And so, on the other hand, a grave and thoughtful air, a dignified and genteel mien, an elevating of one's self above all kinds of vulgarisms, a peremptory divorcement from all kinds

of *streeteries* and *loaferies*, however genteel they profess to be—a being a gentleman any how, tends greatly to make a minister of a man who wishes to be one.

These things are well known to every man, woman, and child. And the reputation, as well as the character of ministers, is graduated accordingly.

The laws of association are as imperative and certain in their operation as the laws of gravitation.

If we see a minister—the gravest and soberest minister in the land—a little too much at home with a certain class of the most genteel, so-so, jolly sort of “good fellows,” he is hail-fellow-well-met with them, he instinctively imbibes their *lingo*, and—“No, sir, ’bliged to you, don’t drink—but these cigars are very *foine*.” If he don’t break off and reform, he is certain to become a tippler, or a loafer; or both.

A minister must *be* a minister, or he will soon find himself something else.

8. THE EFFECT OF TOBACCO ON THE PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION.—No man, from Hayti to Kamtschatka, without first putting his brains in his pocket, ever pretended to say or to intimate that there is any thing good or in any way beneficial in tobacco. Either in or out of Yucatan, from Spanishdom to New Zealand, it never claimed to have a quarter of a grain of moral, religious, social, or intellectual good. Its properties, whatever they may be, are all on the other side of the page.

“Doctor,” said I once, to a medical friend, “you will die from the use of tobacco, and your wife will be a widow.”

“What!—what!”

“I mean precisely what I say, Doctor. It is my candid and sober belief you will die from the use of tobacco, and your wife will be a widow. With you, it is disuse or the coffin.”

And after a few more words, a conversation ensued in regard to the physical effects of tobacco on men of spare make and slender frame. We soon found that his *practice* and my *theory* perfectly harmonized. A year afterward I met the same gentleman, considerably improved in health:

“Do you remember,” he said, “what you said to me a year ago, at my house, about the use of tobacco?”

“Perfectly well.”

“It was a home-thrust. You did not know at the time the effect it had on me. I knew all that as well as you did. I could not but know it. Strange that I did not think about it! I knew at the time that I should have told a patient, in a similar condition, the same thing. I should have died by this time, but now see how I am improved.”

That many persons die from the use of tobacco, is certain. Persons of spare make, especially, are in great danger. It is held by the best medical opinions that the use of tobacco is always injurious to the health, and that it superinduces death oftentimes. The juices of the stomach, which ought to be taken up by absorbents, is spit out of the mouth. Each salivary discharge contains a portion of animal matter, so that after a while a man spits himself out of his mouth!

Tobacco, either by chewing or smoking, tends to destroy the coats of the stomach, and thus superinduces dyspepsia and indigestion, and prevents medicine, in case of any disease, from having its proper effect.

Tobacco supports a very large portion of the physicians of this country. Their testimony, when they give it, is decidedly against it.

9. THE EFFECTS OF TOBACCONIZING ON A MINISTER'S REPUTATION AND USEFULNESS.—It directly and immediately lessens the standing of any minister somewhat in the eyes of every person that witnesses the practice.

Ministers are held in higher estimation among themselves universally—all other things being equal—from the non-use of tobacco. This is universally the case.

In ordinary conversations respecting the reputation and usefulness of ministers, nothing is more common than opinions and sentiments with regard to the amount of depreciation occasioned by the use of tobacco in the cases where it is used. Chewers and smokers seldom hear these remarks, but they are made constantly, commonly just out of their hearing. So far as I know and believe, these remarks are as common as ordinary conversation. In regard to ministers of high standing, who travel abroad, they seldom pass a day or even an hour without being the subject of these remarks. Among the ladies no kind of personal remark is more common; but “wouldn't let him hear it for the world.”

If I were a tobacconizer, I should be as ignorant of these



things as they are; but I am not, and hence I have opportunity of knowing.

A minister's usefulness depends more upon his reputation than most persons are aware of. He may preach the best sermons, say the best things socially or privately, but if he be deficient in reputation, every thing passes for half its value.

And how is a man to keep up his reputation? All direct efforts to do so are highly dishonorable in any man. The only way a man may sustain his reputation is by keeping his conduct right. Let his conduct be void of offence, and the people will take care of his reputation. But if his conduct be regarded as faulty, he might as well try to patch the clouds as to patch his reputation.

It appears to me a minister is obliged to do every honorable thing, and refrain from every thing an honorable man can refrain from, to give himself a reputation: not for the sake of the reputation—this is disgraceful—but for the sake of his usefulness; or, in other words, for the sake of the cause of Christ.

I never heard a word said against a minister or against any man in my life for not tobaccoizing.

The minister who receives a cigar in a smoking trio is thought the less of for it, and his sermon the next Sunday is, in their estimation, depreciated in consequence—perhaps not very much, but this is the inevitable tendency—while he who refuses is appreciated on the spot for that very thing.

Take away tobacco from the ministry, and it is elevated considerably. The whole machinery of the pulpit is invigorated greatly.

Tobacco disgraces the pulpit. Every man not directly involved will readily agree to this. Those involved are not allowed to vote in the case.

10. THE EFFECT OF TOBACCONIZING ON A MINISTER'S EFFORTS TO RAISE MONEY.—It requires all the ingenuity and eloquence of the best ministers to induce the people to do in a very partial manner their duty in supporting the pecuniary requirements of the gospel in its various enterprises. He has to remind them over and often that their money is the Lord's money—that their ownership of it is a mere stewardship—that they are bound by very high considerations

to support these various enterprises—that to this end worldly superfluities must be abridged—that “save all you can and give all you can” was not merely the doctrine of Mr. Wesley, but that he gathered the principle from the Bible—that self-denial is still the law of religion—that those few dimes and dollars spent needlessly, if appropriated according to the will of God, would hasten the evangelization of the world greatly, and bring about the salvation of many a poor soul for whom Christ died. He reminds them how it is, and explains to them that the money saved from needless expenses and appropriated to the Lord’s treasury will greatly benefit their own religious enjoyment. And he appeals to them: how can a Christian spend sums of money, large or small, for that which is not bread, for that which does not lie precisely in the channel of religion, while the Lord’s treasury is so empty?

And all this while people well know that that very man is engaged in a business of useless, worldly, pernicious money-spending, which, if turned into the channel he recommends, would fill the Lord’s treasury to overflowing many times over. The annual interest on the money would meet all his recommendations and demands.

Some of the congregation or other persons to whom these appeals are made do not, perhaps, think of these things; but some do!

Some people think it strange that a minister of the gospel should appropriate more money to the purchase of tobacco than he does for the support of the gospel of the Son of God!

These considerations greatly cripple any man’s efforts to raise money for the Church.

At the same time, a man may make a good speech and get a good collection; but most certainly he would make a much better speech and raise more money if he were unfettered from these entanglements and inconsistencies.

It may be said that the preacher offers the people his speech and not himself: that the duty of the people is to hear and heed his speech—that they are not the supervisors of his conduct—that his character is not now before them for examination.

Perhaps so, and perhaps not. But this is not exactly the question. The right or the wrong of their conduct is not now

under review. The fact is as I state it. People do and will look at the character, position, and consistency of the Lord's advocate.

11. WHISKY AND TOBACCO.—The Church has waked up to the evil of whisky-drinking; and it is now in all respectable ecclesiastical circles regarded as a sin to drink Baldface, Dexter, Schnapps, Hock, or Cordial, except in cases of direct medical necessity.

*Why* is liquor so uniformly reprobated? What is the *reason* for all this? Why may we not "take a little" if we do not get drunk? Is the thing wrong in the absence of drunkenness? Where is the evil?

All moral men whose sense of moral obligation outweighs their sense of self-indulgence, agree that it is wrong because of its *tendency*. Moderate drinking begets more drunkenness than drunkenness does. Moderate drinking is the foundation of *all* the evil, whether found in the waste of money, waste of time, waste of habits of economy and industry, waste of sober, thoughtful feelings, waste of social, public, or self respect, waste of family comforts and respectability, waste of health, waste of life, or waste of the soul. Abate moderate drinking which "*does no harm,*" and the rest is easily controlled.

Just so of tobacconizing. There is a rheumatic sentimentalism preached by those who do not or who will not think, which teaches that those who are not dead from the use of tobacco have done "no harm" by their chewing and smoking and snuffing and dipping. They are "moderate."

But they do not reflect that the foundation of all tobacconizing is laid in this same "moderate" indulgence. The "moderates" only occupy the citadel of all *tobacconodom*. Let the *moderate* chewing and smoking and snuffing and dipping be abated, and I will underwrite for the rest.

Whatever of harm there may be in the whole thing, it is justly chargeable against those who indulge *at all*. But a tobacconizer may ask, "How much of this whole evil under which the Church and the nation groan is properly chargeable to me?"

That question I am not well able to answer. I only know that *your weight*, whatever it may chance to be, moral, mental, literary, ecclesiastical and physical, has tended, to its

full capacity, to bring the thing into its present deplorable condition. I do not know the precise amount of your individual indebtedness in the premises, but I would not have your indebtedness and my conscience, in this matter, *for the price of my right arm.*

12. WHO PAYS FOR THE MINISTER'S TOBACCO? I would like to be allowed to repeat that question with more than ordinary emphasis—*Who PAYS for the minister's tobacco?* In other words, Whose labor earns the money that buys it? From whose brow does the sweat fall while the money is being earned? Some ministers are not rich. Laying aside for the moment the question of the right of those ministers who do not receive their support from the Church to use the money they call theirs in the purchase of tobacco, let us look at the case of those who are dependent on the Church for support, and who receive their support from the Church, and inquire, who pays for their tobacco? This question is easily answered. It seems almost to answer itself. The minister must be supported. The Bible, as well as common justice, requires it. The rule is not that any particular amount of money is to be paid to the minister, but he is to be *supported*. The amount of this "*support*" depends upon a variety of circumstances—the place where he lives, the price of living, the state of society, etc., etc. Now, suppose two ministers in precisely the same circumstances in all respects, except that the one uses tobacco to the amount of fifty or a hundred dollars per year, or any other sum, the principle is the same. They cannot, it is clear, receive each the same amount of money and be both supported in the same way. The tobaccoizer fails to get his support, or he is paid fifty or a hundred dollars more than is necessary; or, in other words, he creates a seeming necessity for support to the amount of all his tobacco dimes and dollars, and palms off that spurious necessity upon the Church.

The Bible does not contemplate any extra allowance for tobacco.

### 13. THE MISSIONIZING AND THE TOBACCONIZING OF THE CHURCH.

This is a noble age! Who is not grateful to God that he lives in the mission age of the Church! The hovels of the poor, the quarters of the black man, the haunts of priest-

craft, the wilds of the West, the deserts of the East, the abodes of idolatry, the equator and the poles, are all visited by the missionary, and are beginning to acknowledge the principles of the cross of Christ. Men give their money to support the missionary, and the missionary sacrifices the endearments of home for the sake of the souls of men.

We have 300 missions, with 70,000 Church-members, and 25,000 children under religious instruction, in our Church alone. And for this we pay annually about \$160,000. Noble deeds of noble men! Soon these operations shall be doubled: soon they shall be trebled: soon they shall be quadrupled.

This is a mission age, and ours is a mission Church.

This is also a tobacco age, and ours is a tobacco Church. Well, why not speak out and acknowledge the truth at once, if we speak at all? Does any man object to my calling our Church a tobacco Church? Then he objects to the truth most manifestly, for its tobacco aspect is much larger than its mission aspect.

We pay \$160,000 a year for missions, and more than ten times \$160,000 a year for tobacco.

Remember we have in our Church alone about, at a moderate calculation, 200,000 persons who tobacconize. An average of ten dollars a piece per year is clearly below the truth, and this will give you an ecclesiastical tobacco revenue of one million six hundred thousand dollars per annum.

Remember that 365 dimes—a dime a day—is	\$36 50
Half a dime a day is	\$18 25
A quarter of a dollar a day is	\$91 25

And remember, “best” tobacco comes at a dollar or *ten bits* a pound, while the meanest of “copperas-rotted” costs from thirty to fifty cents. “Best” cigars are a dime, I believe, and meaner ones in proportion—I don’t exactly remember the price of pipes, but dipping-tobacco for *ladies* stands at a high figure.

“Look ye here,” said a minister in charge of an important station the other day, and whose general finances are not greatly at a premium—“I made quite a spec this morning—best tobacco I have seen in a year, and ten pounds for eleven dollars.”

“Now, don’t do that,” said one minister to another at a missionary meeting: “keep your ten dollars: you haven’t got

it to spare: let the people pay: we preachers pay more than we are really able."

The kind advice was not heeded, perhaps in part for the reason that the prudent, objecting minister pays \$75 a year for tobacco and cigars, while the other pays nothing. Their respective annual missionary payments did not transpire.

*The probability is that the MINISTERS of our Church alone pay as much money for TOBACCO as the whole Church pays for MISSIONS!*

14. MISAPPLICATION OF THE LORD'S MONEY.—The right and pious application of the Lord's money is a primary Christian duty. How can a Christian man misapply any of this money?

How much of the Lord's money does a tobacconizer misapply in a year? From twenty-five to one hundred dollars! Say an average of fifty, forty or thirty, or whatever you think is true, counting every dime in the year.

A little arithmetic here would not be amiss, with those who know how to cipher things out. Ten times fifty, or twenty times fifty, or five or ten times forty, or thirty times thirty, or ten times thirty are—how many?

I do not pretend to be very good at ciphering, but leave each tobacconizer to cipher in his own case, and God will look over the sum and see if he does it right.

The Lord's money is religious money, Christian money, Church money. He allows each possessor to use as much as his bread and other necessities and conveniences require, but he allows nothing for tobacconizing.

I do not know how much of the Lord's money is annually chewed and smoked in the Annual Conferences, severally, of the M. E. Church, South, by the members of the Conference, and the local preachers connected with it. If I did know the sum, I would put it down here; and if I were to do so, my impression is that it would cause every pious minister who is a tobacconizer to quit tobacconizing forthwith, for he would be startled at the figures.

My belief is, however, without pretending to any thing like accuracy, that it will amount to about from two to three thousand dollars per Conference per annum! How many Conferences are there? Let us see. The Discipline says twenty-three.

Well, now, twenty-three times two thousand are how

many? *Forty-six thousand dollars!* And twenty-three times \$2500 would be still more. Is it possible that tobacco-nizing, *by the preachers* in our Church, takes out of the Lord's money fifty or sixty thousand dollars per year?

And still further, does it take out two or three times that sum! What! what! A hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year?

Well! well! It is said that figures don't tell lies; but if so, it is certain they tell some of the most remarkable truths that ever were told.

Fifty or a hundred thousand dollars a year—and the Lord's money at that!

If the Bible be true, and the principles of Christianity be correct principles, then no man spends his own money for tobacco-nizing.

But this is not quite all of the difficulty. Some ministers are poor: some have families—hard work to make the ends of the year meet. Quarterage comes slow, barely sufficient at best. They have to call upon friends for private donations, and loans, which are understood to be nearly equal to donations. Hard, hard work to get along—and spend fifty, or forty, or sixty, or thirty, or seventy dollars a year for tobacco-nizing! To my mind this looks badly.

I have heard of a preacher at Conference, hard run—he borrows a little here and there—must settle up the regular Church money somehow. He borrows from a brother who has not a dime to spare from the necessities of his own family. But he must have at least twenty dollars more. “What shall I do? I must have—where can I borrow twenty dollars?”

And that man spent forty dollars last year for tobacco-nizing!

Well! well! A tobacco-nizing minister borrowing money!

15. SELF-DENIAL.—“But I keep my body under and bring it into subjection.”—Scripture.

The doctrine of self-denial, as it is supposed to be taught in the Bible, and as it is commonly preached in the pulpit, if put into practice in the *pulpit*, would drive tobacco out of the pulpit to-day.

The reason why ministers do not quit tobacco is the very reason why irreligious people do not become religious, *viz.*, a lack of self-denial.

Tobacco has no advocate in the world but the appetite, the mouth, the flesh. The appetite clamors—the appetite clamors. This is the only argument, this is the only reason.

This is precisely the argument of the sinner, if he would speak out what is in him. The habit of sinning has fastened its hands upon him, and will not let him go. And just so in the other case. The habit of tobaccoconizing has fastened its fangs upon him, and will not let him go.

In either case there is no cure beneath the heavens but self-denial. Put this to work, and the thing is done. A Christian, or a person determined to be a Christian, has a way of doing this without much trouble. He, by putting his trust in God, gets the Saviour to do for him, or, what is nearly the same thing, gets the Saviour to help him, with almighty help, to do what he would otherwise be unable to do.

Then when he meets with any thing he can't do, a thing that ought to be done—which is a common occurrence—he turns to the lever of Omnipotence, which cannot fail, and the thing is done.

I think the habit of tobaccoconizing is sometimes so fastened upon a man that he has not power to quit it. I also think the habit of sinning is so fastened upon a man that *he* cannot quit it. But in either case the man and God together can certainly effect it.

And we are told that God most certainly will give his help in any thing that is right. Then it is a very easy and a very simple thing to quit tobacco. What there is about the thing that you can't do, get God to do it.

This is what I understand by self-denial. Faith and self-denial are but twin aspects of the same great principle, viz., the principle of vicarious energy on the part of Omnipotence.

Now don't let the reader go off and say that I said that sin and tobaccoconizing were absolutely the same. I have not said so. I do not believe that all tobaccoconizers are sinners. I believe those who make pretensions to religion, or who are religious, are mistaken men, who fail to think soberly about the matter, and who fail to decide the question entirely, irrespective of the clamors of appetite.

But I say that sin and tobaccoconizing are alike in so far as this, that the same thing will cure in either case—viz., the



pure principles of faith and self-denial. There is no other medicine for either, except quackery, this side of the cross.

16. THE RIGHT AND WRONG.—Tobacconizing, as a practice, is either right or wrong. If it is right, it ought to be practiced more than it is: if wrong, it ought to be abated.

Let me ask the most inveterate tobacconizer this question: Would it be well for this practice to prevail universally in the Church? If not, why not? It would be as right in me as in you, and as right in any one else as in me.

“Take heed to yourselves that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside to serve other gods and worship them.” Deut. xi. 16.

“There is a way which seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”—Proverbs xvi. 25.

“Let no man deceive himself.”—1 Corinthians iii. 18.

I believe there is no difference of opinion with regard to the right or wrong of tobacconizing. I never knew any man seriously attempt to defend it. Boys always commence it stealthily. Beginners, old or young, are always ashamed of it, until it gets a certain sort of brass soldered into it, and then it walks out in public.

I never knew a well-regulated school, the rules of which did not class chewing and smoking in the same category with drinking and swearing, and which did not place them all under the same ban of absolute prohibition. I do not believe a minister in our Church would send his boys to a school where chewing and smoking were allowed.

I know of no reason why it should be allowed in men and denied in boys. Why should not boys smoke and chew? No tobacconizer can answer this question. It ought to be taught to boys or discountenanced in men.

There is a doctrine that teaches that it is more improper for boys to use profane language than men: that it is more improper in boys than in men to drink whisky, play at cards, smoke cigars, chew tobacco, or indulge in any kind of rowdyism. I do not think so. On the contrary, tobacconizing is right in boys if it is not wrong in men. I like to see a boy appear manly. I like to see him talk like a man, act like a man, be a man. I love to see a manly air and manly conduct in boys.

Why ought not a boy of ten or twelve to smoke and

chew? I would like to have any tobacconizer state a reason.

Nay, more. I do not know of any law of taste, general propriety, morals, physiology, gender, or religion, which confines tobacconizing to one sex. Custom says that ladies must not smoke cigars or chew unpulverized tobacco. But this rule is founded upon no reasonable thing. I can conceive of no reason why it is any more wrong in a lady to chew tobacco and smoke cigars than in a gentleman.

No, sir, let the ladies chew and smoke. A girl of eight years should be taught to chew tobacco and smoke cigars. Why not? Can any man state a reason? I am aware that custom would attach more disgust to it in these cases than in men. But the custom is wrong, unless there be a reason for it. If we do things at all, we must do them fairly and reasonably.

But the truth is, tobacconizing is wrong. It is wrong intrinsically and extrinsically; it is wrong absolutely and contingently; it is wrong mediately and immediately, directly and indirectly; it is wrong presently and remotely; it is wrong physically and wrong socially; it is wrong in men, wrong in ministers, wrong in women, and wrong in children. It is wrong in its pecuniary aspects, wrong morally, and wrong religiously. It is wrong to smoke in churches, wrong to chew and bedaub a pulpit. It is wrong to smoke in a lady's face, wrong to bespittle and bedaub the hearth, fireplace, firebrasses, or carpet of a friend. It is wrong to spit tobacco juice on a lady's dress or on a gentleman's cloak. It is wrong to smoke in the street, in stores, houses or steamboats. It is wrong to teach boys to smoke or to teach girls to chew tobacco, either in block or powder. It is wrong in old men, wrong in young men, wrong habitually and wrong occasionally. It is wrong to begin, wrong to continue. It is wrong to yourself, wrong to your family, wrong to your neighbors, wrong to society, and wrong to the Church. It is wrong in itself, and wrong in its relations. Tobacconizers themselves know it is wrong, they admit it is wrong, they say it is wrong, they feel it is wrong. It is wrong in the sight of man, and wrong in the sight of God.

## AN OLD SMOKER.

I SHALL take him for my text. This is rather an ugly customer, but it is worth the while to see if any thing can be made of him. I judge he has been beclouding himself, and all others in dangerous proximity, in tobacco smoke a half century or so. Hence,

1. His perseverance is a lesson. He went into this thing when he was a boy, and, boy and man, he has driven the business with inflexible tenacity of purpose. He has perfumed every day of the year, and almost every hour of the day; to say nothing of a frequent evening smoke, and now and then a midnight smoke; besides an extra smoke for all special occasions. Now, if a man will kindle a fire under his nose with such invincible perseverance, and renew it with such steadiness of purpose, why cannot I, in nobler and better employments, learn the blessed art of holding on and holding out? If he sticks to puffing so tenaciously, cannot I stick to real and important duties with at least a similar fidelity?

2. A lesson of punctuality and exactness can be learned from the old smoker.

He must smoke at regular intervals. The cry for the indulgence rises loud and earnest. And he must meet it. At just such an hour, and just such a moment, the operation must be gone into. He must not be jostled out of this thing. Exact and punctual: never man more so. Most smokers are patterns in this matter, old ones especially.

Here is a lesson for me. Shall smoking command such clock-work regularity and exactness, and shall not the genius, and especially the great Christian duties of life, command at least an equal punctuality? Old smoker! Shall I not be your rival? You at the pipe, and I in the path of duty?

3. Moral courage, too, I can see labelled on that column of smoke! Even to begin his smoking, required serious self-denial. His own physical nature resented, at first, the outrage of the poisonous weed, and a battle had to be fought before nature would yield to the invader. His purse, too, had sent forth many a sigh of sorrow. And his sense of what is becoming in a gentleman had been overborne. The

female inmates of his home have always stood across his path. And reason and conscience have each of them often given him a piece of their mind. But over all these hostile waves has the ship swept on, appetite filling all her sails, and resistance unavailing.

And what obstacles, then, may I not overcome in pursuing the path of duty? If appetite can carry all before it, after this fashion, cannot religious principle move steadily on, and bear down all the opposition of a wicked world?

Now, old smoker, you may puff away, or do any thing else you like. I don't go a reaping on such a field often; but I trust it is not quite in vain that I have tried to make something out of you. Your perseverance, and punctuality, and moral courage, suggest that I should carry the same qualities into those quiet duties of life which lie before me as a traveller toward eternal scenes. I'll not break your pipe, nor smash your tobacco-box. But I will do myself the kindness of turning you to some practical account, as I have before stated.

# STRICTURES

ON

# CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

BY THE

REV. R. ABBEY.



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## Introduction.

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THERE appears to be a strife among many persons, as to whose Church is the most "free," the most "liberal," or the most "republican" or democratic, in its form of government. It seems to be conceded by these disputants that the nearer a Church government approaches a perfect democracy, the nearer it approaches to ecclesiastical perfection.

The Baptist, for instance, claims, in behalf of his Church, that its government is perfectly republican, or democratic—entirely free and liberal. And he is replied to by the Methodist and Presbyterian, that their respective Churches have governments as free and as republican as his. And so we have quite a consumption of words on this subject, which is supposed to embody considerable denominational interest.

But all this does not seem to me to inquire into the nature, powers, or objects of government, or the application of it to different things. It seems, therefore, that they oftentimes debate without a question, and contend without a reason.

It will be attempted in the following pages to reconcile these apparently conflicting views, by straightening out and making plain and smooth these tangled-up sentiments, so that the controversy may abate of itself.

In doing this, I expect to harmonize entirely with the opinions of all fair, thinking, right-minded men of all denominations. In temperate and furious partisans of any party cannot, probably be accommodated with any thing to be found in this essay.

R. A.

Near YAZOO CITY, May, 1855.

STRICTURES  
ON  
CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

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CHAPTER I.

ELEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT.

IF we wish to inquire into *Church* government, in order to examine with regard to its perfection, we should first, that we may know what we are inquiring after, take a brief and analytical view into government itself. And here we see, that,

*First*, The natural *elements* of government are, 1st, Legislation, or the making of laws to which obedience is required. 2d, Judicature, or the legal determination of questions arising under the law, in cases of its supposed infraction. And, 3d, Execution, or the carrying into effect the sentence thus pronounced by the judiciary.

These three things make up the sum of all governments, human and divine. No government can exist without them. They are the three specific things which we mean when we say *government*.

*Second*. The different *forms* of government, consist in the placing of those three elements of government, severally, in the hands of these or those functionaries, and the modification of them thus and so, in contradistinction to their being placed otherwise, and their being otherwise modified.

*Third*. The object, use, or *end* of government, is various. It all seeks, or should seek, to advance the happiness and prosperity of all, governors and governed; but seeks only to do this within the particular scope and purview of the nature

and objects of the particular government. That is to say: The government of the State seeks to promote the happiness of the people by protecting their rights of person and property, by a wise and healthful national diplomacy, and by the ordinary course of civil and criminal judicature. The government of a Church seeks to promote the happiness of the people by securing the best advantages for the promotion and inculcation of religion, and the spread of Christianity. The government of an army is for the invasion or protection of a country; that of a school is for the advancement of education and morals; whilst the government of a family is for the early implantation of obedience, kindness, and good behavior.

*Fourth.* The powers of different governments are, of course, various, and correspond to the particular ends had in view by each. A State has power to incarcerate a man in prison—to divest him of property and invest it in another, levy taxes, etc. A Church has power to invest a man with the functions of a minister, to excommunicate him from the Church, to regulate public worship, etc. An army has power to take the lives of people without accusation or trial, to destroy public or private property, or to appropriate it to its own use at will: while a school has power to organize its students into classes, prescribe their studies, etc.

Each government acts in its own particular sphere, and by its own particular means seeks its own particular ends, while they all observe a general harmony among themselves.

Now, the several forms of government may be as various as one can imagine, and, indeed, much more so. They all range somewhere between a *perfect* monarchy on the one hand, and a *perfect* democracy on the other.

A *perfect* monarchy is where all the control, without any parcelling out, inheres in one person. This, it is obvious, cannot be carried into practice, except on a small scale, and where the government consists of but few persons. A *perfect* democracy is where all the authority is *equally* distributed amongst *all*. This could scarcely be said to be a government. Where no person has any preference above another, women and children are of course equally eligible to office, and have an equal right to vote. What is commonly called a democracy, or more properly, perhaps, a republic, is



where the right to control is restricted to a certain portion of the people, say all male inhabitants over twenty-one years, with certain other restrictions respecting residence, the payment of public dues, etc.

Writers on political economy, for the sake of practical convenience, usually divide governments into three general classes: 1st. Monarchy. 2d. Aristocracy. 3d. Republic. These general classes, however, vary in all conceivable degrees of mixture, in practice. A monarchy is where one man rules. An aristocracy is where a privileged class rules. And a republic is where the right to rule is divided equally among all those who are deemed properly eligible to office. The legal form of a government does not however always determine the degree of liberty enjoyed by the governed. For instance, the government of England, which is monarchical, is more free than the French republic was a few years ago, or than are some of the Mexican or South American republics now.

Strictly speaking, all governments, or almost all, are somewhat mixed. That of England is more mixed with free principles than the government of Russia, although they are both, denominationally, monarchies. The several republics of these States are by no means alike; for the right to vote and eligibility to office are much more restricted in some States than in others.

There is no precise line that distinguishes in all cases between governments of different legal forms. It is apparent, for instance, that a stringent republic is but a liberal aristocracy. There must be some restrictions as to eligibility to office and right to vote, if you wish to avoid anarchy. These restrictions may be, in the first place, fixed at the point that would be by all considered very liberal republicanism. They may then be increased and increased, abridging more and more the principle of very free republicanism, until you arrive at aristocracy. But there is no precise line that separates between the two forms of government.

And let us be reminded right here, that no man is absolutely in favor of, or opposed to, any particular *form* of government in all cases. All men are in favor of, and opposed to, this, that, and the other form of government for this, that, and the other purpose. In this country, for the govern-

ment of a State, I believe all men are in favor of the republican form. We apply the different forms of government to the different kinds of government, according to expediency, and as we think this, that, or the other form will best suit the case and answer the end in view. Family government, I believe, in this country is uniformly monarchical. So is that of the plantation of negroes, or of slaves anywhere. So is that of prisons and primary schools. Banks, railroad companies, and moneyed associations of all kinds for the promotion of enterprise and improvement, are, I believe, uniformly aristocratic: that is, the right to vote and to hold office is regulated by the amount of the pecuniary interest of each.

Large schools and colleges use the aristocratic form. They are governed by a privileged or restricted class, *viz.*, a board of trustees and faculty. Military government is necessarily monarchical: sometimes it is an elective monarchy. The government of ships, steamboats, exploring expeditions, and the like, is always monarchical.

It is a great error to suppose that there is any thing intrinsically wrong or oppressive in monarchy or aristocracy, as forms of government. No man looks upon them in this light. We are opposed to the abuse of the different forms of government in their application to different things: that is, we are opposed to applying them in any way that will work oppression.

Hence we are opposed to aristocracy, or monarchy, in the government of a state; to republicanism in the government of a school, plantation, family, or an army; and to monarchy in that of a university, bank, or railroad company.

What we mean by *liberty*, or *freedom*, in respect to the subjects of any particular government, is this: first and chiefly, a wholesome protection in all private and public rights; and secondly, in some cases, and only in some cases, a right to assist in furnishing this protection and in guarding these rights: that is, in having a right to vote and to hold office. It is not, however, as any one may see in a moment, always best for all the governed to have a right to vote and to hold office. In fact, this is never the case in any governments except in some incidental voluntary associations of very small magnitude. It is not the case in any regular government of continuous existence.

In the family there is no common right to vote or to hold office. Here liberty consists in protection. And so of the school, the college, and with regard to the women and children, and a portion of the men, in all republican civil governments.

Hence it is clearly seen that a blind adherence to any particular form of government, to be used in all cases, would throw society into disruption, and violate the settled principles of all men. One form of government is best for this purpose, another for that, and still other and other modifications for these, those, and the other kinds of government. The best form of government for a state would ruin an army, or a school, or a family. The best form for a college or a family would afford very poor protection to the citizens of a state. If enterprise and improvement will flourish best sometimes by means of banks and railroad companies, governed by governors elected by stockholders, each voting in proportion to the amount of his stock, that does not furnish any good reason to believe that a state, or a school, or a family, or an army, would do best governed in the same way. No reason can be given why any two things to be governed, should have the same form of government, unless it be that the *subjects* of the government, and the *end* to be secured, be the same. *Why* ought the government of a steamboat to be different from that of a state, or an insurance company? Surely there is a reason. *Why* should the government of the state be different from that of the family? Because the things to be governed—the subjects—are dissimilar; and because, further, the object, in either case, is dissimilar. Then there is nothing from which we would infer that they should be alike. As well might it be said that the best model for a plough is also the best model for a stage-coach.

## CHAPTER II.

## OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

WE have seen that what is called *government*, is the exercise of legislative, judicial, and executive functions: that is, the making of laws, the determination of questions arising in cases of supposed disobedience of them, and the executing of such sentence as may be thus pronounced. This is all that we mean by government, either divine or human.

We have seen, also, that these functions of government are exercised in different ways: that is, when one man is the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive, the form, that is, this general form, is called monarchical. Where these functions, particularly the first two, are exercised by a privileged class, above the commonalty of the governed, it is called an aristocracy; and where most of the governed, that is, all who within certain rules are deemed naturally or properly eligible to office, have the right to vote for legislators, judiciary, and executives, it is called a republic.

And that these different forms of government are used, or applied to different governments, or different things to be governed, according to expediency; that sometimes we use one form and sometimes another.

And we come now to inquire what form of government a Church ought to have, and what form it does actually, sometimes, or mostly, have.

It would be exceedingly illogical to say that the Church ought to be republican *because* the State ought to be. The conclusion has no premise. It would be just as unreasonable and just as good an argument to say, that the Church ought to be monarchical because the family ought to be; or because an army ought to be. There is, in either case, no premise to the conclusion.

To say that the government of the Church ought to be of any particular form *because* the government of something else

ought to be, is to show that the *subjects* of both governments are alike, and the *end* in each case is the same. If we contend that the Church ought to be republican, or that it ought to be aristocratic, or monarchical, we must do so for *some reason*, or we must debate without a reason. If debates differ, they must do so upon some issue, or the argument would not be likely to be very profitable, to say the least of it.

Then what form of government ought or must a Church have? This question involves two considerations. 1. What is said in the Bible on the subject? and, 2. What does human experience teach?

The Scriptures contain no directions, in much or in little, respecting any *form* of government which the Church must or ought to have. No Church government was established in apostolic days. Jesus Christ did not establish a Church, in the sense of setting up an external, visible organization. He taught *the principles of religion*, but nothing else. As to Church government, the apostles and disciples kept on in the same way they had all along been accustomed to. They were perfectly familiar with Church government before they became Christians. And neither the Saviour nor his apostles *ever intimated* that there was any thing wrong in their ecclesiastical polity. And the fact is, it was not materially changed in the early ages—nor in late ones, for it is not materially changed to this day.

There are but two ideas in the Bible, or to be gathered from it, respecting or having any bearings on the question of *form* for Church government. First, it is clearly contemplated in the Bible, that the Church is to be under regular discipline and proper control. Second, the *ministry* as a *class*, or *order*, separate and distinct from laymen, are, in some way, and to some extent, to exercise functions of control in the Church. Beyond this the Bible is silent.

The subject of Church government is never alluded to in the Bible except in the most general terms and in the most incidental way. Neither can any thing of much value be gathered from the practice of the early Church. Its government was various. It combined aristocracy, republicanism, and monarchy; though chiefly the two former, particularly before the days of Constantine. The apostolic Church may be said to have been a mixture of republicanism and aristo-

crazy: though in the formation of new churches, their government, for a time, must have been monarchical.

Then it is not stated in the Scriptures what form of government a Church must have—whether it must be entirely or chiefly republican, or aristocratic, or monarchical. It is claimed by some that according to the Bible, or early Church history, or something, the Church must be *episcopal*. But that does not determine its *form of government*. Before you can determine its form of government, you must say several other things besides merely that it must be episcopal.

Must it be the episcopacy of monarchy, where the bishop rules exclusively, where in him inheres the right to make laws, to adjudicate and to execute? Or is it the episcopacy of aristocracy, where the bishop, and a privileged class surrounding him, namely, the other ministers, legislate and adjudicate and execute? Or is it the episcopacy of republicanism, where the episcopate is an office to which men are elected—the body of the Church composing the legislature and forming the judiciary and appointing its executive? Or is it an episcopacy where monarchy, aristocracy, and republicanism are blended together? and if so, what are to be the degrees of admixture?

All these questions must be answered before it can be determined what sort of episcopacy is meant. And to answer these questions is to answer what form of Church government you are to have. So that if it be said or maintained that the Church must be episcopal, that does by no means determine what must be its form of government. Nothing is more clear than this: that a Church may be episcopal, and have any particular form of government a Church with a ministry was ever known to have. When we speak of forms of government, we must not fly off at a tangent, and begin to talk about something else.

We learn from the Scriptures that in the Church, and composing a part of it, there is a class of persons differing from the masses in several particulars, which is called its ministry; and that to the ministry essentially pertains the pastoral care of the Church. These ministers are called pastors. The term pastor was primarily, and, strictly speaking, is now, used figuratively. Literally it means a shepherd—a man whose business it is to lead a flock of sheep about, and take care of them.

Jesus Christ himself used the term in this figurative sense frequently. Then the shepherd's relation to his sheep is a fit emblem of the minister's relation to the Church.

Hence it follows unavoidably, that ministers, as a distinct class, have some share in the government of the Church over and above that which pertains to the body of the Church. Hence, in so far as this ingredient makes up the government of the Church, it cannot be republican. Republicanism is equality with regard to government. But where a class or order of persons comes in with rights or privileges or duties, over and above the rights and privileges of the commonalty—where you have a *privileged class* in whom some governmental rights inhere, of course in so far as this principle obtains, be it much or little, it innovates the principle of pure republicanism. Republicanism knows no *class* or *order* with inherent privileges.

Now, what is the name of that ingredient in Church government which inheres in the ministry as a class, distinct from laymen? The only name which lexicographers and scientific writers on government give to this principle, is aristocracy. Then a Christian Church must be, in part at least, aristocratic. If any man does not like that term, I cannot help it. If he does not know its meaning, I advise him to consult a dictionary. If the term offends his ear, then his ear is either malformed or maleducated. Nothing can offend a healthy ear but an idea. A word cannot.

The ministry is a class, or order, in the Church, distinct from the laity. And as such they have some governmental rights; for government is, to some extent, essential to the pastorate. Then a Christian Church, that is, a Church with a Christian ministry, cannot be wholly republican in its government.

And, as above intimated, it is also absolutely necessary that the monarchical principle be mingled, sometimes, as an ingredient in the government of a Church. The first formation of missionary churches must be upon the monarchical principle, if there be but one minister. If there be several, it may be aristocratic. Churches in prisons—and there ought to be one at least in every prison—and on separate plantations of slaves, ought to be monarchical, or mostly so.

But suppose a Church to be purely republican in its govern-

ment: how must it proceed? Republicanism consists not merely in a right to vote, but in the right to hold office. There may be, and there sometimes are, in republican governments, qualifications for certain offices more stringent than those which give a right to vote. In this country, all who have a right to vote are not eligible to the office of President. This, however, is a general and not a particular discrimination. No *order* or *class* of persons in this or any other legitimate republic are exclusively eligible to any office. If it were to prescribe that lawyers, as such, must always have some share in the government, or are exclusively eligible to some particular office, then that feature would, of course, be aristocratic, because it creates an exclusive eligibility to office. It does not recognize a general eligibility to office.

Then, for a Church to be entirely republican in its government, there must be a general eligibility to office. One man, coming within certain general qualifications, is as eligible as another. Then how is a pastor to be created? All are eligible—that is, all who come within the general rules. Then ministers, those whom God has called to preach, and who are recognized as valid ministers, are no more eligible to the pastorate than any others. Then any one may be elected pastor; and then there is no ministry as a class who are exclusively eligible to the pastorate.

Hence, if ministers, as contradistinguished from laymen, are exclusively eligible to the pastorate, and if pastoral charge necessarily implies government, to some extent, then no Christian Church can be entirely republican in its government.

And what do we learn from human experience on the subject?

Churches have had all forms, and almost all modifications of all forms of government ever known among men. It has been monarchical, despotic, oligarchical, aristocratic, and republican, or nearly so. And it has sustained a thousand different modifications of all these forms. It has been wedded to and mixed up with civil government. It has been connected with the government of the family, and of dynasties, and of colonies, and military interests, and rule and conquest. It has mingled with and had to do with every thing among men that could be called government.

And it might be remarked, perhaps as well here as any-



where else, that Churches have by no means prospered or suffered in proportion as their governments have been good or bad. Sometimes the Church has prospered greatly under the greatest external disadvantages. And again, with many external advantages surrounding it, it has not made spiritual progress in an apparently corresponding degree. Something else than *government* is necessary to religious prosperity. Still, it cannot be doubted but a well-arranged and healthy government is greatly advantageous in religious and ecclesiastical prosperity.

I do not see that the Scriptures on the one hand, or human experience on the other, furnish us with any reason why the Church might not, generally, be republican in its government, except in so far as the ministry, as a class, make the Scriptural innovation hereinbefore explained. I say generally, because this form would not always be best. It would not do in newly formed missionary stations, nor in any of those instances where the laws of the country create a social or civil inequality between the pastor and his flock.

The Church, then, which boasts of being exclusively republican in its government, even with the exception with regard to the ministry already noted, cannot preach the gospel to every creature, and exercise pastoral oversight where it preaches. Still, nothing is conceived to be more wholesome in Church government than republicanism, to the extent the Scriptures and the great mission will allow.

Since the Reformation, the government of the Church, except the Church of England, and perhaps some others, has been a wholesome mixture of republicanism and aristocracy. The government of the Church of England, like that of its State, is a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy and republicanism.

The government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country has very little, if any, of the monarchical principle in it. It is a wholesome, or, at least, a tolerably wholesome mixture of republicanism and aristocracy. Perhaps it has a little more of the latter than the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. Whether that is advantageous, or otherwise, to its usefulness, might be difficult to determine. That question is not under discussion.

The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches are, beyond all question, republican in their government, except in so far

as a participation in the government by ministers, as such, in pursuance of the rule of the Scriptures, changes that system of polity.

The principal practical things in the government of Churches have respect to the arrangement and investiture of the functions of ministers, their trial and excommunication, the reception, trial, and excommunication of members, and the administration of finances. These make up what we call government. In regard to these, the Church makes laws, adjudicates, and executes them.

An instance in the inequality in spiritual and ecclesiastical prosperity, and supposed soundness in Church government, may be seen in the history and present condition of the Methodist Protestant Church.

This Church grew out of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from an avowed purpose of making it more free. It did not, in the fancy of its founders and adherents, conform sufficiently to the civil government of the country, or to something else.

We might pause here long enough to ask what kind of a Church that would be which conformed precisely, in all things, or as nearly as practicable, to the civil government of this, or any other country? If a Church government ought to be conformed, as nearly as practicable, to American republicanism, then why not do so? It could be made to follow the prototype very closely. But who acts upon this principle? Who believes that the form of the government of a Church ought to be brought *as near* to that of the State as practicable? No man believes this, because no man has so far lost his reason as to believe that the *subjects* or the *end* of the two governments bear any considerable similarity. Then why the continual boasting and the continual recrimination respecting such conformity?

But to return. Whether the Methodist Protestant Church did or did not succeed in bringing its government nearer to that of the State, or to whatever model they had in view, appears not to be a very important inquiry, since it is pretty certain the change has resulted in no good. That the persons who engaged in this ecclesiastical government have not advanced evangelical piety, or extended the Redeemer's kingdom, beyond what they most probably would have done if

they had remained in the Methodist Episcopal Church, is, to say the least of it, pretty certain.

Abstractly considered, their government cannot be regarded as a very bad one. Certainly, the cause of this Church's inefficiency cannot be found in any positive defects in its external polity. Perhaps it could, with more safety, be looked for in the fact that neither the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, nor the condition of civil affairs, nor any other surrounding circumstances, demanded the change. Certain it is that this Church does not seem to extend and prosper in proportion to the evangelical soundness of its external polity or principles of government.

It would seem that the government of the Church ought not, or need not, be precisely modelled after that of the State, from the further consideration, that the former proposes to exercise no coercive power: whilst the powers of the latter are chiefly, if not exclusively, coercive. Let any man pause, and look slowly and carefully into what a Church government proposes to *do*; and then let him examine into what a State or civil government has to *do*. And he will most likely be cured of the notion—if he has ever been governed by it—that they must be, or ought to be, similar in their organization. This notion has been jumped at by rapid strides, not formed by careful investigation.

There are reasons why the government of the Church ought to be as republican, or as popular, as the constituent principles thereof will allow. But these reasons are not found by regarding the civil government as its prototype.

## CHAPTER III.

## GOVERNMENT OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

IN looking over the ground, and noting these popular errors with regard to Church government, I find an anomaly in what is called "The Baptist Church." The extent and respectability of this class of Christians, and the strange and unnatural peculiarities which oftentimes attach to what is called their government, make it necessary for me to devote to it a separate chapter.

In searching among the Baptists after Church polity, we are led, more strikingly than anywhere else, to observe that the religion of Christianity—the piety of religion—the prosperity of a Church, or of the kingdom of Christ, does not depend, by any means, exclusively, or even mainly, on the soundness of Church government. Here we have a very large and respectable class of Christians, who, as a general thing oftentimes, in many parts of the country, are doing considerable good; and it might almost be said they have no government at all. So that it would be exceedingly unwise to regard mere soundness or wisdom in Church government as the vital cause or mainspring of piety or denominational advancement.

I will try to look calmly and impartially into whatever of polity or government I may be able to find among the Baptist churches. In regard to any peculiar religious tenets they may entertain respecting the sacrament of Baptism, or any thing else, I have nothing to say in this essay. I have no sectarian or theological controversy with any one; but will merely examine and explain facts as I find them.

Some of the various denominations of the general class of Christians commonly called Baptists, certainly embody a good degree of piety: they preach a sound gospel, they administer the ordinances of Christ, they live pious lives, inculcate Christian principles, and do very much in the great work of spreading holiness, and in extending Christianity over the world. They have, some of them, faithful and efficient mis-

sionaries in almost every clime: they have schools and churches almost all over the country. But this prosperity can by no means be attributed to their ecclesiastical polity; for, as a class of Christians, they have none.

It is improper to speak of Baptists as a *denomination* of Christians, as is sometimes done: because the various Baptist Churches in this, or any other country, have generally no denominational alliance, or federate or common principles, which unite them. Hence, as a class, they have no form or principles of Church government. They have nothing of this kind in common.

The term "Baptist" comprehends all those various classes, sects and denominations of Christians—which are very extensive in variety, and very dissimilar in belief and practice—which deny the rite of baptism to children, or which use the ceremony of immersion in baptizing. But as denominations, Churches, or individuals, they have, generally, no sort of affinity, communion, correspondence or relationship among themselves. Hence, no tenets or principles can be applied to them, as Baptists, for they have nothing in common by which they are distinguished from other Christians, other than the exclusion of children from Church-membership, and the use of immersion in baptism. They are of every tenet and belief on all other questions.

We frequently have arguments and treatises on the subject of the Church government of Baptists, and of other ecclesiastical or theological tenets or peculiarities applied to them, denominationally, as contradistinguished from other Christians. All this is obviously erroneous. No such discussion can be properly maintained, for the reason that nothing can be predicated of Baptists, as such, beyond the two points above named.

For the most part, Baptists are congregational in their Church government—very strictly so. It must be remarked, however, that Congregationalism cannot be called a *form* of government, for it may exist in any form. As it is generally practiced by Presbyterians, it admits of some considerable degree of federate alliance with other Churches; but Baptists mostly deny this principle.

The primitive Church was unquestionably congregational. Christianity, in the form of Churches, could have *begun* in no

other way. The rapid spread of Christianity in distant countries, the isolated and distant condition of the Churches in their geographical relation to each other, the great lack of travelling facilities and intercommunication in these countries generally, the opposition of civil governments and men of influence to Christianity, and the persecutions to which the Churches were subject, required that the government of Churches, in minor matters at least, should be confined to each separate congregation. Hence they are called congregational.

But when any Church becomes so highly, so stringently and exclusively congregational, as to admit of *no* official intercommunion in matters of government: when a congregation assumes to govern and regulate its ecclesiastical affairs *exclusively*, in all things—repudiating *all* coöperation, or other authority from without itself—then it assumes a very different ground from what is commonly called Congregationalism, and sets up, each congregation for itself, a totally independent Christianity.

Most of the Baptist Churches in this country claim to be independent of each other in the sense above described. They claim to govern themselves and regulate their entire ecclesiastical machinery, each Church or congregation for itself, without any assistance from, or connection with, other Churches. Then, of course, they cannot be spoken of *collectively* as having any particular form of government, or as maintaining any particular religious principles, either theological or ecclesiastical.

If each Church be totally independent of all others, in all things, then a thousand Churches may have a thousand different forms of government, and a thousand different religious creeds. If they have no alliance, then they have no bonds of alliance; and then, Arians, Trinitarians, Unitarians, Arminians, and Calvinists have the same relation amongst each other as Baptists have: that is, they have no official relation whatever.

“The Baptist Church,” then—meaning thereby all the single congregations of Christians which call themselves Baptists—cannot, of course, be spoken of as having any Church government which, in form, is applicable to the whole. And if, on examination, it be found that any two of them have the

same form of government to-day, that urnishes no guaranty that they will be alike to-morrow; for each one possesses, independently, the complete powers of legislation, judicature and execution, and exercises these powers, any day, at will. The kind of government which any Church has, as well as its mode of administering such government, depends entirely upon the predominant notions of right, or of expediency, or of ecclesiastical law, which, at the moment, chance to be entertained by the individual persons—half a dozen, it may be—which compose the church. Each single congregation is an *independent* Church.

It is not of course said that this is the case with all Baptist churches. There can be no regularity. Churches in a certain region of country, for a certain time may unite upon certain religious tenets, or upon certain forms of government, and affiliate with each other. The conditions of federation may have respect to ordination, to the trial of ministers, to missionary operations, or to any thing else. And, of course, in so far as these matters are yielded up to the federate power, they are not possessed by the individual church power.

All this may be done, and sometimes perhaps is done, by Baptists. But still it is claimed in this age and in this country to a very great extent, that Baptist churches are *entirely independent of each other*. Then one Baptist church bears the same relation to another Baptist church that it has to a Methodist or a Presbyterian church, so far as religious creed and Church government are concerned. Each one is a religious establishment, in all things entirely independent.

It cannot but be seen that, conditioned as Christianity is in this country—or, in fact, in any other—a Church government where each congregation is entirely independent, must labor under great embarrassments and disadvantages. Look a moment at its practical working.

A member is accused of crime or immorality. The church, that is, the congregation to which he belongs, is his legislature, his court, and his executive. He is brought forward and tried, and expelled. He has no appeal, for the reason that the church, being independent, can allow of no appeal to another tribunal. He looks around, and finds that his expulsion was the result of dislike or prejudice on the part of one

or two influential persons, or the ignorance of a few women or youths who did not understand his case, involving much intricacy perhaps; but he has no redress.

Again, a member is accused of some heretical error, and a majority-vote of a dozen or half a dozen persons, who possibly never heard of that particular question before, decides his case finally.

The minister himself is accused. And the congregation, large or small, perhaps a congregation of half a dozen very ignorant persons, sit in judgment, and rectify the theological or ecclesiastical wrongs in question—suspend him from the ministry, or expel him from the pale of Christianity; and that decision, perhaps obtained by the casting vote of an ignorant youth, is final.

It cannot but be seen that here there is no security. No man knows how soon his Churchmembership may be taken from him without cause, or a minister be deprived of his credentials without reason.

This kind of government, instead of following as closely as may be the political government around us, departs from it most widely, and at the very outset.

One of the chief things in our civil government, and the great thing looked at in all governments, is the proper and safe security given to private rights through the judiciary. The best government is where these rights are best secured. In any safe State government the primary trial is never final. The right of appeal to a higher and more impartial tribunal is the great bulwark of liberty. This right is generally secured in all human governments, except where children are exclusively the subjects, as in families, and primary schools. Even on the plantation among slaves, the right of appeal is generally available. In all aristocratic and monarchical civil governments, the right of appeal is never denied. A man cannot be deprived of his property, his life, or his reputation, but by the rehearing of a higher court, better arranged for the correction of errors than any primary court can be.

The Baptist churches in this respect form an anomaly in human governments. There is in them a far more feeble security of liberty and justice than is to be found in any government, civil, military, social, domestic or ecclesiastical, at present known to the writer. In truth, so far as private rights



are concerned, which is but another name for liberty, there can scarcely be said to be a government. For a judiciary with no right of appeal for the correction of errors, can scarcely be said to be a judiciary.

What would we consider the extent of our civil liberties to be, if our property, our lives, or our reputation, were suspended upon, and finally disposed of, by the mere vote of a majority of a few men, women and youths, upon the first inquiry into the matter? We would have less of *liberty* than the citizens or subjects of any civil government on earth.

And yet such is the nature of Christianity, and such the ability of the Church of Christ to make way along and sustain itself amidst worldly difficulties and embarrassments, that these seemingly insurmountable objects and derangements do not subdue the Baptist churches; but, amidst them all, they get along and do good to the cause of Christ.

But the above-mentioned difficulties are by no means the greatest that beset the government of this respectable phalanx of Christianity. For, notwithstanding the summary manner in which all judicial and other questions are decided, yet it is also true that no question is *ever* finally decided. This may at first appear contradictory, but a word or two of explanation will make it quite plain. It is in reference to this feature in Baptist polity that it was intimated a few pages back that they had almost no government at all. For there can scarcely be said to be a *government* where questions respecting public polity and private rights cannot be *decided* finally.

This anarchical feature in the usages of this branch of Christianity is inseparable from the entire independency of the several churches.

Where each congregation or church is independent, there can be, as above explained, no appeal in the adjudication of any public or private matters. Each church has as good a right to decide any question as any other church has. Hence any congregation can dispose of any question, *as far as it is concerned at the time*. This in these churches is the highest and the lowest grade of any decision of any question. But the decision of any question made to-day, does not preclude the same church from entertaining the question again the next week, or the next month, and of deciding it differently. It is impossible for any Church to make any rule or law that

will prevent this instability of administration. The society has at all times cognizance and jurisdiction of all questions. It can, at *any time*, decide *any question*, by its popular vote. This is inseparable from a perfect republic—which these churches claim to be, acting without a regularly constituted judiciary, with courts of inquiry, of investigation, and of last resort.

Suppose a member be taken up and tried in one of these churches to-day, and he be expelled. The congregation being entirely independent, there can be nothing to prevent the same society—with perhaps other members present—from reinstating him the next week, and of expelling him again the next, and so on without limit. There can be no final decision, because there is no tribunal of last resort. But at the same time the expelled person has, himself, no right to a rehearing, or the privilege of bringing forward new testimony. *His rights* cease with the first decision; but the *society* is still independent—as independent of *him* as of any thing and every thing else.

A man applies for Church membership; and for some cause, supposed by the persons present to be good cause at the time,—say the ceremony of baptism was not exactly right, or something was not exactly right, or something of the sort—he is rejected. But the same question may be brought up again and decided favorably to the applicant; but he does not know how soon it may be dealt with otherwise. His membership in the Church can never be *secured* to him, for the reason that there is no tribunal of last resort. And just so of any other question that may arise. The society or church is at all times at perfect liberty to entertain, or refuse to entertain, any question. Being independent of all other tribunals, it can decide any question; and, so far as that church is concerned, it may or may not be a final decision, just as the popular sentiment of that society chances to pulsate. So there can be no security of rights, and hence no liberty.

It is, of course, not held or intimated that a *republican* government, *wholly independent*, cannot administer justice rightfully, and secure the rights of liberty in the best manner possible. It is said that this can never be done in any government—except in small monarchical governments like families, schools, and the like—without a regularly constituted judiciary with a high tribunal of last resort, distinct and separate from the legislative power; and that this cannot

be the case where the whole republic embraces but a handful of people.

And further, it is explained, that this *is not*, of course, the case where all the members of the republic, whenever they are convened together, have immediate jurisdiction of all questions.

Wherever the legislature—which in Baptist churches is all the people convened, or all who chance to be present at a church meeting—have immediate jurisdiction of all judicial, as well as other questions, of course there is no judiciary distinct from and independent of the legislature.

Look at individual security with regard to judicial rights—and all personal *rights* are of a judicial character—in one of these States. The freedom men enjoy with regard to these rights is secured in the independency of the judiciary above the legislative power.

Look at the same thing in the Methodist Church. Here is a regular judiciary, with a regularly graded tribunal of last resort. *This* is the only security of rights, the sole bulwark of liberty, in any government of any kind, except where children are exclusively the subjects.

Baptist churches have *no judiciary*. *Every thing* is at the mercy of legislative whim or caprice.

But this, still, is not the greatest difficulty. For, when any one church decides any question, it is still perfectly competent for another church to decide the same question reversely. So there can be no *decision*.

For instance, a minister, for good or bad cause, is, by vote of his church, expelled. And the next day, the next church, in the next neighborhood, or on the next street, declares him to be in good standing. The first church refuses to reconsider, but holds on to its judgment of excommunication. Now, according to one decision, which is final, he is not a minister; and according to other authority, just as high, and just as competent, he is. Now, is this man a minister, or is he not? It is beyond the power of jurisprudence to determine. The science of jurisprudence can determine any question that can arise within the range of a regularly constituted government. But where there is no judicial tribunal of last resort, and, consequently, no *government*, in the proper sense, it is impossible for public or private rights to be *secured*.

A person applies to a church for membership, and, for good or bad cause, he is refused. But another church receives him. This is, in truth, not a very uncommon thing. It could scarcely fail to happen occasionally, such is the difference of opinion among individual persons respecting the validity of baptism, certificates of Church membership, and many other questions that must arise in inquiring into a man's right to Church membership. And so of *any other question*. Any theological question,—any ecclesiastical question,—any question respecting the validity of a Church, a ministry, the sacraments, or *any thing else*—may be summarily decided by any one congregation, at any time, consisting of four or five, or five hundred members; and, so far as the rights of parties concerned are involved, the decision is final; but so far as the question itself and the views of other persons are concerned, it can never be decided.

Let us now look a few minutes at *The Baptist Church*, in general; for heretofore we have been chiefly looking at the single, separate churches or congregations, individually.

The several churches which make up the whole Church, as it is called, are, it must be remembered, entirely independent of each other. There is no legislative, or judicial, or executive federation among them. Then it cannot be said of the *whole*, that *it* has a government. No one, with any sort of logical propriety, can speak of *the government of the Baptist Church*. For, as a whole, it can have no common government, because there is no federation among and between the separate churches or separate governments.

You can speak of *the government of the several States of this Union*, because, and only because, they have all confederated in a general government; surrendering to such general government certain legislative, judicial, and executive rights, which primarily pertained to them. And in so far as they have surrendered these rights, they are not independent. One of the rights the States have surrendered is, that they will not change their governments, severally, so as to make them any thing else than republican. Another right surrendered is, that they will not legislate,—and another, that they will not exercise jurisdiction, in many specified instances of great importance, which are assigned to the general government.

Hence you can speak of the government of the States,

severally or collectively: because, in these respects, they are in the compact they have entered into in their federation.

But if these States had no federation, you could not predicate any thing of them in common, any more than you could of the States of Mississippi, Lower Canada, Holland, and Cuba. They have no federate alliance, and hence their government, laws, and administration, severally, are independent of each other.

The several Baptist churches are not federate with each other, but are independent. Hence, as a whole, they have no government, whatever may be said of each separate church in particular. And hence, to know any thing about ecclesiastical government among Baptists, you must go and examine each one in particular. Many of them are at times, or altogether, practically monarchical: others are aristocratic. But, for the most part, they are republican or democratic. But, as is explained above, each society being an independent republic, without a judiciary—and being so utterly unlike any other republics that ever existed—having no means of deciding questions finally, but every thing being constantly exposed to popular whim or popular will—there is no security for rights, and consequently no liberty, and hence, it might be said, no government.

For here is an important principle that must be remembered. When the republican or democratic principle is carried so far as to destroy the regular judicial power, with a tribunal of last resort, and also destroy or forbid the exercise of proper executive authority, then you have pushed it into anarchy. Anarchy is the condition of a people where *each one*, without any limit or restraint, has *equal* authority with *any other* one.

This is said to be—nay, it is claimed to be, the condition of the Baptist churches. It is unfortunate that it is so. If that large and respectable body of Christians had a government, they would, no doubt, be much more useful.

Not only have they no government, but legally they have no ministry. In this particular, however, they constantly violate their own avowed principles; for really they have a valid ministry. They can have no ministry but in violation of their principles, for this obvious reason: Each church—that is, each congregation, is independent in itself and wholly republican in its government. Then each member of the church is not only equally entitled to vote on all questions,

but is equally eligible to any office. There can be no privileged class, or order, who alone are eligible to office. For this would be an innovation upon republicanism. Now it is desired to elect a pastor. Each member is equally eligible. Then ministers are not exclusively eligible, which must be the case in a Christian Church.

We see very plainly, therefore, that what they call republicanism, and liberty, is, in the first place, anarchy: because it gives the same right to *any church member*, women, or girls and boys of twelve years or less or more, to vote on any question, or hold any office that any other member enjoys.

And secondly, upon this principle there can be no Christian ministry; for the Christian ministry have inherent rights pertaining to the government, and the exclusive right of being the pastors of the people.

These are some of the awkward and entangling embarrassments these persons throw around themselves by their efforts to assume supposed or dreamy advantages above what is written either in the word of God or the philosophy of government.

This Church is suffered to remain in this anomalous and awkward condition, no doubt, from a mistaken notion with regard to the primitive churches. They have heard that the primitive churches were congregational—as any one may very easily learn—but they fail to remember two other important things with regard to these early churches.

*First.* They were congregational from necessity. Christianity could *commence* in no other way; and, moreover, the rapid spread of churches over large countries, oftentimes distant from each other, the lack of facilities for intercommunication and frequent correspondence with each other, together with the dangers to which they were exposed, required that their governments should be, for a time, at least, what is commonly called congregational.

*Second.* The primitive churches were by no means so exclusively congregational as to forbid all federative and official communication with each other. In many matters they administered their affairs in a congregational manner—each congregation for itself; but in many other matters—always in the most important matters—where it was at all practicable, they called in the aid of other churches, or several churches would combine in administering the affairs of one. In all matters of any considerable moment, they conferred with

each other as far as possible. So that when you say they were congregational, you must at the same time say they were confederate with each other, as far as their circumstances and condition would allow. To a considerable extent they were confederate.

And the same reasonings must hold good with regard to the religious tenets or faith of the Baptists. There can, in this regard, be no harmony or oneness among the several churches, because each one is independent.

It has been said in a Baptist publication, "Religious Encyclopedia," that "The following brief Declaration of Faith, with the Church Covenant, was recently published by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire, and is believed to express, with little variation, the general sentiments of the body in the United States." Then follows sixteen articles of religious faith.

This may all be very true. That "Convention" may have adopted, and no doubt did adopt, these tenets; but they were binding on no one but the individual members of the Convention. The several churches are *independent*, and therefore each congregation adopts such tenets as it chooses at the time, or none at all if it chooses. They may or may not chance to be the same.

A "Convention" of Baptists can perform no legal act. They cannot legislate, or adjudicate, or execute, in the smallest matter. They can say what they please for themselves, but they cannot speak for any church. They may give very wholesome religious advice, but the churches are not represented in such action in any federate sense, and so they may or may not listen to what is said in a "Convention." Each church adopts its own faith, and tenets, and rules, and polity; and changes them from day to day at will.

Many of them are so rabidly Calvinistic that their "decrees" amount simply to fatalism. Many of them are openly hostile to missions of all kinds. Many of them are opposed to Sabbath-schools—to temperance reform—to Bible societies—others oppose all religious publications by the Church. Many of them openly oppose the Christian ministry. Many of them oppose the Christian Sabbath, etc.

And as to affiliation, or denominational amity, or social intercourse, we oftentimes find less of it *in* what is called the

Baptist Church than out of it. Among the different denominations and sects and classes of Baptists, we find, oftentimes, more of sectarian hostility, aversion, and disaffection, than anywhere else in all the realms of Christianity. How it is these unfortunate dislikes and hostilities which so often separate *between* other denominations, are so frequent and abundant *among* Baptists, may be difficult to determine.

In fact, it is well known that among churches and Christians which are called Baptists, are to be found every known variety of faith and persuasion. Hence, beyond all sort of comparison, there is far less of real religious liberty in Baptist churches than in any other portions of Christianity. Liberty consists *not in voting* on all questions that may arise. In judicial proceedings there is usually, in a free government, very little of voting by the populace. Liberty consists in a firm and steady security of rights. These rights are secured mainly by means of a judiciary. Every judiciary must have, at least, a court of primary examination, and a higher tribunal, differently constituted, of last resort. The judiciary is, in all governments, the great bulwark of human freedom.

Baptist churches have no judiciary. All judicial questions are disposed of by a kind of legislation—a mere summary popular vote of all the members of the government who chance to be present, men, women and children.

There can be no protection of constitutional rights, because there is no constitution, written or otherwise. There *can*, in the nature of the case, be no constitution. If any church were, at any time, to pass a law which they would call a constitution, it could, in the nature of the case, only govern them at that meeting, unless they chose to be governed by it at the next. It could not be a binding constitution, because one “church meeting” is of the same dignity and authority as any other church meeting.

Thus we have a large number of Christian people held together by the mere cohesive virtues and influences of Christianity, doing, many of them, considerable good to the cause of Christ, and maintaining themselves without a judiciary, and existing in compact without a government.

The naked, inherent power of THE GOSPEL is exhibited here most marvellously.



# REASONS FOR NOT JOINING THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A BAPTIST AND A  
METHODIST.

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BY THE REV. JOSEPH TRAVIS,

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*Baptist.* Good morning, Brother Methodist.

*Methodist.* Good morning, Neighbor Friendly.

*B.* I thought I saw you at our church last Sabbath, on our sacramental occasion. How were you pleased?

*M.* Your preacher, in his sermon, really pleased me. He preached full and free salvation for all. And then he wound up so beautifully in presenting to our view the happy meeting of all good Christians in heaven; and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed,

“There names, and sects, and parties fall:  
And Jesus Christ is all in all.

I really felt happy, and almost like shouting aloud. I was also well pleased that he had invited Brother Faithful, a Methodist preacher, to preach immediately after him.

*B.* Well, Brother Methodist, this is the way to get on.

*M.* But, why call me *Brother*?

*B.* Because I think you a good Christian, and expect to meet you in heaven.

*M.* Why there is something very strange to me in all this. You recollect that, at the sacrament, your preacher told us that he was truly sorry that he could not invite any but the

Baptists; that were it but the *Baptist table*, he would have no difficulty in extending the invitation to Methodists and Presbyterians, etc.; but, as it was the *Lord's table*, he did not feel authorized to give *them* the invitation. Yet, to-day you call me *Brother*, tell me that you view me a good Christian, and expect to meet me in heaven. Nevertheless, I was passed by in the holy sacrament, as not being fit to participate thereof, because it was the Lord's table, and I not being a member of the Baptist Church. And there was also Brother Faithful, *good enough* to preach Jesus and him crucified, but not good enough to commemorate his death and sufferings.

*B.* Brother Methodist, I was myself truly sorry, knowing you as well as I do, to see you sitting off yonder, and not participating with us. I could but exclaim to myself, O that you had been *immersed*, and were but a member of our Church! And as to Brother Faithful, I would at any time as soon hear him preach as our own preacher, and I don't know but a little rather. I know him to be a good, conscientious, upright man.

*M.* Well, *Neighbor* (you will have to excuse me in not calling you *Brother*; for, if I am not worthy to take the sacrament with you, I am not worthy to call *you* Brother,) I am myself truly sorry that such contracted and bigoted views are held, and acted out, by the Baptist Church. I do desire to love, and to be in fellowship with all Christians; but if, in very deed, they will not let me, I can only feel sorry for it, and make my appeal to the great Head of the Church, and tell him that *these* Christians forbid the communion of saints; and that the sin thereof be not laid to my charge, nor lie at my door.

*B.* Oh, my dear Brother Methodist! there is one way to prevent all this difficulty; and that is, let you and all others just submit to *immersion* by a properly authorized minister, and join the Baptist Church, and then we shall have but "*one faith, one LORD, and one baptism*;" yea, and but *one Church* on earth, which, indeed, is our object, and for which we most sincerely pray, and hope it will yet come to pass.

*M.* But, my dear friend, admit that I had no particular objection to your mode of baptism; but, suppose I had objections to your mode of Church government, and very serious objections to some of your doctrines as a Church, would you

compel me to subscribe to that which I could not in good conscience believe, in order to be a communicant at your sacramental board?

*B.* Why I really thought that you Methodists only objected to our going under the water!

*M.* We do not object to you as a Church, or to any one else, receiving baptism, either by *immersion*, *sprinkling*, or *pouring*; let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. We Methodists believe that either mode is valid, so it be performed regularly, in the name of the Holy Trinity. I fear that you Baptists lay too much stress upon immersion, making it an essential qualification for the Lord's table, and, of course, equally essential for an admission into heaven. And yet, stranger still to tell, that if any one be *immersed* by a Methodist, or any other Church, except your own, and unless he joins your Church, you will not admit him to the communion. Does not this savor of bigotry? It is as much as to say that none but Baptists are right, and none but your Church can ever get to heaven. Bigotry in any Church is to me anti-scriptural and anti-Christian. Don't you recollect when Mr. B, an Episcopalian clergyman, preached at your church, on a sacramental occasion, that your preacher apologized to him for not inviting him to the sacrament, when the Episcopalian minister replied, "Sir, it needs no apology; for I could not have received the bread and wine from your hands." This really appeared to me like "diamond cut diamond"—both equally bigoted, and of course both equally wrong. Did you never read the remarks of the great and learned Mr. Hall, Baptist preacher in England? I read it with my own eyes, where he says that his Baptist brethren, in refusing the Holy Supper to other denominations of pious Christians, "are worse than the Roman Catholics." And God forbid that I should ever join a Church "worse than the Roman Catholics!" So, my good friend, if for nothing else, your close communion would ever prevent my throwing in my lot among *you*.

*B.* I confess, Brother Methodist, you rather stagger me. Indeed I never did fully approve of close communion; yet, as it was a rule of our Church, I thought, for peace sake, I would keep quiet. But your quotation from Mr. Hall, of whom I have heard so many good and great things, rather clinches the nail. To be "worse than a Roman Catholic," is what I

cannot so well swallow. I shall try to get his works, and show them to my brethren. Indeed I have noticed one thing; and that is, the works of Mr. Hall have never been recommended by any of our preachers, and very seldom have they recommended Mr. Bunyan, and I rather wonder at it. But, have you any objection to our Church government?

*M.* Well, my Neighbor, as you have asked me, I am bound to tell you, *Yes*. Your government is too tyrannical. I will but instance one fact. There is Brother A., of undoubted piety: his character is irreproachable. Since he joined your Church, he changed his mind on some points of doctrine, and now wishes to join the Methodist Episcopal Church. He applies to your Church for a letter of his good standing as a Christian. You utterly refuse him; and, if he persists in joining the Methodists, you expel him from your Church, as you would a drunkard or a horse-thief. If this is not tyranny with a vengeance, I know not what is. What, my dear sir, by joining your Church to be deprived of my rights as a free-man! No. Never, never could I consent to it.

*B.* Why, I always thought that you Methodists had a government altogether subversive of Democracy and Republicanism; that your bishops and preachers received and expelled members just in accordance with their own will, altogether independently of the Church.

*M.* That, Mr. Friendly, is a grievous mistake. No bishop or preacher among us can either receive into full membership, or expel from the Church, the poorest lay member, without the voice of the society to which they belong. Moreover, it is by the lay members our preachers, and even bishops, take their origin. No bishop or preacher can issue a license to any person to preach without the consent of the lay members. Now, here is B., who wants license. If the lay members think him worthy, they grant him license to exhort. He then becomes a member of our Quarterly Conference, composed of stewards and class-leaders; and, if he wants license to preach, this body of lay members must say whether or not said license shall be granted to him. And, if he desires to become a travelling preacher, said body of lay members is to recommend him to the Annual Conference of Itinerants; or, if they see proper not to recommend him, he can never become an itinerant preacher. But, if B. is received, he may, by fidelity,

holiness, and improvement of his talents, afterwards become a bishop, by the voice of the delegated General Conference. So you see, the highest order of ministers in our Church are dependent on the laity for their clerical existence. In addition to this, there is C., who has been a faithful and pious member of our Church for years. He afterwards changes his mind, and wishes to join the Baptist. He applies to us for a letter in relation to his good standing among us. We grant him the letter; but do not enter him on our Church books, "expelled," but, simply, "withdrawn in good standing." So with our preachers, up to the highest order. This we consider republican, and in keeping with our national policy. Excommunication, or expulsion from a Christian Church, should in no wise be executed, only upon such as have been guilty of a crime which would necessarily exclude them from the kingdom of grace and glory. Now, your Church certainly does it; and, in so doing, I must believe, acts very wrong, and in direct opposition to republican principles.

B. Why, Brother Methodist, you really astonish me. I had no idea that such was the government of your Church; and did I not so well know you to be a man of truth and honor, I should be loath to believe it; for I have been told again and again that your Church had the most despotic government of all others upon earth. And yet, I wondered to see it flourish as it does, and to see so many ultra-political Democrats joining it, as also so many lawyers, judges, and even governors enter into it, also why it is that Congress generally selects Methodist preachers for their chaplains. And, indeed, the last Congress, I understand, had two Methodist preachers, one for each house; whilst I was apprised that the President and a large majority of Congress belonged to the party called Democrats. I am beginning to think that there is something rotten in Denmark. I must have been most certainly wrongly informed. I will not as yet say *designedly* so. Charity hopeth all things.

M. As I have already told you that either mode of baptism is valid, so I now tell you that Church government may not be essential to salvation. But, as I prefer *sprinkling* as a mode of baptism, so I am compelled to prefer a republican form of Church government to that of any other.

B. And what son or daughter of Columbia would not? I

assure you, my dear sir, that I myself abominate an aristocracy; monarchy, or autocracy, either in Church or State. But, Brother Methodist, have you any objections to our doctrines?

*M.* Why, my good neighbor Friendly, you know that I am a peaceable man; and my motto ever has been, "Think; and let think." But to you, as a dispassionate man, I may conscientiously answer, Yes. Some time ago, one of your brethren in Georgia was preaching, and in his sermon remarked, "that it was just as possible for a dead horse to kick a blind man's eyes out, as for a soul to fall from grace." Another, in another part of the country, whilst preaching, said, "that a soul might get converted to-day, die before midnight, and, in that time, murder five men, steal five horses, and be just as sure of heaven as if he was in it." However, this last one was not a missionary Baptist, but a Hard Shell—not even softened by much whiskey. I, however, understand that you as a Church believe, "once in grace, always in grace." Now, my good friend, I cannot subscribe to such a doctrine. I view it a dangerous doctrine; and also that it is opposed to the Holy Scriptures.

*B.* Well, I should really love to hear you descant somewhat on the doctrine. It has been one of my firm opinions. I may have been wrong; and if wrong, I do desire to be put right. I will listen to you with delight, and endeavor to weigh all your arguments as you go along; and I shall do so without prejudice or prepossession.

*M.* Neighbor Friendly, there is some satisfaction in conversing with such as you. In crossing your opinions, I do not brush against a hornet's nest. I find myself arguing with a cool, deliberate, and honest Christian. O that all Methodists and Baptists were even as you are! We would find but little quarreling and wrangling in the churches. However, right opinions are certainly a great auxiliary to our well-being, both in time and in eternity. Now, in giving you my views to-day, recollect they are all given by your request. And hence you cannot harbor a thought that I have any design upon you whatever in proselyting you to my Church. With these preliminary remarks—being assured of your attention and patience, I will proceed, First: To speak of what has already taken place: namely, the angels in heaven, many of

them have fallen, and are reserved in chains of darkness for the judgment of the great day. And Satan himself is believed to have been once an angel of light. Well, if angels and glorified spirits (as free agents) may fall, and have fallen, what guarantee have we, so less holy and pure than they, that we shall not fall?

Secondly: Adam and Eve fell, *both* pure, and spotless, and innocent, made in the moral image of God. Says Milton:

——“So will fall  
He and his faithless progeny: Whose fault?  
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me  
All he could have; I made him just and right,  
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.”

They were also moral agents, and unhappily abused their liberty, bringing sin and death into the world. Now, as conversion does not destroy our moral agency, why may not we be liable to apostasy as well as they, they being so much more pure than the holiest of us?

Thirdly: The God of nature and the God of grace are one and the same. And there appears to be a unison of principle alike in nature and in grace. Put an iron ball into the fire, and make it red-hot. Now, the law of nature is, that, in order for it to retain its heat, you must keep it in the fire. Remove it out of the fire, and it will soon assume its pristine color and coldness. So with a renewed soul converted by the *fire* of the Holy Spirit: it is happy and holy; but remove it from that hallowed fire designed to purify and thoroughly cleanse it, and it soon becomes, as at first, wretched and unholy. So that in grace, as well as in nature, effect is produced by cause. And in fully understanding both, we have to reason from cause to effect, and from effect to cause. But we will make an appeal to the law and testimony. David, in addressing his son, Solomon, says: “Remember the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and willing mind. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.” Can any thing be plainer, in order to prove the possibility of final apostasy? Again, read Ezekiel xviii. 24: “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all his righteousness that he

hath done shall not be *mentioned*: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." It won't do, to say with some, that the prophet meant turning away from "self-righteousness;" for verily it would be a godly act in all of us to do that.

Again: The Prophet Isaiah says, "Your sins have separated between you and your God." God could not be separated from them, had he never been united to them. Hence I fully accord with that passage: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other *creature*, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our *Lord*." Now, mark it. St. Paul does not say that *sin* shall not separate you. *Sin* is not a *creature*. All *creatures* were created by God. God never *created sin*. Sin is the absence of holiness, as darkness is the absence of light, or cold the absence of heat.

"No evil can from God proceed,  
'Tis only suffered, not decreed:  
As darkness comes not from the sun,  
Nor mount the shades till he is gone."

Again: Did you never read the fifteenth chapter of John? where our Lord says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye (that is, all of you) are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without (or severed from) me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Now, you are to recollect these branches were "clean"—no hypocrisy, no wickedness in them. Yet, if they did not abide in Christ, they were to be cast away, withered, yea, burned. Here is certainly final apostasy; for every body knows that a branch that is



withered, and burned to ashes, can never again be grafted into a vine. Hence you or our blessed *Lord* must be wrong. I myself must take the word of him "who spake as never man spake." Again, St. Paul speaks of Hymeneus and Alexander, who had made *shipwreck* of the faith. Here is total apostacy again proven to us. Again, listen to St. Paul's opinion of his own state. Says he: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Even Paul had to watch and mortify his body to prevent his becoming a castaway—that is, totally apostatizing. St. Peter says: "Better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." St. Paul says: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." If this does not prove the doctrine of final apostasy, I know not what will. It is here that language is just as plain as it can speak; and, if we can get over such direct and positive texts as we have just quoted, we could, with equal propriety, "call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter," or "black white, and white black." We have to form our ideas, and give expression to our words, in accordance with the meaning of language, or there would be no certain data afforded us of truthful communication with each other. In addition to all this, listen to the language of our blessed Lord: "He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven." "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Recollect the man out of whom the unclean spirit was cast, returning back, and taking seven more wicked than himself, entering into his old house, and that the last state of that man was worse than the first. Remember the two servants—one owing his lord a thousand talents, and having naught to pay, his lord frankly forgave him the whole debt. But this same person met with one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred pence: he had not wherewithal to pay it: he begged indulgence; but this lately forgiven servant would not yield to his entreaties, but had him cast into prison. Now, when the lord

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heard of this cruel treatment by the servant whom he had frankly forgiven, he had him called to him, rehearsed to him his hard-hearted conduct towards his fellow-servant—he cancels the late forgiveness granted to him, and orders him to be imprisoned until he has paid the whole original amount. Now, my dear sir, from this parable we must learn the fact that, our continued state of forgiveness is suspended upon our continued fidelity and perseverance in well-doing; and this is in accordance with St. Peter, who says: “Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity;” and then remarks, “If ye do these things, ye shall never fall”—plainly indicating that, if they did not persevere in well-doing, they would inevitably fall.

Again: “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” Again: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” We are again exhorted not “to receive the grace of God in vain.” Again: “Let us, therefore, fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” We might multiply text upon text, from the third chapter of Genesis to the end of Revelation, going either directly or indirectly to prove the possibility of apostasy; but, be you assured, just with the few quoted texts glaring me in the face, and thundering their divine peal in my ear, I never could subscribe to the human creed of “Once in grace, always in grace.” I am aware, that by some it has been stated that these threats of apostasy were only given to stir up God’s people to greater diligence in the divine life. But, my friend, there is something absurd in that idea. Suppose that I was even to say to you, “Sir, take care, and do not let that rattlesnake bite you,” when, probably, such a poisonous snake is not within five miles of you, would you not justly charge me with worse than childish mockery, and downright insult to your feelings, in thus trying to alarm your fears so unnecessarily; yea, so unjustly? And what should we think of Almighty God, if this was the fact? Oh, I shudder at the very thought of such a blasphemous conclusion! How much better just to take God at his word, without any effort to twist it, and to metamorphose it, in accordance with our own preconceived opinions!

Yea, let God be true, if even thereby every man has to be viewed a liar. I said that from the third chapter of Genesis, where the fall of Adam and Eve is related, to the end of Revelation, we have either direct or indirect texts, going to prove the possibility of apostasy. Yes, and I thought best to make good my assertion. You will just please to turn to the last chapter of the book of Revelation, and 19th verse. It thus reads: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, etc." So you see, he had a part in the book of life, and a part in the holy city; yet, if he did so or so, contrary to the will of God, his promised part was to be taken from him. Our names may be even written in the book of life, but they will be expunged, if we are not faithful until death.

But as you appear to be no wise weary or restless, I will proceed to give you another objection which I have to this doctrine; and that is, I view it very dangerous: hence it ought to be laid aside. I will again introduce our unfortunate mother Eve. God had told her, that in the day she ate the forbidden fruit, she should die. But the devil told her she should not die, but become as a god, or goddess, knowing good from evil; or, in other words, told her she could not fall from grace, or the favor of her Maker. Thus, it proved not only dangerous to her, but ruinous to the whole human family. It is also productive of a false security. We have reason to believe that many have been most wretchedly deceived in reference to their conversion. In taking dreams, and sympathetic feelings for conversion, they have settled down upon their lees, singing a requiem of peace to themselves, "I can't fall, I can't fall." We confess that it is hard for any one to fall who is already down. And alas! I fear that a considerable number are in this unfortunate predicament, who never have been raised from a death of sin unto a life of righteousness. Moreover, the doctrine is dangerous, from the fact of inducing many to trust in a past experience of grace, without daily feeling the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. You recollect Mr. H—— wrote down his experience; and, whenever alarmed at any incident threatening death, he would get his manuscript, and read it over, fully believing that all was well, because he was once converted,

## 12 REASONS FOR NOT JOINING THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

and could not fall. But at a certain time, when serious apprehensions of speedy dissolution was impressed upon his mind, he ordered his experimental manuscript to be brought to him, when lo, and behold! the rats had eaten it all up, and the poor man was left destitute of either ocular or feeling experience. The safest way is the best way. And certainly the safest way is "to keep our lamps trimmed, and brightly burning;" "to be pressing on to the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus." "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." But let us "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ"—which, no doubt, hundreds of our good Baptist brethren are daily doing. At a certain time there arose a friendly dispute between two colored preachers—one a Baptist, the other a Methodist—on this same subject, when the Baptist colored preacher remarked, saying: "Well, buddy, I does think the best way for all of us to do, is, to take hold, hold on, and never let go." Now, I think that both you and I will accord with the Baptist black man. And in so doing we shall make our calling and election sure; for thus, being found faithful until death, we shall receive the crown of life.

*B.* Indeed, Brother Methodist, I feel much at a loss how to get round your scriptural arguments; for I am a great stickler for "Thus saith the Lord." However, there is one passage of Scripture that I should love to hear your opinion concerning, namely: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

*M.* I feel much at ease and liberty in conversing with such as you, well knowing that you are a man of good sense, and of honorable principles; and above all, I trust, of genuine piety. I will, therefore, proceed agreeably to your request. "Ye are dead;" *i. e.*, dead unto sin, and alive unto God—dead to worldly pleasures, desires, and honors. "Your life is hid with Christ in God;" *i. e.*, Christ is your treasure; and where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Christ is in the bosom of the Father, and ye in Christ. According to that text, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

And hence, as you have received the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in him. Now, this close union between Christ and the Father, and you and Christ, is gloriously consoling. And that no creature can separate you from Christ, and that no man is able to pluck you out of the Father's hand, is a heart-cheering doctrine, and one in which I must cordially, and thankfully, and implicitly believe. But oh! remember that whilst neither life, nor death, etc., can separate us, sin may do it; and, as before quoted from the prophet Isaiah, "Your sins have separated between you and your God." And as Satan who was hid with God in heaven by transgression fell, and many others of the angels; as also Adam and Eve, hid with God in paradise, by disobedience fell—alas! for us, unless we watch and pray against sin, we will be sure to fall. Oh, sin! what hast thou not already done? Thou didst blacken the devil: thou didst dig a hell: thou didst thrust out of heaven many, once happy angels: thou didst bring death and destruction upon our globe: thou hast produced famine, pestilence, war, and bloodshed: thou art daily peopling the lower regions: thou art enticing from the Church of God immortal spirits aiming to make their way to heaven! How, can we plead for sin, even the smallest particle of it? Away with the idea that sin tends to humble us. Just as absurd as for a man to say that he got bled by a cold, when in truth he got bled by a lancet for a cold. So, in tender mercy, God, by his grace, may humble us for sins; but, verily, sin, abstractly considered, never humbled any one. Oh, my dear neighbor, just let us keep free from sin, and then no weapon, formed even in hell, shall prevail against us; yea,

"A feeble saint shall win the day,  
Though death and hell obstruct the way."

Thanks be unto God, that there is no necessity for our apostasy. I am a firm believer in the final perseverance of the saints, when viewed in accordance with "Thus saith the Lord."

*B.* I see that if the *Bible* is right, so are *you*. But, Brother Methodist, one thought more. You seem to hinge upon what is called the doctrine of Christian perfection. I am afraid that I shall weary out your patience; but do be so

good as, in a few words, to give me your opinion on that much ridiculed doctrine.

*M.* With pleasure I will comply with your request; for, be you assured, I am a full believer in that Bible doctrine. Not that I believe we are to be as perfect as angels are in heaven, or was Adam in paradise, previous to his fall, or that we shall ever arrive to that perfection on earth as to render us invulnerable to sin, and not liable to apostasy; for sanctification itself does not destroy our free agency—hence, we are still free to do or not to do, to act or not to act, to stand or to fall; or, in other words, to persevere in well-doing, or to become weary, and to cease in so doing. But, now to the point, in a few words, as requested by you. What is Christian perfection? I answer, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” This is Bible perfection. And surely God is too good and too wise to command us to perform impossibilities. Again, thus saith the Lord: “Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;” *i. e.*, in our sphere as mortals, not as angels, or God. The comparison here may be simply illustrated, by presenting to your view two unequal vessels as to their contents. For instance, a hogshead, when full, is perfectly full: also a half-pint vessel, when full, is just as perfectly full as is the hogshead, though there is a vast disproportion in quantity between the two perfectly filled vessels. Again, thus saith the Lord: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.” Again, thus saith the Lord: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” And if from *all* unrighteousness, of course there is none left, either to lurk within us, or to reign over us. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What, then, shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid! And my soul cries, Amen. Again, thus saith the Lord: “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin.” Hence, there is no sin left, and we become perfect Christians, being dead unto sin, and alive unto God. We also become crucified unto the world, and the world unto us. St. Paul must have been a believer in the doctrine, when he prayed for his Corinthian brethren, that God might make them perfect, that they might

be of good comfort, that they might live in peace, and that the God of love and peace would be with them. And to his Thessalonian brethren he writes, saying: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I might easily multiply texts, but I think it unnecessary. I would merely add, that this doctrine is taught all through the Bible, from the book of Genesis, where God commands Abraham "to walk before him, and to be perfect," unto the Revelation, where we have an account of the happy multitude around the throne of God, who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

*B.* I am satisfied. I yield the point. I dare not oppose the blessed Bible. I have now only one request to make of you; and that is, please don't attend our church on sacramental occasions; for, were I to look around, and see you sitting off, as a forbidden guest, it would destroy my comforts, and render the occasion of no benefit to me.

*M.* Never mind that, Brother Friendly. I do hope you and I will ere long get around our Father's table. In heaven there are no different sorts of tables—one for the Methodists, and another for the Baptists, etc. There is but one table, and one united family surrounding it, and they all together. But, now mark it, Brother Friendly, if you are convinced that I am right, I do not by any means wish to proselyte you.

*B.* No, Brother Methodist, you gave me to understand in the beginning that you had no such design upon me. Yet, I cannot now say what I may ultimately do. I am, however, glad of one thing—that I met with you this morning. I always loved you; but I now love you better than ever. But, as we have to part, I would just say, remember me at the throne of grace. Farewell.

*M.* Farewell, my dear friend. May grace, mercy, and peace, attend you through life; and in heaven may you and I have a seat near to each other!

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

—  
BY C. WESLEY.  
—

FATHER, Son, and Spirit, hear  
Faith's effectual fervent prayer :  
Hear, and our petitions seal,  
Let us now the answer feel.  
Still our fellowship increase :  
Knit us in the bond of peace :  
Join our new-born spirits, join  
Each to each, and all to thine.

Build us in one body up,  
Call'd in one high calling's hope :  
One the Spirit whom we claim :  
One the pure baptismal flame :  
One the faith, and common Lord :  
One the Father lives adored,  
Over, through, and in us all  
God incomprehensible.

One with God, the source of bliss,  
Ground of our communion this :  
Life of all that live below,  
Let thine emanations flow :  
Rise eternal in our heart :  
Thou our long-sought Eden art :  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Be to us what Adam lost.













