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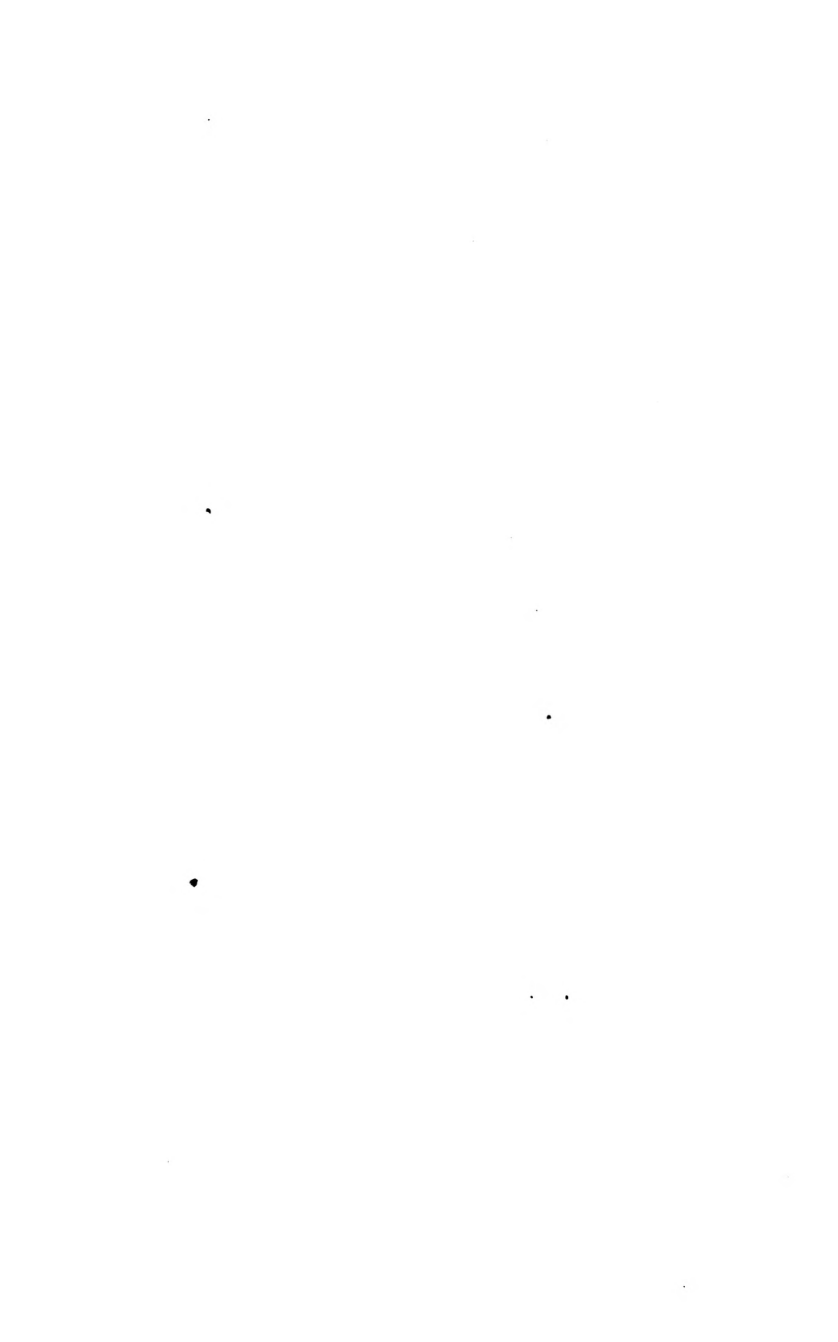
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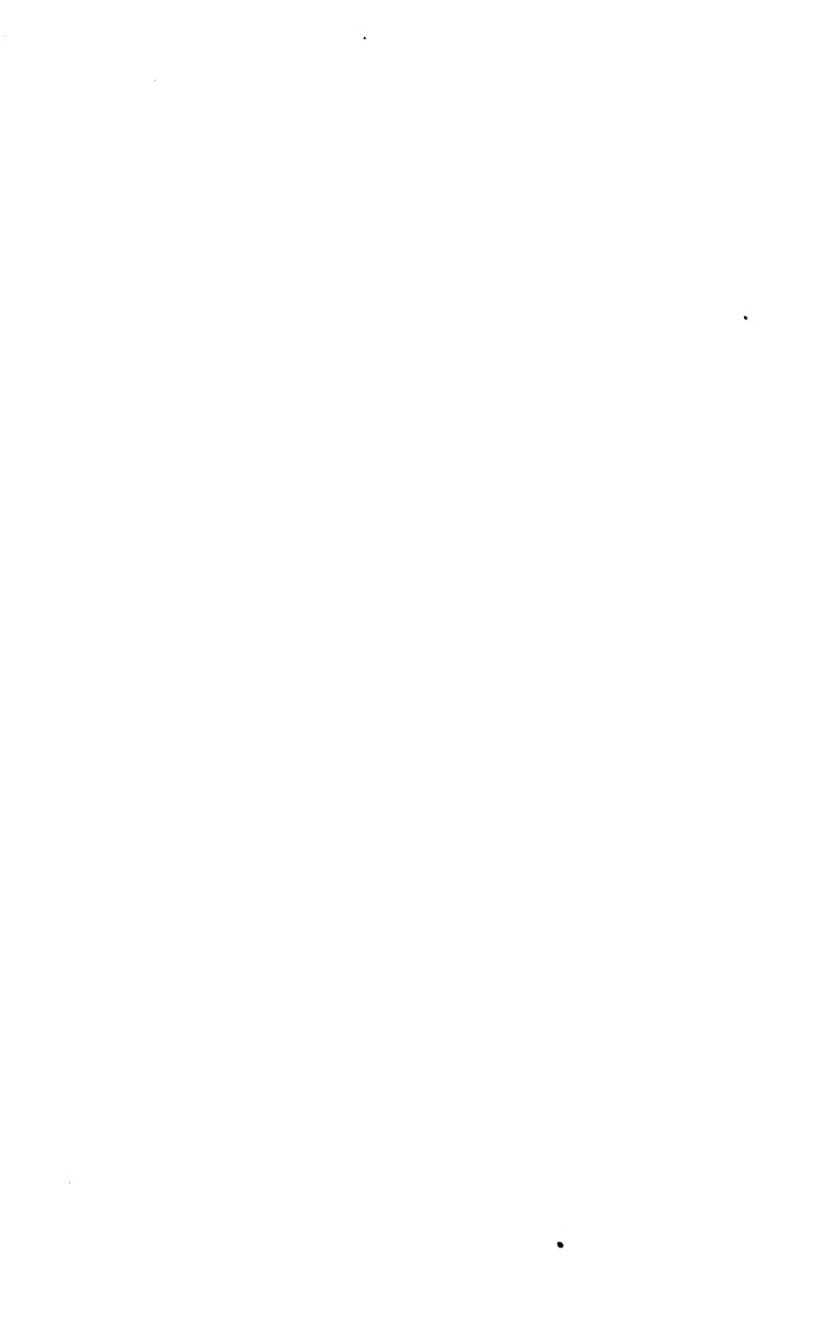
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S E R M O N S

TO

THE CHURCHES.

BY

FRANCIS WAYLAND.

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TO THE

HON. RICHARD FLETCHER, LL.D.,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .

THE design of the following discourses is, to urge upon individual Christians the duty of personal effort for the conversion of men, and a more consistent and uncompromising profession of religion. Addressed to disciples of every name, I hope I have not erred in denominating them, Sermons to the Churches. They were delivered in different places and on various occasions ; and, all having in view the same object, refer so frequently to the same topics, that I fear they may be liable to the charge of repetition. This fact was more distinctly perceived on reading the proof-sheets, when change had become impossible. I shall therefore submit without complaint to whatever censure my negligence deserves.

I had just commenced the preparation of the volume for the press, when the death of a brother in the ministry, devolved upon me unexpectedly all the responsibilities of the pastoral office, and laid claim to all the labor of which I was capable. This service continued

much longer than was anticipated, and placed it out of my power until now, to fulfill the promise made to the publishers nearly two years since. For this delay I alone am responsible.

Imploring the blessing of God upon this attempt to promote the piety and increase the efficiency of his church, I commend these pages to the candid consideration of the disciples of Christ.

PROVIDENCE, August 30, 1858.

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S E R M O N I.

THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY.

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

THESE words, uttered by the Son of God a few moments before his ascension, contain the last precept which he ever delivered to his disciples. They constitute the commission under which we labor to extend the reign of the Messiah ; and they furnish the assurance on which we rely, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. A proper understanding of the text must therefore convey important instruction on the nature and duties of the Christian ministry.

The precept in the text is, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

I. What is this *Gospel* which we are here commanded to preach ? The Gospel is good news. What good news are we then commissioned to proclaim ?

In order to answer this question, let us glance at the moral condition of those to whom the gospel is sent.

In the beginning, God created man in his own image, with a moral constitution perfectly adapted to a holy life,

and placed before him every motive which should impel a moral agent to a course of spotless virtue. The law under which we were created was holy and just and good. The probation assigned to us was, however, wholly subjected to the principle of law. Its conditions were two : first, the man that doeth these things shall live by them ; and secondly, cursed is every man that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Through the abounding grace of God, eternal life was promised as the reward of obedience, and on the other hand, disobedience to the law, or, rebellion against the moral government of the universe, was punishable with eternal death, banishment from the presence of God, misery everlasting. Under our first probation no provision was made for pardon, and therefore no hope was offered to the guilty. Every thing was to be gained by perfect obedience, every thing was to be lost by a single transgression.

Such were the moral conditions under which we were originally created. But our first parents sinned, and by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners. Without inquiring here into the manner in which his posterity are affected by the fall of Adam, it is sufficient to state the fact, that, from the date of the first transgression there has not been a just man on earth who has not sinned. The moral blight fell upon all born of woman. The whole race became rebels against God. They did not like to retain Him in their knowledge, and preferred

to live in open defiance of his authority. The thoughts of their heart became evil, only evil continually. Sin became the irrevocable habit of man. Though impelled by the constitution of his nature to worship something, he chose to worship birds and four footed beasts and creeping things, nay the work of his own hands, rather than God over all who is blessed forevermore. The earth was filled with violence and steeped in pollution. In every single individual of our race, unrenewed by the Spirit of God, evil tendency assumed the form of fixed and unalterable habit, and thus every man was making himself meet for eternal banishment from all that is holy ; while at the same time, he was treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

The conditions of the probation under which we were created having thus been universally violated, nothing remained but for the law to take its course. By the deeds of the law could no man be justified, for we had broken the law during our whole existence. We were thus all under condemnation. The law contained no provision for pardon. Sentence had been passed upon us, and we were awaiting the day of its execution. Earth had become a mere suburb of hell, into which death was commissioned to sweep the myriads of our race, from the first sinner, Adam, to the last of his sin-smitten posterity.

But though all was lost, the compassions of God were not exhausted, and he did not leave us to perish without

hope. The terms of our first probation having been violated, eternal life on the principles under which we were originally created, was impossible. It pleased our Father in Heaven to offer us a second probation on infinitely more favorable conditions, so that although we had sinned and come short of the glory of God, we might be freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But before this new probation could be offered to us, it was necessary that the law which we had broken should be magnified and made honorable. It must be perfectly and triumphantly obeyed by a being in our nature, and yet one who by his own nature was not under the law of humanity. No other being than the Son of God himself was competent to assume the work of our redemption, and our help was laid upon one that was mighty. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The Messiah fulfilled every requirement of the law in our stead, and, as by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one the many were made righteous. He suffered whatever was necessary to redeem us from the curse of the law. He died for our offenses, and offered himself without spot to God in our stead. His offering was accepted, and, to assure us of its accept-

ance, he was raised from the dead. Having finished the work that had been given him to do, he ascended to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Having humbled himself, and become obedient to death, the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and of things on earth, and of things under the earth, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

By this interposition of the Son of God on our behalf, the destiny of man was changed. A new probation on more favorable conditions was granted to us. By the conditions of the former probation we were doomed to despair in consequence of a single transgression. Now, through the righteousness of Christ, though guilty of innumerable sins, we may be accepted through the beloved. God is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, for he hath magnified the law and made it honorable. On the most merciful conditions, repentance for sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, every child of Adam may be pardoned, justified, sanctified and raised to a higher glory than that which he had lost by his own wilful transgression. Henceforth the gate of heaven stands as wide open for all born of woman as the gate of hell. The change in our condition is such as the imagination of man could never have conceived. It is a change from darkness to light, from death to life, from pollution to purity, from a dwelling forever

in hell with the spirits of the damned, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

Every one must at once perceive that this is the great event in the history of the world. Compared with it, what are the revolutions of nations, what the deliverance of peoples from bondage, what the progress of man from ignorance to knowledge, and from barbarism to civilization! Nay, could we combine in one event all the most stupendous social changes which the world has ever seen, they would all be lighter than the dust of the balance, in comparison with the mystery of Christ and him crucified. This is the good news spoken of in the text.

II. Let us in the next place inquire what is meant by preaching this gospel.

The word preach, in the New Testament, has a meaning different from that which at present commonly attaches to it. We understand by it the delivery of an oration, or discourse, on a particular theme, connected more or less closely with religion. It may be the discussion of a doctrine, an exegetical essay, a dissertation on social virtues or vices, as well as a persuasive unfolding of the teaching of the Holy Ghost. No such general idea was intended by the word as it is used by the writers of the New Testament. The words translated *preach* in our

version are two. The one signifies simply to herald, to announce, to proclaim, to publish ; the other, with this general idea, combines the notion of, good tidings ; and means, to publish, or be the messenger of good news. From what I have already said of the nature of the gospel message, it is evident that no other idea would so well have corresponded with the facts of the case. A great and unexpected change had been wrought in the condition of humanity. Our whole race had been, by a most astonishing act of grace, redeemed from inconceivable misery. They, however, remained ignorant both of their danger and of their deliverance. The knowledge of this act of infinite love had been communicated to a few men who had availed themselves of the gracious conditions of the new covenant, and had consecrated their whole being henceforth to their Redeemer. The rest of the world was wrapt in Egyptian darkness. Mankind still continued under the curse of the law, and were passing by millions to receive in everlasting despair the just demerit of their transgressions. The command was, Go abroad every where, proclaim to every creature the news of redemption ; tell them of the love of God in Christ Jesus. All things are now ready, bid them come and welcome to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

When the Israelites were bitten by the fiery flying serpents, and the bite was inevitably fatal, Moses was directed to set up a brazen serpent, with the assurance that whosoever that had been bitten, looked upon it, should

be healed. You can imagine how the first man who had felt its saving efficacy, flew to communicate the news to his brethren, and urge them to avail themselves of the remedy which had delivered him from death. Every man who was healed became immediately a herald of the glad tidings to others. Every one who was saved became a publisher of the salvation, or in other words, a preacher, until in a few minutes the news spread throughout the encampment, and in this sense every tribe was evangelized.

Allow me to illustrate the meaning of this term, as used by our Lord, by an occurrence of which I was an eye-witness. It so chanced, that at the close of the last war with Great Britain, I was temporarily a resident of the city of New York. The prospects of the nation were shrouded in gloom. We had been for two or three years at war with the mightiest nation on earth, and, as she had now concluded a peace with the continent of Europe, we were obliged to cope with her single-handed. Our harbors were blockaded. Communication coast-wise, between our ports, was cut off. Our ships were rotting in every creek and cove where they could find a place of security. Our immense annual products were mouldering in our ware-houses. The sources of profitable labor were dried up. Our currency was reduced to irredeemable paper. The extreme portions of our country were becoming hostile to each other, and differences of political opinion were embittering the peace of every household.

The credit of the government was exhausted. No one could predict when the contest would terminate, or discover the means by which it could much longer be protracted.

It happened that on a Saturday afternoon in February, a ship was discovered in the offing, which was supposed to be a cartel, bringing home our commissioners at Ghent, from their unsuccessful mission. The sun had set gloomily, before any intelligence from the vessel had reached the city. Expectation became painfully intense, as the hours of darkness drew on. At length a boat reached the wharf, announcing the fact that a treaty of peace had been signed, and was waiting for nothing but the action of our government to become a law. The men on whose ears these words first fell, rushed in breathless haste into the city, to repeat them to their friends, shouting, as they ran through the streets, peace! peace! peace! Every one who heard the sound repeated it. From house to house, from street to street, the news spread with electric rapidity. The whole city was in commotion. Men bearing lighted torches were flying to and fro, shouting like madmen, peace! peace! peace! When the rapture had partially subsided, one idea occupied every mind. But few men slept that night. In groups they were gathered in the streets and by the fire-side, beguiling the hours of midnight by reminding each other that the agony of war was over, and that a worn out and distracted country was about to enter again upon its wonted career of prosperity.

Thus, every one becoming a herald, the news soon reached every man, woman and child in the city, and in this sense, the city was evangelized. All this you see was reasonable and proper. But when Jehovah has offered to our world a treaty of peace, when men doomed to hell may be raised to seats at the right hand of God, why is not a similar zeal displayed in proclaiming the good news? Why are men perishing all around us, and no one has ever personally offered to them salvation through a crucified Redeemer?

This then is, I think, the generic idea of preaching conveyed in the New Testament. It is the proclamation to every creature, of the love of God to men through Christ Jesus. This is the main idea. To this our Lord adds, according to the other evangelist, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. The duty then enjoined in our Lord's last command is two fold: First, to invite men to avail themselves of the offer of salvation; and, secondly, to teach them to obey the commands of Christ, so that they may become meet for the kingdom of heaven. In so far as we do these, we preach the gospel. When we do anything else, it may, or it may not, be very good; but in the sense here considered, it is not preaching the gospel.

Hence we see that we may deliver discourses on subjects associated with religion, without preaching the gospel. A discourse is not preaching because it is delivered by a minister, or spoken from the pulpit, or appended to

a text. Nothing is, I think, properly preaching, except explaining the teachings, or enforcing the commands of Christ and his apostles. To hold forth our own inferences, or the inferences of other men, drawn from the gospel, to construct intellectual discourses which affect not the conscience, to show the importance of religion to the temporal well-being of men, or the tendency of the religion of Christ to uphold republican institutions, and a hundred topics of a similar character, may or may not be well ; but to do either or all of them certainly falls short of the idea of the apostle, when he determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And moreover, the command of Christ supposes our appeal to be made *directly* to the consciences of men ; relying for success *wholly* on the promised aid of the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour gives us no directions concerning any indirect or preparatory labor. The preparation of the heart is a work which the Lord has reserved for himself. We are not to go about making men think well of religion in general, with the intention of afterward directing them to Christ, and urging them to obey God. The Son of God has left us no directions for civilizing the heathen, and then Christianizing them. We are not commanded to teach schools in order to undermine paganism, and then, on its ruins, to build up Christianity. If this is our duty, the command must be found in another gospel ; it is not found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are, at

once and always, to set before all men their sin and danger, and point them to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. And here I would ask, are we not liable to err in these respects? For instance, when we profess to preach the gospel, is it right to take as a text the words of inspiration, and then discourse on something which inspiration never taught? It is not enough that what we say is true; so is geometry, or chemistry, or metaphysics; but is it the truth which Christ came from heaven to reveal? Again, is not our object frequently far too low in preaching? Do we not sometimes preach with the direct design merely of creating in men a respect for religion; and of inducing them to aid us in promoting the objects of religious benevolence, instead of striving to make them, by means of this very sermon, new creatures in Christ Jesus? Do we not labor, as it is called, to build up a good society; that is to collect around us the rich and the well-conditioned, instead of laboring to save souls from perdition? The Almighty God sends us to make known his offer of salvation to sinful men; and we, instead of delivering his message, content ourselves with teaching them to pay a decent respect to us, and to our services. In the mean time, we allow their immortal souls to go unwarned to eternal death. On whose conscience will the blood of these souls rest?

Such then is the preaching of the gospel; it is the proclamation of the love of God to men in Christ Jesus. It may be in public or in private, to one or to many, from

the pulpit or at the fire-side. Whenever we set before men the message of mercy, and urge them to obey the commands of Christ, then we preach the gospel in obedience to the precept in the text.

III. But who is thus to preach the gospel ?

What would be the answer to this question, if we listened to the voice of common humanity ? When the brazen serpent was lifted up, who was to carry the good news throughout the camp ? When the glad tidings of peace arrived in the city, who was to proclaim it to his fellow-citizens ? When the news of peace with God, through the blood of the covenant, is proclaimed to us, who shall make it known to those perishing in sin ? The answer in each case is, *every one*. Were no command given, the common principles of our nature would teach us that nothing but the grossest selfishness would claim to be exempted from the joyful duty of extending to others the blessing which we have received ourselves.

But, beside this, we have, in the text, the command of Christ. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature ; and, lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. The command is as universal as discipleship, and it is to continue obligatory till the Son of man shall come.

Does any one say that this command was given only to the apostles ? It may or may not have been so ; but were they alone included in the obligation which it im-

poses? The address at the last supper was given to them alone, as were many other of the instructions of our Lord; but were they the only persons to whom the words spoken apply? Is it affirmed that they and those whom they should appoint are alone to preach the word? I answer that Jesus Christ never said so, and we have no more right to add to this, than to any other of his commandments.

But let us see how the apostles themselves understood the precept. Their own narrative shall inform us. At that time there was a great persecution against the church that was at Jerusalem, and they were scattered abroad throughout all the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles*. Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.—Acts viii. 1, 4. Then they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, traveled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake also to the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. These men were not apostles, nor even original disciples of Christ, for they were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. Yet they went everywhere preaching the word, and in so doing they pleased the Master, for the Holy Spirit accompanied their labors with the blessing from on high. The as-

cended Saviour thus approved of their conduct, and testified that their understanding of his last command was correct.

If we need any farther confirmation of the interpretation which we have given of the precept in the text, we find it in other portions of our Lord's teaching. The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. The words here indicate the manner in which the kingdom of Christ is to extend itself. Leaven assimilates the whole mass to itself by the contact of particle with particle—each particle, as soon as it is leavened, communicating its own virtue to all the particles surrounding it. So, every disciple of Christ is bound, by proclaiming Christ to those near to him, to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer; and every one who becomes a disciple is bound to make it his chief business to disciple others.

Again, our Lord declares that every one who believes in him shall be the means of imparting salvation to others. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This he spake of the Spirit which, not the *apostles*, but *they that believe on him* should receive. Thus, as our Lord is the living fountain from which every believer drinks; so every one who has drunk of this fountain be-

comes, in this secondary sense, a fountain to all who are about him.

So, in the message to the churches, delivered by the ascended Saviour to the Apostle John, we find these remarkable words : I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

You see then, brethren, the nature and duty of the church of Christ. It consists of the whole company of penitent sinners, united to Christ by faith, animated by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit, every one partaking with Christ in that love of souls which moved him to offer up himself, and every one laboring after his example for the salvation of the world. This is the object for which the believer lives, as it was the object for which Christ lived. This consecration of himself to Christ for this purpose, is a matter of personal obligation. It cannot be done by deputy. It must be done by the man himself. He can no more delegate it to another, than he can delegate faith, or repentance, or prayer, or holy living. Every disciple must be a discipler. Every individual is leaven, and he must assimilate to himself all that comes into contact with him. As he himself drinks of the fountain, he must become a fountain to his fellow men ; otherwise, he has not drunk of the fountain him-

self. If he bear not fruit, he is cut off as a branch, and is withered.

This is the first and primary duty of a disciple, and to it his whole life must be conformed. He may enter upon no calling, he may occupy no station, he may indulge in no amusement inconsistent with his elementary duty of discipleship. A revival of religion represents a church in its normal condition, the condition which Christ always intended it to maintain. Then every believer makes it his great concern to call men to repentance, not as a matter of form, but with earnest and moving persuasion. Every convert is inviting his former companions to turn unto the Lord. But, if this manner of life is appropriate to a revival, it is appropriate to all times ; for men are, everywhere and at all times, sinners hastening to the judgment seat, and they must perish unless they are redeemed by the blood of Christ.

It would be easy to show that it is by involving this obligation in the very elementary idea of discipleship, that Christ has provided for the universal triumph of his church. On this depends the vitality of personal religion. We can never in earnest call men to repentance, unless we are living holy and penitent lives ourselves. Hence, also arises the separation of the church from the world, and hence the antagonism which Christ declares must always exist between them. Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. It is under these circumstances

that the church has always gained its most signal victories, and when these principles of duty exercise an abiding influence over the life of every disciple, the kingdoms of this world will soon become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*

* There is matter for thought in the following remarks of Neander :

“History teaches us to estimate aright the deep significance of this Christian truth, [‘the mediation of Christ’] here developed from the words of the Apostle. The entire dependence of all Christians alike upon this one advocacy, to the exclusion of every other, being based upon this truth; we accordingly see that whenever it became obscured in the Christian consciousness, that dependence was again, as in the ante-Christian period, transferred to a human priesthood and to a multiplicity of mediations, and again the distinction between priests and laity, between spiritual and secular, found admission. And thus will it ever be, when this reference of the religious consciousness in all believers, to the one mediation through Christ, is cast in the back ground; is obscured or misunderstood”—*Neander on John, translated by Mrs. Conant, p. 57.*

“The word ‘anointing’ suggests to us the ordinances of the old dispensation, from which it was borrowed. Kings, priests, prophets, received their consecration to the office appointed them by God through an anointing,—the symbol of the power imparted to them by God through his Spirit for the fulfillment of their calling. By the outward and visible was signified that which in its fullness and completion, was to be wrought inwardly upon the spirit. Now that which was expressed outwardly under the old dispensation, and by a single act, is in the New Testament converted wholly into the inward and spiritual, and working from within embraces the entire life. That which under the old dispensation, was restricted to individuals, intrusted in some manner with the guidance of God’s people,—individuals who were thereby separated from the body of the people,—now under the new dispensation belongs to the people of God universally. The limitations of the Old Testament are burst asunder by the spirit of the New. First of all, its founder himself, the sovereign in God’s kingdom, the Saviour—is called the Anointed, the Christ, as having been consecrated to his work through the fullness of the indwelling Spirit of God; as possessing in himself the fullness, the sum of all those divine powers, which were only imparted singly as special gifts to the prophets of the Old Testament. So, by virtue of their fel-

Such, then, is the privilege, and such the duty of every disciple of Christ. It enters into the elementary idea of discipleship. With this every other subsequent idea must be in harmony. No ecclesiastical system which we form can either liberate a disciple from this obligation, or take away his privilege of thus laboring for Christ. Whatever offices are created in the church, are created for the purpose of enabling the disciple the better to discharge this duty. They are made for the church, the church is not made for them; and it becomes us ever to be watchful, lest by any error the church of Christ be deprived of this, the mainspring of all its efficiency.

I have thus far spoken of the gifts which are common to every man of a sane mind. But almost every man has some peculiar gift, that is, some naturally bestowed means of usefulness. This also he is bound in the same manner

lowship with him, are all who are redeemed by him made partakers of the Holy Spirit which he imparts. From the fullness of the divine nature, the divine power dwelling in him, he imparts to all. This is the inward anointing, the inward consecration whereby they are inwardly set apart from the world, as those who belong to God through Christ. All are admitted without distinction to the same fellowship with him, and receive from him the same inward consecration to their divine mission through the Holy Spirit. Henceforth there exists no more among the people of God any such distinction as under the old Testament between kings, priests, prophets and people; but all collectively are in like manner consecrated to God, have an equal part in that inward consecration, in the illuminating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. It is one royal, priestly generation, whose nobility and high office is alike the heritage of all; all are prophets, through that common illumination of the Holy Spirit. Such are the weighty thoughts contained in that single word, that honorable designation of believers."—*Ibid.*, pp. 126–8.

to consecrate to the service of the Master. A brief allusion to some of these will sufficiently illustrate my meaning. One man may be endowed with uncommon conversational ability, so that in the ordinary intercourse of society, he readily leads the minds of men in any direction that he chooses. The disciple of Christ is not at liberty to use this talent for the purpose of attaining to social pre-eminence, or for the gratification of personal vanity ; he must use it as a means of winning souls to Christ. Beautiful illustrations of this form of consecration of talent were seen in the lives of the late William Wilberforce and Joseph John Gurney. Another disciple may be endowed with skill in the conduct of mercantile affairs, so that, with ease, he can accumulate a fortune, when other men would merely earn a subsistence. This talent he has no right to employ for the purpose of hoarding up wealth for himself, or for his children, or of procuring the means of luxurious extravagance, or fashionable display. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are not of the Father, but of the world. He must consecrate this gift to God, and remember that he will be called to account for this, as for every other talent. And while such a man should abound in almsgiving, let him be his own almoner, laboring with his own hands and not with the hands of others, in the work of benevolence. Another may have been gifted with skill in the management of affairs, in arranging and carrying forward plans for the labor of others, and in guiding

masses of men to right conclusions in all matters of public concernment. This talent should be given to the cause of religion and benevolence. Such men, instead of leaving the charge of our benevolent institutions to the ministry, should assume it themselves. They can do it better than we, and the gift was granted to them for this very purpose. It belongs to Christ, and to him must it be cheerfully rendered.

These gifts to which I have referred, are bestowed upon Christians for the general service of the church of Christ. There are but few men who are not endowed with some one of them, which it is their duty faithfully to improve. I must, however, turn to those gifts which have special reference to the ministry of the word.

It frequently happens, that a brother engaged in secular business is endowed with a talent for public speaking. On matters of general interest, he is heard by his fellow-citizens with pleasure and profit. This talent is more largely bestowed than we commonly suppose; and it would be more frequently observed, if we desired to cultivate and develop it. Now, a disciple who is able successfully to address men on secular subjects, is surely competent to address them on the subject in which he takes an immeasurably greater interest. This talent should specially be offered up in sacrifice to Christ. The voice of such brethren should be heard in the conference room, and in the prayer meeting. They have no right to lay up this talent, more than any other, in a napkin.

And still more is it incumbent on the churches, to foster and improve gifts of this kind. Thus we arrive at the order of lay preachers, formerly a most efficient aid in the work of spreading the gospel. I believe that there are but few churches among us, in the ordinary enjoyment of religion, who have not much of this talent undiscovered and unemployed. Let them search out and improve it. Every church would thus be able to maintain out-stations, where small congregations might be gathered, which would shortly grow up into churches, able themselves to become lights to the surrounding neighborhood. I know of but few means by which the efficiency of our denomination could be so much increased as by a return to our former practice in this respect.

But, besides this, it seems plainly to be the will of Christ that some of his disciples should addict themselves exclusively to the ministry of the gospel. Such men are called elders, presbyters, bishops, ministers of the word, or stewards of the mysteries of God. If it be asked, under what circumstances may a believer undertake this service?—I answer, the New Testament, as it seems to me, always refers to it as a calling to which a man is moved by the Holy Ghost. No one may therefore enter the ministry, except from the motive of solemn, conscientious duty. If he choose it as a profession, for the sake of worldly advantage, or that he may enjoy a life of leisure, or be enabled the better to pursue some favorite studies, he has mistaken his calling. No man will ever

succeed in any undertaking, who pursues it as a means to the attainment of something else ; least of all, when he makes a convenience of the service of God in the ministry of reconciliation.

If it be asked how a man may know that he is called of God to this work, I answer, the evidence seems to me to be two-fold. In the first place, he must be conscious of a love for the work itself, not for what in other respects he may gain by it ; and also, there must be impressed on his soul an abiding conviction, that, unless he devote himself to this service, he can in no wise answer a good conscience towards God. With the Apostle, he must be conscious that a necessity is laid upon him, yea, that a woe rests upon him, if he preach not the gospel. He who is impressed by no such convictions, had, I think, better pursue some other vocation.

This is the first indication of the man's duty. In the next place, he must exhibit such evidences of his call to this work as shall secure for him the approbation of his brethren. Of his own feelings *he* must be the judge ; of his qualifications *they* must be the judges. When both he and they, after prayerful deliberation, unite in the same opinion, then he may conclude that he is called of God to the ministerial office. Neither of these evidences alone is sufficient ; the union of them is alone satisfactory.

The New Testament, I think, recognizes two forms of ministerial labor ; that of evangelists and that of pas-

tors. Evangelists are specially preachers, or missionaries. Men called to this office are endowed with peculiar gifts for awakening the careless, arousing the secure, directing the attention of men to the subject of religion, and thus planting churches where Christ has not been named. The particular value of such an order of ministers, in such a country as our own, is, I think, apparent. Many of the fathers of the ministry in all this region, the men who laid the foundations of your present prosperity, were, for much of their time, evangelists; and worthily did they fulfill the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus.

Besides evangelists, the New Testament authorizes the appointment of pastors, that is of ministers of the gospel placed over particular churches. The calling of such a man is not to the cure of souls generally; but, first of all, of the souls of that particular people. He believes that Christ has placed him over a separate church; from that church he receives his support; and, for both reasons, he is bound to devote to them his whole service. It is his duty to warn every man and teach every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto he is to labor according to the working that worketh in him mightily. It is his duty to make known clearly and explicitly, and with tears, the danger and guilt of the impenitent, to arouse the conscience, to point the inquiring soul to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, to unfold the riches of divine love to

the believing, to guard the disciples against conformity to the world, to stimulate them by every holy motive to higher attainments in piety and closer conformity to Christ, to reclaim the backslider, to counsel the tempted, to caution the unwary, to comfort the sick, to speak peace to the dying believer, to suggest to his brethren means of usefulness, to watch over the discipline of the church, in all things showing himself a pattern of good works, and ever doing the *same work* which he urges upon them. He is to labor publicly, holding up the cross of Christ before his people on the Sabbath, and on all occasions when he can collect them to hear his message. Wherever he calls them to assemble he should meet with them. He will accomplish but little by urging them to leave their secular business for a meeting for prayer, while he is too much occupied in miscellaneous business to attend it himself. But, beside this, he must follow them to their homes, and press upon them individually the claims of the Most High. With Paul, he must teach publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, if he would finish his course with joy, and at the close of his life take his people to witness that he is pure from the blood of all men. My brethren, is not this a work great enough for any man? Can any duty vie with it in importance? Doth it not then become us to give ourselves wholly to it, that our profiting may appear unto all? Can we have any excuse before God,

if we fritter away our lives in miscellaneous business, and give to the work of God the mere shreds and clippings of our time ?

You see, then, the means which the Saviour has provided for the universal triumph of his kingdom upon earth. He requires every disciple, as soon as he becomes a partaker of divine grace, to become a herald of salvation to his fellow-men. He is a fountain, from which is to flow a river of living water. The doing of this, is the test of his discipleship. If he is a branch that beareth not fruit, his end is to be cut off. He is the salt of the earth, and if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall *it* be salted. It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Secondly, every disciple is bound to employ for Christ every peculiar gift with which he may have been endowed. Thirdly, every man possessed of the gifts for the ministry, mentioned in the New Testament, is bound to consecrate them to Christ, either in connection with his secular pursuits or by devoting his whole time to this particular service.

If this be so, you see that in the church of Christ there is no ministerial caste; no class elevated in rank above their brethren, on whom devolves the discharge of the more dignified or more honorable portions of Christian labor, while the rest of the disciples are to do nothing but raise the funds necessary for their support. The minister does the same work that is to be done by every

other member of the body of Christ ; but, since he does it exclusively, he may be expected to do it more to edification. Is it his business to labor for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the body of Christ ? so is it theirs. In every thing which they do as disciples, he is to be their example. I know that we now restrict to the ministry the administration of the ordinances, and to this rule I think there can be no objection. But we all know that for this restriction we have no example in the New Testament. In other respects it is difficult to discover, in principle, the difference between the labors of a minister and those of any other disciple, in conversation, or in a Sabbath-school, or a Bible class, or in a conference room. All are laboring to produce the same result, the conversion of men, and by the same means, the inculcation of the teachings of Christ and his apostles. The ministry is made for the church, and not the church for the ministry. We are not Boodhist priests, or Mohammedan dervishes, or members of a papal or any other hierarchy, or a class above or aside from our brethren, but simply ambassadors of Christ, your servants for Jesus' sake. The chiefest of the Apostles desired no higher rank, and with it we are abundantly satisfied.

You see, then, my brethren, what is the New Testament idea of a church of Christ ; it is a company of believers, each one united to Christ and pervaded by his spirit, and each one devoting every talent, whether ordinary or peculiar, to the work of evangelizing the world.

When a company of disciples is collected together in a particular community, they are the leaven by which Christ intends that whole community to be leavened. By virtue of their discipleship they are called upon to accomplish this work, and it is their duty, in his strength, to attempt it. He did not light that candle to place it under a bushel. Every individual is to become at once a herald of salvation. Those endowed with aptness to teach are to be sent to destitute and forgotten places in the vicinity, to the highways and hedges, to compel men to come to the gospel supper. The ministry are to devote to this work their whole time, as ensamples and leaders of the flock ; surveying the whole field and suggesting to each brother his appropriate sphere of labor. Let the disciples of Christ thus obey the Master in the most depraved city among us, and, by the grace of God, its whole population would soon be subdued unto Christ. The moral atmosphere would be purified by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the work of righteousness would be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

And when the disciples of Christ of every name thus obey his last command, making, as he did, the conversion of the world the great object for which they live, the last act in the great drama of man's redemption will have opened. Private believers will feel their obligation to carry the gospel to the destitute as strongly as ministers. They will then be seen by thousands, like Paul, minister-

ing to themselves with their own hands, while they carry the gospel to regions beyond. Then will ensue the final struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, for dominion over this world. Then will the heathen be given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Then will the accuser of the brethren be cast out. Then from every people and tongue and nation of a regenerated world will ascend the anthem of salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever.

If now we need any confirmation of the truth of these views, I think we shall find it in observing the manner in which the church of Christ was first planted, under the eye of the Master. It was simply this : One individual, when called of Christ, brought other individuals to him. John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah. And he brought him to Jesus. The day following Jesus findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathanael saith unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Thus, by contact of soul

with soul, did the church of Christ increase. And I may add, if any one will read the gospel with this view, he will be surprised to observe how much of the recorded teaching of Christ consists of conversation addressed to individuals, in the ordinary intercourse of life.

Again, observe that no sooner had our Lord collected a little band of disciples, than he employed a large portion of them as missionaries to announce the approach of his kingdom. From his small company of followers, he chose first twelve, and then seventy, whom he sent abroad on this errand. If every church among us furnished heralds of the gospel in like proportion, there would be no lack of ministers.

Observe, again, the circumstances under which, after the ascension of our Lord, the church of Christ commenced its victorious march over the then known world. Against it were arrayed not only the interests and lusts and pride of man, but the power of every government, and all the influences emanating from a luxurious, refined, and intelligent civilization. On what did Christ rely, as his human instruments, to prostrate this vast fabric of tasteful, venerable, and cultivated idolatry? He made no attempt to undermine and overthrow paganism in general. He published no discourses intended to prepare the public mind for the coming revolution. He sent abroad no schoolmasters, to instil the principles of secular truth into the minds of the young. On the contrary, he met the whole power of the adversary face to face, and brought

divine truth into immediate collision with long cherished and much loved moral error. He charged every disciple to proclaim the gospel at once to every creature. He selected those who were to be the first preachers of the word, the first ministers of his church, from the lower and middle walks of life—men destitute of all the advantages of special intellectual culture, whom their enemies reproached as unlettered and ignorant. When cultivated talent was required, it was furnished in the person of the Apostle to the Gentiles. As the church commenced, so, to the close of the inspired record, it continued. Ye see your calling, brethren, said the Apostle, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, things that are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Under the conviction of these truths, Paul labored in the ministry. Though a well educated man, who had profited above many that were his equals, yet when he proclaimed the gospel in refined and luxurious Corinth, although the preaching of the cross was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, he resolved to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified. He did from choice, precisely as his uneducated brethren did from necessity. It is surprising to observe the entire simplicity of those efforts, by which,

in an incredibly short period, the gospel was planted throughout the whole Roman Empire. We can discover no means employed to accomplish this result, but proclaiming to all men repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, imposing on every regenerated man the duty, in turn, of proclaiming the good news to others, always relying, and relying wholly, on the power of the Holy Ghost.

It may be said, these times were unlike any that the world has since witnessed. But let us ask, does change in social condition render it necessary to adopt any new principles in conducting our efforts for the conversion of mankind? Survey our missionary field, and observe the places where the preaching of the gospel has been attended with the most remarkable success. We number among the Karens, for instance, more converts than in all our other missions together. And how was the gospel preached to them? They live in scattered hamlets along the water courses, in the jungle, whose miasmata are fatal to a foreigner, except for a few months in the year. During this brief interval the missionary traveled among them, preaching Christ to one, or two, or ten, or twenty, as he could collect hearers. The Holy Spirit was poured out, and sinners were converted. Small churches were formed, and, from the necessity of the case, left for the remainder of the year to themselves. With the spirit of primitive Christianity, these rude men pointed their neighbors to the Saviour. Ministerial gifts

manifested themselves among them as they were needed, and a large number became ministers of the word. The work of God was thus carried forward with remarkable power. The brother whose labors among them have been so eminently blessed, worn down by incessant toil, was obliged to leave his station for a year or two, for the recovery of his health. On his return, fearful that his flock had been scattered during his absence, he inquired with trembling solicitude concerning their condition. You may judge of his surprise, when he learned that about fifteen hundred persons were then awaiting baptism.—This blessed result had been accomplished by men hardly elevated at all above their brethren, for they had no knowledge whatever, beyond that contained in the New Testament, and the few books and tracts which, within a few years, had been translated into their language. The contact of soul with soul was thus leavening the lump. Pastors, as they were needed, have been raised up among them; and these are now, in a large measure, supported by the voluntary effort of their brethren. Thus is the religion of Christ displaying through this whole region its power of self-extension, by the preaching of the gospel attended by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If the question be asked, could this work have been carried on without the aid of men of more cultivated minds and larger knowledge than the Karens?—I answer, Certainly not.—But I ask again, could this work have been carried on without the labors of these rude and unlettered

men, who went everywhere preaching the word? The answer is the same, Certainly not. Our conclusion, then, is that God requires, and that he employs, in his vineyard, all classes of laborers; and the union of all is necessary to the accomplishment of his work. In general, I think it will be found that, other things being equal, the preacher of the gospel will be most successful, whose habits of thought are not greatly elevated above those of his hearers. President Edwards was, I think, without dispute, the ablest theologian of his time. His ministry, for many years, was eminently successful in Northampton and its vicinity; but I have never heard that it was attended with any remarkable results during his missionary life among the Stockbridge Indians.

But it may perhaps be said, that in this case the people to whom the gospel was preached, were ignorant pagans; and that we cannot, from such an example, learn the best manner of extending the church of Christ among men of intellectual culture. Let us then turn to Germany, and inquire for the circumstances under which the gospel has wrought so powerfully there. Among no people on earth has education been more widely diffused, and nowhere has teaching been conducted with more admirable skill. It is the land of Luther and of the reformation, the preceptress of Europe in science and philology. What, then, have been the facts here?

In the year 1835, a Baptist Church of believers was constituted in Hamburgh, consisting of seven members,

imbued in a remarkable degree with the spirit of Apostolic Christianity. Of this church, Rev. Mr. Oncken was ordained pastor. That church of seven members has already multiplied itself into 42 churches, sustaining 356 stations, numbering 4,215 communicants,* baptized, on profession of their faith, into the name of the Lord Jesus. Each church is supplied with a pastor. Churches and stations are established in Northern Germany, eastward from Hamburg to the borders of Russia; quite extensively through Southern Germany, and to some extent in Sweden and Denmark. On no other churches in Christendom does the smile of heaven so signally rest. They are, emphatically, a field which the Lord has blessed.

And how have these results been accomplished? By following the example left us by Christ and his apostles, the little one has become a thousand, and a small nation a strong people. Every disciple acknowledged the obligation laid upon him by the last command of our Lord. The Holy Ghost bestowed upon the churches ministerial gifts adapted to the work before them. These gifts were cherished, and called into exercise. Preaching was commenced wherever the Lord opened a door. Stations were established, and the men were found to occupy them. These stations grew into churches, by which other stations were sustained. Thus churches were multiplied in every

* Exclusive of those who have been removed by death and emigration. Many of them are now residing in our Western States.

direction ; the Holy Spirit was everywhere poured out, and much people was added to the Lord. Some of these churches now contain two or three hundred members. Almost all of them sustain stations, some of them as many as twenty or thirty ; and, though it may seem incredible to some of us, all this glorious work has been accomplished in classical Germany, without the aid of a single classically educated laborer. Would it not be possible for us to learn a lesson from our brethren in Germany ?

But it will perhaps be said, this is an example from a foreign country ; would the same means for extending the reign of Christ avail us equally here at home ? Cast your eyes backward then, and look upon our own condition some fifty or sixty years since. The men are now living, who remember the Baptist denomination when it was the least of the thousands of Israel. We are now among the most numerous, perhaps the most numerous, communion in the United States. By what means has our increase been so astonishing ? How has it come to pass, that believers in such multitudes have, through our instrumentality, been added to the Lord. I think the answer at once suggests itself, if we call to mind the character of the Baptists of the preceding generation. Though plain men, generally of ordinary education, they were men of prayer, full of the Holy Ghost, each one holding himself in a special manner responsible for making known to those that were around him the truth as it is in

Jesus. They were men of conference and prayer meetings, and revivals of religion ; who, in barns, in school-rooms, and in private houses, wherever they could collect an audience, preached repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Every talent which a church discovered among its members, was called into the service of Christ. There was scarcely a church amongst us which had not its lay preachers, or as they were termed, licentiates. Of these, many from time to time entered the regular ministry, and thus pastors were supplied in proportion to our need. Our settled ministers labored not only in their own churches, but made frequent missionary tours in the more destitute regions in their vicinity, thus doing the work of evangelists. While we were thus, with singular earnestness, devoting all the means in our power to the service of Christ, the Lord added to us daily of such as should be saved. And nowhere could I appeal to the result of these labors with greater pleasure, than in the very spot on which I stand. The numerous and flourishing churches that fill the whole of Western New York, this University, with all its strength in the present, and its boundless hopes for the future, all owe their existence to the self-denials, the preaching, the prayers of these plain, pious, venerable, and never to be forgotten men. They have labored, and you have entered into their labors. Of late years our progress has been much less rapid. Our views in many of these respects have

changed. May not this change in our views be connected with the change in our prosperity ?

These instances seem to me to throw some light upon the teachings of the New Testament on this subject. I fear that we are in danger in this matter of forsaking the instructions of Christ and his apostles, and following the traditions of men, not observing the tendencies to which they lead. The Reformers brought with them many of the errors of the church of Rome. May we not have derived, through them, some erroneous notions respecting the church and the Christian ministry ? Can any one fail to perceive, that the views of our Hamburg brethren on this subject are more in accordance with the New Testament, than those of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon, or John Knox ?

The doctrines here presented seem to me to have an important bearing on the subject of Christian and ministerial education.

The principles which should govern us in this matter, seem to be something like the following :—

I have said that every disciple of Christ is under imperative obligations to become a herald of salvation to his fellow men, and to beseech them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. This can only be done by the action of mind upon mind. It is a case in which the mind of one man seeks to exert an influence over the mind of another. To accomplish this result, it is obvious that disciplined is more powerful than undisciplined mind.

We are taught by Christ, that we are under obligations not only to *use*, but to *improve* every talent committed to us, that we may have the more to consecrate to his service. The slothful servant was condemned because he returned his talent just in the condition in which he had received it. This is the universal condition on which we are allowed to hold every gift intrusted to us. But, if this be the universal rule, how emphatic is its application to intellectual gifts, the most valuable of all the talents with which we are intrusted. Hence, every disciple of Christ is under the most imperative obligations to enlarge his knowledge, to cultivate his faculties, to discipline his mental energies ; that he may have the more to devote to the service of the Master. A wilfully ignorant Christian is a contradiction. He is a barren fig tree. He is the indolent servant who returned his talent, which he had kept wrapt up in a napkin. When the Master shall ask what he has gained by trading, what will he reply ? Brethren, the law of the Lord is exceeding broad, and it would be well for us if we more frequently contemplated the universality of its application.

When I say this, I beg not to be misunderstood. I do not mean to teach that Christ requires you all to qualify yourselves for what are sometimes called the learned professions, or to pursue any particular course of mental culture. I mean that every man, whatever be his calling, should avail himself of every means of mental cultivation which Providence has placed within his reach ; and that

he should strive, with all earnestness, to place such means within the reach of his children. Let our youth, universally, be provided with every opportunity for generous intellectual discipline. I can see no reason why a farmer, or a mechanic, or a merchant, or a manufacturer, should not read as good books, and be as well-informed and intelligent a man, as a lawyer, or a minister, or a physician. I have thought, that our institutions of higher education should be organized upon this principle ; providing education not for one class, but for all classes, thus enabling all classes to avail themselves of their advantages. To labor for these results seems to me to be our duty as parents, and as citizens, but above all, as disciples of Christ. If we are bound to consecrate our all to Him, we are just as much bound to render that *all* as valuable as possible, that so we may have the richer gift to lay upon his altar. Looking upon the subject from a Christian point of view, this seems to me to be the principle underlying every other, which should govern all our efforts to educate ourselves, and to provide the means of education for our children. Were this principle universally recognized, is it possible to estimate its effects upon the progress and stability of individual piety, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ ?

But, secondly, God sometimes bestows upon individuals particular talents, which may be made the means of special usefulness. One has a remarkable capacity for managing affairs, another for mechanical invention, another

for philological research, and another for the pursuit of abstract science. In such a case, it would seem that such talent is to be cultivated with special care. It is a means of usefulness which has not been created in vain, and is not to be recklessly thrown away. On the same principle, if a man has been endowed with a talent for public speaking, though employed in a secular calling, he must embrace every opportunity in his power to render this talent serviceable to Christ. Besides availing himself of every means of general culture, he should devote particular attention to the improvement of this special gift. He should give himself to the study of the word of God, and should labor as much as may be in his power, to render his instructions profitable to his fellow men.

But, now, suppose it manifest that God has called a man to devote his whole time to the ministry of the word; it is obvious that the obligation to improve his talent to the utmost, is specially imperative. It is by means of his intellectual faculties that he attempts to influence the minds of his fellow men. This is the service to which they are exclusively devoted. He is laboring in the cause which employed all the faculties of the Son of man while on earth. For the use and the improvement of his intellectual powers, *he* must render a specially solemn account. The means of improvement, which God has placed in the power of those whom he calls to the ministry, may be very dissimilar; inasmuch as they may vary with age, domestic relations, pecuniary ability,

and degree of talent for acquisition. God assigns these conditions as he pleases ; all that he requires is, that all that he has given should be faithfully improved, and consecrated to his service. From the views which we entertain respecting the ministry, it is evident that a large portion of our candidates for the sacred office must have attained to some maturity of age. It must certainly be difficult to ascertain whether or not a person in mere youth possesses the qualifications which the Apostle Paul teaches us must be required in a candidate.

If it be then our purpose to provide the means of improvement for those among us who are called to the ministry, it has seemed to me that we should bear in mind these elementary ideas of our denomination on this subject. If we are willing to follow, and not to lead, the Spirit of God—that is, if we educate no man for the ministry until we are satisfied, not that he *may be*, but that he *has been* called of God to the work of preaching the gospel—we shall always have among our candidates a large number of those who have passed the period of youth, and for whom the studies of youth would be unsuitable, if not useless. Yet these are the very men to whom appropriate culture would be specially valuable. Others, in various degrees, have been more favored with preparatory education, and the means for more extended discipline. The means and advantages of our candidates must, therefore, be exceedingly dissimilar. If, then, we would labor to give to the ministry the means of improvement,

we must provide those means for them all. A system of ministerial education, adapted to the condition of but one in twenty of our candidates, commences with the avowed intention of doing but one-twentieth part of its work, and of helping those only who have the least need of its assistance. We should therefore provide for all our brethren whom God has called to this service, the best instruction in our power ; adapted, as far as possible, not to any theoretical view, but to the actual condition of the mass of our candidates, leaving each individual, in the exercise of a sound and pious discretion, to determine the extent to which he is able to avail himself of our services. While means should be fully provided for pursuing an extended course of education, we must never lose sight of the large number of our brethren to whom an extended course would be impossible.

But in what way soever a candidate pursues his studies, whether by himself, or under the instruction of an elder brother in the ministry, or in a seminary devoted to this purpose, the question remains to be considered, to what points shall his efforts be directed. In attempting to answer this question, it is important to determine, in the first place, what object he has in view. His object is to prepare himself to be, not a teacher, or a professor, or an agent, or a philological scholar, or a popular writer, but an evangelist or a pastor.* His calling is to persuade

* It is not by any means asserted that these various gifts are not useful, or are not to be cultivated. What I say is, that they are not particularly

men to be reconciled to God, and to build up those who are reconciled, in their most holy faith. His studies, then, must all bear directly upon the object, for which it has pleased God to put him into the ministry. The means which he is to use in accomplishing this object are simple. He is to make known the will of God as it has been revealed in the New Testament, and to urge men to obey it.

It is obvious then, first of all, that the minister of the gospel must be, as thoroughly as possible, acquainted with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles. These contain the precise truth inspired by the Holy Ghost, which he is to communicate to others. He is authorized to make known to men, as the commandment of God, the whole of this revelation, and nothing whatever beyond it. It is precisely this truth, and nothing else, that the Spirit of God has promised to accompany with his almighty power. Now, I think that a man may be materially assisted to understand the New Testament by improved mental discipline. He needs to acquire the habit of continuous and abstract thought, the power of concentrating his mind upon a subject, and keeping it steady to its work. He must think through the thoughts of the Bible, that he may be able to present them clearly to others. But let me say that this is far from being a

connected with the ministry, and therefore should be cultivated elsewhere. Least of all should a course of education for the Christian ministry be modified for the sake of preparing men for other and different pursuits.

merely intellectual process. Simply intellectual power can never attain to it. There is needed, beside this, a devout and holy temper of mind, without which mere mental strength can do but little. These things are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. Of all this you are fully aware from your own experience. When you have been desirous of ascertaining the meaning of any particular passage of the Scriptures, in order to impress it more deeply on your fellow-men, in what manner have you been most successful ; by turning over the works of men, or by the earnest thinking of a soul lying in lowly prostration before the Spirit of infinite wisdom ? I do not stand here to disparage either human learning, or logical acuteness, but I say that these, without the aid of a holy temper of mind, will enable us but imperfectly to understand the mind of the Spirit. What we need is, to know, not the thoughts of man, but the thoughts of God, and these will be best understood by the soul illumined by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Here I may, however, remark, in passing, that the revelation given to us consists of ideas, and not of words. These ideas may be expressed in our own language, or in the languages in which they were written. If a man have the opportunity of reading the Bible in its original languages, let him by all means learn to do it, and do it thoroughly. Let him embrace this and every other opportunity of generous intellectual culture. No man may innocently reject any means by which he may add to the

accuracy of his knowledge of the word of God. But if such opportunity as he may desire have not been given him, let him not despair, or think himself set aside as a vessel in whom the Master has no pleasure. Let him study the Scriptures more earnestly, and pray more devoutly, using every means which God has placed in his power; and the Spirit will assuredly lead him into all necessary truth.

But suppose this truth to have been arrived at; it is then to be presented to the human heart, so as to produce the effect of persuasion. Here is required a knowledge of the human mind, its moral condition, its opposition to God, its subjection to earthly affections, and of all the phases which it assumes when its chambers of imagery are illuminated by the light of divine truth. In order to acquire this knowledge, the man must become acquainted, first of all, with his own moral nature, and the modes of its operation. When he tells what he has himself experienced, he may be assured that in general he speaks the language of humanity. Here also he needs to be in the habit of personal conversation with his fellow-men on the subject of religion. Hence it is that no man is ever an effective preacher, who does not visit his people for the sake of urging upon them personally the claims of religion. Have you never observed how pungent the preaching of a minister becomes who has spent a few weeks in the midst of a revival of religion, where his whole time is occupied in intercourse with awakened souls, and how such a min-

ister carries everywhere with him the spirit of a revival ? It is thus that we learn to apply the truths of the gospel to the minds of men.

But a minister is to teach publicly, and from house to house.

Under the first of these divisions of his duty must be placed the composition of a sermon. He whose weekly business it is to address men publicly, should, if possible, understand the nature and objects of a discourse, and should learn to construct a discourse correctly. He should acquire the ability to think out a train of thought, which embodies one idea revealed by the Spirit of truth, and to lead the minds of men in the direction which he intends. Thorough, faithful, and honest dealing with a candidate, may here be of eminent advantage to his future ministry.

But suppose this train of thought to be thus prepared, shall it be written or unwritten ? Each has its advantages, but I am constrained to believe that the value of written discourses has been in this country greatly overrated. Speaking an unwritten train of thought is by far the noblest and most effective exercise of mind, provided the labor of preparation in both cases be the same. I can not but think that we have been the losers, by cultivating too exclusively the habit of written discourses.

But the discourse having been prepared, it has yet to be delivered. The cultivation of a clear and impressive delivery, free from awkwardness, vulgarity, and oddity,

and deeply imbued with the tones expressive of natural feeling, is of the greatest importance to a public speaker. It has surprised me that in seminaries, of which the object is to educate preachers, so little time should be devoted to the art of delivery. From want of attention to this subject, good and able men frequently attain to very moderate success, and are shoved aside by men, in other respects, very greatly their inferiors.

But the gospel is to be preached not only publicly, but from house to house. In preparing for this part of his duty a young minister may receive much valuable instruction from an elder brother who has himself been a diligent pastor. The sick are to be visited, the mourners consoled, the thoughtless aroused, the secure alarmed, the convicted urged to decision, the penitent pointed to Christ, the wandering reclaimed, the feeble encouraged. All this is to be done by personal appeal to individuals, and he who has done it successfully, may give much valuable counsel to him who is just entering upon the work. Until a minister has learned not only to perform but to love this part of his labor, he cannot hope to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. I do not know of a more common or a more just ground of complaint against the ministry, than that of the neglect of parochial visitation. It seems strange that a man whose sole calling it is to urge men to repentance, should refuse to perform this duty, in this particular form, especially when his people themselves invite him to perform it. They de-

sire that he should converse with them individually on the subject of their souls' salvation, and shall he consider such conversation a drudgery, and leave his people unwarned? If any one desires to see this subject treated of with great force and eloquence, I ask leave to commend him to the perusal of "Baxter's Reformed Pastor."

Such seem to me, after some reflection, to be the points to which the attention of a candidate for the ministry should be directed. To these I know many others are commonly added, and the number of additions is continually increasing. We, however, seem frequently to forget that the time is rapidly approaching every young man, when, if he would be any thing but a retailer of other men's opinions, he must be a teacher unto himself; and, that the sooner he can be induced to put himself under his own instruction, the sooner will he attain to the stature of a full grown man.

It is possible, my brethren, that in the views I have thus frankly suggested, there may seem to you somewhat of strangeness; but let me respectfully request that you will examine them, not in the light of the opinions and practice of men, but in the light of the teachings of Christ and his Apostles. Believe them and put them in practice in just so far as they conform to the revealed will of God, and no farther. This I may reasonably claim of every disciple of Christ, and I have no desire to claim any thing more.

At the present moment, a right understanding of the

duties of the private disciples of Christ, and of the ministers, and of the relations which they sustain to the Master and to each other, seems to me of incalculable importance. Since the era of the Reformation, Protestantism has made no aggressions upon Popery, and the same geographical lines have for centuries separated the parties from each other. But now it is evident that a contest for the mastery of the world between the powers of light and the powers of darkness is imminent and inevitable. The nations in which the Bible is freely circulated, and the gospel publicly preached, are ranging themselves on the one side ; and the nations from which the Bible is prohibited, and where the preaching of Christ crucified is forbidden, are ranging themselves on the other. Within the life-time of men who now hear me, the question will probably be decided, whether the kingdom of Christ is now to proceed to universal victory, or ages of intellectual and moral darkness are again to overspread the earth. It is for such a crisis as this that the disciples of Christ are now called upon to prepare.

But more than this. It is obvious that this question is really to be decided in our own country. So long as the light of true Christianity shines brightly *here*, the rest of the world can not be enveloped in darkness. Hence it is that the intention is publicly avowed of overturning our systems of universal education, and thus bringing us under the power of a foreign hierarchy. In aid of this design, immigrants by hundreds of thousands are annu-

ally arriving on our shores, who are at once admitted to all the privileges of citizenship, while they are conscientiously bound to obedience to a foreign ecclesiastical potentate. At the same time the press is scattering broadcast over our land the seeds of frivolity and licentiousness. Unbounded prosperity is providing for every class of our people the means of sensual gratification. The rise of prices, consequent upon the increase of the precious metals, is stimulating to yet greater excess the desire of acquisition already sufficiently rife amongst us. But critical as is our position, there would be nothing to alarm us, if the disciples of Christ, holy and self-denying, were, with one accord, ranging themselves under the banner of their Master, and using every means in their power to prepare for the coming onset; and the ministry, in the van of the Lord's hosts, filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, were by precept and example training their brethren for the approaching conflict.

But what is the condition of our churches of all denominations at this critical moment? The disciples of Christ seem to be fast losing the distinctive marks of their profession. Self-denial for the cause of the Redeemer will soon become the exception, rather than the rule. In large districts of our country, the admissions to the churches are not as numerous as the removals by death. In the mean time, the number of candidates for the ministry is diminishing, in all denominations, not only relatively, but absolutely. Nay, it is diminishing more rapidly than the

figures indicate, for of the reputed number of candidates a considerable portion never enter the ministry ; and of those who enter it, a greater and greater number are annually leaving it for other pursuits. And what is the remedy proposed in this unusual crisis ? It has been recommended, in order to meet this emergency, to reduce the cost of ministerial education, to extend the term of ministerial study, and to increase the pecuniary emoluments of the ministry. In other words, we are told to address stronger motives to the self-interests of men, that so we may induce them to enter upon a calling essentially self-denying. When the whole power of the adversary is thundering at the gates, and the crisis requires every man to stand to his arms, we content ourselves with offering large bounty to officers, and allow every citizen to retire from the conflict. Was ever a victory gained by strategy such as this ?

In our own denomination, it is said that we have 4,000 churches destitute of preachers of the gospel. What is to be done to meet this deficiency ? Does all that we are doing furnish us with the shadow of a hope that this demand can be supplied ? Nay, multiply our present efforts to any practicable extent, and compared with the work to be done, the discrepancy between the means and the end is such as to awaken the feeling of the ludicrous. Is it not time, then, to examine the whole subject from its foundations ? May not some light be derived from

considering attentively the doctrine and examples of Christ and his apostles ?

Is it not evident that if we are attempting to do the work of God, we must do it in obedience to his commandments, and in conformity with the principles which he has established ? Ministerial gifts have been bestowed upon the church by Christ ever since he ascended on high, and led captivity captive. He has commanded us to pray the Lord of the harvest to bestow these gifts upon men, and thus send forth laborers into the harvest. These gifts, in whatsoever manner bestowed, we are to receive cherish and improve. By no rules of our own are we to restrict their number, or diminish their usefulness. We are to accept thankfully all the means which Christ has bestowed upon us for the advancement of his cause. We are to cultivate a ministry after the example of the apostles, composed of men relying upon prayer and the Holy Ghost ; and in self-denial, crucifixion to the world, its maxims, its amusements and its frivolities, setting an example to the flock, while they devote themselves daily to the work of saving souls. To every one whom Christ has thus called let us give every intellectual advantage, which the circumstances of his individual case render suitable. Having done this, we have done all in our power for the improvement of the ministry, and we may reasonably expect on our labors the blessing of God.

But when all this has been done, but little will have been accomplished. If you, brethren, would improve the

ministry, you must begin by improving yourselves. Ministerial gifts are not bestowed upon a slumbering, lukewarm and worldly church. And suppose they were bestowed, of what value would they be either to you or to others, if you are surrendered up to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life? The ministry can only labor successfully as you labor with them. If you then really desire to witness the triumph of the cause of the Redeemer, you must begin to live a holy, self-denying life. You men of wealth must cease from accumulation, and devote not only your income but yourselves to the work of the Lord. You men in active business must be content to accumulate less rapidly, that you may have more of your time to consecrate to the salvation of men. Ye who, professing obedience to Christ, are yet living in subjection to the maxims of the world, eagerly chasing its frivolities, and teaching the lesson to your children, must commence a life of godly simplicity and Christian self-denial. Every disciple, by his mode of life, must show that he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. When ministers and people thus begin to labor in earnest for Christ, we shall witness results such as the ages have not yet seen.

The nineteenth century since the advent of Christ, is now half completed, and the world still lieth in wickedness. Is it not high time that the heathen were given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession? Never, since the beginning,

have the disciples of Christ enjoyed such advantages for the universal dissemination of the gospel as at present. Let us then go up and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it. Nothing is now wanting to subdue the world unto Christ, but an universal, earnest, self-sacrificing effort of his disciples, in firm reliance upon the Spirit from on high. Thus far we have failed in just so far as we have trusted to our own wisdom instead of the wisdom of the Master. We mourn over the vices of the land? We invoke the majesty of the law, and laws are not executed. We unite in associations, and our associations are rent asunder. We join hands, now with one, and then with another struggling party, and we are sold in the political shambles like brute beasts. Let us then abjure all such vain alliances, and commence the work of reforming the world by obeying the precepts of Jesus. If we can convert men to Christ, the work of reformation will be done. By no other means will the flood of iniquity be stayed.

Do you not believe that if all the disciples of Christ in any of our cities or villages thus labored for Christ, they would soon arrest the progress of iniquity, and make it a garden of the Lord? Suppose that we in the same spirit undertook, in solemn earnestness, the conversion of the world; would it not soon be given unto Christ for his possession? Brethren, on whom does the responsibility for the present state of our cities, of our country, and of the world rest? Awake, then, and shake yourselves

from your lethargy ! Put ye in the sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

The following Citations are appended as illustration of the doctrines discussed in the sermon :

OBJECTS OF THE MINISTRY :

Acts, xxvi. 17.

2 Cor., v. 20. Acts, xx. 24.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY, TO BE JUDGED OF BY THE INDIVIDUAL :

1 Tim., i. 12. 1 Cor., ix. 16.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY, TO BE JUDGED OF BY THE CHURCH :

1 Tim., iii. 2-7.

Titus, i. 6-9.

Paul's preaching in Corinth.

1 Cor., xi. 1-8; and 11, 12.

S E R M O N I I .

THE CHURCH A SOCIETY FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.—1 TIMOTHY, iii. 15.

IN the New Testament, pious men are sometimes spoken of as individual believers, and sometimes as members of the church of Christ. In the text, the Apostle Paul addresses Timothy under the latter relation. He moreover clearly intimates that, to this relation, there attach peculiar and important obligations. He desires that his "own son in the faith" may know how to behave himself, not merely as an individual Christian, but also as a member of the Christian society. The text then naturally leads us to consider the duties of believers in this particular relation. If it was important that Timothy should *know how to behave himself* in the church of God, it cannot be unimportant to any one of us.

But if we would know how to behave ourselves in the church of Christ, we must first form some definite conception of the nature of the church itself. I shall therefore, in the following remarks, endeavor to set before you

the teachings of the New Testament on this subject, confining myself to the consideration of the church of Christ as an association of men for the accomplishment of a particular object. When we can form a clear conception of the church in this aspect, our duty as members of it, or, in other words, how we ought to behave ourselves in it, will be self-evident.

Jesus Christ left his disciples without any organization, and this fact has appropriately been used as an evidence of the divine authority of his mission. In one respect this is perfectly true, and the argument derived from it is valid. The Messiah established no organization such as ever entered into the mind of man. He appointed no successor, nor did he confer on his disciples the power to make any such appointment. The office of apostle also was limited to those who had seen the Lord, and had been personally appointed by Christ himself. It, of course, terminated with the men who first held it, and *they* had no successors. Nor did Jesus form any constitution for the government of his church, such as we see in all human organizations. We find in the New Testament, not a word about the different grades of office, or their functions, duties, responsibilities and powers, such as we find in the constitutions of all other bodies politic. Our Lord, once for all, repudiates in the most pointed manner, every such idea as wholly inconsistent with the nature of the church which he was establishing. *One is your Master*, said he, even Christ, and *all ye are brethren*.

We see then that, in Christ's view of his church, there was one Head over all, and that all the members were on the level of absolute equality. So, again, the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, came to him worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom. After exposing the folly of her request, he called the disciples unto him and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over *them* (i. e. the princes), but it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. That is to say, In the kingdoms of this world there exist various gradations of rank and authority, each officer being subject to those above him, and controlling those below him; but, in the kingdom of Christ, no such gradations of office exist. Superiority here depends wholly on moral character. He is the greatest in this kingdom who attains to the highest degree of humble, self-sacrificing benevolence. He, whose life most closely resembles the life of Christ, is the greatest here. The Master, though in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of

a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being formed in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This is the highest conception of greatness which the universe presents. He surely must be the greatest on earth, who, in his character, most accurately realizes it.

Thus, utterly without visible organization, did Christ leave his disciples. There was only one officer having authority, it was the Redeemer himself. All below him were brethren standing on the same undistinguished level. If any one was ambitious of greatness, there was only one way pointed out by which he could attain it. He must sink himself below that level, and become more emphatically the servant of all. So, after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

While, however, all this is true, it is not true that Christ left to his disciples a work without providing the means by which it should be accomplished. He organized a society of the most remarkable character, designed to subdue this world to God, and he adapted it perfectly to its purpose. The whole conception of it is so unique, it is in every respect so entirely unlike any association ever

framed by the mind of man, so perfectly in contrast with all that man has ever designed or even imagined, and yet containing within itself the elements of such irresistible power and the necessity of such marvellous self-extension, that we recognize its origin in the mind of God : it never had its birth among the thoughts of man.

Let us then proceed to examine the theory of the Christian church, as a society established by Christ for the accomplishment of the purpose for which he became incarnate.

A society consists of certain individuals, voluntarily united under a common law, for the accomplishment of a specific object.

In examining the nature of any society, three distinct points of inquiry immediately present themselves. First, what is the character, and what are the qualifications of those who compose it ? secondly, what is the object which it intends to accomplish ? and, thirdly, what are the laws by which it is governed ? Understanding these, we may easily form a distinct opinion of the nature and effectiveness of such association.

I. What are the qualifications for membership of that society which Christ established, sometimes called the kingdom of God, sometimes the church, or the house of God, and sometimes the church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ?

When the Son of God came to our earth to establish his kingdom, he found the whole world in open rebellion

against his Father. All flesh had corrupted its way. The Gentile world was universally given over to idolatry. Every true conception of God had been banished from the minds of men. Because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God had given them over to the control of every evil passion, and every degrading lust. Not only did they do these things, they had pleasure in those that did them. The Jews, while retaining in their Scriptures the written knowledge of God, were as base and vastly more guilty than the heathen themselves, so that, through them, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles. Here and there a pious soul was looking for the salvation of Israel, but, even in such rare and exceptional cases, this hope was blended with low ideas of temporal sovereignty, and the expectation that God was about to restore the *kingdom* to Israel. The idea of God as the Creator of all, loving all the race of man with an equal and unspeakable love, infinitely holy, and yet not willing that any should perish, giving up his well-beloved Son for our offences, and thus opening wide for us all the gate of heaven, did not then exist upon earth, except in the bosom of the Messiah. Of the people there was none with him. Not one of the race of man had ever risen to so mighty a conception. He alone comprehended it, and comprehended it in all its grandeur. He was conscious that he was set apart to carry into effect this astonishing purpose of God. He bowed himself to assume the weight of this stupendous under-

taking. He, standing alone on this round earth, consecrated himself to the work of turning its teeming millions from their rebellion against God, and of making them the dutiful sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. He saw the intense guilt which defiled the soul of every one born of woman, and he undertook to cleanse and purify and sanctify all who would believe on and receive him as the Saviour of their souls.

One part of this work consisted in his sacrifice for sin. He obeyed the law which we had broken, and gave himself up for our offences. He thus removed the obstacles to our pardon and restoration, which, under the holy government of God, had otherwise rendered our salvation impossible. These obstacles he took out of the way, nailing them to his cross. Salvation was now as free as condemnation. Whosoever believed in him could never perish, but had passed from death unto life.

The foundations of this kingdom were thus laid. But how was the good news of pardon to be carried to a world that hated the very Messiah who told of peace on earth and good will to man? A plan must be devised by which this good news should be proclaimed, in circles widening and multiplying from age to age, until every nation should be subjected to the faith, and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

In forming a society for this purpose Jesus Christ explicitly informs us what are the qualifications of its members. From these qualifications hereditary descent is at

once excluded. Here it is of no avail to have even Abraham for our father. The members of this society are neither born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man. Parentage can give us no title to membership. No work of man, no rites which he can impose, no ceremonies that he can perform, can introduce us into this society. It is a spiritual kingdom, and the change which prepares us for it, is wrought in our souls only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Except a man be *born again* he can not see the kingdom of God. As by physical birth we become members of that civil society which embraces the whole brotherhood of man ; so, by the spiritual birth, we become members of the society which Christ has established, the general assembly and church of the first-born. This birth involves an entire change of moral affections. The supreme love of the sinner is transferred from the vanities and follies, the lusts and ambition of earth, and is fixed on God his Father and Christ his Redeemer. God becomes the all-sufficient portion of the renewed soul. Its controlling and all-absorbing desire is to please God and to be like him. The man would in all things be perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. The change wrought in him by this new birth is likened by the Apostle to that wrought in Christ, when, from his lifeless state in the tomb of Joseph, God raised him to glory, and set him at his own right hand, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named,

not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet. Not only is the transformation of the human soul to be compared to nothing less than this change in the personal condition of the Redeemer; the power also by which it is effected is declared to be equally stupendous. Such is the moral change which must be wrought in us before we can enter the society which Christ has established.

As soon as a member is received into the society of Christ, he is at once entitled to all its privileges. Whether young or old, learned or ignorant, bond or free, honored or despised, he is at once admitted to an equal share in all the blessings promised in the gospel. He was under condemnation, but there is now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. He was an alien and a foreigner, he is now a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. He was a stranger from the covenants of promise, now, all the promises of God are unto him yea and amen in Christ Jesus. He was living without hope, he now has a hope sure and steadfast, entering within the vail. He was without God in the world, now he dwells in God and God dwells in him. Christ was to him a root out of a dry ground, having neither form nor comeliness; now, for him to live is Christ, and to die is gain. This world was his home, and he looked for nothing beyond it, now it is but the resting-place in which he tarries for the night, until the day dawn and the day star arise in his heart. He was once willing to barter away

his soul for wealth and honor and pleasure, now, the world is crucified to him, and he is crucified to the world. Once the grave was to him the gloomy passage to yet more gloomy darkness ; now, it is the entrance to an immortality of light, the introduction to the immediate presence of the Saviour who loved him and gave himself for him. The day of final account was to him an object of unutterable dread, for he knew that then he had no intercessor ; now, he can look forward to it in humble joy, knowing that he shall appear clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and be a partaker in the merits of his all-sufficient sacrifice. Beyond, all is joy unspeakable and full of glory, for he knows that neither life, nor death, 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 him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus his Lord.

The member admitted to this society, partakes at once of the communion of saints. Every Christian receives him as a brother, and bestows upon him more than a brother's love. To every believer, Christ is precious, for in him is united every moral excellence that can attract a renewed soul. But every believer is formed in the likeness of Christ, and this likeness can be found nowhere else on earth. Those who love the original, can not but love his image reflected from the souls of his disciples. If we love him who begat, we must love those that are begotten of him. This love is one of the very first tests

of membership of Christ's society. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. By this do we know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. How could it be otherwise? Christ is the head, and every believer is a member of his body, and if one member suffer, must not all the members suffer with it? The Christian beholds in his brother those moral elements which he loves better than any thing else on earth. He loves him because he venerates, adores, and loves his Father who is in heaven. He loves him because he has given up his whole self to that Saviour who gave up himself a ransom for us all. He loves him because the Spirit of God dwells in him, working in him all the fruits of righteousness. He loves him for his penitence for sin, for his loving trust in Christ, for his meekness under reproach and contumely, for his forgiveness of injuries, for his self-denial for the good of others, for his victories over the world, and for his lively hope of an inheritance that fadeth not away. It is impossible that a Christian should not love with an overcoming and abiding affection the brother in whom he perceives these moral elements. They are found in every believer; hence every renewed soul loves the whole family of the redeemed, and the whole family of the redeemed loves in return every individual; and thus love, the perfect bond, unites them all to each other, and to Christ who is the head.

But yet more, our Saviour has taught us that this love

of the members of his society to each other must transcend every other form of affection. It was so with him, and it must be so with his disciples. Whosoever doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother. Our Lord enforces the duty of loving our brethren more than even our own life by his own example. This is my commandment that ye love one another *as* I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man *lay down his life* for his friends. The Apostle John urges the same precept, and enforces it by the same motive. Hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us ; and we ought to *lay down our lives* for the brethren. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God *so* loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also. Nor has this truth proved, like too many others, a mere barren dogma. Nothing, in the early ages of Christianity, so amazed the heathen as the earnest, self-denying love which bound all the disciples of Jesus to each other, even to those whom they had not personally known. Nothing was more common with them than willingly to suffer death rather than discover to their persecutors the hiding-places of their brethren. In every age of martyrdom, this same love has been always appa-

rent. Christians by hundreds of thousands, have, like Priscilla and Aquila, laid down their own necks for their brethren. Such is the love which pervades the society of Jesus Christ, according to his conception of it.

Here then we behold a society without any organization, bound together by a stronger and more universal tie than the world ever conceived of. Every member is obliged, by the terms of admission, to love his brother better than his own life. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. The same moral affections animate every member. The same hopes and fears agitate all. The same God is served, the same Saviour is loved, the same world is to be overcome, the same hell to be escaped, and the same heaven to be gained, by every individual. Hence there exists throughout this whole society one and the same universal token of recognition. Whatever may be the differences of their social position, how great soever the varieties of their culture, every member knows his brother by a sign which can not be mistaken, and, knowing, loves him with a love stronger than death. His possessions are all held subject to the call of his brother's necessities. For whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? With his brethren he shares reproach. For them he endures persecution. In every suffering brother he beholds a representative of the Saviour who died for him, and hears a voice from the excellent glory

saying unto him, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

But the Master has commanded every one who enters this society publicly to confess him before men. This is most appropriate. Before, he was a servant of Satan, doing his will, and yielding himself up in subjection to the desires and appetites of a heart at enmity with God. He has now changed his allegiance forever. He renounces without reserve the authority which he formerly acknowledged, and owes it no obedience. He has become dead to the world, and is henceforth alive unto God. It is seemly that so important a change in all his moral relations should be announced, both to his former and to his present associates, by some public act. By the command of the Lord he is, therefore, baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He is bound in baptism to show his death to the world; he rises from the water to show that he is risen with Christ, and enters upon a new and ever-blessed life. By this significant rite he declares to the world his change of character, and the establishment of new moral relations.

In thus confessing Christ before men, he unites himself with some visible company of believers. These, at the present day are divided into various sects, or religious denominations, differing from each other commonly in matters not essential to salvation. Such is the natural and necessary result of free discussion, and it will doubtless

continue until we all know the way of the Lord more perfectly. He unites with those whose views of the teachings of Christ most nearly coincide with his own. With them he specially labors in building up the cause of Christ. To them he submits himself, but only as under law to the Master. In their labors he shares a special responsibility. He does this, not because they are *the* church of Christ, but, as he believes, a true branch of it, because his lot has been cast with them, and because their views and practice seem to him most in harmony with the teachings of the Saviour.

But while all this is true, it is never to be forgotten that the believer was a member of Christ's society before he ever united himself to any community of professing Christians. They acknowledge him to have been a member of this society before they received him to their fellowship, and declare that this is the only ground on which they had any authority to receive him. They were all admitted in the same manner and for the same reason. Hence it is obvious that the society which Christ has established, is the foundation of every particular association of brethren calling themselves a church of Christ. They are in fact entitled to the name of churches of Christ only as they are portions of the general society of renewed souls. The teachings of the New Testament concerning the church universal must control and govern their action as separate associations. To elevate any separate portion of the general society into an original authority

to claim for it a power over the whole, to assume for it an authority to modify or alter, to add to or take from, any of the laws which Christ has enacted for the government of his disciples, is arrogant and impious. The believer was a member of Christ's society before he became a member of any church seen of men. His union to Christ, by which he becomes a member of Christ's society, takes precedence immeasurably of any union which he can form with them. His association with his brethren has in no respect changed his relations to Christ, or to Christ's society. Hence his love to his Christian brethren can not be circumscribed by denominational lines, nor restricted by sectarian shibboleths. He must embrace with Christian affection every man in whom he sees the image of Christ; and the fervor of his love must be measured, not by the sympathies of party, but by the perfection in which that image is formed in the soul of the believer. He must rejoice in the prosperity, and sorrow in the adversity, of every Christian brother and every Christian sect. He must pray without ceasing that grace, mercy, and peace may be upon all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and ever bear in mind the words of the Saviour, he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.

Such then are the constituent elements of the society which Christ has established. Its members are the renewed in heart, the children of the Lord Almighty. They are identical in moral character, being all formed in the

likeness of Christ. By this likeness they recognize each other amid all the varieties of human condition. They are united to each other by the perfect bond of universal love, by a stronger and more enduring affection than is elsewhere to be found among men.

II. Every society must have an OBJECT. What is the object for which Christ established his society upon earth. This question is easily answered by observing the relations which the renewed soul sustains to the Redeemer.

It is obvious that the Son of God became incarnate for the single purpose of redeeming the race of man from the condemnation of the second death. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. In him we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins. When he undertook this work, he gave himself up wholly to it. He pressed forward to the endurance of any suffering by which it could be promoted. I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished. He recoiled from no humiliation that this work demanded. He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He hid not his face from shame and spitting. He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. He refused not at that awful crisis to be bereft of every friend on earth, and even to be forsaken by his Father in heaven, that thus he might

destroy him that had the power of death, and open the door of life to all who believe. For this purpose he reappeared on earth, he ascended to the glory which he ever had with the Father, and there he ever liveth to make intercession for us. His whole being as the Messiah, God manifest in the flesh, was, without the shadow of a turning, consecrated to the accomplishment of this one purpose. Never was a life so absolutely unique, never was every energy of a being so absolutely swallowed up in the effort to realize one mighty idea.

When a man becomes a member of Christ's society, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, he has an apprehension by faith of the sacrifice which Christ has made for his redemption. The incarnate Son of God gave himself up without any reservation for him, and bore his sins in his own body on the tree. What can he do to testify his gratitude for love such as this? Instinctively he surrenders himself, all that he is, all that he has, for time and for eternity to his Redeemer. He yields himself up to Christ that he may be wholly formed in his likeness. His ambition henceforth is to obey every command of Christ, and in his humble manner do as Christ did, and live as Christ lived. The object for which Christ lived and died and rose again, is the object for which he lives. He has become a member of that body of which Christ is the head, and the vitality which animates the head animates the remotest extremity. Christ dwells in his heart by faith, a soul within his soul, inciting him to copy the ex-

ample which he set before us when he was manifest in the flesh. Such is the mold into which the believer is cast.

We have already seen the object of the life of Christ. It was to save the world by reclaiming it to obedience to the Father. Such then is the object for which the renewed man lives. As Christ gave himself wholly to this object, so the disciple gives up himself wholly to it. As Christ made no reservation so he makes none. If he reserves any thing which he refuses to surrender to Christ, Christ does not admit him as a member of this society. If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he *can not* be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and *come after me* can not be my disciple. And whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not *all that he hath*, he can not be my disciple. The most cherished affections of our nature must be allowed to interpose no obstacle to our obedience to Christ. The loss of everything earthly must be cheerfully endured, when duty to him requires it. We must pursue the object for which he lived, with a self-abandonment akin to his, if he would share in his merits and be partakers of his glory.

This then is the object for which the individual believer lives, the subjection of the world to Christ. To this he has consecrated all that he has, yea, and his own life also. But, this being the object of every individual

member, it must be the object of the whole society. This is the purpose for which the church was established, and for which it has been continued on earth. Hence its members are called the salt of the earth. They are the leaven by which the whole mass is leavened. They are the candle lighted and set upon a candlestick that it may give light to all that are in the house. They are the medium of communication, through, which the spirit of God is sent to convert and sanctify men, the appointed instrument which God employs in turning the world unto himself.

This object of the Christian's life has respect to the world within him, and the world without him.

Though the believer is renewed in his spirit, he is sanctified but in part. The remains of corruption still linger about him, and from time to time discover themselves. He has, however, declared eternal warfare against every sin, and most of all against the sin that dwelleth in him. Hence his life is a continual struggle against the evil in his own heart, and a striving after higher and higher moral attainment. This work is carried on in the deep recesses of the man's own consciousness. But even here he may derive important aid from his brethren of the Christian society. They may see faults which he can not see, they may detect vices which he has not discovered. By using their spiritual vision he may thus be enabled the better to accomplish the great object of his life. He courts these smitings of the righteous, which are to him

an excellent oil ; and in return his prayer is lifted up for them in their calamities. In time of deep tribulation, the experience of his brethren will frequently direct his eye to a ray of hope which had otherwise been unobserved. When called upon to bear reproach for Christ, the burden is alleviated by his brethren who hasten to share it with him. Nor is this all. In all his prayers for himself, every Christian remembers every Christian brother on earth. Whatever good thing he desires for himself, he equally desires for every disciple, but most of all he prays that the Holy Spirit, the crowning mercy purchased by the Saviour for us, may be shed abroad abundantly on every believer. Every member thus receives the benefit of the prayers of the whole society. Thus, each one laboring with his might to secure the highest moral attainment both for himself and for all Christ's people, the whole society, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.

But the world without is in rebellion against God, and under the condemnation of eternal death. As soon as man is formed in the likeness of Christ, he devotes himself without reservation to the work of its salvation.

Were there but one Christian on earth, he would be obliged, from the very elements of his renewed character, to commence this undertaking. Proclaiming salvation through the blood of Christ, in faith and love, the Holy

Spirit, according to the promise of the Father, would accompany his preaching with Almighty power. Souls would be converted ; and each convert formed in the same moral likeness, and devoting himself in the spirit of the Master to the same work, the flame of divine love would be communicated from heart to heart ; it would spread from neighborhood to neighborhood, from city to city, from nation to nation, until the whole earth should be filled with the glory of the Lord. Thus was it in the beginning ; nor did the progress of the gospel cease until men forsook the precepts of Jesus, relied on an arm of flesh instead of the promise of the Spirit, and basely submitted to the world which they had already well nigh overcome.

But what would be the duty of a disciple of Christ were he the only disciple on earth, is clearly the duty of every disciple. Every one is bound to undertake the conversion of the world to God. No one of Christ's people is under stronger obligations to be like the Master than another. All are equally bound to live and die for the object for which he lived, and died, and rose again, and is now seated on the right hand of the Father. The father and the mother in the family are to leave no effort untried to bring their children and their whole household to Christ. The mechanic in his shop, the merchant in his warehouse, the lawyer in his office, is the candle lighted and placed there upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. Every believer is

so to conduct his secular calling as to render it an instrument for extending the kingdom of Christ. Thus every member of this society, wherever his lot may be cast, is to be a plant bearing fruit; and the fruit has the seed within itself, from which again a more abundant harvest shall be sown and bear fruit until it has covered the whole earth.

But suppose that two or three of the members of this society find themselves thrown together in the midst of a company of those who know not God. From the very principles of their renewed nature, they unite together and form the church of Christ in this community. They then labor not only individually, but in *concert* for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. They need no ecclesiastical organization to render them, in all essential respects, a church of Christ. They unite in bearing testimony for Jesus, in avoiding the appearance of evil, in shunning the counsel of the ungodly, in mutual prayer for the descent of the Spirit, and in bearing reproach for the name of their Lord. But besides this they labor personally to turn men from sin to righteousness. The gifts bestowed upon each are different from those of the others, but all are bestowed by the same Master, and all are to be used in the same service. Each one cultivating his own peculiar talent, the power of the whole is increased by the employment of all the means which Christ has consecrated to this work. No matter how small this company of believers is, laboring in this manner

they may lay claim to the promise of Christ, wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Nor are we without examples of just such churches in the records of early Christianity. The Apostle Paul frequently addresses messages to the church in a particular house. He, in this manner, alludes to the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. These disciples were tent makers, and the apostle had labored in their workshop when he was in Corinth. They had, as we may suppose, many other workmen in their service. Some of these were disciples, and the apostle, remembering his former associates in labor, speaks of them as the church in that house. They formed, in that company, a little band of loving, bold, uncompromising witnesses for Christ. They were ever acting, not only individually, but in concert, for the building up of each other in the faith, and for the salvation of the souls around them, and therefore were they, with great propriety, designated the church of Christ in this Corinthian tent manufactory. My brethren, when every manufactory, every shop, every warehouse, every office, has not merely its professors of religion, but in reality its church bearing witness for God, then may we say unto Zion, Arise and shine, for thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

When a sufficient number of converts has been gathered in any place they proceed to form a society for the

purpose, of publicly holding forth the word of life, and maintaining in their original simplicity the ordinances of the gospel. Here they publicly covenant with each other to consecrate themselves and all that they possess to the accomplishment of the object for which Christ died. For this they first gave themselves to God, and then to each other by the will of God. They undertake the conversion of the world, but specially that part of it in which their lot has, by the providence of God, been cast. God has committed to each one of them, some talent which he has created for this purpose. The Christian society finds occupation for all the gifts which Christ has committed to it. Some it sends into the highways and hedges to invite men to come in, some it appoints to converse at their houses with the poor and neglected, some to minister to the sick and afflicted, some who are endowed with the gift of utterance to preach the gospel in the destitute neighborhood around them. All are diligently engaged in promoting the work to which each one has individually consecrated himself. The poor give their service, the rich their service and their wealth. Their object is to fill that neighborhood, that town, that city, with the knowledge of the Lord. Every convert increases their power and adds one to the number of their laborers. Every new station furnishes an additional centre for the diffusion of moral light. Advancing thus with accumulating power, and ever relying on the soul renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, they cannot cease

from their work until they have dried up every fountain of iniquity within their borders, and the place in which they reside has become a mountain of holiness, the dwelling place of righteousness.

Nor even then can it cease. There yet remain regions beyond, unblessed by a knowledge of the gospel of Christ. The all-consuming love of souls which burns in the bosom of Christ's people, finding no place of labor in its own vicinity, will yearn to carry the good news of salvation where Christ has not been named. The merchant and the mechanic, instead of wandering abroad in search of some new California, inquire only, Where can I pursue my avocation with the greatest service to the cause of Christ? If Aquila and Priscilla had believed that they could more efficiently serve Christ in Rome than in Corinth, do you suppose that any prospect of gain would have prevented their removal? The student employs his learning in scattering abroad among barbarian nations the word of everlasting truth. The minister of the gospel, turning away from regions filled to repletion with the knowledge of salvation, seeks his field of labor among those who are perishing for lack of vision. Every people, every Christian sect, sends forth its laborers, of all occupations, to turn the heathen to righteousness. Nor will this labor cease until the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, be given to the saints of the Most High.

Have I, in these remarks, in aught exaggerated? Have I not described the society of Jesus Christ as he himself conceived of it, and as he himself established it? If we would form an accurate opinion on this subject, let us take an example from the company of his early disciples, who acted under the immediate direction of the ever-blessed Spirit. We will take, for instance, the Apostle Paul, whose life is better known to us than that of any of his brethren. How did he enter the society of Christ? Was it not by as complete and radical a change of moral character as we can possibly imagine? Did he not surrender himself without the shadow of a reservation to him who had loved him and given himself for him? Was not his whole soul poured out in love to his brethren, so that he was willing to spend and be spent for them, though the more he loved them the less he was loved? Was not the inner life of his soul consumed in the agonizing struggle after likeness to Christ, keeping under his body and bringing it into subjection, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, forgetting the things which were behind, and reaching forward to those things which were before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? And in this labor for Christian perfection, do we not behold him in every one of his epistles calling upon his brethren to aid him by their prayers, while he declares that without ceasing he daily remembers them in all his supplications? Of his

efforts to extend the kingdom of Christ why should I speak? His whole life was a succession of missionary tours, except when his plans were interrupted by bonds and imprisonment. Asia Minor was his first missionary field. When he had established churches in every important city on the sea-board of that populous region, he entered Europe, and in various cities of Macedonia, in Athens and in Corinth, he labored abundantly. Then, extending his field yet more widely, he projected a mission to Spain, and was only interrupted in his design by his imprisonment in Rome. But even here he ceased not from his labors. His bonds in Christ were manifest in all the palace and in all other places; and hence were sent to the churches those immortal letters, the precious heritage of the believer until the end of time. If the greatest of our missionary organizations, uniting the efforts of half a million of professed believers, had accomplished as great results as these, we should look upon it as marvellous success. And yet this man was feeble in health, weighed down by a distressing physical infirmity, and knowing that wherever he went, bonds and imprisonment awaited him. In one case, in vindication of his own character, he sums up in these words the circumstances under which his life had been spent from the moment in which he united himself to the society of Christ. In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with

rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by my 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, beside those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. It was in this manner that the Apostle Paul behaved himself as a member of the society of Christ, the church of the living God. Did he over-estimate his obligations? Was he either a fool or a fanatic? Then I have in no manner over-stated the obligations resting upon every disciple of Christ.

III. I come in the third place to speak briefly of the laws by which this society is governed.

The laws of the society of Christ control the conscience. They can not therefore be made by man. They originate with the Master, to whom every member has voluntarily submitted himself. They have respect mainly to the qualifications of membership, and to the duties which the Master imposes upon the members. They are found in the New Testament, and consist of the precepts which have been committed to us by Christ and his apostles.

The laws of the Christian society have been made by the Master, and, as I have said, can be made by no other

authority. Should all the disciples of Christ on earth be at any one time assembled, they would be utterly powerless to add to, or take from, to alter, or modify, a single law enacted by Jesus Christ. The decisions of councils, or popes, or bishops, or synods, or assemblies, or conventions, or associations, can impose no obligation upon any disciple of Christ. If what they enact was before enacted by Christ, their re-enacting of it is nugatory. If it were not enacted by Christ, it is an assumption of his jurisdiction. One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren.

But it may be asked, Who shall interpret for us the precepts of Christ? We answer, Christ has appointed no interpreter. He has told us that *every one* must give account for *himself* unto God. The New Testament is a message from God to every individual, and every individual, seeking the truth in humility and prayer, is an interpreter unto himself. He must, in the fear of God, learn from the written revelation what God requires of him, and, so seeking, he will be taught all necessary truth.

But will there not arise from hence great diversities of opinion? If men seek with a right spirit, I answer, not in things essential to salvation. But, were it otherwise, would these diversities be lessened by submitting our conscience and intellect to any other interpreters? These are as liable to err as ourselves, and, as each one of us is to give account for himself, it is reasonable that each

should, for himself, learn from the written message what God has required of him.

Supposing, however, differences of opinion as to the teachings of Christ to exist. Each disciple unites with those whose belief is most nearly coincident with his own. With these he labors more especially, and for their progress as disciples of Christ, he is more directly responsible. But this, as I have said, changes in no respect his relation to the whole body of believers. He is most of all a member of the society of Christ, belonging to the general assembly and church of the first born. Yet having united with them in visible fellowship, he has placed himself specially under their jurisdiction, and is amenable to their authority, in respect to all things which he and they believe Christ to have commanded. They have no legislative power. They may enforce obedience to the commands of Christ on every one of their members. This they are obliged to do as servants of Christ, this they must do, or the distinctive character of Christ's society would in a few years disappear. And these laws must be enforced upon all, without respect of persons. To them, the rich and the poor, the wise and the unwise, the powerful and the powerless, are equally amenable.

The society of Christ has but one means of enforcing the commands of the Master. It has no physical penalties to inflict. It can punish the disobedient neither by fine, nor imprisonment, nor exile, nor the scaffold, nor the stake. All that it can do, is simply to withdraw

itself from every brother that walketh disorderly. He joined the society as a renewed man, who submitted himself without reserve to the authority of Christ. When his conduct renders it evident that he is unrenewed, and that the word of Christ has no control over him, his brethren withdraw from him, and return him again to the world to which he belongs. Thus far they may go. Beyond this, they have received from the Master not a shadow of authority, and to assume it is an atrocious invasion of the dearest rights of humanity.

Such do I suppose to be the conception of the church of Christ as he has revealed it to us in the New Testament. How a man should behave himself in it, has been manifest as we have proceeded. I will, therefore, close this discourse with a few suggestions which press themselves upon us as we reflect upon the ground which we have passed over.

1. If such be the scriptural idea of the church of Christ, we may reasonably inquire where such churches are to be found. There exist vast corporations, of incalculable wealth and terrific power, each claiming to be not only *a* church, but *the* church of Christ, though founded upon principles diametrically opposed to those on which Christ has established his society. Can these be churches of Christ? Have they a single mark which can designate them as his people? Of the associations, called at the present day churches of Christ, just so many are portions of Christ's society as obey the laws,

and imitate the examples which have been left to us in the New Testament. I speak not here of individuals. A holy man may be a visible member of an unholy church. It is not given us to know how much error may co-exist with piety. While, therefore, we hope and believe that even in the most corrupt churches, there are reserved many thousands who worship God in spirit, it yet seems evident that nothing can be in reality a church of Christ, which does not practically realize the idea of a church left us by Christ and his apostles.

2. It has frequently been a matter of surprise that the religion of Christ has made so little progress, and that, after eighteen centuries, so small a portion of mankind has acknowledged his authority. To abate our surprise at this acknowledged fact, we may ask whether we can conceive of any means better adapted to the accomplishment of their purpose, than the society which Christ has established. We may also point to the historical fact, that whenever any portion of his professed disciples have practically realized our Lord's idea of a church, their moral power has always been irresistible. The promise of Christ that the kingdom should be given to the little flock, was only made to *his* flock, the church built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, he himself being the chief corner stone. He never promised the moral conquest of the world to everything that might be called by his name. The power of his church resides in the elements which he has incorporated into its very

essence. Remove these, and it is shorn of its strength, for the Lord has departed from it. Christ promised the victory over the world only to the society which he established. If we have changed it into another, and instead of a spiritual society, made it, in various degrees, a secular corporation, is it any wonder that the promise of Christ yet remains unfulfilled. And it will remain unfulfilled until the church assumes again the character which it received from Christ. Then, and not till then, will its righteousness go forth as brightness, and its salvation as a lamp that burneth.

3. If such be the case, brethren, what is to done? Is Christ's idea of a church such as I have attempted to delineate? Can we then hope to subdue the world to Christ, nay, can we hope to save our own souls, unless we be practically conformed to it? Have we, who profess to belong to Christ, the evidence in our own consciousness, that we are renewed in the spirit of our minds? Have we given up ourselves wholly to Christ, in return for the gift of himself for us? Is our affection for our Christian brethren paramount to the ties of sect, or party, or social position, nay, to the love of life itself? Are we using every talent we possess in the cause of Christ, seeking *first of all* the kingdom of God? Are we, as churches of Jesus Christ, practically acknowledging the conversion of the world to be *the* great object for which we are associated, and are we laboring to accomplish this object,

striving according to the working that worketh in us mightily? If we can not answer these questions affirmatively, we have either left our first love, or we have the name to live, while we are dead. Let us try our ways and turn again to the Lord. It is very possible for us to profess the name of Christ, and yet to be, in fact, the greatest obstacles to the progress of his kingdom. If ever the condition of the world demanded a living and not a dead church, it demands it at this very moment. Our own country, in an especial manner, demands it. Iniquity abounds. Our cities and towns are becoming sinks of moral pollution. The want of principle in our public men is periling the very existence of our republic. And while this is becoming more alarming, there seems no moral power existing to arrest those tendencies which are becoming every year more and more alarming. And there is no moral power in the people, because the church of Christ is faithless to her trust; and men professing godliness love luxury, and power, and party, better than Christ. Is it not time then for the children of God to come out from the world and be separate, and put away from them every unclean thing? Unless this be done, I see nothing to prevent us from perishing in one common ruin. But it is possible that we have not yet wearied out the forbearance of God. There may yet remain a blessing in store for us if we repent of our sins and turn again to the Lord. Let this then be our first work. Let

us begin with our own hearts. Let us carry the principles of the gospel in practice in all our churches. Let us consecrate ourselves and all our possessions to the Saviour, and prove him now herewith, if he will not open to us the windows of heaven, and pour us out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Amen.

S E R M O N I I I .

C H R I S T I A N W O R S H I P .

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—MATTHEW, xviii. 20.

To a being endowed with the intellectual and moral faculties of man, the idea of a supernatural power arises almost by necessity. To him, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handy work. He no sooner begins to reflect, than he perceives that he has been placed in a world which he did not create, which he can not govern, and from which, without any respect to his own volitions, he will inexorably be recalled. Above him, beneath him, and within him, a system is carried forward which he did not originate, which he can not change, but which everywhere indicates the existence of infinite power, unsearchable wisdom, and ever-unfolding goodness. Whatever it is that possesses these attributes, how feebly soever he may conceive of them, assumes to him the character of Deity. His conception may be obscure, imperfect, erroneous, or absurd, but it is formed in obedience to the primitive impulses of his intellectual and moral nature; and, even in its very lowest form is incomparably more reasonable than the

denial of the existence of a Creator. The *fool* hath said in his heart there is no God.

It is manifest that the belief in a Deity necessitates the idea of adoration, supplication, thanksgiving. To the thoughtful man, as he surveys the boundless glories of creation, and meditates on the attributes of their Author, the sentiments of humility and devotion present themselves spontaneously. When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, saith David, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. The thought of God first prostrated the soul of the king of Israel in self-abasement, and then inspired it with sublime and exulting adoration.

But it is not alone in minds of deep moral sensibility and refined intellectual culture, that the idea of a Deity awakens becoming emotions. The wintry tempest, as it walks forth in majesty, teaches the soul even of the rude savage to bow in submission before a power which he can not resist, and which it is meet that he should propitiate. Spring with its reviving loveliness, and autumn with its overflowing bounty can scarcely be contemplated, without awakening an emotion of thankfulness in the bosom of the most obdurate. The endless vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, of blessing and bereavement, of danger and deliverance, as they must occur in the personal history of every individual, teach the same lesson; and, with dif-

ferent degrees of distinctness, that lesson is learned by every human being who has arrived at the condition of earnest thought.

Hence have arisen the various forms of religion which have prevailed among men. Notwithstanding their endless diversity, their universality proves that they spring from the instinctive impulses of our common nature. Hence when we hear of a newly discovered tribe or people, we as naturally inquire respecting their religion, as respecting their social or domestic habits. Go where we will, we observe on every side traces of the acknowledgment of a supernatural power, and of the relations which are sustained to that power by us, the children of yesterday.

But man, beside being a religious, is also a social being. He delights in the united expression of a common sentiment, and the common manifestation of the same emotion. The sentiments and emotions of religion are awakened by changes which equally affect the whole community. God causes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. A whole nation trembles at the prospect of famine, or rejoices in the abundance of harvest. Every living thing is aroused from slumber by the rising sun, and is soothed to rest beneath the curtain of darkness. That all should unite in deprecating the wrath of the Being whose power we know to be irresistible, and in giving thanks to him whom we believe to be the Giver

of all good, is one of the first dictates of our nature. Hence the culture of religion is so universally a public concern, and has been so commonly, though so incorrectly, placed under the guardianship of the State. Men unite together in acts of worship as they unite in public rejoicing or lamentation, and they meet together when they perform a religious service, just as they meet to declare war or accept conditions of peace, to elect a ruler or dethrone a despot.

But, in the early ages of humanity, men, like children, think more readily through the medium of visible objects. Hence the idea of God is soon transferred to some representation of the Deity which can be seen and felt. Thus arose all the multiplied forms of heathen idolatry. Each nation forming its own conception of the Supreme Being, embodied that conception in some material image. Then again, the notion of the Deity became divided and subdivided, as some distinct supernatural being was supposed to govern some peculiar department of the visible creation. Thus every nation and tribe and city had its own appropriate gods to whom it specially looked for succor in calamity, and whom it adored as the authors of every deliverance. Not only every trade and occupation, but every individual had his supernatural friend, god, demi-god, or deified hero, to whom his special service was due, and who was to him, in a peculiar sense, the giver of all good.

It thus followed that a mutual intercourse was sup-

posed to be established between the gods and men. The gods bestowed favors, and men made to them offerings of the things in which they specially delighted. The gods were present, either by representation or in person, and they received the sacrifices which the worshiper presented. But the common people were not worthy themselves to present their offering to the gods. Hence a caste, selected from the people, or holding their office by hereditary descent, was chosen by the god to mediate between him and men. And again, since the gods were personally present, they must have a place of abode. At first the most beautiful and picturesque spots on earth were consecrated to their service. Thus, in Greece, the lofty hill-top as it first received the rays of Apollo, the smiling valley bearing on its bosom the rich gifts of Ceres, the solemn forest as it whispered the praises of Jove, nay, every sparkling fountain, every mysterious cavern, every loud resounding beach, had each its presiding divinity. As wealth increased, men began to adorn and beautify their private residences. The deity must also have his appropriate dwelling-place. His house was the temple. This was his chosen abode where, by his own appointment, he could be most acceptably worshiped. Hence he scattered blessings upon his friends, and hence he launched his thunderbolts upon his enemies. The splendor of the temple of the deity was the measure of the devotion of his worshipers. Hence the wealth of provinces was not unfrequently exhausted in providing a suitable edifice for

the abode of the god. All that genius could conceive, or art elaborate, was poured out in profusion in honor of the patron deity. Hence arose those stupendous structures in India and Egypt, and those magnificent temples in Greece and Italy, the ruins of which can not now be viewed without the profoundest emotions of grandeur and astonishment. The civilized world was dotted thickly with edifices and shrines, in comparison with which all that the Christian religion has ever done in the erection of forms of beauty and sublimity, dwindles into insignificance.

Of the moral results of the heathen temple worship it is not my purpose here to speak. These may be best understood from the character of paganism delineated in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. One or two general observations, however, thrust themselves upon our attention.

In the first place, we observe that it all proceeded upon the belief of *holy places*, that is, of peculiar localities made holy by the actual presence of the god. - In the temple consecrated to his honor the deity personally dwelt, and dwelt more emphatically in proportion to the splendor of his abode. Thus the temple of Juno at Carthage, of Minerva at Athens, and of Jupiter at Rome, were supposed to be the places at which these deities were, in an eminent degree, propitious.

In the second place, we perceive that this heathen worship proceeded upon the belief not only of holy places,

but also of holy *persons*. The common herd of worshippers were considered unworthy to approach into the presence of the deity. He must have servants of his own selection, to negotiate between him and men, and these alone were admitted into his immediate presence. Hence, every temple was surrounded by a retinue of priests who officiated as the sole ministers in holy things. They were under the especial protection of the god whom they served, and an injury to them was an insult to him, to be punished with bloodshed and pestilence, and to be atoned for only by hecatombs of offerings. The priest alone admitted the worshiper to intercourse with the deity. He presented the petition, he offered the victim, and he fattened on the oblation.

Hence, in the third place, you see that the heathen temple was never an audience room in which a congregation assembled. It was merely the palace of the god, where, shrouded in darkness, he held his court, surrounded by his retinue of waiting ministers. The people, at humbler distance, might surround the shrine ; but no one except a priest dared to enter it on penalty of death. This honor was reserved for the priesthood alone, and it was granted to them only on occasions of peculiar solemnity. The place was holy, and none but those whose holiness the god had himself recognized, were admitted to hold personal interviews with the being who condescended to dwell with men.

If now we turn to the Hebrew ritual, we observe that

it was established on similar principles. God, in the manifestation of himself to man, has always in great condescension, accommodated himself to the condition of humanity. The Hebrews, just emancipated from the slavery of Egypt, were a rude people, and like any other rude people were more readily impressed by an appeal to the senses. The worship which God ordained was therefore adapted to minds unaccustomed to reflect upon the spiritual and invisible ; while, at the same time, to those who looked upon it aright, it shadowed forth the glories of the coming dispensation.

The Hebrew ritual was established on the principle of holiness of places, that is, of places in which God abode, and where he was most acceptably worshiped. God, as their Theocratic King, dwelt among the children of Israel. It was therefore necessary that a place be prepared for his residence. The people were dwelling in tents, and he directed that a tabernacle, of surpassing magnificence, should be constructed for the place of his rest. The directions for the material, the form, and the furniture of this tabernacle, were with the most minute speciality dictated by Jehovah himself. When it was finished according to the pattern showed to Moses in the Mount, when the ark of the covenant overshadowed by cherubim was deposited in its place, when every thing had been made ready for the Divine Occupant, then did God, by a visible manifestation, come down and take possession of his abode. Thus we are informed by the inspired

historian, that then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle ; and Moses himself was not able to enter the tent of the congregation because the cloud abode thereon. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in their journeys, but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day ; fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys. Here then was the visible dwelling place of Jehovah. Here above all other places on earth was he to be acceptably worshiped. Here in distinction from every other spot falsely esteemed holy, might men come and bow down in adoration before God, the Creator, the Ruler and the Upholder of all.

But if God held his court on earth, he must be surrounded by a retinue of his own appointed servants. He therefore chose the family of Aaron as the officers, if I may so say, of his household, whose duty it was to wait upon him, and mediate between him and the people. They alone could perform the solemn service of his house, but even of their number, one only could, as High Priest, approach into his immediate presence ; and he was not allowed to draw near to God unless on the day of solemn expiation. But the service was too onerous to be discharged by a single family. The whole

tribe of Levi was set apart to aid in the labor which pertained to the ordinances of the Hebrew ceremonial. The ritual was so burdensome that one man in twelve of the whole nation, was required to perform the religious duties commanded by the Mosaic law.

It moreover pleased God to give the most minute directions concerning every part of this ritual. The purity of the blood of both priests and levites, the manner of inducting them into office, their dress and manner of life, their food, and their social and domestic habits were all accurately and specifically ordained. It was meet that it should be so. If the Holy One had taken up his residence with sinful men, it was appropriate that those who ministered to him should be separated from their brethren, and thus escape the defilement of intercourse with the ungodly. They alone mediated between man and his Maker. Through them alone could the pious Israelite draw near into the presence of Jehovah. He dared not, on pain of death, enter the Holy Place, but the high priest in his name appeared before God, and he felt assured that he had thus approached as near to the Most High as was permitted even to the seed of Abraham his friend.

Thus, again, we see that the Jewish temple was not, any more than the heathen temple, a place *in which* the congregation ever assembled. For any man but a priest to enter the temple where the deity dwelt, would, in either case, have been considered unpardonable impiety.

The prince and the beggar alike stood aloof from its sacred precincts. The sanctuary was a shrine, a thing to *look upon*, before which men were permitted to bow down at a reverential distance, but to attempt to enter it, to draw aside the veil which shrouded its sacred mysteries, was a crime which scarcely admitted of expiation.

The tabernacle was the centre from which every moral and social influence emanated. Every sin was to be atoned for by an offering, or a ceremonial rite. Every mercy was to be acknowledged by a gift. The first fruit of the field and the stall was to be devoted to God. The kind of offering, its age, its condition, color, and the manner of its sacrifice, were all distinctly specified. Three times a year every Hebrew male was commanded to appear before God, in the place which he had chosen for his abode. So complicated indeed was the ritual service, and so thoroughly was it intended to pervade the whole life of the Israelite, that of the five books of Moses, the original scriptures of the nation, if we exclude the narrative portion, about three-fourths are occupied in directions for the offices of the tabernacle, and the various services directly or indirectly connected with it.

When the people were settled in the land of Canaan, and had become a great nation, it was obvious that some better provision should be made for the dwelling place of Jehovah. The Hebrews now dwelt not in tents but in ceiled houses, and the resting place of the Deity was under curtains. Then arose the temple at Jerusalem

covered with pure gold, astonishing the world by its unparalleled magnificence. Then was the service of the sanctuary inaugurated with increased splendor, and the offerings of the whole nation were poured out like water to contribute to its imposing ceremonial. Levites in multitudes thronged around the shrine. Thousands of singers on the solemn feast days hymned the praises of the Holy One of Israel. Countless victims smoked upon its altars. It was a gorgeous spectacle. All that man could do was done to render honor to the God whose dwelling place was on Mount Zion, and whose chosen resting place was the temple in Jerusalem.

Such was the worship ordained by God for his ancient people. It recognized the fact of *holiness of places*. It supposed that God manifested himself with peculiar favor to those who approached the place where he had recorded his name, and where he had condescended to exhibit the visible signs of his presence. There was the throne of Jehovah on earth. There he was surrounded by the thousands and tens of thousands of his selected servants, who ministered day and night before him. They were specially under his care, and no Hebrew of another tribe could, without the grossest impiety, assume the most trifling function of their office. To Jehovah thus shrouded in darkness, and surrounded by his chosen ministers, three times a year the pious Hebrew drew near with solemn awe. Yet he never presumed to *enter* the temple. It was not a house of worship, it was the palace of

the great king. Standing at humble distance, he united with the thousands of Israel in singing the praises of him to whom he offered the firstling of his flock, the first born of his sons, and whose presence rendered Jerusalem the city of the living God, the joy of the whole earth.

But all this magnificent pageant, as, in process of time the human mind advanced in cultivation, and increasing luxury gave greater power to temptation, was shorn of its effect. This splendid service at the time of our Saviour, had become a mere physical and outward seeming. The Jews, excepting here and there a Simeon and an Anna, believed that God could be cajoled by formal offerings, while the worshipper wallowed in sensuality, and insulted the Holy One by treachery, cruelty and lust. They tithed mint, anise and cummin, with scrupulous exactitude, while they wholly omitted justice, mercy and faith. They prayed in the corners of the streets, but their prayers were the longest and the most earnest while they were devouring widows' houses. As the corruption of true religion is wont to degrade the conscience beneath the standard of unassisted natural virtue, so the Apostle Paul declares, That the Jews had become more corrupt than even the heathen around them. All that a magnificent ritual addressed to the senses, the taste, and the imagination, could do, had been done, and the result had proved a lamentable failure. Religion and morality had become entirely disconnected ideas. Men believed that by formal service they might recommend themselves to

the favor of God, while they rioted in unblushing licentiousness. Such is ever the result of a religion of form and ritual, of gorgeous ceremonial and magnificent parade, or, in a word, of attempting to move the consciences of men by an appeal to the senses, the taste, and the imagination. Gentile and Jew were thus given over to vile affections, and it might reasonably have been expected, that the next manifestation of the Deity to man, would be a revelation of wrath, consigning the whole race to merited and remediless destruction.

But my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. Throughout these long ages of misery and sin, God had never forgotten the promise made in the garden of Eden, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. Amidst all the vicissitudes of empire, God had been preparing the way for the advent of the reign of Heaven. At last, when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

The principles on which this new dispensation, the kingdom of God upon earth, was established, were, as might well be supposed, the very reverse of all that had preceded it. The former dispensation with its burdensome and material ritual, was, as I have said, typical of the

spiritual facts of that which was to follow. When the new revelation was published, when he of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write had appeared, its office was accomplished, and it was forever abolished. Then was revealed the reign of heaven, scorning the sensual and ritual appliances which were the shadows of that which was to come. It is impossible to conceive of two systems more diametrically opposed, in all that is visible and tangible, than the Mosaic dispensation, and the kingdom of the Messiah. The one relied for its effect on architectural display, imposing ceremonial, and the performance of rites which could not make the worshiper perfect as pertaining to the conscience. The simple utterance of the other was, the kingdom of God is within you.

The Mosaic dispensation, as I have said, proceeded upon the belief that the presence of God was in a definite sense limited to a particular locality. This locality was the temple. Hence the temple was the central glory of the ancient dispensation. To it all that professed to be religion tended, and from it all proceeded. The Mosaic scriptures are filled to overflowing with directions concerning its construction and its service. The Jew never wearied of describing its magnificence, and he exulted in the thought that the shrine at which he worshiped was esteemed one of the wonders of the world.

I turn now to the New Testament, and I do not find a single syllable on this subject, or on anything even re-

motely allied to it. With the advent of the Messiah, the doctrine of holy places passed forever into oblivion. The hour now is, said the Saviour, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; the true worshipers worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Throughout the whole New Testament, I remember but three places mentioned, in which the saints were accustomed to assemble for worship, one was the upper chamber at Jerusalem, another was the school room of Tyrannus, at Ephesus, and the third was Paul's own hired house in Rome, where he received all that came unto him. God had left his ancient abode, and had chosen for himself a far different residence. Know ye not, saith the apostle, that *ye* are the *temple* of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you. If a man love me, said the Saviour, he will keep my words, and the Father will love him, and we *will come unto him* and make our *abode* with him. When the Jews and heathen reproached the early Christians because they had no temples, their apposite and beautiful reply was, that their *hearts* were the *temple* of God, that there he dwelt, and there he had his abode. The tabernacle and its ritual was formed after the pattern showed to Moses in the mount. The Christian church is built upon the model of the new Jerusalem beheld by John in vision. I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and there shall in no wise

enter into it any thing that defileth, but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The old dispensation had its priesthood, divinely appointed to mediate between God and man. They held their office by hereditary succession, and in their veins for ages had flowed uncontaminated, the pure blood of Aaron. The priesthood had its various gradations, descending step by step from the high priest to the humblest Levite who ministered in its service. The sacerdotal order, by virtue of their mediatorial office, held undisputed control over the conscience of the nation. Hence, as it must be where such an order of men exists, they stood at the head of the commonwealth, amassing its wealth, aspiring successfully after its honors, imposing on the laity burdens which they would not touch with one of their fingers, and by their licentious example leading the nation to inevitable destruction.

I turn now to the New Testament, and I perceive that the priesthood is forever abolished. It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood. Jesus Christ was, therefore, a Jewish layman. There is, therefore, a disannuling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. There is no longer either any priest or high priest on earth. We have, however, an High Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for

his own sins, and then for the sins of the people, for this he did once when he offered up himself. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Every believer is, under the new dispensation, a priest unto himself; and it is his undoubted and inestimable privilege to draw near to God, pleading the merits of the ever-prevalent Intercessor. In the place of a powerful, wealthy, and insolent hierarchy, enslaving the conscience and monopolizing the offices of the nation, I behold twelve common men, all but one, peasants, publicans and fishermen; untitled, illiterate, unknown, whom neither the lordly priest nor the learned Greek would have numbered with the dogs of their flock. Instead of the various grades of the priesthood, I hear the Saviour declare, one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and if any of you would be great, let him become the servant of all. Hereditary descent determined the right to the Jewish priesthood. The Christian ministry is thrown open to every man of earnest piety, self-sacrificing zeal, on whom the Holy Spirit has conferred the gift of teaching. Social position, wealth, and political influence were the attendants upon the Jewish priesthood. To the Christian minister the Saviour promised nothing but the hatred of the world, the loss of friends, the malice of enemies, and persecution even unto death, with the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give him at a coming day. Moses, the

warrior statesman, and Aaron the head of an aristocratic hierarchy, were the types of the first dispensation ; the Redeemer on the cross, drawing all men unto him, was the type of the second.

The Mosaic ritual was burdened with numberless ceremonial observances which met the pious Jew at every hour of the day, none of which could be omitted without bringing guilt upon the conscience. In the New Testament, but two rites are ordained, of which the one may be performed at any water-side, if need be, whenever a disciple and a convert may meet together ; the other, a simple commemorative meal, which may be celebrated with the domestic utensils that can be found in any private house. In the place of the costly sacrifices which were offered year by year continually, I see nothing demanded of the Christian worshiper but the offering up of holy affections, repentance for sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing forth the fruits of love to God and charity to man. The soul united to the Saviour finds within itself a living principle of holy and childlike obedience, and from this fountain issue those graces which manifest the man to be a new creature in Christ Jesus.

But in this entire absence of pomp and splendor, in this absolute want of visible organization, there is manifestly no element of power. Negations have no efficiency. Whence then that wonderful almightiness by which the new dispensation is intended to subdue all things unto itself ? The answer to this question is found in the as-

tonishing facts which the New Testament reveals. In these consist the power of the new dispensation, and hence beams forth that glory before which all the forms of ritual religion fade away into insignificance. These facts are, as I understand them, mainly as follows.

A race of intelligent and immortal beings, morally responsible, in rebellion against God, was justly under the condemnation of eternal death. Help from a created arm was evidently impossible. The Son of God, by whom and for whom all things were made, moved by Godlike love, undertook the work of our redemption. He took upon himself our nature. He offered up himself for us. He obeyed the law which we had broken, and bore our sins in his own body on the tree. God can now be just and justify the ungodly, in virtue of the doing and suffering of him who has magnified the law and made it honorable. As, by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one the many may be made righteous. A door was thus opened in heaven. The race of man, which had been shut out from all hope, may now enter freely into the holy place through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

The Son of God, while he was thus working out our salvation, condescended to become our teacher. Through him, the pure light from the throne of God shone down upon our sin-benighted world. By obedience to his precepts, every one born of woman, though now under condemnation, may attain to glory, honor, and immortality.

And more than this, he himself, in his own life, so clearly exemplified every precept which he taught, that a way-faring man though a fool need not err therein. Denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following in his footsteps, no one will fail to enter with him into the mansions which he has prepared for those that love him.

But this is not all. Jesus Christ implants in the souls of those who obey him a new principle of moral life, by which they obtain victory over the sin that is within them, and the sin that is without them, and become united to God by a loving and childlike faith. This new principle of spiritual life *must be communicated by them to others*. Every man who is enlightened is under imperative obligations to hold forth the word of life. He that believeth on me, said the Saviour, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Every man, as soon as he is quickened, is commanded to proclaim to men perishing in sin the good news of redemption, until the reign of heaven shall have become universal, and the kingdoms of this world transformed into the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

The Captain of our salvation, having finished his work on earth, and opened the gate of heaven to the race whose nature he had assumed, ascended to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. He took his seat at the right hand of the Most High, not in his original condition, but as the glorified Messiah, the head of his body which is the church. As such he sends

forth the Holy Spirit, who by the manifestation of the truth awakens to spiritual life those who are dead in sin. He endows his servants with those gifts which are needed in the labor to which he has appointed them. He meets his disciples when they meet to worship him. Where two or three are met together in his name, there is he in the midst of them. Nay, the soul of every individual believer is a *temple* of the Holy Ghost. If a man love me, said the Saviour, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him. Every believer is a priest, and in this temple he offers up spiritual sacrifice to God. The oblations which he presents are childlike affections, filial obedience, the sob of contrition, the tear of penitence, the humble yet mighty confidence of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love, the universal and joyful surrender of himself to the Saviour who loved him and gave himself for him. These are the sacrifices with which God is well pleased. The priest who offers such sacrifice, whether in the private chamber or in the public assembly, in the crowded city or the lonely desert, on the throne or in the hovel, draws near to God, and God draws near unto him, shedding abroad in his soul the consciousness of his love, the peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

Such then is the worship of the new dispensation. It knows of no holy place but the sanctified heart. It accepts of no oblation but devout affections. It acknowl-

edges no high priest but the Advocate with the Father, and it invites every believer in his name to draw near to the mercy-seat. It scorns as impertinent all appeals to the senses, wrought in gold and silver and stone graven by art and man's device. Its kingdom is established in the spiritual nature of man. Its aim is accomplished in just so far as it realizes the saying of our Saviour, God is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

From this view of the new dispensation the principles may be easily discovered in obedience to which the services of the Christian sanctuary are to be conducted. To this part of our subject suffer us now to direct our attention.

The design of Christian worship is two-fold: first to cultivate the divine life in the soul of the believer, and secondly to communicate that life to those who are yet dead in trespasses and sins. Both these ends are accomplished by the same means—the public exhibition of the truths of the New Testament in humble and believing dependence upon the promised aid of the ever-blessed Spirit.

The word of God must be addressed to men *orally*. A place where they can assemble, retired from the noise of the passing world, is therefore needed. The church therefore requires an audience room, to which believers may invite their fellow-men to hear the words of everlasting

life. Let us then inquire what are the principles which should govern its construction.

We have seen that the New Testament rejects all ideas of holiness of *place*. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in the heart of the humble and contrite. The soul in which the Spirit dwells is holy, all else is common. There is no holiness in form. There is no holiness in antiquated form. There is no holiness in any mode of decoration, whether it be Boodhist or Grecian, Hebrew or Gothic. From all these the religion of Christ averts her face in sorrow, if not in anger. The church of Christ does not worship before a shrine, addressing itself to the eye, which men may look upon, but which only the priesthood may enter. It needs merely an audience-room, in which the congregation may assemble to hear the word of God, and unite in oral praise and thanksgiving. In all its arrangements, therefore, the ear and not the eye is first of all to be consulted. The place of worship should therefore be of convenient dimensions, adapted to the wants of both speaker and hearer. It should be well warmed, well ventilated, and in every respect so constructed that nothing either within or about it shall withdraw the attention of the worshipers from the great object for which they are assembled. The only beauty at which it can aspire must be derived from correct proportion and simplicity of structure. If our devotions are suspended to behold what manner of stones and of buildings are these, taste has overstepped her appro-

priate limits, and, irreverently placing herself by the side of the Creator, has wrought not beauty but deformity. Every thing about a Christian place of worship should be neat, chaste, appropriate, and simple ; so that the disciple of Jesus, free from the intrusion of every other sentiment, may direct his whole attention to the relations of his spirit to the unseen God. An edifice of this character meets all the conditions required in a meeting-house for Christians. It may, moreover, be constructed in unexceptionable taste and of pleasing appearance, and yet be completed at a cost not beyond the pecuniary means of almost any ordinary company of worshiping disciples. I do not perceive that either taste or piety requires any thing beyond this in a Christian house of worship.

Holding these views, it may well be supposed that I have no sympathy with the style of ecclesiastical architecture which is rapidly extending itself among the various denominations of Protestant Christians in this country. Whatever be its form, whether Gothic, or Grecian, or Italian, I object to it, in the first place, on account of its enormous and unreasonable expense.

I am aware that I shall here be met at the outset by the remark, that men build sumptuous palaces for themselves, why should they not build magnificent houses for the worship of God? Men, it is said, will spend their money in some way or another, why should not a part of their extravagant outlay be employed for the purposes of religion? To this I reply, by what right do they build

such palaces for themselves? Does it become a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth to consume his property in useless and frivolous extravagance? Is not every dollar that he possesses a talent committed to him by God, for which he must render a strict account? While the poor around him are growing up in ignorance and vice, while perishing millions are famishing for the bread of life, by what right does a disciple of the blessed Jesus consume in fashionable expenditure those means by which a heathen district might be turned from idols to the living God? We engage in the pursuit of wealth with an earnestness which paralyzes every holy affection, and throw away our gains in a vain competition for preëminence in extravagance. Living thus, I grant it may be *consistent* to build expensive houses of worship. But would it not be equally consistent, and more befitting the disciples of the lowly Jesus, to cultivate simplicity and plainness in every form of expenditure, and consecrate our gains to the cause of that Saviour who loved us, and gave himself for us?

But there are graver and important objections to the present style of ecclesiastical architecture, aside from its lavish expenditure. It is certainly no trifling matter that thus the influence of worldliness is extended over the church of Christ. That expensiveness of worship has this tendency, the history of the past, and the observation of the present, abundantly demonstrate.

But this is not all. The moral results of the prevailing

views of ecclesiastical architecture are already alarming. It is evident that our Lord intended the religion of the gospel ever to hold its seat among the middling classes and the poor, for these constitute the mass of humanity. It was among these classes that Christianity was first planted. The Redeemer himself was, as was supposed, the son of a mechanic. His apostles were peasants and fishermen, illiterate and common men. Wherever the gospel was preached, it was among such men that it flourished. Thus our Saviour proclaimed it as one of the palpable evidences of the truth of his mission, that to the poor the gospel was preached. By this feature was his religion to be distinguished from systems of man's devising, which always sought alliance with the rich and the powerful. As churches were multiplied after the ascension of the Redeemer, they were composed of the very classes from which Christ selected his disciples. Paul, though a well educated man, so preached that the illiterate and the cultivated could equally well understand him. He came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, to the luxurious and polished Corinthians, but with the determination to know nothing, even among them, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. And the result of his preaching was such as might have been expected. Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called ; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the

weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.

Now I object to costly church architecture because it completely reverses the design of Christ in the promulgation of the gospel. Expensive edifices render necessary a great additional expense in the accessories of public worship. So enormous is the cost of edifices, and so great the expense of maintaining religious services in our cities and large towns, that none but the rich are able to hear the gospel of salvation. The mass of the community are as effectually excluded from the house of God as if they were expressly forbidden to enter it. Thus men of moderate means are growing up by hundreds of thousands estranged from every religious sympathy. They will not go where every thing around them contrasts so strangely with the plainness of their attire that their very presence may be a subject of remark. We hear much of increasing wickedness and alarming infidelity in our cities, and we observe that the infection is spreading to the country. How can it be otherwise, when we practically exclude from the worship of God four-fifths of our population, and associate religion with fashion, and wealth, and power, and galling worldly distinction?

But it will be said that in most of these churches free seats are provided for "these people;" why do not they

occupy them? Or it may be said again, we will build mission chapels for the poor, which they may occupy free of cost. To this, I reply, such means as these will do but little to mitigate the evil. The self-respect of an American mechanic forbids him to accept as a gift what is paid for by his neighbors. He will cheerfully contribute for what he receives according to his ability; but, if you demand a contribution beyond his ability, he will have nothing to do with your service. But suppose it were not so. Were the rich assembled in luxurious temples, regaled with the music of the choir, and elated with the consciousness that no plebeian sinner united with them in the service of the sanctuary; and were the poor and the laboring classes collected by themselves in humble chapels in lanes and by-ways, should we thus realize the idea of worship presented to us in the New Testament? Let the Apostle James answer our question. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool, are ye not then partial in yourselves and are become judges of (having) evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which

he hath promised ? If ye have respect to persons, ye do commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. But it may be asked, are not the souls of the rich of as much value as those of the poor ? I answer, of precisely as much, and no more. We all stand on the same level in the sight of God. It is for the spiritual good of the rich, as much as of the poor, that I strenuously urge a change in our practice in this respect. Let there be at least one place this side of the grave where the rich and poor may meet together on terms of equality, as the children of one Father in heaven ; where the one party may learn a lesson of thankfulness and humility, and the other may feel that they are recognized as heirs together of the same inheritance, and where the hearts of all are bound together in one common sentiment of Christian sympathy, and then every worshiping assembly would testify that the children of God are one, and the world would believe that Christ was sent of the Father.

But again, we are living in an unexampled period of the history of our race. The whole world (nations under the power of the Romish and Greek churches only excepted), is now accessible to the preaching of the gospel. Our own country presents a field for philanthropic and Christian effort, such as has never before been seen. It is in the power of the disciples of Christ in the United States to make this nation the instrument of a world's renovation. All the means possessed by the children of God are required in the work of Christian benevolence.

The field both at home and abroad is boundless. The providence of God invites us to go up and possess the whole land. At such a time as this, can the disciple of Christ innocently lavish upon splendid temples the wealth which would feed famishing millions with the bread of eternal life ?

The style of church architecture now coming into use among us is the medieval. To this, especially there seem to me very grave objections.

Aside from the fact of its enormous expensiveness, it is especially unfit for a Christian place of worship. We need for this purpose, as I have said, a convenient *audience* room. But for this purpose the Gothic form is wholly unsuited. Its numerous columns and arches, the elevation of its roof, the multitude of its angles, and the profuseness of its ornament, render it equally inconvenient both for speaker and hearer. Were an audience room to be constructed for any other purpose but hearing the gospel, who would ever select, as the most appropriate form, the model of a Gothic cathedral ?

But, it is said, the Gothic is remarkable for its solemn magnificence. It appeals with power to the taste and the imagination. Why should we not use these means for the promotion of piety ? Can wealth be better employed than in creating those forms of beauty and grandeur which lead men to holy reflection ?

To this I answer, first, I have seen some of the most exquisite specimens of medieval architecture. I have

spent a day in admiring the surpassing beauty of Lincoln Cathedral. As a work of art I have never seen any thing that could compare with it. I was almost saddened as the conviction came over me that no such structure would ever stand on the soil of my country. I must, however, confess that it never awakened in my bosom a single religious emotion. Those magnificent pillars, with their superb tracery, neither raised my soul to God nor quickened my charity to man. I bowed in reverence before the unknown architect who had composed this wondrous epic in stone. The remembrance of his work can never leave me ; but the emotion is purely esthetical ; it has nothing whatever in common with religion.

But perhaps I may be peculiar, and, in this respect, unlike the rest of my species. I will turn then to the teachings of history. If these grand and beautiful forms, which we strive at so humble a distance to emulate, have any power to raise the soul to God, they would naturally have been created at a period when the disciples of Christ were specially heavenly minded, and willing to part with their wealth profusely for the purpose of attaining a more vigorous growth in holiness. But is this so ? Did architectural magnificence take its rise in a period of pure, or, of corrupt Christianity ? Costly Christian temples were never erected until the church was sinking into the lethargy of spiritual death. The period in which ecclesiastical architecture most flourished was the age of spiritual darkness, when the Bible was a forbidden book, to

the masses of the people, and almost unknown to the priesthood itself, and when moral midnight brooded over all the people of Christendom.

But we may ask, what has been the practical result of this effort to awaken piety by an appeal to the senses? Many of these magnificent piles have stood for ages. Have they been found peculiarly successful in the cultivation of devotion? Are they now, or have they ever been, thronged with the humble believing disciples of Jesus? If there be any places in Christendom where the name of Christianity has become a scoff and a by-word, is it not under the eaves of those cathedrals which are now held forth to us as incentives to piety? Would it not appear to us passing strange if we were told that a glorious revival of religion was in progress in York Minster, or Westminster Abbey, or Notre Dame, or the Cathedral of Strasburg, or Milan, or St. Peter's; and that these gorgeous shrines were crowded with men and women, inquiring what they should do to be saved? Or, suppose the Spirit of God should be poured out in these very localities, where would you expect to find the awakened souls assembled? In these magnificent temples, or in hovels and barns, in retired hamlets, and caves of the earth, where they might escape the notice of the very priesthood whose religion had been nourished by the contemplation of the noblest specimens of medieval architecture? Or we may come nearer home. Do we find that any better effect is produced among ourselves by our

puny imitations of the architectural wonders of Europe? Do you find the temples which adorn our cities in any manner the special resort of the humble, devout, self-denying disciples of Jesus? Is it to these that the sinner most eagerly resorts when he would know what he shall do to be saved? When trembling in moral agony he is inquiring, how shall man be just with God, will stained glass, or oriel windows, or carving in wood or stone return him any answer? I can not then believe that such structures have any moral efficacy. If they have never accomplished the purpose for which they were designed, and if they do not accomplish it now, I am constrained to believe that for every moral purpose they are, to say the least, utterly powerless.

But it will be said that these forms of ancient architecture are hallowed by ancient and holy associations. Is it not desirable to avail ourselves of sacred memories to increase our reverence for the house of God? In this suggestion there is certainly a show of reason. We naturally look with reverence on the past, and delight to foster every recollection that can aid us in the attainment of piety or virtue. But, granting this, let us not mislead ourselves by a misstatement of the facts. Let the moral history of the most splendid specimens of medieval architecture be written, and what associations would it awaken in the bosom of a disciple of Christ! Were they erected by the free-will offerings of the holy, or by contributions drained from the earnings of the

degraded slaves of an oppressive and licentious hierarchy the most imposing of them all by the sale of indulgences to sin? Who have frequented these solemn shrines? The lowly disciples of the Son of God, or brutalized, sensual men, who dared not on pain of death to open the lively oracles? Have the ecclesiastics, who age after age have fattened on the oblations offered at their shrines, been men determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, or were they purpled cardinals, mitred bishops, luxurious abbots,

“Monks, eremites and friars,
White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery?”

These very edifices, with all their gorgeous magnificence, have been the chosen resorts of men who have persecuted even unto death our brethren, the saints of the Most High. What is there in any such associations that can create any joy, or awaken any reverence, in the bosom of the disciple of Christ? Were we to be governed by association I would as soon construct all our halls of justice after the model of the judgment hall of Pilate, as to erect churches of Christ after the pattern of the most splendid specimens of medieval architecture.

But it is time that I turned from the house of worship to the purpose for which it is intended. What is the purpose for which a Christian congregation assembles?

This service is all expressed in the single word WORSHIP. We come up to the house of God neither for the gratification of taste nor the cultivation of intellect, but

for the single purpose of worshipping him who is a Spirit in spirit and in truth.

This worship consists in no physical acts. It is not the performance of an imposing ceremonial, it is not the offering up of costly oblations, it is not the burning of incense, or the procession of priests, nor is it the seemly presentation of our bodies in the house of God, bedizened with all the adornment of costly apparel. Ah no ! it is something infinitely different from all these. It is the offering up of holy affections to the Most Holy God. Penitence for sin, the earnest purpose of amendment, the confidence of filial love, the outpouring of gratitude, longing after holiness, the self-sacrificing resolution to be in all things a follower of Jesus, the absolute surrender in the presence of God of the most secret and unsuspected sins, the cutting off of a right hand, the plucking out of a right eye, adoring views of the love of Christ that bring to the soul the consciousness of indissoluble union to him, the solemn consecration of our whole selves to him for time and eternity, faith which confers victory over the world, joyful anticipations of the day when, washed from every stain and clothed in the Redeemer's righteousness, we shall be ever with the Lord ; these, these are the offerings which, in the name of the only Mediator, we present before God when we come to worship in his presence. Wherever his people assemble to offer such sacrifices, the Saviour in an especial manner draws near to them. He presents the oblation with much incense before the throne. Where two

or three are met together in my name there, saith he, am I in the midst of them.

So far as this service is purely individual and spiritual, it is precisely the same in minister and people. So far as it is social and vocal, it is shared between them.

In prayer, the minister expresses orally the spiritual affections which the people, each one for himself, present unto God. He does not offer it for them, he only gives utterance to their offering. They approach no nearer to God by any mediation of his. His prayers are no more prevalent with God than those of the humblest worshiper before him ; they may not in fact be half so prevalent. He rises before them, not to make an official address to the Most High, or to deliver an eloquent harangue to man, but to utter, in the hearing of all, the spiritual affections which animate his bosom and the bosoms of his fellow-worshippers.

But their affections are excited and sustained by the contemplation of the truth revealed to us by inspiration. For this reason the reading of the Scriptures should invariably form a part of the service *whenever* Christians assemble for worship. And again, the truth of revelation may be so unfolded and enforced, that it will enable us to offer up a more acceptable service than would arise from our unaided contemplation. The preacher, a man who has, it may be, withdrawn himself from worldly affairs that he may give himself continually to prayer and the ministry of the word, explains a passage of holy

writ, and shows its bearing upon the spiritual character, affections, and conduct of a Christian assembly. He deals not with other truth, be it scientific, philosophical, economical, political, or patriotic, but simply with that truth which Christ came from heaven to reveal. This truth alone will nourish the soul in all virtue, and prepare it for its eternal home. The teachings of inspiration having been unfolded, he must apply them fearlessly, honestly, and lovingly to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He does not stand up in the presence of his Maker to attract attention to the beauty of his style or the splendor of his imagery. He does not rise there to build up a reputation. This were to handle the word of God deceitfully. His object is, in thorough, honest and holy self-forgetfulness to make known to perishing men the precise mind of the Spirit, warning *every man* and teaching *every man* in all wisdom, that he may present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. You observe that the apostle, by way of emphasis, thrice repeats the words *every man*, and not without reason. The minister of the gospel is not to preach that the ten shall applaud him, while the ninety shall wonder at what they do not understand. He is to unfold the law of God with stern impartiality, whether it condemn the few or the many, the mean or the mighty. He must place his learning, his talent, his whole self on the altar, as the Son of God gave up himself for us. He must so deliver his message that every one of his audience not only may, but so that

with common attention every one of them must, understand him. Jesus Christ was not too great to preach simply. Though in him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead, he was not ashamed to bear the reproach of "having never learned." The common people heard him gladly. Shall those who follow in his footsteps aim at preaching what three-fourths of their hearers can not understand, and what, to those who understand it, serves no other purpose than the creation of an intellectual excitement?

Such is the labor of a minister of Christ. His object is to awaken and to cherish holy affections in the minds of those around him, to arouse sinners to repentance, and to strengthen the faithful in all well doing. His object is to do it now, while they are at this moment before him. He is not to preach in the frigid hope that peradventure, at some time or other, some two, or ten, or twenty years hence, his words may become effectual to their salvation. Peter did not preach thus on the day of Pentecost. He called on his hearers *on that day* to repent, and *on that day* they repented, and three thousand souls were added to the Lord. Why should not the same results follow the preaching of the gospel now? The minister of Christ preaches the truth which is appointed to make men wise to salvation. Perishing men, in danger of perdition, are before him. The Saviour, according to his promise, is in the midst of the assembly. Why should not the truth be effectual *now* rather than at any

other time ? It is to accomplish these results, to bring men now, at this present, to be reconciled to God that the minister of the gospel labors, striving according to the working which worketh in him mightily.

I have said that so far as the service of God in the Christian sanctuary is vocal and social it is shared by the minister and people. They perform their part of the service in singing the praises of God.

The principles on which music aids us in devotion are apparent. It is well known that musical sounds have a decided influence over the tone of the mind. One air harmonizes with grave emotions, another with cheerful, and another with exulting. Not only do they harmonize with such emotions, but they are capable of exciting them. Hence, when the sentiments which we utter are accompanied by appropriate music they make a deeper impression both on ourselves and on others. The impression of music is also greatly increased when a multitude expresses the same sentiments in unison. A hymn sung by a single individual, or a choir, at the head of an army, would scarcely attract attention ; let it be sung by ten thousand men on the eve of a battle, and its effect would be irresistible. The music of a solemn psalm was on the lips of Cromwell's Ironsides in those furious onsets before which the best troops in Europe were scattered like the dust of the summer threshing-floor.

The application of these principles to the case before us is self-evident. In a Christian assembly the believing

soul offers up to God the sacrifice of devout affections. These affections are essentially the same in the bosom of every worshiper, as the hymn is appropriately read. By a natural instinct they are impelled to express them in unison. By thus expressing them, the sentiment of devotion is enkindled to an intenser flame, and the hearts of the worshipers are united in holier sympathy both with the Saviour and with each other. In one spirit and with one voice they bow in lowly adoration before the King invisible. Together they pray for the kindling power of the Holy Spirit, together their hearts melt in lowly contrition, together they lay hold by faith on the promises, and anticipate that day when, clothed in the righteousness of saints, they shall unite with all the redeemed in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Believing all this to be true, you will not be surprised when I say, that nothing but congregational singing seems appropriate to the devotions of a Christian assembly. We meet to *worship God*. We worship God by offering up to him the oblation of holy affections. In singing we offer up this oblation in *unison*. It is then a service in which every believer is expected to *unite*. Hence the airs should obviously be simple. They should be emphatically expressive of solemn, tender, and devout emotion. However well adapted music may be to the expression of other emotions, if it fail here, it is at best an impertinence. Unless it fan the flame of devotion, it

were better to omit it entirely, and lift up our souls to God in silence.

And if this be so, by what name shall we designate that service which is performed merely as a matter of musical divertisement, when the most solemn truths of which the mind can conceive are used for the frivolous purpose of professional display? Can that be the worship of God, which is enacted by men and women hired from the theater and the opera house, to regale the ears of an audience of musical amateurs? Can it be pleasing to God to exchange the oblation of holy affections for a mere sensual oblectation? The Saviour, whom we worship, has said, where two or three are gathered in my name, there *am I in the midst of them*. My brethren, do we believe this? Is such a service as this a meet oblation to offer to the Saviour who is present in the assemblies of his saints? When he demands of us the tear of penitence, the yearning of holy love, and the confidence of childlike faith, is it seemly to offer him, instead, trills from a fashionable opera?

Such are some of the views which I entertain respecting the worship of God under the New Testament dispensation. With a few parting words I close this discourse, already too far extended.

You have been prompted to erect this house of worship, I trust, by sentiments similar to those which I have so imperfectly unfolded. God grant that the devoutest hopes you have ever cherished may be more than realized.

You have consecrated this house to the worship of God. Let it never be used for any other purpose. Let no sound but the voice of worship be ever heard within these walls. Here, Sabbath after Sabbath, may you appear before God to offer up to him the sacrifice of holy affections. Here may the Word be ever preached in earnest, faithful, and loving simplicity. From this place may you go forth clothed in the whole armor of God to fight the good fight of faith. Here may you trim your lamps so that in all the resorts of business you may hold forth the word of Life. Here may the Holy Spirit take up his permanent abode, and fill this house with awakened sinners, and with saints growing in grace. From you may the Word of God be sounded out in this city, and in all the region round about you. And, as in succession, each one of you comes to offer his last sacrifice at this altar, may an entrance abundantly be ministered to you into the temple made without hands, where the Lamb is the light thereof. May your children rise up to fill the places which you leave vacant, and your posterity to the remotest generations become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Then shall this sanctuary, which you have builded, be to you none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven.

S E R M O N I V .

A CONSISTENT PIETY, THE DEMAND OF THE AGE.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do, and teach them the same, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.—MATTHEW, v. 19.

THE form of expression here is peculiar and idiomatic. The meaning is not, that the man who breaks the commandment and teaches men so, and the man who obeys and teaches them, shall both enter heaven, though not under equally favorable circumstances. The words teach us a lesson far more emphatic. They affirm, that the one shall be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, while the other shall be admitted to it. This sense is clearly brought out by the connection of the text with the verse that follows it. Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall *in no case* enter into the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord always describes the Pharisees as sinning in the manner alluded to in the former part of the verse ; they broke the commandments and taught men so ; they would not enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, and those that would enter in they hindered ; they compassed sea and

land to make a proselyte, and then made him twofold more the child of Satan than themselves. They could not, therefore, escape the damnation of hell. The text is then to be understood as positively affirmative and negative. If a man (knowingly of course) breaks one of the least commandments and teaches men so, he shall not, if he do and teach them he shall, enter the kingdom of heaven. The Apostle James teaches the same truth when he says, if a man keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. The entire subjection of the whole man, body and soul and spirit, to the will of Christ, is, everywhere in the New Testament, declared to be the only valid test of discipleship.

But what are the commandments referred to in the text? Plainly the law and the prophets mentioned in the preceding verses, or, more generally, the whole revealed will of God. This law is briefly expressed by our Lord in his conversation with the young ruler. What shall I do, said the inquirer, to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law, how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. And Jesus said, Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live.

We learn from the discourses of our Lord, that these words announce the law which God has established for the government of his moral universe. It was revealed

under the old dispensation, and it has been confirmed by God manifest in the flesh, speaking as the Divine Lawgiver for mankind. The reward of obedience is also proclaimed by the same authority. The Son of God has declared, This do and thou shalt live. Such is the law to which our Lord refers in the text.

If we reflect but for a moment upon this commandment, we shall easily perceive that it is holy and just and good. It requires us to love God supremely, that is, to love him as much better than every thing that he has made, as he is more deserving of our love, and of course to subordinate every motive to this all-controlling affection. Can any one complain of such a law? Let him then take any object in creation, and placing it by the side of the eternal God, ask himself, Which of these two is the more worthy of my supreme love and adoration? Or, let him take this whole created universe, and ask himself again, Which is the more worthy of my unlimited reverence, affection, and obedience, this stupendous mechanism, or the Being whose mind conceived, whose hand formed, and whose word sustains it, and who, in infinite benevolence, watches with parental care over every creature, rational and irrational, that inhabits it? Or, if it be remembered that disinterested goodness justly deserves a return of gratitude and love, let him ask, What has this created universe done for me? or what sacrifices has it made to secure my happiness, or shelter me from harm? On the other hand, the Creator of all has

watched over me and all that he has made with infinite loving-kindness ; and when by willful rebellion I had involved myself in misery such as no finite mind can adequately comprehend, he so loved me that he gave his only-begotten Son that I might not perish but have everlasting life. Should we not then love the Creator infinitely better than all that he has created ? There is not a man who can stand up in the presence of his reason and conscience, and not confess that this commandment is holy and just and good.

The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. By this precept we are commanded to love our neighbor's rights as we love our own. We love our own rights, not because they are *our own*, but because they are *rights*. We despise a man who acts on any other principle, and who cares for right only when it is for his personal advantage. I ask, then, are not my neighbor's rights as much *rights* as my own ? If I love my own rights because they are *rights*, ought I not to love equally well my neighbor's rights for the very same reason ?

But it may be said, and truly, that the precept is broader than this, that it requires us to love our neighbor's happiness as we love our own. Be it so. But how do we properly love our own happiness, or, in other words, what is the true and legitimate object of self-love ? I answer, self-love is an innocent and necessary impulse, disposing us to surrender a small good at the present,

for a greater good in the future ; or (throwing away the element of time, which is obviously merely an accident) which disposes us to prefer a greater amount of happiness to a less. In this way we properly and wisely love ourselves. Ought we not to love our neighbor in the very same manner, and setting aside all consideration of mine and thine, prefer a large amount of his happiness to a small amount of our own ? This is, as it seems to me, the precise view taken of the subject by our Saviour himself. It was in illustration of this law that he spake the parable of the good Samaritan. He tells us of a man on a journey who expends his money and exposes himself to personal inconvenience in order to save the life of a fellow-man, a stranger and a national enemy. He surrendered a less good of his own to accomplish a greater good for his neighbor. Ought we not to love our fellow-men in precisely this manner ? We should then love them as ourselves, according to our Lord's interpretation of the law. Can any man suggest a better rule for the government of our conduct ? John Howard spent a lifetime in practical obedience to this precept, and humanity, without a dissenting voice, has declared that he acted nobly. But was not John Howard placed under precisely the same moral law as ourselves ? Can we honor him without acknowledging that it is our indispensable duty to go and do likewise ? Is not every responsible being obliged to imitate an example of which his conscience approves ?

I ask, then, do not our reason and conscience consent unto the law that it is good? We can not disobey it without doing violence to our own moral nature, and thus increasing the consciousness of guilt and the expectation of punishment. We know that we *shall* suffer the consequences of evil doing, because we *ought* to suffer them. If, on the contrary, we obey the moral law under which we are created, God in boundless goodness has promised to reward us with eternal life. If, however, we look for eternal life on the ground of obedience, that obedience must be perfect. If we fail but in one point, our claim on the ground of merit is set aside forever.

Such were the conditions of our first probation. Have these conditions been fulfilled? Alas! all flesh has corrupted his way, there is none that doeth good, no not one. Men did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and he gave them up to a reprobate mind, and they have loved and served the creature more than the Creator. The love of God, the controlling principle of the moral universe, having perished, the love of man perished with it. The first-born of woman was a murderer, and his children have imbibed his spirit and walked in his footsteps. It is evident, then, that by the deeds of the law no man can be justified. The conditions of our probation having been hopelessly violated, there remains for us nothing but to suffer the consequences of our transgression.

In this our lost condition, the infinite love of God, through the atonement of his Son, provided for us a

second probation, established upon better promises. He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should have everlasting life. Under the conditions of this probation, sinners of the human race may be received as righteous through the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Under this most merciful arrangement, it is not *our* obedience but the obedience of *Christ*, that avails at the bar of eternal justice. The evidence that we are sharers in the blessings of the atonement is found, not in the sinless obedience demanded by the conditions of the first probation (for this has become impossible), but in supreme love to the Saviour, prompting us to sincere, honest, whole-hearted intention to obey the law of God in every thing that shall be revealed to us. This is the law of God that we keep his commandments. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The law continues the same ; it could not be changed, for then God would deny himself. We must set it always before us and make it the rule of our conduct as much as if we expected to merit heaven by our own obedience. A twofold motive now impels us to keep it with all our heart. In the first place, an enlightened and quickened conscience prompts us in all things to do the will of God : in the second place, the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that we should not live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again. The law as a rule of conduct is

the same under the new dispensation as the old, only additional and more powerful motives urge us to obey it. Do we then by faith make void the law? nay, we establish the law. We can not believe in Christ without dying unto sin, and if we be dead to sin, how can we live any longer therein? He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure. This then is the law under which the disciple of Christ is now passing his probation. Its requirements press upon us in all their strictness, and must press upon us, unless we make Christ himself the minister of sin.

Nor is this all. We must not only do the commandments but teach them, if we would enter the kingdom of heaven. We are the leaven by which the mass is to be leavened. By precept and example we must show forth the excellency of piety, and by labor and self-sacrifice we must persuade men to be reconciled to God. If we look to Christ for salvation, we must follow in his footsteps, bearing his cross, and confessing him in evil report and good report. We must fight the fight of faith, ever remembering that it is only he that overcometh that shall have a right to the tree of life. And if we do otherwise, if to please men we break the commandments of Christ, if we timidly surrender ourselves to the tyranny of a world that perisheth, if by our conduct and conversation we cause others to offend, what, I pray you, will it avail to have been called by the name of Christ? Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works; and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me ye that work iniquity.

It is moreover to be remarked, that this spiritual life is to be maintained in the midst of a world lying in wickedness, in which the laws of God are everywhere set at defiance. He who obeys God must oppose the world and be opposed by it. Our only choice is between the service of God and the service of the world, for to serve both, our Lord has declared to be impossible. We are now in the midst of this conflict, and it knows of but two issues, victory or defeat. It is a warfare which admits of no compromises. If we manifest our love to Christ by keeping his commandments and teach men so, we shall receive the crown of life which fadeth not away. If we break the commandments, and lead others to eternal perdition, our inheritance must be shame and everlasting contempt.

Though this antagonism between the kingdom of Christ and the world, must continue, until the reign of Christ be universal, yet its visible manifestations are not always the same. Though the maxims and practices of a carnal world must be opposed to the teachings of Jesus, the opposition displays itself under a considerable variety of phases. Hence the temptation to break the law of Christ and teach men so, may appear at different times under quite dissimilar aspects. It must then be a matter

of some practical importance to ascertain some of the snares which at this present beset the path of the pilgrim to the new Jerusalem. Some who bear the name of Christ are hardly aware of the position which they actually occupy. Others have lately commenced the Christian life, and, observing the practices of men professing godliness, are asking with solicitude, where are the representatives of the Saviour on earth? To such and many others it may be useful to reflect upon some of the moral perils which surround the disciple of Christ in the age in which we live.

Permit me then to remark, that the present is, if I mistake not, an unusually irreligious age. By this I mean that the proportion of men in Christendom, who, in simplicity of heart, do the commandments of God and teach men so, is now lamentably small. I do not deny that we exhibit an outward respect for the visible forms of religion. We build magnificent temples after the most approved architectural models. Without regard to expense we load them with such ornaments as will gratify the taste, true or false, of the worshippers. We provide for the display of the most artistic musical talent in our religious assemblies. With imposing ceremonies we dedicate these temples to the name of him who had not where to lay his head. With considerable regularity, once at least on the Sabbath, we unite in what we esteem a religious service. We have succeeded making the gospel of Christ so entirely respectable, that a man who

would hold a position in good society finds it for his interest to connect himself, more or less closely, with some society of professed worshipers of God. This surely looks as if the kingdom had been given to the saints. But we do more than this. We unite ourselves in voluntary associations to aid the various objects of Christian benevolence. Societies exist for the purpose of promoting every good design, and of arresting almost every form of evil. Men at the head of every political party condescend to recommend the revelation which God has made of himself as a very useful book. The value of religion as a social power is commonly acknowledged, and politicians and statesmen patronize it, in part no doubt on account of its benign tendencies, and in part, perhaps, because by its cohesive attraction it will enable them the more easily to move the masses on the political chess-board. It is not on account of any neglect of religion in these and similar respects that I am constrained to consider the present as more than commonly an undevout age.

I however turn to first principles. I open the New Testament, and there learn that the Son of God left the glory which he had with the Father to establish a *spiritual* kingdom in the hearts of men, to accomplish a perfect revolution in the moral character of our race, to transform the enemies of God into living and obedient children, to make every human soul a temple of the Holy Ghost, and to prepare us for heaven by breathing the

spirit of heaven into our own bosoms. It was for this purpose that Jesus Christ constituted his disciples into a holy brotherhood, commanding them to disciple all nations, until the will of God should be done on earth as it is done in heaven. This brotherhood is the church of the redeemed, which he has purchased with his own blood. From the very principles of its constitution its normal condition is antagonism to every form of evil; its only movement is aggression upon all the powers of darkness. Its only watchword is, onward. Having triumphed over the kingdom of Satan immediately around it, its eager eye is fixed upon the regions beyond. It knows no pause. It is incapable of weariness. Like a conflagration in the forest, it acquires intensity as it advances, becoming more irresistible at every step of its progress, and, by its own necessity, knowing of no cessation until there remains nothing more to be conquered.

Such is the conception of the kingdom of Christ as it existed in the mind of its founder. How far is this conception realized by the church at the present moment? Are men by thousands, as at the beginning, submitting themselves to God? In Christendom itself, does the increase of converts to Christ keep pace with the increase of population? Nay, the statistics of most of our churches, of every sect, for several years past, have exhibited an annual diminution in the number of their communicants. I bless God that within the last few months there are indications that the church of Christ is returning to her

normal condition, and is becoming once more aggressive. Should this change become permanent, there will be hope. Should it be but temporary, it will only exhibit by contrast the difference between what the church of God ought to be, and what, in fact, it is. It is, however, true, that for many years the world has been on the aggressive and in advance, and the church on the defensive and in retreat. Can this be the normal condition of the kingdom of the living God? Did the Son of God take upon him our nature, was he born of a woman and made under the law, did he bear our sins in his own body on the tree, was this earth sealed with his blood for his peculiar possession, and is he now seated at the right hand of the Father, head over all things to his church, and all this to establish a kingdom that should be conquered, beaten down and exterminated by the very powers whom he has once conquered, triumphing over them openly?

But this is not all. It is perfectly manifest that the Redeemer established his church for the very purpose of exhibiting a living example of direct and positive antagonism to the principles and practices of the world. Indications, however, are not wanting of a prevalent desire to conform Christianity to the principles and practices of the world. Christ has taught us that the more distinctly the contrast is seen between his kingdom and the kingdom which he came to overthrow, the greater is the power of the church, and the more rapid her progress to

universal dominion. We seem to have taken a different view of this matter, and to suppose that the kingdom of Christ can conquer by conforming itself to the world, and reducing its peculiarity to a mere thing of creeds and forms, and names and ceremonies. Instead of transforming the world to Christ, we seem to suppose that the same end may be attained by transforming Christ to the world. The holy, fearless, plain-spoken friend of publicans and sinners, clothed in the garments and radiant with the manners which he brought with him from heaven, seems unfit to be presented to the society in which we move ; we must array him in modern apparel, and teach him a more polished address, and repress his homely truthfulness, and accustom him to look upon fashionable sin with allowance if not with approbation, before we can venture to introduce him into the selecter circles of intellectual, well-bred, and thoroughly respectable Christianity.

Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments and *shall teach men so*, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. We can not break the commandments of Christ without teaching others to break them. When the professed disciples of Christ, whatever may be their theory, conform their lives to the manners of the world, they must, of necessity, lead others astray. Especially is this influence exerted over those who are commencing a religious course. It is natural to suppose our

selves good enough, if we are no worse than our neighbors, and more than all if these neighbors have been in the school of Christ before us. We thus insensibly slide down from the high moral eminence on which Christ has placed his church, and approach the dead level of absolute worldliness. We then in turn become sad examples to those that are coming after us, until the servant of Christ and the servant of Mammon are separated by a line so indistinct that it can be discovered only at the communion table. Nor is this quite all. He who chooses for himself a higher standard of religious attainment than is acknowledged by those about him, exposes himself to manifold forms of ill will. This ill will nestles most securely in the bosoms of those who think themselves as good as there is any occasion for. Hence, as Whitfield and Tennant and Edwards in a former generation found it, the contradiction of saints is harder to bear than the contradiction of sinners. The young convert has, after a desperate and protracted moral struggle, surrendered the world for Christ. He enters a church of Christ's disciples and finds them delighting in the very forms of worldliness which he has abandoned as incompatible with a hope of salvation. Is it wonderful if he is moulded by the examples everywhere around him, after he has searched the church in vain for witnesses for God? The salt has lost its savor and is profitable for nothing. Those who call themselves disciples of Christ break

Christ's commandments and teach men so; how can they point out to others the path to the kingdom of heaven?

To set before you all the cases of departure from the commandments of Christ would be impossible. I will, however, present a few of the most obvious, for the sake of illustrating our manifest moral tendencies.

In the first place, I fear that the love of wealth is undermining the religious principles of many who profess to be the disciples of Christ. In the too eager struggle for accumulation, men break the Saviour's commandment and teach men so.

That this should be the case, especially in this country, is not remarkable. The perfect freedom of individual action, the universality of education, the free development of human invention, the boundless extent of our national domain, render the attainment not merely of competence, but even of wealth, possible to an extent heretofore unprecedented. Increased facilities of intercourse at home and abroad have inflamed the desire of acquisition, by placing before us every form of sensual, luxurious and artistic gratification. The passions thus acquire a terrific power in their warfare against the soul. Temptation becomes too great to be resisted by ordinary human virtue. The self-denying precepts of the gospel must thus be brought into stern and perpetual collision with desires inflamed by the presence of every means of enjoyment. Never did the enemy of righteousness go

forth to the conflict armed with so deadly weapons, or clothed with so irresistible power.

For instance, the Word of God commands us to be diligent in business and fervent in spirit ; to labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life ; that our desire for accumulation should never interfere with our spiritual-mindedness and the needful preparation of our souls for eternity. Do we keep, or do we break this commandment ? Does the disciple give to Christ or to Mammon the choicest portion of his time, his talent, and his earnest and effective exertion ? Does he set apart, first of all, such a portion of every day as will cultivate within him an habitual consciousness of the presence of God ? or, does he surrender himself thoughtlessly to the pursuits of business, and leave for God only those fragmentary moments which are useless for any other purpose ? If a merchant should decline a lucrative arrangement because it would leave him no time for communion with God, would not even his Christian brethren look upon him with amazement, and the opinion be generally expressed that he had mistaken his profession and had better become a minister ?

In our relations with men the commandment is, As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them. It is the law of simple-minded, honorable, disinterested reciprocity. It forbids not only stealing, or the appropriation to ourselves of any thing which belongs to our neighbor, but coveting, or the secret desire to appro-

priate it. It commands us to love not only our neighbor's rights, but also his means of happiness, as we love our own. Such is the commandment. But when we urge obedience to it as a practical every-day duty, we are told of overwhelming competition, of the customs of trade, of the present modes of doing business, and the utter impossibility of obeying such a rule if we hope to be rich. The plain English of such statements is this: we can not become rich without breaking the commandment, but we must be rich whether we break the commandment or not. Thus, when Christ and Mammon claim authority over the man's life, he yields to the authority of Mammon, and yet flatters himself that he is a disciple of Christ. The love of wealth thus gains the victory over him, and his power to resist evil is fatally impaired. Temptations to wider and wider deviations are palliated by more and more skillful methods of self-deception. At last, this disciple of Christ is known of all men to be rapacious and unscrupulous, and nothing but his religious profession rescues him from the imputation of being a sharper. His life among men is a topic of common conversation, and scoffers point at him as an example of the morality taught by the blessed Redeemer.

Jesus Christ has said, Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth. Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. These words

from the lips of Jesus were no rhetorical exaggeration ; he intended them to convey a very definite meaning, for he spake nothing at random. But we can give them no meaning at all which does not rebuke with decided emphasis the inordinate love of wealth which we see everywhere around us. Our Lord surely taught us to be contented with a moderate portion of worldly possessions, that so we might give ourselves without reserve to the service of his kingdom. Is this commandment kept or broken by his disciples ? When they have attained to a competence, do they pause and devote their lives to the service of Christ, or do they, just like other men, go on adding fortune to fortune, while the appetite for lucre grows by what it feeds on ?

But we may look upon this subject from another point of view. The Saviour has taught us that we can not hope to be saved by his sacrifice unless we surrender ourselves and all that we possess without reserve to him. He re-commits to us what we have surrendered, as a talent to be used in his service, for which we must render up our account. We are not owners, we are only stewards, and we must so use our stewardship as to please the Master. How then can we use our Lord's property for the purpose of sensual gratification, of luxurious display, or of social emulation ? Can we spend the money which we declare to be the Lord's, as those spend it who know not God ? Yet, when we press these plain precepts upon men, it will not be strange if they treat us as intruders into their per-

sonal concerns, and tell us that they have earned their money honestly, and have a perfect right to use it as they please. If they violate no human law in acquiring their gains, and pay the market price for whatever they purchase, they wish us to understand that no further question can be made in the matter. They thus, in fact, shut God out from the government of this part of his universe, and affirm that their right is paramount, and of course extinguishes his. The question here, you will observe, is not at all between man and man, but between the man and his Maker. Christ declares that the possessions of his redeemed ones are his, and are to be used only in obedience to his will ; they assert that their possessions are their own, and they will use them as they please. We have no controversy with men on this matter. We leave the servant to settle this account with his Master.

I trust that in these remarks I am in no danger of being misunderstood. In all the denominations of Christ's disciples, we find among the rich and the poor shining examples of earnest, simple-minded, self-denying piety. The religion of Jesus Christ received into the heart must of necessity transform the affections and give victory over the world. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. It is by the precept and example of such men and women that the church is distinguished from the world. But, I ask, are there not among the churches of every denomination, just such specimens of

professing Christianity as those to which I have alluded ? Are they ever rebuked ? nay, are they not, if occupying a prominent social position, frequently flattered and caressed ? I ask, again, do not the lives of humble, self-denying Christians shine as lights in the church ? But why should they shine so conspicuously if their brethren in general obeyed the commandments of Christ ? They have surely done no more than their duty. But if this be so, what must be the end of those who are manifestly living to themselves ?

I remark in the second place that the fear of man is, to a lamentable degree, undermining the religious principles of the professed disciples of Christ.

The teaching of Jesus on this subject is explicit. He commands us not to fear those that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but fear him who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell, yea, I say unto you fear him. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake ; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. The apostles understood these sayings literally, and they acted accordingly. When threatened for uttering unpalatable truth, they nobly replied that they must obey God rather than man, and when beaten with many stripes for proclaiming Christ and the resurrection, they departed from the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. They had a vivid conception

of a higher law than can be enacted by man, and they fully believed that this higher law must in all things govern the conduct of every disciple. They were simple enough to believe that the will of man, no matter in what way it be expressed, is unworthy of a moment's consideration when it comes into conflict with the will of Almighty God. No matter what our obedience costs, no matter to what sacrifices of the respect and favor of men it leads us, if we be the disciples of Christ we must resolutely do his will and prepare without shrinking to take the consequences.

Such is the commandment of the Master. Do we keep it or break it, and are we by our lives teaching men to keep or to break it ?

We will take an example from a class of men not unfrequently seen in every denomination. It shall be a man of large possessions accumulated by his own exertions. In early life he maintained the reputation of an earnest, prayerful, and consistent Christian. His expenditures for every thing but religion have increased in proportion to his means, and he has now attained to the height of his ambition. He holds a place among those whom the world treats with all the respect of which it is capable.

Let us enter his princely dwelling and observe the habits of his family. The worship of God has been found incompatible with the arrangements of a fashionable establishment, and it has long since been discontinued. His children are leaders in every form of polite dissipa-

tion. Their talk is of the ball-room, the theater, the opera, and the watering-places. The card-table and the billiard-room have become necessary to the amusement of this Christian household. That income which the man long since consecrated to Christ, is squandered upon furniture, equipages, and every form of luxurious extravagance. He is perfectly aware that if he had been educated as he is now educating his children, he would long since have become a bloated sot or a loathsome debauchee. His conscience formerly spoke to him in tones of solemn warning, but he has at last succeeded in silencing its monitions. We tell him of his obligations, we point out to him his danger.* He acknowledges it all, but asks in despair, What can I do? All this is expected, he assures us, of a person holding his position in society. Were he to live according to the precepts of Jesus he would be discarded at once by all his acquaintances. Were he to confess Christ, men would separate him from their company. This he can not bear. He dare not obey him whom he calls Master. He therefore breaks the commandment and teaches men so.

Let us follow him in his walks through the world. Are his chosen associates the children of God, or the children of this world? Some of them are ruining themselves by vicious indulgence. Does he privately and faithfully warn them that the end of these things is death? They are given to much wine. Does he abstain from the wine-cup himself, lest, by his example, a brother be made to

stumble? Inquire respecting one of his fashionable entertainments, and you shall hear that his guests have been seen reeling homeward, as from the celebration of a Bacchanalian festival. He is surrounded by men whom he believes to be hastening to a lost eternity. When returning from the funeral of one who has died and made no sign, he resolves that he will warn them of their danger; but the contrast between his belief and practice closes his lips, and he sees them one by one sink into a lost eternity. If we tell him of his duty and his danger, he replies, perhaps, that he knows it all, but that were he to do otherwise he would lose all his influence, though what his influence really is good for, neither he nor any other man can possibly conceive. He is afraid to confess Christ before men, and therefore he breaks the commandment and teaches men so.

I know, however, of no case in which the conduct of the disciples of Christ is more at variance with their principles, than in the case of their political associations.

It is needless for me to remind you that the law of God is intended to govern all our actions, private and public, individual and social. If we ascend up into heaven, behold, God is there; if we make our bed in hell, lo he is there. There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. But this consciousness of the divine presence should press upon us with redoubled power when our action affects not ourselves, merely, but our fellow-citizens, the church of

Christ, and the whole brotherhood of man. So much as this will certainly be admitted by every reasonable being. But what is the spectacle actually presented during the progress of every important election? You will see professed disciples making themselves parties to the most atrocious wrong-doing, and supporting measures at which the natural conscience of man turns pale, at the command of their political leaders. When their political party prescribes one course, and the precepts of Christ another, they, without a blush, obey their party and disobey Christ. If you know a man's political party, you can easily predict the cause which he will espouse, but if you know only that he is a professed child of God, you can form no opinion in the matter. Christian legislators in their places have been heard to scoff at the authority of conscience, and men claiming to be ambassadors of Christ have taught us that we have no higher law than that enacted by our fellow-men. When we set before Christians the law of the Most High, they shake their heads and tell us sometimes that they can not, and sometimes that they dare not desert their party. It would seem that men would rather meet the judgments of Almighty God than be found in a political minority. If we show them that their party is doing wickedly, they reply that religion is one thing and politics another, and that we had better be careful how we mingle them together. Let any atrocity become a political measure, and, in the minds of many Christians, it seems to be cleansed

from its wickedness, and sheltered securely from the possibility of moral rebuke. We must not apply to it the principles of the gospel, because the wickedness is done for the purpose of aiding the schemes of a political party. Thus do men claim the right to ignore the authority of God, and mark out for themselves a domain within which he must not enter. And Christian men dare not resist this usurpation, but consent to serve the creature more than the Creator. Do we not thus break the commandment of Christ and teach men so ?

In the third place we are in danger of breaking the commandment in consequence of erroneous views of personal obligation.

I think it obvious that the New Testament is a message from God, addressed not to nations, or societies, or masses, or to any ecclesiastical caste, but to every individual of the human race. It treats of the relations which every one of us holds to God, and of the duties which he requires of every one of us personally. Every one of us must give an account *for himself* unto God. The duties which the New Testament imposes must be performed, not by the votes of the masses, but by the acts of the individual, not by representatives, but by each man for himself. Moral obligation is in its nature intransferable, and it is of moral obligation exclusively that the Word of God treats. It tells us of the duties which we owe to our Creator and Redeemer, and these duties can never be performed by substitute. So far as I

know, this rule applies to every precept taught by Jesus Christ. What could be more absurd than to suppose ourselves at liberty to lie or steal if we only procured some one else to be honest and tell the truth for us. Does not the same principle apply equally to all the other precepts of the gospel? Do we keep the law or break it?

Let us turn for a moment to the views which prevail in most of the churches of every denomination. There can, I think, be no doubt that the Saviour requires every redeemed soul to make the extension of the kingdom of Christ the great business of his life, to labor personally with men for their salvation, to invite them to come to Christ that they may escape the wrath to come. There can not then be a disciple of Christ, whatever be his condition, on whom this obligation in all its strictness does not plainly rest. But how do we perform this duty? We form ourselves into churches, delegate the labor of extending the kingdom of Christ to a single individual, and consider ourselves absolved from the duty imposed upon us by simply ministering to his physical wants. The Master summons us all to personal labor in his vineyard, and we combine together and send, in the place of several hundreds, a single individual. To render our conduct consistent, we prescribe qualifications for the discharge of a Christian duty which Christ has never prescribed, and then excuse ourselves from doing his bidding because we have not these self-imposed qualifications.

We seem to suppose that no disciple is at liberty to invite sinners to come to Christ unless he has consumed many years in the study of heathen classics, and become familiar with the opinions of men for eighteen centuries on the teachings of Christ. It required the wisdom of Omniscience to express the ideas of God in the words of Jesus so simply that a little child can understand them. We assume that these very teachings are, of all writings on earth, the most enigmatical, nay, that they are in fact committed to a learned priesthood, who are authorized to interpret them to us. But this learned caste seem to find almost as much difficulty in understanding the revelation as their less favored brethren. They open the book and spread over it a covering of the opinions of the so-called fathers, and over this another from the logomachy of the schoolmen, and over this another from the polemics of the Reformation, and over this another from the metaphysical divinity of a later age, and over these, last of all, a thick veil of German neology, and then they wonder that through all these, they can not decipher the letters of light traced by the finger of God manifest in the flesh. Thus the vision is become unto us as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this I pray thee, and he saith, I can not for it is sealed; and the book is delivered unto one that is not learned, saying, Read this I pray thee, and he saith, I can not for I am not learned. Thus, to escape the obligation of personal

duty, we make the Word of God of none effect, we deny the right of private interpretation, and are thoughtlessly embracing one of the most fatal errors of Romanism.

The same tendency to do the will of God by substitute, instead of doing it each one for himself, may be observed in our attempts to accomplish some good design, or to arrest the progress of some enormous evil. Christ commands every one of us, individually, to follow his example, and, laying hold of the weapons of faith and love, with holy boldness commence the warfare against every form of vice and oppression. It is on the efforts of single men, moved by a common love of Christ, and guided by the indwelling Spirit, that the gospel relies for success. We, however, take a different course. Instead of commencing this labor, each one for himself, we prefer to merge our individuality in extensive voluntary associations. We meet in conventions, we deliver platform orations, we pass strong resolutions, and we return home well pleased with the belief that, though we have not reformed a single sinner, we have made a powerful impression on what we term the American mind. In this conviction we remain perfectly at ease until the next anniversary, when we meet again, make speeches, pass resolutions, talk vehemently about the all-controlling moral efficacy of the ballot-box, and, although we have not touched the burden with one of our fingers, wonder that the work of reformation is not already accomplished. We proceed in the same manner in the matter of ordi-

nary benevolence. Jesus Christ has made it the duty of every one of his disciples to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick and the prisoner, to speak words of comfort to the disconsolate, and to carry the good news of salvation to publicans and sinners, the lost, the forgotten, and the abandoned, and he has said, Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me. He has taught us that personal labor in these forms of charity is a means of spiritual improvement, just like prayer or fasting; he has subjected it to the same rules, and promised to it the same rewards. How do we obey this precept? We form a society to which each member contributes a miserable mite, and thus a sum is annually collected no greater than that which many of these individuals expend in thoughtless extravagance. We employ an agent to distribute these little offerings, and never ourselves come into personal contact with poverty, wretchedness, and crime. Thus the work of charity is, as we suppose, adequately, as it certainly is economically, performed. It costs no sacrifice. It cultivates the Christian graces neither of the benefactor nor the recipient. In all this, do we keep or break the commandment of the Redeemer?

Before I close, suffer me to add a remark respecting missions. The command of the Saviour to his disciples, is, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. To fulfill this command is the very object for which the church of Christ was constituted,

and for which each individual Christian lives. For himself and for his fellow-men he seeks first the kingdom of heaven. To this object the plans of his life should be subordinated. Every disciple of Christ should hold himself ready, at all times, to spend his life in any place where he can the most successfully labor for the conversion of souls. With these views I do not see why a Christian merchant, or mechanic, or physician, is not bound, just as much as a minister of the gospel, to ask, is it the will of the Master that I shall serve him in a heathen or in a Christian land? The cause of Christ requires the aid of all men of every calling. Men of the world go to heathen lands by thousands for the sake of gain; why should not Christian laymen accompany them and labor to rescue souls from perdition? The heathen are corrupted by the example of ungodly civilized men; why should not their unholy influence be corrected by the precept and example of godly men? Or, if the Christian layman believes it to be his duty to remain at home, the principles which govern his life are not on that account in any manner changed. He accumulates not for himself but for others, and all that he possesses is to be consecrated in simplicity of heart to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

But how do we obey the injunctions of the Master? We form associations for the purpose of extending the kingdom of Christ at home and abroad, we devolve upon a few of our brethren the labor of superintending the

work, and suppose that our duty is performed by simply making a contribution to this form of charity. This contribution, however, is too small to occasion the self-denial of the most insignificant luxury. We send a few missionaries abroad, and a few to our own destitute settlements. But let me ask, at our present rate of self-denying effort, what millions of years must elapse before the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ? Are we in this matter obeying or breaking the commandment of the Master?

I need not any further multiply illustrations. Suppose, however, a visitor from another sphere, acquainted with all that has been done for the salvation of man, and knowing the infinite consequences which result from keeping or breaking the commandments of Jesus, should visit our world, pass through our marts of business, enter our families, frequent our places of amusement, go with us to our magnificent temples, and make himself familiar with the vice and misery festering everywhere around us, where would he look for the disciples of the holy, self-denying Son of God? If we made simple obedience to the commands of Jesus the foundation of his judgments, would he not decide that the love of the Father was hardly to be discovered among us? But, beloved, there is such a Visitor ever present with us, whose word is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. He said not a word, when he was on earth, which did not express

the unchangeable law of the eternal God. That law is as great and powerful now as at the moment when he uttered it. He has said, unless a man deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, he can not be my disciple. In vain do ye call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. The law of Christian discipleship has not changed, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.

Nor is this all. When we break the commandments of Christ we of necessity teach men so. We are set forth before the world as the living exponents of the precepts of Christ, and men understand them to mean whatever they see us actually doing. Hence the young convert, misled by our example, quickly forsakes his first love and sinks his religion into a thing of creeds and formulas and outward professions. The impenitent ask us, what is the change which we insist upon as necessary to salvation, since the men who have passed through it are no better than themselves? They hear from the pulpit much about human depravity, regeneration, heaven and hell, victory over the world, and of unreserved consecration to Christ, but they hear little of them anywhere else. These, if they be truths, do not influence men's lives, and the inquirer denounces the whole system a worthless imposture. Beloved, does our practice give

occasion to no such errors as these ? If we enter not the kingdom of heaven ourselves, the mischief does not terminate here—those that are entering in we shall hinder, and on whom will the sin of their destruction rest ?

Beloved, pardon, I beseech you, my plainness. But if these are the true sayings of the New Testament, ought they not to be spoken plainly ? Was there ever a time, since the coming of Christ, in which the whole world stood in such perishing need of a universal revival of religion as the present ? Was the world ever so universally open to Christian effort as it is now ? The voice of God's providence seems emphatically to say to us, go ye up and possess the land. But can we ever go up until we cast ourselves loose from the entanglements of the world, and, in reality as well as in form, consecrate our whole selves and all that we possess to the service of Christ ? May God enable us to reflect upon the solemnity of our position ; may Zion arise and shake herself from the dust and put on her beautiful garments ; and thus may the will of our Father who is heaven be done on earth even as it is in heaven.

SERMON V.

SLAVERY TO PUBLIC OPINION.

But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.—2 CORINTHIANS, x. 12

It is too obvious to need illustration, that upon our social nature a large part of our happiness essentially depends. We become members of civil society as soon as we enter upon our existence, and our right to its protection and care is universally acknowledged. We instinctively concede to all born of woman the privileges which belong to humanity, and guarantee even to a helpless infant the free enjoyment of them all. This is evidently one of the noblest impulses of our common nature, and that heart must be morally diseased in which it does not beat with the power of an irresistible passion. On our instinctive social and moral elements rest the whole fabric of government and law. Remove these, and though we might be gregarious we could never form a commonwealth, and the physical force of the individual would confer the only authority known among men.

Allied to the social element of our nature are various accessory impulses of acknowledged power. Among these may be reckoned the simple love of companionship. A

sane human being instinctively shrinks from being alone. Solitary confinement for life is deemed by many more terrible than death. So abhorrent is this condition to our nature that it frequently terminates in insanity. The conception of an intelligent being condemned to eternal banishment from every living thing is one of the most terrific that the imagination can create.

Intimately associated with the love of companionship is the desire for the esteem and affection of our fellow-men. We all desire our companions to adopt our practices and coincide with our sentiments. The more distinctly we observe in others this moral parallelism with ourselves, the more readily do we form acquaintances, and the more rapidly does acquaintance ripen into intimacy. It is, on the other hand, painful to find ourselves segregated in feelings, sentiments, and action from our fellows ; and when, in fact, a dissimilarity exists, our first impulse is to conceal it, lest, by chance, we should forfeit somewhat of their good opinion. Our Saviour alludes to this as the cause of much of the pain which would attend upon a profession of his religion : they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil. He, on various occasions, takes special care to strengthen them against this form of persecution as one which it would be hard to bear and difficult to withstand.

It is, however, evident that this accessory of our social nature is wisely implanted within us. From this univer-

sal impulse arise many of the choicest amenities of daily intercourse. We are thus reciprocally guarded against the infliction of unnecessary pain ; and hence an incalculable amount of mental disquietude is banished from the earth. He who disregards this impulse of his nature, and derives pleasure from collision with the opinions and practices of his neighbors, soon finds himself in a condition in which collision is impossible. Men gradually withdraw from him, and leave him in the undisturbed enjoyment of his cherished opinions. From this love of esteem, and the unwillingness to forfeit it, flow all the courtesies of refined society, the laws of universal good breeding, and that studiousness to avoid giving unnecessary offense, which should ever regulate our intercourse with our fellow-men of every rank, of every position, of every degree of refinement, and every grade of social cultivation.

But while all this is acknowledged, it is apparent that this excellent tendency of our nature may easily be carried to excess. Its foundations are laid in the relations which men sustain to each other, as beings endowed with the same sensibilities, and invested with the same inalienable rights. Our relations to the Creator depend upon very different principles, and it is essential to the perfection of our moral character that every impulse should be subject to the love and obedience which we owe to our Father who is in heaven. If this love of companionship, this longing for the good opinion of

others, is permitted to stifle the monitions of conscience, and paralyze our love of rectitude ; if it lead us to say what we know to be false, or do what we know to be wrong ; if it cause us to ignore the government of God, and thus, in practice, exclude the Most High from the government of his universe, then I think we all must allow that the love of human approbation has carried us somewhat too far. This conflict between impulse and obligation did not escape the notice of the Saviour. How can ye believe, said he, who receive honor one of another, and not the honor which cometh from God only ?

That an antagonism between our moral principles and our love of human esteem is likely to arise in a world lying in wickedness, is sufficiently apparent. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God ; and we are everywhere surrounded by men who are practically guilty of this precise folly. The most comprehensive charity must admit that men are, in general, lovers of pleasure, of power, of wealth, of social position, rather than lovers of God. From the principle of companionship to which we have alluded, they desire all men to bow down to their idols, and worship the images which they have set up. Nor is this quite all. Conscience, though stupefied by sin, is painfully aroused by a living testimony to the frivolity and wickedness of a life without God. We naturally turn away from that which gives us pain, and hence he who resolutely obeys God will frequently find

himself in a small minority ; it will be well if he is not, like the prophet of old, apparently alone. In addition to this negative distress, he will frequently be called upon to suffer from the malice aroused by his determined opposition to the practices prevalent around him. It is thus that every step in our probation on earth becomes a test of moral character. The question is arising every day, and many times in the day, shall we obey God rather than man ? The authority of the Creator and of the creature are thus set over one against the other. We must decide which of the two we will obey, and his servants we are whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.

It is thus that the love of companionship tempts us to disobey God. But it frequently goes much further. We even plead companionship in evil as a justification of evil itself. If our moral convictions are at variance with our conduct, we silence the voice of conscience by the reflection that we are no worse than others. If God forbids the deed which we are about to do, we do it nevertheless, replying to our Maker, that all the world does it also. Thus, what we would confess to be wrong if we did it alone, we claim to be right if we do it in company and by concert. We seem to suppose that though it would be madness for one man to contend with Omnipotence, a multitude of men may do it with impunity. At last, having silenced the monitions of conscience, we yield ourselves up to the current of public

opinion, and without a moral struggle float onward towards that eternity in which we and all born of woman will shortly be engulfed.

It may perhaps surprise us to observe how universal and all pervading is this soul-destructive tendency. It meets us everywhere, and meets us at all times during our progress through life. It spreads its snare for us as we leave the cradle, and follows closely on our track until we step into the grave.

The little child is no sooner capable of holding intercourse with the intelligent beings around him than he finds himself enveloped in this unhealthy moral atmosphere. He hears, in the nursery, as the justification for wrong doing, that some one else did it also. He quickly learns the lesson, and, when conscious of fault, enters the same plea in exculpation. When convicted of misconduct, he has only to show that brothers and sisters have been equally guilty, and it seems as though his innocence were established, and that the parents whose precepts he has violated can accuse him of no wrong. Thus was it at the beginning. The Lord God said, Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? and the man said, the woman whom thou gavest me to be with me, gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

The instructions of parents may in some measure have corrected these evil tendencies, and the young immortal may have learned to make some accurate moral distinc-

tions, when a new world opens upon him, the world of the school room. He soon finds that the children around him have very different notions of right and wrong from those which he learned at home. Words reach his ear which he has been taught to consider wicked and degrading. In the sports in which he engages, treachery and deceit may form a part of the amusement. Tyranny over the weak and defenseless is the rule rather than the exception. All this, however, must be kept secret from parents and instructors, and if this can be done only by prevarication and falsehood, it matters not; every scholar is bound, right or wrong, to shield the rest from punishment. If the boy questions the right of all this, he is told that the rules of the family and the rules of the school are very different things; that there is no wrong in the acts which he has considered wicked, for all the boys do them; and, in a word, unless he conform to the manners of the society in which he lives, he will be treated as a traitor, fit only to be the butt of boyish ridicule and the object of daily annoyance. The young immortal hesitates. There is placed before him, on the one hand, the teaching of parents and the sanctions of the Bible, and, on the other, the maxims of Satan enforced by all the power of boyish public opinion. This is a critical moment in the history of a child. He may with noble heroism stand firmly for truth, and honesty and God, and thus from the first build up his character in righteousness. Too frequently, association with wick-

edness inflicts a stain hardly ever erased. His mind is divided in its affection between truth and error. He is capable of being moved in either direction by the force of the public opinion around him. His character at home and at school are strangely at variance. His future, henceforth, depends not on himself, but upon the accidental associations into which he may be thrown. This is almost the best that can be hoped for. It is well if he has not by degrees become partaker in every form of evil, ready to inculcate defiance of principles upon the innocent stranger, and proud of being a ringleader in every form of boyish depravity. Thus is it, that so early in life the love of companionship and fear of public opinion have planted within his soul the seeds of treachery, violence, selfishness, and thorough dissoluteness of principle.

The youth thus instructed enters upon another stage of his career. He is removed from home to a more advanced institution of learning. Under the discipline which he has left, the evil tendencies which surrounded him were checked and frequently arrested by the eye of the instructor in the school room, and the precept and example of parents by the fireside. Domestic religion may daily have recalled to his recollection the teachings of the Bible, and conscience thus quickened may have held him back from the grosser forms of sin. He was continually receiving from his parents affecting proofs of self-sacrificing love. Brothers and sisters were watching

his progress with trembling anxiety, and he could not be unaware that they all were looking forward to his success, as one of the brightest spots in their anticipations of the future. These redeeming influences have not been without their effect. Though his heart, under the discipline of the school room, has in many places grown callous, there remain some fibres within it, which still palpitate with generous emotion. The word home still exerts its magical power over his affections, and he would shrink from giving pain to those who love him so tenderly. But now his condition is, in many respects, dissimilar. The home of his childhood, hallowed by so many delightful associations, is exchanged for a residence in a college. He is to be separated for months, it may be for years, from all who love him best. He is no longer a witness to their self-denials. He no more hears their words of encouragement and affection. Left to his own guidance, with the means provided by parental love, he is to work out his own destiny in the new world upon which he has just entered.

At first a distressing feeling of loneliness settles heavily upon him. He instinctively craves society of some sort, and soon finds that this craving can easily be satisfied. His acquaintance is quickly sought by older students, who soon initiate him into all the mysteries of the new society. It is not long before he finds that many lessons are to be learned, besides those specified in the published course of study. There exists here an

unwritten code of laws, in many respects quite unlike that with which he has been previously acquainted. He learns that one law governs his intercourse with students, and another his intercourse with instructors. To lie to a student is mean, to lie to an officer is innocent, it may even be honorable. The principles which regulate his conduct to students are very different from those which regulate his conduct to the rest of the world. His associates form a society by themselves, governed by such laws as its public opinion may enact, and right or wrong they are bound to stand by each other. Deceit, dishonesty and malice are only disreputable in our intercourse with the protected class. The grosser crimes affect unfavorably no man's standing provided they are committed in comparative secrecy, and to conceal them from the uninitiated every man holds himself unreservedly committed.

The young man, if he be not thoroughly corrupt, is for a time bewildered. He can not comprehend these distinctions of moral obligation. He has been taught that right acknowledged no modification of circumstances, but was pure and unchangeable as the throne of God. He had always believed that duplicity was mean, that deceit was contemptible, that the very suspicion of falsehood inflicted on the character a stain like a wound, that vicious pleasure was a sin against God, and that to abuse the self-denying love of parents was a crime of which none but the most abandoned could be guilty. If he remon-

strates against some act of meanness or wickedness, he finds to his surprise, that his remonstrance is seconded by no one. He is told that such things can not be wrong, for all the fellows do it; and he learns that this announcement is clothed with a power which he can scarcely comprehend. Those antiquated notions belong to a state of society quite unlike that into which he has now entered. Honorable men here acknowledge no laws but those enacted by the public opinion of the little world around them. He observes the men by whom this public opinion is created, and he finds them in general to be the idle, the ignorant, the dissolute and the profane. He, however, soon learns that this public opinion is a fixed fact, and that its origin is not to be too closely investigated. He is moreover assured that everybody submits to it, that it punishes with isolation and multiplied annoyance the rebel against its authority, and that he had better be careful how he sets its mandates at defiance. He begins to reflect seriously upon his position. Here is the very crisis of his destiny. If strong in manly virtue he resolves to hold fast to his integrity, and acknowledge no higher law than the law of God; if rising to the dignity of a disciple of Christ he scorns the enticements of sin and despises the threatenings of sinners; if looking calmly at all that may come upon him he determines on no occasion, be it great or small, to swerve from his allegiance to truth and honor and the fear of God, he has determined his character for life. No severer trial in the

future, probably, awaits him. No temptation will henceforth take him at a disadvantage. His path is onward and upward. With the blessing of God, his success is as certain as his life. He can not fail, for he holds in his own hands the power of being victorious. He has vanquished the vanquisher of millions, by defying public opinion when it is a defier of the Most High God. Let him pursue this path to the end of life and he may, by the blessing of God, leave an inheritance for humanity which they will not readily consign to oblivion. But if he take the opposite course, if yielding to the love of companionship, and quailing before the frown of a vicious public opinion he first temporizes, then surrenders principle in things that seem ambiguous, then associates with the vicious and depraved, and, at last, silencing the voice of conscience, acknowledges no law but that imposed upon him by the men whom he despises; every manly and generous sentiment will soon be cleanly scooped out of his heart. Friends on earth and angels in heaven will weep over the change that has passed upon the lost soul. He left his father's house a worshiper of God, pure in principle, virtuous in conduct; looking forward to the future buoyant in hope and confident of success. He returns thither shipwrecked in faith, beggared in hope, conscious of the degradation which is written on his flushed forehead and in his treacherous eye, the fawning and impious worshiper of a public opinion which though he servilely obeys he can not but thoroughly despise.

If leaving the snares which beset the path of the young, we observe the pursuits of maturer life, we may not unlikely fall upon similar experiences. Were we invisibly to pass through the marts of trade, we might probably meet with much that would deeply interest a thoughtful mind. We might perhaps learn that light weight and short measure were in many cases indispensable to profitable business, that to tell a lie to a customer is no untruth, for he need not believe it unless he chooses, that selling a vicious adulteration at the price and in the place of a genuine article is not dishonest if people are willing to buy it, that to defraud the revenue is no wrong, if it be not discovered, that a false oath at the custom house involves us in no guilt, if a clerk is willing to perjure himself for us, that to monopolize the necessaries of life in order to fleece the community and double the price of the poor man's loaf is one of the legitimate uses of capital, and that to dupe the unfledged in the stock market is nothing more than a pleasing divertisement. We might wonder at all this, and be surprised to behold engaged in it men who would grieve to be suspected of dishonor. Were we, however, in a moment of calm reflection to ask them whether such things are right, the answer would probably be, why, not exactly right, but what is the use of talking, for every body does it? Thus men seem to think that what every one would acknowledge to be wrong if it were done by a single individual,

every one believes to be innocent if it only be done by the multitude.

Should we turn now to public life, one might possibly there also find some rare examples of this power of sin. Could we listen to the private discourse or the more private thoughts of the men who devote themselves to the service of their country, we might possibly learn that discourse about political principles was designed only for the uninitiated, that patriotism was a word useful only for a political canvass, that a man liable to be troubled with conscientious scruples, was a very useless, or as it is said, a very impracticable member of a party, that on questions involving the dearest interests of humanity, a man may, without the least offence, take any side that promises him a majority, that he may change his opinions as often as necessity requires, provided always that it is not done clumsily, that he can never expect to rise to power unless he loves party better than principle, or even personal honor, and, in a word, that religion, truth, morality are one thing, and politics quite another. We should thus learn that there is a large class of actions, actions affecting the highest interests not only of ourselves, our children, our fellow-citizens, but the interests, social, moral and religious, of the whole human race, in which it is innocent for us to ignore every principle derived either from the love of God or the love of our neighbor. If we press this consideration upon men, what reply shall we probably elicit? They will tell us, not that it

is right, but that it has been so always and every where, and that now especially such is the universal practice. It would not be surprising if they should turn upon us and ask, who would be such a fool as to be in a minority for the sake of an idea, or sacrifice his political prospects for a barren adherence to impracticable rectitude.

But if leaving the men of the world, we turn to the church of Christ, shall we find that even here the fear of God has triumphed over the fear of man? By observing the communicants at the sacramental table, we find those who profess the name of Jesus intermingled with other men in all the departments of active life. They are to be seen among students, professional men, merchants, mechanics, manufacturers, brokers, and politicians of every grade and every political party. Should we ask them whether in their several relations they make it their first concern to obey the Master, they would probably inquire with some astonishment whether we suppose that the precepts of Jesus Christ are to be understood literally. Should we modestly intimate that Christ spoke very plainly, they would inform us that to obey the law of Christ strictly, would separate them from all men, that the course which they pursue can not be wrong, for every body pursues it, and that, upon the whole, it is certainly better to do a little wrong, than by shutting ourselves out from the world, lose all our influence over it.

But let us open our eyes upon the men around us who claim to be, by way of eminence, the world. What are

the gods which these immortal beings worship? They are worshipers of pleasure more than lovers of God. They bow down before the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The objects for which they live are the various forms of sensual enjoyment, political power, social position, and luxurious display. They congregate by thousands in those resorts where vanity may be satiated, if satiated it can be, where the senses are stimulated to intense excitement, and where fashion scoffs at the prudery which shuns the appearance of evil. Every one knows that this ceaseless pursuit of sensual pleasure banishes from the soul every thought of eternity, benumbs our moral sensibilities, and renders us powerless to resist the temptations which it spreads everywhere around us. Nothing can be more at variance with a heavenly mind than a life of thoughtless worldliness. But are the men and women who avow that they are living for this world the only worshipers at the shrine of fashionable sensuality? Alas! too often shall we see in the midst of this giddy throng, enjoying its pleasures to the uttermost, many of the professed disciples of the lowly, cross-bearing, crucified Jesus of Nazareth. You ask, Can such things delight a soul that has been transformed into the image of Christ? Can these childish vanities satisfy affections that are placed on the eternal God? Do the followers of the Messiah find the print of his footsteps here, and did we not see them in the garden with him? When we press these questions on such

disciples as these, we are told that they would lose caste unless they followed the examples of those who hold the social position after which they aspire, and beside this, it is all perfectly innocent, for they find associated with them Christians of every denomination ; and yet more, conformity to the world is necessary in order to render the religion of Christ attractive to the giddy and thoughtless. We urge upon men of the world the saying of Jesus, Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God, and they tell us they can not see the necessity of any moral change, for these regenerated men are in no respect different from themselves. Thus Christians disobey Christ because men of the world do it ; and the men of the world disobey him because Christians set them the example.

But let us pause for a moment, and ask where do we now find ourselves ? We have only to generalize this principle, and whereunto will it lead us ? The voice of conscience is silenced, the distinction between honor and meanness, between virtue and vice, between right and wrong is abolished ; the law of God is trampled in the dust ; the Judge of the whole earth has no longer any jurisdiction ; and all this is accomplished by the simplest possible process. Nothing else is needed than that you and I, the creatures of yesterday, declare that though we defy God and crucify his Son afresh, we have nothing to fear, for we do it by companies and we do it in concert.

But amidst all this flimsy folly and audacious wicked-

ness, God has not left himself without a witness. He has taken special means to caution us against this wide-spreading delusion. If there be a single child of Adam beguiled by this miserable sophistry, it will not be on account of ignorance that could not be dispelled, but because he has loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil.

In the first place, reason and conscience abundantly teach us that no relation whatever exists between many and few, and innocence and guilt. Right and wrong, innocence and guilt, depend on the moral relations of the parties, and not upon the number of the actors. If ten men lie, each one of them is an individual liar ; nor is the matter altered if they agree to the same lie, and all unite in affirming it to be the truth. If twenty men agree together to do a mean thing, every one of them is individually despicable. If a hundred men are false to their country, every one of them is a traitor, and as an individual must he answer for it. I do not deny that companionship and concert may, in some respects, modify the character of a moral action. If a man act alone he may act thoughtlessly, and from sudden and ungovernable impulse ; but if a number of men agree together to do an act, they must do it deliberately. If they organize themselves into an association to do it, they manifest a still more settled determination. Thus piracy is always held to be more atrocious than murder ; and an organized

banditti deserves more condign punishment than an individual thief.

But lest this should not be enough, God, in the revelation which he has given us, has made known his moral attributes, and the relations which we sustain to him. He is the Creator and Preserver of all, the Legislator, and rightful Governor, and Proprietor of the universe. He justly claims of all his intelligent creatures universal obedience, the obedience which springs from boundless gratitude and illimitable love. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. All other things are created, God alone is the Creator, holy, just, true, all compassionate and all merciful. The greatest crime of which it is possible for us to conceive, is for a creature on any account, or for any reason, or under any inducement, to disobey God. What then must be the guilt of setting aside the authority of God by deliberate consent, and installing in its place the opinions and example of men, nay of men even weaker and more wicked than ourselves. It is exchanging the true God for a lie, and worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forevermore.

In his written word God has left us some impressive lessons on the subject which we are now considering. In the early history of our race, the worshipers of the Most High had followed the examples of the ungodly, until all flesh had corrupted its way, and the earth was filled

with violence. Century after century had the infection spread, until only one family remained which held fast to its integrity. It was then that Jehovah interfered, and, saving only eight persons, overwhelmed with a flood the world of the ungodly. Though the whole race was united in companionship in evil, the judgment of God slumbered not, but brought upon every individual sinner unexpected and remediless destruction.

At a later period, the cities of the plain had sunk down in loathsome sensuality. A preacher was sent to reprove them for their wickedness and warn them of their danger. To all his remonstrances every individual was able to plead that there could be nothing very wrong in their conduct, for no man was in particular more corrupt than his neighbor. One family alone was exempt from this general pollution; the rest had become so preëminent in wickedness, that their name has become a by-word to the ages. At last their cry came up to heaven, and no intercession could save them. A deluge of wrath swept them away, and, with the exception of this single family, they all sunk into the burning abyss, and are set forth as an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Nor are the Scriptures wanting in examples of those who, in the face of contumely and persecution unto death, have scorned companionship with sinners, and boldly avowed their allegiance to God. We read of Moses, who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming

the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. We are told of the three noble Hebrews, who, in sight of the furnace heated sevenfold, calmly replied to an Oriental despot, Be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. We have the example of Daniel, who, when the decree was signed forbidding the worship of any God under pain of a dreadful death, and when a whole realm was bowing submissively to the blasphemous enactment, went into his house, and his windows being open to Jerusalem, kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime. The Holy Spirit has set before us such instances for the imitation of all the sons of God. Nay more, they teach us that when we refuse at all hazards to become partakers in sin, we are then the objects of the special care of our Father in heaven. We may, it is true, be surrounded with hosts of the ungodly, but more are they that are with us than those that be with our enemies; for the mountain on which we stand is encompassed with chariots of fire and horses of fire, sent from on high to be our invisible but mighty protectors. Nothing can harm us if we be followers of that which is good.

But all human examples pale in the presence of that illustrious example which came down to us from heaven. The Messiah visited our earth not only to make an atonement for our transgressions, but to teach us how

we should live in the midst of a world in rebellion against God. Observe the position which he chose for the accomplishment of his object. Was he surrounded by millions bowing before him in lowly adoration? Did he by conforming to the manners of Jew or Gentile, ally himself to the wealthy, the powerful, the intellectual, or the refined? Did he by pandering to the vices of the multitude gain over the masses to his cause? Did the fear of standing alone ever move him to adopt the principles or conform to the practices of sinners? Did he ever quail before the tyranny of public opinion in rebellion against God? You know his history. He stood up alone, and resisted unto death the whole power of a world lying in wickedness. No temptation could allure, no danger could alarm him. Neither the opinions nor examples of earth's teeming millions ever moved him an hair's breadth from the line of perfect love to God, and perfect charity to man. No association either with the lofty or the lowly ever palsied his tongue when the cause of truth, or piety, or charity required him to speak. The prince of this world came, and had nothing in him. Amidst a world of faithless,

“Faithful only he.

Amidst innumerable false, unmoved,
His loyalty he kept, his love and zeal,
Nor numbers nor example with him wrought,
To swerve from truth, nor change his constant mind,
Though single.”

If such were the Master what must be the disciples? Are those his disciples who walk not in his footsteps?

A few Galilean fishermen imbibed his spirit, separated themselves from the world, and became his chosen and inseparable companions. With them he traversed the mountains of Galilee and threaded the streets of Jerusalem. With them he shared his scanty meals, and spread his homely couch. He knew no distinction among men, but that which is made by moral character. Whosoever, said he, doeth the will of my Father, he is my brother, and sister and mother. Day by day he enlightened their understandings, invigorated their principles, enlarged their conceptions, and thus prepared them to engage in the conflict with a sensual, frivolous and ungodly world.

By the Spirit which descended upon him from on high, they were enabled to follow in his footsteps. Few and feeble, poor and illiterate, they went forth boldly to subdue rebellious nations unto God. Every people, every political party, every religion, every priesthood, all the usages of society, all the maxims of trade, all the investments of capital, all the reverence for antiquity, all the seductions of the arts, all the blandishments of poetry, and all the magic of eloquence were arrayed in deadly hostility against them. They met it all and came off from the conflict victorious. But in what manner was that victory achieved? Was it by yielding themselves up to the seductions of a sensual age, by submit-

ting their consciences to the dictation of rulers, or conforming their lives to the maxims of the world around them? You all know how they lived and how they died. In every place and in every company, they fearlessly avowed their principles in the presence of persecution unto death. They had but one question to ask, "is it right in the sight of God to obey God rather than man?" and by the answer to that question, the course of their conduct was decided. Everywhere they proclaimed the teachings of their Master, and exemplified his precepts by a holy life and blameless conversation. It was thus that they have exerted a power over humanity to which the history of our race presents no parallel. Thus they commenced that moral movement which is so perceptibly changing the destinies of mankind, and which can never be arrested until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Thus did Christ and his apostles achieve their victories. This then is the model of a Christian life, and we are disciples of Christ, in just so far as we are individually conformed to it.

If this be so, the principles which govern a Christian's life must place him in direct opposition to the opinions and maxims of impenitent men. He acknowledges the supreme authority of the eternal God, they bow down and worship the public opinion of a world lying in wickedness. The one looks to the present, the other to the future. The one acts for time the other, for eternity. The

one follows in the footsteps of Christ, the other in the footsteps of his enemies. Lives so diametrically opposite can never coincide, for we can not serve God and Mammon. Let each man inquire for himself, which manner of life he has chosen, for on the choice which he has made depends his eternal destiny.

Would it not be well for every one of us to pause for a moment and consider well our prospects for eternity? The objects which now interest us so deeply will soon have passed away forever. Every one of us will soon have laid aside this earthly tabernacle, and uncovered spirits stand in the presence of our Omniscient Judge. Companionship in sin will avail us nothing, for every one of us must give account for himself unto God. Public opinion will yield us no protection, for there every mouth will be stopped, and the whole world be guilty before God. What will it profit us to have sinned in company and defied the Almighty in concert? Our plea will only seal our tenfold condemnation, and our dwelling place forever must be with the devil and his angels.

Some among us hope that we have taken shelter under the cover of the atonement, and are trusting in the merits of Christ for salvation. But what are the conditions on which we are permitted to rely on the great sacrifice for sin? The Saviour himself has told us. Unless a man deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me he can not be my disciple. What evidence have we that we are resting under the shadow of the

atonement, if we have neither denied ourselves, nor taken up the cross, nor followed Christ? In vain do ye call me Lord! Lord! and do not the things that I say. What will it avail us, at the last day, to aver that multitudes with us made the same profession of discipleship, that we denied Christ in masses, and put him to open shame in company? We thus with our own mouths pronounce our own condemnation.

When the question was asked, Lord are there few that be saved? the answer returned was, Strive to enter into the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. Are there any among us who are thus striving, who hold themselves aloof from all companionship with fashionable sin, whose standard of duty is the Word of God, and whose pattern of life is the example of Christ? Are there any among us in whose daily conversation Christ is set forth, and who joyfully suffer ignominy for the name of Jesus? Are there not some among us who esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the companionship of the ungodly? God be with you and strengthen you, ye saints of the Most High. Men may cast out your names as evil, but be of good cheer, your names are written in the Lamb's book of life. The path that you tread may be rough and wearisome, but it leads directly to the city of the living God. There is not a reproach that you bear for Christ, which shall not work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Trials may await you, for

in the world ye shall have tribulation, but fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Your eternity will be with the Forerunner in whose footsteps you have trodden, and with the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. And one of the elders said unto me, what are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The Son of God goes forth to war,
 A kingly crown to gain;
 His blood-red banner streams afar;
 Who follows in his train?
 Who best can drink his cup of woe,
 Triumphant over pain,
 Who patient bears his cross below:
 He follows in his train.

The martyr first whose eagle eye
 Could pierce beyond the grave;
 Who saw his Master in the sky,
 And called on him to save.
 Like him, with pardon on his tongue
 In midst of mortal pain,
 He prayed for them that did the wrong:
 Who follows in his train?

A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came;
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and shame.
They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane;
They bowed their necks the death to feel:
Who follows in their train?

A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,
Around the Saviour's throne rejoice,
In robes of light arrayed.
They climbed the steep ascent to heaven,
Through peril, toil and pain.
O God! to us may grace be given,
To follow in their train?

SERMON VI.

THE PERILS OF RICHES.

But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, 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 coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things.—1 TIMOTHY, vi. 9, 10, 11.

It has long since been wisely remarked, that our greatest moral dangers arise, not from direct but indirect temptations. When we are solicited to violate a plain commandment of Christ, conscience promptly gives the alarm, and we turn away from the sin with abhorrence. When, however, the evil consists in doing in excess what can be innocently done only within limits; when conduct, perhaps harmless to others, paralyzes our moral sensibilities and disqualifies us for the discharge of duty; when the motives which at first impelled us may be insensibly exchanged for others which calm reflection would instantly pronounce to be wrong, we frequently pass, without heeding it, the boundary which separates virtue from vice, and the voice of conscience is hardly recognized until the chains of habit are riveted upon us, and we are fully committed to a course of ill doing.

To no subject does this remark more emphatically apply than to the pursuit of wealth. Labor is imposed upon us as one of the conditions of health and enjoyment, nay of existence itself. If a man will not work, neither shall he eat, said an Apostle. We are, moreover, commanded not only to do with our might whatever our hand findeth to do, but to be in all things moderate in our desires, temperate, and self-denying. But this course of life leads, by necessity, to increased possessions. The increase of possessions opens new avenues to temptation; it spreads before us allurements unknown to poverty, and discloses opportunities for accumulation clustering thickly just on the other side of the line of perfect rectitude. Hence the Scriptures so frequently admonish us against these inevitable dangers. We are taught that the love of wealth is, in its nature, at variance with the love of God, for covetousness is idolatry; and that unless we forsake houses and lands for Christ's sake, we can not be his disciples. In the solemn and impressive words of the text, they that will be rich, fall into temptation, 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 have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things.

If such be the dangers of riches, it is our duty to medi-

tate upon them with deep attention. To aid you in this moral labor is the object of the present discourse.

I. Suffer us, in the first place, to set before you some of the dangers which surround the *acquisition* of wealth.

In order to apprehend this subject the more adequately, let us commence with the obvious truth, that the right of property rests on the self-evident axiom, that EVERY MAN HAS A RIGHT TO HIMSELF. His powers of body and his faculties of mind were bestowed upon him by his Creator, and no created power can revoke the grant. These energies of body and faculties of mind every man may use as he will, provided only he obey the laws of God, and violate no right of his neighbor. It is on this foundation that the doctrine of human accountability rests. For every thought and word and action of our lives, every one of us must give account. But this account could never be required, unless every man were perfectly free, provided he violated no right of his neighbor, to think and speak and act as he pleased.

Secondly. A man, under the condition just suggested, is at perfect liberty to employ his faculties, both of body and mind, in the creation of value, or, as it is commonly called, wealth. By the use of his powers, in obedience to the laws of nature, a product is created which did not before exist. It owes its existence in its present form to the exercise of these faculties, or, in common language, to his labor. If the labor had not been put forth, the product could not have existed. This product, whatever

it be, is the exclusive property of the man by whom it has been brought into existence. If the original material and the means of production are his own, the whole of the product is the property of the producer. If the materials and the means of production belonged to another, the product must be equitably divided between the capitalist and the laborer. But whatever be the portion earned by the laborer, whether the whole or a part of the product created, it is all exclusively his own. It is the reward which God has bestowed upon him for obedience to the laws of his creation.

The productiveness of the earth has been ordained in perfect harmony with the laws of human labor. We can not exist without food, clothing and shelter. These wants of man may be fully supplied from the bosom of the soil, but they are not furnished spontaneously. We must labor to procure them, and they are yielded to us on no other condition. By the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread, is the original enactment. It has never been repealed and the Lawgiver enforces it with adequate penalties. It is thus that the labor of every day provides for the wants of every day. Because the labor has been our own, we are entitled to its results, for the sustentation of our lives, and the production of our individual happiness.

But the relation between human labor and the productiveness of the earth may be still further considered. If the use of our physical power has been directed by

skill, the earth will yield far more than will suffice for the supply of our daily wants. An annual surplus will remain after every rational want is gratified, and this surplus may be used to increase the productiveness of the succeeding year. Thus it is that, by the union of industry with frugality, wealth is created. It is clearly the will of God that each generation should leave the world richer than it found it, and better adapted to yield a larger increase. Thus it is that the earth, which once possessed nothing but capabilities, is now covered with the various forms of wealth, and every means for the production of human happiness. Land and sea, mountain and valley, forest and prairie, the soil that we tread on, the mine beneath and the atmosphere around us, are all rendered subservient to the well-being of man. Had we obeyed the laws of our Creator, and had sin with its results been banished from our world, the whole earth would long since have been again transformed into a paradise, and suffering, and want, have been no more known among the children of men.

It is too obvious to need remark, that the surplus which remains after our wants have been supplied, is our own, just as much as any part of our product. No one without injustice can take from us one part more than another, unless he pay us a satisfactory equivalent. Again, our product may be perishable and its value depreciate, or a part of it be annihilated. Inasmuch as the whole product is our own, and no one else has the

semblance of a right over it, the loss must, by necessity, fall upon ourselves and we ourselves must bear it. So, on the other hand, our product may increase in value. This additional value, for the same reason, is our own just as much as the original product, and to take from us this part of our property without an equivalent, is just as wicked as to deprive us of any other. It is all our own, the result directly or indirectly of our own labor, and every portion of it is equally guarded by the same moral law of the Creator.

All this is simple and easily understood, and were wealth accumulated on no other principles, our moral nature would be in little danger from increased possessions. But it unfortunately happens that by the increase of wealth, the love of wealth is rendered more intense. Great possessions, by opening new avenues to gain and presenting new opportunities for sensual and social enjoyment, expose us to some of the most seducing temptations which ever beset us. The insatiate striving for more, leads us to look with an evil eye upon the prosperity of our neighbor. As the gains of our own labor are insufficient to supply our exaggerated wants, the desire springs up unbidden to appropriate to ourselves some portion of that for which he has labored. We covet that which is our neighbor's and yet we despise the character of a thief. We would not on any account take from him *all* his possessions. We would not pick his pocket of a shilling, or break into his house and rob him

of his spoons. We might, however, take great pains to accomplish an exchange with him, by which we should receive a full equivalent for all that we part with, and besides this a very large amount for which we have rendered no equivalent whatever. We would on no account charge him with goods which were never delivered, but we might be quite willing to deliver him goods of which twenty-five per cent. is useless adulteration, or which we know to be short of measure or deficient in weight. If our property has depreciated in value, we scruple not to charge a buyer who is ignorant of the market, a price which shall throw upon him the loss which belongs wholly to ourselves. If, on the other hand, our neighbor's property has risen in value, we scarcely consider it sharp practice, quietly to obtain it, on such terms as shall secure to us the additional value without the shadow of an equivalent. I would not sell a forged bond, or pass a counterfeit bill, but I might sell a bond which I privately knew was not worth the half of what I received for it, or I might offer in payment the bills of a bank which, from "information received," I was sure would to-morrow be almost worthless. Accustomed to this manner of transfer, we may go a step further, and ourselves create the very rise and fall of prices of which we so eagerly take advantage. When the market price of an article is low, we may innocently purchase as much as we think for our benefit. We thus equalize prices, and prevent any further depreciation. But because we may do this inno-

cently, we may be tempted to go farther, and combine with others to purchase the whole supply of a necessary of life, that thus we may command the market, and oblige our fellow-citizens to pay us any price which our cupidity may impose. Because we have the power, we think we have the right, to wring from the laboring masses as much of their dear bought earnings as we please, and thus enrich ourselves by impoverishing the community. The talent committed to us for the purpose of blessing mankind we use as an instrument of wholesale oppression. We thus create that very prejudice against wealth of which we are the first to complain, and bring to pass the saying of Solomon, He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him.

These and a thousand such snares beset the disciple of Christ in his effort to grow rich, or even to provide for the exaggerated wants of them of his own household. He can only escape them by undeviating adherence to the Saviour's commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. God has given to each of us such a portion as he chose, and neither of us may touch a farthing of that which he has bestowed on another. Nay more, we are forbidden even to desire it. We may not covet his house, or his lands, or anything that is our neighbor's. Whatever is his, be it much or little, be it in whole or in part, is guarded and protected by that holy law which is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Let a man make haste and delay not to keep this com-

mandment ; let him submit himself and all his transactions to the clearly revealed will of God ; and he may walk unharmed amidst all the snares which beset the path of him who is diligent in business. The temptations to fraud, chicanery and overreaching, will fall harmless at his feet. The smallest right of the most ignorant and unsuspecting will be as precious in his eyes as his own. Whatever be the increase which God has given him, there will not be found there a shilling, which the law of impartial justice would award to another. His earnings are the blessings which his Father in heaven has bestowed on his honest industry, and he may confidently trust that on such gains the favor of God has rested.

I know full well the objections which can be urged against this scriptural law of accumulation. I shall be told that the customs of trade proceed on very different principles, and that to these customs every man of business must conform. It will be said that to obey Christ in that matter would consign ourselves and our families to inevitable poverty. Be it so. Still I ask, what does the Saviour require of us if we acknowledge him to be our Master ? If we are not willing to surrender houses and lands for his sake, we cannot be his disciples. If we do not submit our desires to his will, how can we claim him as our Redeemer ? Doth it matter much, though we be poor in this world, if we be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that shall be revealed ? If the world lieth in wickedness and we wallow in wickedness

with it, will a profession of religion save us from the condemnation that cometh upon the ungodly? Is it not an honor to endure poverty for the sake of him, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich?

But I ask has it been found that disinterested and honorable dealing commonly leads to poverty? How comes it then to be universally acknowledged that honesty is the best policy? Industry, frugality and undeviating integrity have always been found to lead with certainty to mercantile success. I know that fortunes are sometimes made, but I also know that they are much more frequently lost, by rash speculation, the result of all grasping love of gain. But let us bring this matter to a practical test. Suppose that every professor of the religion of Christ was known to be a man of undeviating truth and scrupulous conscientiousness, whose word was as good as his bond, and in whose hands the concerns of every man were perfectly secure, would not the disciples of Christ control the business of the world? Would not every man, whether stranger or near neighbor select them as the persons with whom he would prefer to transact business? Their success would oblige other men to imitate their example, and thus they would create the general necessity of adopting the highest standard of mercantile integrity. They would thus leaven the world instead of being leavened by it. The precepts of Jesus would govern the minutest transactions of the counting-

room and banking-house, so that, in the significant language of scripture, Holiness should be written on the bells of the horses. How vain then is the excuse so often pleaded, that a Christian must degrade himself to the level of covetous and unscrupulous men, in order to achieve mercantile success. Were the disciples of Christ fearlessly, stedfastly, and in faith, to obey their Master, not only would they escape the perils which surround their peculiar position, but they would elevate the whole community to the high level of honorable and disinterested Christian morality.

Such then are some of the perils of accumulation, and thus can they be met by the Christian merchant. Whether he be rich or poor, whether he be rich in youth, in manhood, or mature life, is to him a matter of secondary importance. His first concern is, to please the Master, and this he can do, only by adherence to the law of high-minded, disinterested, Christian reciprocity. The rest he leaves with God. In success or in failure, the great object of his life is to please his Father who is in heaven. His daily labor is a service to Christ. His daily warfare with temptation strengthens his virtue, confirms him in all goodness, and in an eminent degree prepares him for that world where the crown of righteousness is given to all who have triumphed over the sin which so easily besets them.

Here, however, let me caution the young believer against a rock on which very many have made ship-

wreck. Though he should obey the rule of the Saviour in the manner of his accumulation, yet too eager a desire for immediate success may entangle him in a snare hardly less hurtful. Feeling deeply the need of capital, he is tempted to re-invest his gains with an avidity which puts far away into the future all the claims of religion and benevolence. The command of God is, Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the *first fruits* of thy increase. In too great haste to be rich, he determines to devote the first part of his life to accumulation, that, in old age, he may have the more to consecrate to the service of God. Of this device of the adversary let the young Christian beware. The duty of devoting our possessions to Christ, belongs to all times and all places. It is obligatory on us as much at the commencement as at the close of our probation. The small offering saved by self-denial from the scanty salary of the clerk, or earned by the additional toil of the young mechanic, or withheld from some rare investment by the young merchant, may be a richer gift in the sight of God, than the world-renowned benefaction of the aged millionaire. Besides, it is only by commencing early in life the consecration of our substance unto God, that we can establish the habit of benevolence. While we postpone the discharge of our duty until we have become wealthy, the love of gain is insensibly acquiring strength, we listen to the claims of benevolence with less and less sensibility, and at last become deaf to the voice of humanity. When we are able

to give without the smallest self-denial, the disposition to give has perished, and we have been transformed into the very misers whom once we thoroughly despised.

Were it necessary, I might here explain the connection which God has established between habitual benevolence and financial ability. Time would fail were I to consider the subject at large. I will only remark that this very habit, above all others, cultivates that calm equanimity on which soundness of judgment so materially depends. Men commonly fail from one of two causes. They either timidly shrink from a reasonable risk, or, allured by the promise of extraordinary gains, peril their all in too hazardous investments. We are best preserved from both these dangers, by ever considering our property as a talent committed to us by God, which we are bound to use for the benefit of humanity. Our personal interest then ceases to agitate us, and we act as stewards to whom a trust has been committed. Thus, exempted from the bias both toward timidity and rashness, we estimate a risk at precisely its true value, the surest test of financial skill. In this manner the promise is fulfilled which follows the precept I just now quoted. Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thy increase ; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

II. But suppose the disciple of Christ to have pursued his calling in obedience to the law of reciprocity, and that not a dollar of his estate has been soiled by mean-

ness or dishonesty. He may have given of his increase, so that, thus far, he has escaped the charge of avarice. God has smiled upon the labor of his hands, and has blessed him with ample means for the supply of every reasonable want, both of himself and his children. He believed it his duty to make provision for those committed to his charge. This duty is accomplished ; what shall he do next ? The question presents itself, how much may be in the fear of God accumulated, and how much longer may he rightfully continue in the pursuit of wealth ? Shall he labor on for the gold that perisheth until death surprises him, or shall he devote the remainder of his life to the service of God and humanity ? Here is the temptation to the man of middle age.

I am well aware that this question may sound strangely to most of you. I fear that many a disciple of Christ has lived until his eye has grown dim and his natural force abated, without ever asking it. On this very rock we fear that thousands are at this moment making shipwreck of faith. It is obvious that the man of business has no more right to live unto himself than the clergyman, the missionary, the martyr, or the apostle. The principles which govern the life of a Christian are not affected by his calling ; they are the same always and everywhere. Christ died for the one as much as for the other, and the title of both to the heavenly inheritance is verified by the same sign, they live not unto themselves but unto him who loved them and gave himself for them.

But let a man ignore all this, and claim that he has a right to live unto himself, and he chooses the path which leads to the chambers of spiritual death. The opportunity is afforded him to spend the remainder of his life in the direct service of Christ, or in the labor for accumulation. He chooses the latter, and it soon becomes his ruling passion. Religion, from being an active principle, becomes a matter of form. He may attend the worship of the sanctuary with business-like punctuality, but his soul holds no communion with God. As his wealth increases, his love of it becomes more intense and absorbing. Investments are so precious that he has nothing to spare for the cause of Christ. The cry of distress, that once aroused his whole soul to sympathy, now falls on his ear unheeded. His moral perceptions are obscured. Arts of gain which he once scorned, he now practices with avidity. At last, professing the religion of the blessed Jesus, and holding the most orthodox of creeds, he is transformed into a grasping miser. Yet he is hardly aware of the change that has passed upon him. His brethren foster his delusion, for instead of rebuking, they flatter him, for they know that he is very rich. Thus, cursed with spiritual blindness, he is drawing near to the judgment-seat with a lie in his right hand.

The man dies and appears before God. What evidence has he left behind him that he is an heir of heaven? The heathen have not read the message of salvation from Bibles which he has scattered abroad.

No savage tribe has heard of the love of Christ from the lips of a herald whom he has sent forth. The poor have not been warmed by the fleece of his flock, nor has his cheering voice or liberal hand caused the heart of the widow or the orphan to leap for joy. Nay, his life has been an offence ; for multitudes, taking his example as an exponent of the religion of Jesus, have resolved that they will have nothing to do with it. An asterisk is prefixed to his name on the books of his church. The newspapers announce the death of the senior member of a very respectable firm. Men on 'Change discuss with interest the question how much he was worth, and this question answered, he passes away from the thoughts of the living, and is remembered no more forever. Such is the end of him that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Another disciple has made provision for every reasonable want ; it is in his power to consecrate his life to the service of Christ, but he chooses the pursuit of worldliness in its more seductive form.

He is able to enter upon the career of social competition, and gain for himself and his family a position in what is fancifully termed "the best society." His modest dwelling is exchanged for a mansion that attracts the gaze of the passers by. His drawing rooms shine in costly magnificence, and are embellished by the highest efforts of artistic skill. His tables are loaded with every delicacy that wealth can command. His equipages are

remarked for the tastefulness of their construction, and the perfection of their appointments. His entertainments boast an extravagance from which nobles would draw back, and they are crowded with all that is distinguished in talent or wealth, in beauty or fashion, in political power or social preëminence. The man has devoted his life to the accomplishment of his object, and he has accomplished it. And he must continue it, though old age is coming upon him, and the labor which it imposes presses heavily upon grey hairs, exhausted energies, and the saddened conviction that he is living in vain. He is by profession a disciple of that Jesus of Nazareth who had not where to lay his head, and he regularly at the communion table professes, that his affections are set upon things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. But when Christ who is our life shall appear, will he appear with him in glory?

This rich man also dies and is buried. His establishment is broken up, and his equipages are scattered. A prominent name is erased from the list of aspirants for social distinction. A house of gratuitous entertainment for the frivolous and gay is closed. Before the next season arrives his name is forgotten. The widow and the orphan have not a friend the less. The young and inexperienced have lost no counselor. The church of God is no longer paralyzed by the influence of his example. Every act of his probation has been recorded on high, and

the man has appeared before God to render up his account for the deeds done in the body.

But it will be asked, Are we not bound to make a suitable provision for our children? Is not this duty imposed upon us by the gospel itself? We answer most certainly. But it is to be remembered that we are here dealing with those who have already made every provision needful to enable their children to enter upon a life of industry with the best prospect of success. We have still to ask whether, having accomplished this, a disciple of Christ may spend the rest of his life in the accumulation of wealth for those that shall come after him.

We have observed that the man has the opportunity to select the manner in which the maturity of his life shall be spent. He may devote it to the service of Christ or to the service of his children. While we grant that not to love our children is to deny the faith, we must not forget our Saviour's emphatic declaration, He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Here then the two things are set the one over against the other. We may live for the salvation of the world for which Christ died, or we may live for the purpose of leaving large possessions to our children. We choose the latter. We love son and daughter more than Christ. Can we then be worthy of him?

I would ask, in what manner can we so worthily provide for our children, as by laboring to prepare them for usefulness here and happiness hereafter? But in what de-

gree does large accumulation confer this preparation? When we have suitably cultivated the faculties with which God has endowed them, and accustomed them to habits of manly self-reliance; when we have trained them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and provided them with the means of rendering their industry available, wealth can render them no further service. The direct effect of large expectations is to render labor at first unnecessary, and then repulsive. Indolent habits with large opportunity for sensual gratification, constitute the most perilous condition of human probation. Hence when the children of the rich rise to eminence, we consider the case exceptional, and award to them the praise of having escaped the most appalling moral dangers. The high prizes in life are almost always gained by those on whom poverty has sternly yet kindly imposed the necessity of earnest and untiring effort. To this necessity they ascribe their success, and the habits which it cultivated they declare to have been the source of their present happiness. Can it be wise parental love to remove from our children the necessity of industry, with the high-souled self-reliance and the full development of their intellectual and moral nature which industry so naturally fosters?

We seem here to be the victims of a strange and unaccountable delusion. No man of sense is ashamed to acknowledge that he was the architect of his own fortunes, and that by his own unaided effort he has attained

to independence. Nay, it is to him a matter of honest gratulation. Our friends so esteem it, and they delight to repeat the story of our early struggles, our resolute self-reliance, and their ultimate reward. We compare ourselves with our companions in childhood who were born to hereditary wealth. We observe, perhaps, with too complacent self-esteem, the difference between their course and our own. They grew up in indolence, were nurtured in affluence, yielded to the seductions of vice, and sunk to an early and dishonored grave. We were inured to hardship, were taught industry by necessity, at an early age were obliged to rely upon ourselves, and entering upon life with this discipline soon discovered the path to eminence. But with these facts daily in remembrance, in the treatment of our children we reverse the principles which all our experience has so fully verified. We make it the business of our lives to exclude them from the very conditions to which we owe our success, and surround them with the very perils which were fatal to our contemporaries. How shall we account for so universal an abandonment of the lessons of reason and experience? Can it be possible that we are honest with ourselves in this matter? May it not be the fact that under the cover of love to our children, there lurks concealed within us the base and miserly love of simple accumulation?

If the perils of riches are thus alarming, a disciple of Christ is certainly bound frequently to pause and ask

himself whether it would be either wise or right to spend any greater portion of his life in the acquisition of wealth. It may aid him in forming his decision on this subject, to read the words of the Master. His teachings contain warnings such as these, Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you. Verily, 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. When his disciples were astonished at this saying, our Lord continued, how hard is it for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God; and then he repeated his previous assertion. By this he evidently intended to teach us, that it is hardly possible for us to be rich without trusting in riches; and to trust in riches is fatal. Hear also the words of the text in which the moral perils of wealth are most solemnly set forth. But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and 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 have coveted after, they have erred from the faith and have pierced them-

selves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things. He who will meditate on these solemn admonitions, and the Word of God is filled with them, may surely find reason to ask himself, can I any longer, with a good conscience, devote myself to the accumulation of the treasure that perisheth?

III. But it will doubtless be said, suppose we do this, and cease from further accumulation, in what manner shall we spend the remainder of our lives? The gospel does not allow us to live in idleness. This is an important inquiry, and we must attempt briefly to answer it.

I here address myself to those who have given themselves without reserve to Christ, who expect to be pardoned through his sacrifice, who have pledged themselves to obey all his commandments, and who daily pray that his will may be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. Let such a man think for a moment upon the condition of our race, more than eighteen centuries after the Son of God by the sacrifice of himself has opened wide the gate of heaven to every one who will believe. Let him survey the hundreds of millions still groaning under the curse of paganism, in whose hearing even the name of the Saviour has never yet been uttered. Let him look upon the nations nominally Christian, and observe how a religion bearing the name of Christ, but more corrupt and debasing than paganism itself, is pressing with the weight of ages upon prostrate humanity. Let him then

turn to the lands most favored with the light of the gospel, and reflect upon the wrongs of oppression, the misery inflicted by intemperance, the myriads of souls offered up annually for the gratification of lust, the increasing godlessness of our whole population, while the very church of God is retreating before her enemies, or compromising her principles to maintain a nominal existence ; let him think of all this when he prays Thy kingdom come, and he will surely be in no danger of suffering from want of employment. And more than this, he will be convinced that this world can never be regenerated until every disciple of Christ devotes himself with his whole soul to the work of its salvation. To leave it to an ecclesiastical caste, is to concede that the object for which the Son of God died can never be accomplished. It was when the *people* had a mind to work that the wall of Jerusalem was built. And this reign of Christ can never be established on earth, until every disciple is ready to forsake houses and lands for his sake and the gospel's.

But suppose a Christian brother having overcome the love of wealth, is willing to consecrate himself to the cause of his Master, in what manner can he best employ himself. To this I might reply in general, if he is really willing to labor, the Master will soon find for him abundant occupation. On this subject, however, a few practical suggestions may not be inappropriate.

A disciple of Christ who has resolved to labor no

longer for accumulation, will naturally deliberate on the question whether he shall relinquish his business or continue in it. The question he must decide for himself, in view of the circumstances in which he is placed, and of his own particular aptitudes.

Suppose then that a disciple of Christ, convinced that he can proceed no farther in the work of accumulation, resolves to release himself from secular pursuits, where shall he find adequate employment? To this I answer, First, it may be his duty to enter the ministry of reconciliation. For this form of Christian labor his habits of business, his knowledge of the world, his experience of the temptations to which men in active life are exposed, his acquaintance with the ordinary modes of thought on religious subjects, and the subterfuges under which the neglect of religion hides itself, would confer on him peculiar advantages. He may not, it is true, be familiar with the knowledge of the schools; but, I ask, is it in the knowledge of the schools, or the knowledge of the human heart, that the pulpit of the present day is most palpably deficient. Is not the latter, to say the least, as indispensable to the preacher of the gospel as the former. The common complaint against our preaching is, that it is dry, abstract, bookish and metaphysical, or else poetical, imaginative, and morally unimpressive. We prepare ourselves for the ministry by the study of books, secluded as far as possible from all intercourse with mankind. Would not the churches hail with delight a class

of preachers who had prepared themselves for their work by a large and intimate acquaintance with men. I believe that the walks of mercantile and professional life could easily furnish us with ten times as many useful and acceptable preachers of the gospel, as all the theological seminaries in the land.

If I do not mistake, there is at this moment, a multitude of men engaged in secular pursuits, who in youth have silenced their convictions of duty, and have borne about with them ever since the painful conviction that they ought to have devoted themselves to the preaching of the gospel. The prospect of worldly gain overcame the monitions of conscience; and they quieted her upbraidings with the promise that when they had acquired a competence, they would devote themselves exclusively to works of religious usefulness. While engaged in the hot pursuit of wealth they almost forget their bygone vows; but when the hand of affliction presses heavily upon them, or when the influences from on high quicken them to spiritual life, the question addressed to the wandering prophet sounds solemnly in their ears, What doest thou here, Elijah? Never in the history of the church, was the aid of such men so much needed as at present. Let them delay no longer to perform their vows, and now that all things have been added to them, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Again, there are others to whom the gift of teaching and public address has not been given, who are largely

endowed with administrative talents. They are capable of conducting extended and complicated operations with singular facility and success. The services of such men are greatly needed in the management of all our benevolent associations. Our societies for the promotion of religion and the relief of distress, for the reformation of offenders and the suppression of vice, all stand greatly in need of the labors of pious laymen, endowed with the talent of managing affairs. At present, from the necessity of the case, ministers of the gospel are to a great extent pressed into this service. Men complain that in this work we are unskillful, and conduct the affairs committed to our charge, on the principles of brotherhood rather than of business. This may be true, but we do as well as we can. Why do they not relieve us and assume the responsibility themselves? They can transact business much better than we, and we had much rather give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. If other men would undertake this service, they would enable a large number of our most useful ministers to return to their appropriate work, and also add greatly to the efficiency of our means for evangelizing the world.

But when all this has been done, by far the widest field for Christian labor remains still unoccupied. There exists not a city, or town, or village, or neighborhood in our country, in which there may not be found a large portion of the people unbled by any proper knowledge of

the truths of religion. In our large cities this portion of our populace greatly outnumbered the attendants upon the sanctuary. In fact they have no sanctuary. Our churches are built and furnished, and our services are conducted, for the rich ; the poor will not and can not enter them. They therefore grow up strangers to religious culture, either at home or abroad, and yield at once to the temptations of sensuality and vice. They spend their sabbaths in rioting and excess, and corrupted and corrupting, the infection of their example is ever drawing multitudes within the reach of its influence. Intemperance and licentiousness sweep them off by thousands, and yet their number increases with appalling rapidity. We have Maine laws and vagrant acts, we have magistrates and policemen, we have night watchmen and day watchmen, we have prisons and jails, we have houses of reformation for youth and for adults, and yet the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience laughs at our efforts to arrest the progress of evil. Intemperance increases. The tide of licentiousness is rising higher and higher, carrying misery and debasement into thousands of households that the world knows not of. Crime against both person and property multiplies beyond precedent. Poverty, squalid and despairing, the cause and the result of vice, nestles in every unfrequented suburb, and in every filthy alley. We now and then detect and imprison an offender. We sometimes rescue from misery a single victim. But it is commonly acknowledged, that, especially in our

cities, a large portion of our population, with intellects quickened and passions inflamed by the progress of civilization, are passing their probation under moral conditions vastly more awful than those of the most benighted heathen.

Can nothing be done to arrest the progress of evil, and rescue these perishing millions from misery here and perdition hereafter? Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no Physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Will it ever be recovered by the remedies at present administered? Can the disease be cured by the erection of magnificent temples to Jesus of Nazareth from which the poor, to whom he preached the gospel, are virtually excluded? Will the cure be effected by a few ministers of the word, whose power is exhausted in the attempt to render the teachings of Jesus acceptable to the intelligent and refined, the opulent and the fastidious? Can we expect a reformation from our Sabbath-schools, filled as these schools frequently are with children who might be instructed at home? Alas! such means as these are wholly inadequate to the accomplishment of our object. An effort far more universal is required, if we would arrest the progress of iniquity, and subdue our cities and towns, nay our whole country, unto God. Christian men and women must give themselves individually to this work. Why should not every church in city and in country undertake, in the strength of God, the conversion of the

souls in its vicinity? Why should not every neighborhood be divided into districts, and apportioned out among the disciples of Christ, so that each one may have his appropriate field of labor? The brethren who have relinquished the pursuit of gain for the love of Christ, would find delightful occupation in systematizing and directing efforts of this kind, and in furnishing examples of the manner in which the work should be done. Oh, could the disciples of Christ of every name unite in a universal effort thus to fulfill the commands of their Master, there is not an abandoned neighborhood in the most licentious of our cities, that would not be transformed into a dwelling-place of righteousness; there is not a moral desert among us that would not rejoice and blossom as the rose. Nothing but such an effort can save us. Such an effort, by the blessing of God, can save us. Why should not the effort be made?

But, in the next place, there may be many of the disciples of Christ engaged in secular business, from which they can not disengage themselves, and others whose talent is specially adapted to the management of large financial operations. Such men may nevertheless be convinced that they have no right to devote the remainder of their lives to the purpose of accumulation. They have already made provision for every reasonable want, and they recognize their obligation to devote their remaining gains to the service of their Lord. Let such men continue in their calling, pursuing it with diligence

and energy as co-workers with Christ. A Christian laboring thus, and ceasing to accumulate, will be enabled at once to enter upon the noblest enterprizes of benevolence. The poor and destitute around him, by judicious assistance and timely advice, may be delivered from the fear of poverty, by learning how to take care of themselves. The ignorant, near and afar off, may through his liberality be blessed with the means of education. The gospel planted by his labors may gladden the heart of many a wanderer in the wide-spreading west, and thus the foundation of coming empires be established upon the principles of immutable justice and reciprocal good will. He may go beyond the confines of his own country, and embracing in the arms of Christian love the whole family of man, establish missions among far distant heathen, and plant the standard of the cross among nations that for thousands of years have been sitting in the region and shadow of death. All these blessed enterprizes are open before him, and he may choose from them that which he prefers, or he may labor according to his ability in them all. He may put on righteousness as a clothing, his judgment may be a robe and a diadem. When the ear hears him it shall bless him, and when the eye sees him it shall give witness unto him, because he delivers the poor when he crieth, the fatherless and him that hath none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish shall come upon him, for he has caused the widow's heart to leap for joy. All this is well,

but it is only a small part of his reward. He shall walk all day in the light of his Saviour's countenance. The consciousness shall ever abide with him that he is not living to himself, but to the Saviour that died for him. Christ shall dwell in his heart by faith. Being rooted and grounded in love, he shall be able to know the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and shall be filled with all the fullness of God ; and when he is called home to his reward, an entrance shall abundantly be administered to him into the kingdom of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My Christian brother, you may if you will enter upon such a life as this. Dare you turn from it to the weak and beggarly elements of a perishing world. Fix your eyes on Calvary, and tell your ascended Redeemer what manner of life you intend henceforward to choose.

But you may reply, We aid in all these good designs already ; what lack we yet ? I doubt not that you aid them, but I fear lest all you have thus far done will hardly save you from the condemnation of him who hid his lord's talent in a napkin. Let us look for a moment on the facts of the case. You believe that after moral character, education is the greatest of earthly blessings—and you pay your tax for the support of public schools. Why do you not from your own means establish schools for the destitute ; or like Peter Cooper and Amos, Abbott, and William Lawrence, bestow upon coming generations the richest treasures of science and the largest knowledge

of the works of God. You believe it to be of the greatest importance to furnish our whole population, especially the young, with the opportunity for extensive and valuable reading—and you pay your annual subscription to a library in your neighborhood. Why do you not, like George Peabody and Joshua Bates, provide for the town that nurtured you, as valuable and abundant means for intellectual and moral culture as any man could desire? You believe that those whom God has called to the ministry should receive as valuable culture as their circumstances will allow—and you pay your annual subscription to an education society. Why do you not, by donation or loan, assist a score of men thus to enlarge the field of their usefulness? You can select them as wisely, and watch over them as carefully, as any education society, and you will thus do it with much greater benefit to your own soul. You are convinced of the importance of home missions, and mourn over the moral desolation that overspreads many of our old and all of our newly settled States—and you are a life member of some Home Mission Society. Why are you not a Home Mission Society yourself? Why do you not establish the preaching of the gospel in twenty villages of the West, and thus distribute the bread of life every Sabbath-day to twenty congregations of perishing men? You believe that Christ has commanded us to preach the gospel to every creature; you think well of foreign missions—and you make an annual contribution of a few dollars to a

Foreign Mission Society. Why do you not establish a mission yourself, selecting the field, sending forth and supporting the heralds of salvation, and being yourself the instrument of bringing a nation into obedience to Christ ?

When Robert Haldane, nephew to the Earl of Camperdown, became a disciple of Christ, he disposed of his splendid estate at Airthrey, to obtain the means for establishing a mission in India ; intending of course to lead the enterprize himself. He had selected his associates and matured his arrangements, when the whole plan was frustrated through the opposition of the Directors of the East India Company. His efforts in this direction being arrested, he turned his attention first to his own country, and devoted his large income to the education of pious men for the ministry, and the erection of houses of worship in destitute places, and thus became, in fact, a Home Mission Society for the length and breadth of Scotland. Through his labors and those of his brother, an extensive revival of religion was witnessed in every part of that land. His attention was then turned to the Continent, and he spent several years in Geneva, laboring in faith to sow the seed of the gospel where formalism had usurped the place of Christianity. Abundant success here also attended his efforts, and all the evangelical religion now existing in the city of Calvin, is the fruit of his labors. There are among us many disciples of Christ who might well follow the example of

Robert Haldane, and who, with the blessing of God, might reap a similar harvest.

The late Joseph John Gurney was a man of similar spirit. During the early part of his life he was the leading partner in an extensive banking-house. In middle life he became satisfied that it was his duty to cease from accumulation. He gradually retired from active business, so far as it was in his power, and devoted himself to labors for the extension of the gospel and the welfare of humanity. His benefactions in aid of every good design were such as became his character. Forsaking the comforts of Earlham, the spot which he loved so well, he spent three years of incessant gospel labor in this country and the West Indies. The remainder of his life was employed mainly in journeys on the continent, in preaching Christ crucified to men of every rank, distributing bibles and tracts, and pleading with men in authority for those who were suffering persecution for conscience' sake. My brethren, let us meditate on such examples ; and seeing we are encompassed by so great a crowd of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

But it may be said, do you intend to throw the burden

of charity solely on the wealthy? Is not benevolence the duty of all men? Why then single us out, as though we were alone responsible for the progress of the religion which we profess.

I reply, it is perfectly right that you should be singled out as the leaders in every good work. The greater part of mankind are obliged to labor for little more than a mere subsistence. A smaller number are only beginning to accumulate something. The providence of God has delivered you from the fear of want and the necessity of personal labor. You then are the very persons whom God has prepared for the work of Christian beneficence. Nay, if you carry out the principles of your religious profession, in what other manner can you spend the remainder of your life. Those who are forced to labor for their personal support, are denied the privilege which has been granted to you. We ask you to render unto God according to his benefits. Is not this just? We ask for nothing more.

Besides, your example would quicken the pulse of charity throughout the whole multitude of Christ's disciples. Laboring men will emulate your deeds of mercy, and thus a new impulse will be given to the whole church of Christ. You are not probably aware that rich Christians are, most commonly, obstacles to the progress of the gospel. The amount of your pecuniary ability is better known than you suppose. The ratio of your charities to your income is pretty well ascertained.

Other men measure themselves by the standard which you have established, and hence the aggregate of our offerings to Christ is so meagre. I said measure themselves by your standard, but it is not so. Your charities impose on you not the shadow of a sacrifice. Did poor men give only within this limit the fountains of religious benevolence would be well nigh dried up. Should your zeal provoke them to emulation, the host of God's elect would be excited to universal effort, and a new era would dawn upon the church of God.

And, lastly, some one may say that I am transcending the limits assigned to a teacher of religion, and prescribing to other men what they shall do with their own property. Not so, my brother. What you have honestly earned, so far as man is concerned, is your own, and with your disposal of it we pretend not to interfere. Whatever we may say, you will do with it just what you please, and we would not if we could prevent you. But, as you profess to obey without reserve the commands of Christ, it is surely competent to us to show you what the commands of Christ are. We desire simply to point out to you what your profession of discipleship involves. Having done this we rest. It is for you to decide whether what we have said is in accordance with the teachings of the Master, and if it be, whether you will or will not obey it. If we have faithfully and in love made known to you the will of the Lord, our duty is done. The rest remains with you.

Christian brethren, we beg you to consider these things. Remember the saying of the Lord, That it is more blessed to give than to receive. Remember his example; though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Observe the awful peril which attends upon the laying up of treasure on the earth. Remark the effect which accumulation has already produced on your religious character. Estimate if you can the blessings which, by devoting yourselves in faith to the cause of Christ, you might confer upon humanity; the hearts which you might gladden, the ignorant whom you might enlighten, the vicious whom you might reclaim, and the souls whom you might rescue from eternal death. Think of the peace which the Redeemer sheds abroad in the soul of the faithful, and the crown of life which he bestows upon those who forsake houses and lands for his sake and the gospel's. Think of all this, redeemed sinner, and compare it with all that can be hoped for from a life of successful worldliness, and form your decision in the sight of Him before whom all born of woman will shortly be gathered. The Lord help you to decide wisely: And may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in all things to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

S E R M O N V I I .

P R E V A L E N T P R A Y E R .

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.—JOHN, xv. 7.

You must all have observed, my brethren, the importance which the Scriptures attach to the subject of prayer. We are exhorted to pray always, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting. We are encouraged in all things, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make our wants known unto God. It is the intention of our Father in heaven that our lives should be a continual prayer, that in all our concerns, whether great or small, we should ask his direction, expecting his blessing, and return to him without ceasing our tribute of grateful adoration. It is our privilege to live ever in intimate communion with God ; so that the spiritual intercourse between us and the Creator should be as unlimited and as incessant as our dependence upon him.

In the New Testament this subject assumes a new and even more interesting aspect. Sinners might well shrink back from approaching a God of infinite holiness. From the abyss of our moral degradation, it might seem presumptuous to lift up our eyes to the place where his

honor dwelleth. But the gospel reveals to us an atoning sacrifice, an all-prevailing intercessor, who has purchased our pardon, through whose merits we are invited to draw near unto God. Approaching the mercy-seat in his name, we may cast behind us our own unworthiness; and pleading the atoning sacrifice of God manifest in the flesh, ask for all that we need, in the full assurance that God will hear us for the sake of the beloved. We thus have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us. Such is the new relation in which we stand to God, the Judge of all, in consequence of the death and sacrifice of his well-beloved Son.

But more than this: God has, in the most explicit manner, assured us that he will answer our prayers. It is not needful for me here to pause and inquire about the manner in which the fulfillment of this promise may be reconciled with the doctrine of the divine decrees; or with the truth that God governs the universe by general laws. God has declared that he never disregards the feeblest supplication of the least of his children. Faith asks for no firmer reliance than the word of the unchanging God. Our Lord has said to us, Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. The

Scriptures clearly teach, that whatsoever we ask for, under the conditions which God has revealed, will be granted to us, not indeed according to the measure of our unwise desires, but the measure dictated by omniscient knowledge and infinite love.

I need not remind you, that the word of God is filled with examples of answers to prayer, for every conceivable blessing. Our great High Priest himself offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. The prayers of nations have often prevailed to avert a national calamity. The prayers of individuals, such as Moses and Samuel and David, have been answered in the salvation of a whole people from pestilence and utter destruction. The prayers of saints for temporal as well as spiritual mercies, for themselves, for each other, and for the people of God, have been abundantly answered in time past, and they will be answered in time to come, unless the Spirit of inspiration has taught us to believe a lie. Our Lord places this subject in the strongest light when he says, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall obey you ; and nothing shall be impossible to you. It may be said, and said truly, that this language is figurative. But though it be figurative, it must mean something ; and it can mean nothing, if it does not teach, that things utterly beyond the power of

natural causes, are possible to the prayer of humble, earnest, confiding faith.

Such is the teaching of the Word of God, and we believe it all to be true ; but how does it correspond with the facts which are everywhere transpiring around us. We believe it to be true, but we most commonly act as if it were false. We generally pray with but little expectation that our prayers will really be answered, and too frequently justify our unbelief by the supposition that some change must have occurred in the manner of the divine dispensations. We take it for granted that we can not expect God to do at this time as he did on the day of Pentecost, and in the times of the apostles. We have been praying for centuries for the conversion of the world, yet the world is not converted. We pray for a revival in our churches, but our churches are not revived. We pray for an increase of piety in our own souls, but we continue immersed and steeped in worldliness. We pray for the conversion of our children, but they grow up without God in the world. How shall we account for all this ? Has God ceased to be the unchangeable God ? Is not Christ Jesus the same yesterday, to-day and forever ? Are not his promises, as of old, yea and amen ? Hath he said and will he not do it, hath he spoken and will he not make it good ?

Such questions as these may perhaps find the elements of a solution in the words of the text. We here find an explicit and universal assurance, that the prayers of the

people of God will be answered. With this is connected the condition by which this assurance is limited. The promise is, Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done. The condition is, If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you.

Let us consider first the promise, and secondly, the condition.

I. The promise is, Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

The first thing which strikes us in reading these words, is, their universality. The grant which they contain is as absolute as language can make. *Ask what ye will*, there is no limit as to the objects of prayer. It is like the saying of Christ to the Syrophenician woman, Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. *It shall be done*. The promise is without a peradventure. It is fixed as the ordinances of God. It is as definite as the promise to Noah, while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. I do not see how we can escape from the plain and literal meaning of the words even if we desired it.

But if this be the case, we naturally ask, is there no restriction in the application of this promise. It was addressed originally to the apostles. Were not they the only persons to whom this assurance was given? This is evidently an important inquiry, for on the answer to it depends our personal interest in the whole matter. We

must seek for the truth here, not by attempting to harmonize the words with any theory of our own, but simply by examining the context for ourselves.

We ask then, was our Lord addressing his hearers as apostles, or merely as disciples who stood in the same relation to him as we do at this moment? Observe the preceding verses. I am the vine, ye are the branches. Were the apostles the only branches of the vine? Were they the only members of the body of which Christ is the head? He that abideth in me beareth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing. Is this true of the apostles alone, or of every believer? In the verse immediately preceding the text, it is said, if a man, (not an apostle) abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and men gather them and cast them into the fire. This is certainly a general sentiment. It is as true of you and me, as it was of the eleven apostles. Then follow the words of the text. If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. Our Lord proceeds, in the next verse, to say, herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples, not, my apostles. We can not therefore give to these words a restricted meaning, without doing violence to the whole spirit of the passage, and setting at defiance the plainest principles of interpretation. We must admit that they announce, not a special but a general law of the divine dispensation. But in the laws of God's moral government, we and the apostles,

and all other men stand precisely on a level. We are authorized therefore in taking this promise just as it stands, and receiving it as our own, just as much as the apostles to whom it was originally given.

II. Let us now, in the second place, examine the conditions of this wonderful promise. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you.

What is meant by abiding in Christ? I think it has precisely the force of the phrase abide in my love, used in the tenth verse of this chapter. It is to have the love of Christ within us, as an all controlling motive. It is analogous to the words of the apostle, the love of Christ constraineth us. It is that holy, tender, grateful affection to Jesus, which is ever moving us to do whatsoever will please him, and which renders his approval the highest object of our existence. This is what is meant by being in Christ, or being in his love. But our Lord goes further, he says *abide* in me, *abide* in my love. He speaks not of a temporary emotion, present to-day and forgotten to-morrow. If we *abide* in Christ, he will take up his abode with us. Love to him will be the atmosphere which we breathe, which sustains us in life and from which we derive all our spiritual health and vigor. It is the permanent and stedfast condition of the soul. Thus saith the Apostle Paul, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ; yet not I but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the

faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Such is it to abide in Christ.

The immediate result of such a life is, that his words abide in us. His precepts will be written on our hearts, and will control all our affections. We shall not only do his will, but we shall do it from love. It will be the spontaneous acting of the soul renewed and transformed into the image of Christ. These two ideas, love and obedience, are so intimately connected that our Lord in this chapter frequently uses them interchangeably. If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love ; he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And then again, if a man love me he will keep my words and the Father will love him. This is the law of God, that we keep his commandments. To abide in Christ then, is to have our affections supremely fixed on him as the unchanging condition of the soul ; and to have his words abiding in us, is to carry out this affection in universal obedience to his commandments. If this be the meaning of the words, the promise of the Saviour is briefly this, if we, with the whole heart, perfectly love and perfectly obey Christ, we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us.

Here again you will ask, does Christ intend to declare that every child of God receives all that he asks for ? If this be the promise, it certainly is not fulfilled. No, my brethren, this is not quite the promise. Many of those who are, as we hope, his children, pray much and receive

but little answer. The apostle James declares, Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss. The question then returns, what is the limitation with which this passage is to be understood.

We said, in the beginning, that the promise in the text is to be taken absolutely, and without restriction. The words will bear no other signification. Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. In like manner is the condition annexed to it to be taken. If the promise speaks of perfect prevalence in prayer, the condition in like manner speaks of perfect love and perfect obedience. That is to say, if a man love and serve God perfectly, his prayers will infallibly prevail. And this, you see at once, is a general principle in the government of God. We believe that in heaven, every desire being holy, every desire will be fully gratified. Then shall I be satisfied, saith the Psalmist, when I awake in thy *likeness*. Thus saith the Revelator; They shall not hunger any more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; but the Lamb shall feed them and lead them to fountains of living water. The meaning of these two passages, though they differ in form, is precisely the same. They teach us that the desires of a holy soul, being perfectly in harmony with the will of a holy God, must be fully gratified.

But you will say, these illustrations are taken from the condition of saints and angels in heaven. What has this to do with us who are encompassed with infirmity, who

bear about with us this body of sin, and who are daily bemoaning its power over us? The words were spoken, not to angels and glorified spirits, but to men like ourselves, who can plead no perfect righteousness, and can boast no sinless obedience.

We answer they are intended to express a general law of the divine dispensation. They announce the general rule by which prevalence of prayer is graduated, the condition under which God pledges his veracity to grant our petitions. That is to say, if the prayer of the perfectly loving and obedient will infallibly prevail, so, in any inferior degree will prayer prevail, in proportion to the perfection of our love and obedience. The words are intended to unfold the relation which exists between the moral temper of our hearts and the prevalence of our prayers. It is as though he had said, your love and obedience is the measure of the guaranty that your prayer shall be answered. I do not say, by any means, that our Father in Heaven does not, in compassion to our infirmity, frequently do much more than he has here promised. This is all of his superabundant love to us in Christ Jesus. It is, however, only as we obey and love him, that we can plead his promise; and, looking up to him with confidence, in lowly humility, urge him to do even as he has said.

The reason of this rule is obvious. Just in proportion as we abide in the love of Christ, and his words abide in us, his Spirit dwells within us, teaching us how to pray,

and what to pray for. The desires which the Spirit of God kindles in the soul, must be according to the will of God. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us. The desires of a soul pervaded by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit must be holy, and they can not but be gratified by a holy God. Our prayers are *then* nothing else than the perfections of God reflected from the soul of the believer, and he must act in harmony with them, unless he deny himself. The desires of a holy soul in heaven must be gratified, for they are emanations of the divine will. The desires of a soul in hell must be ever unsatisfied, for they are, of necessity, perfectly at enmity with God. And so, between these two extremes, wherever prayer proceeds from a loving and obedient spirit it will be answered; and the abundance of the answer, will, according to the condition in the text, be measured by our attainments in holiness. It is the effectual fervent prayer of a *righteous* man that availeth much.

But we need hardly appeal to the Scriptures to confirm a truth which is, in fact, legibly written on the conscience of man. Wicked men on their deathbeds, or in any imminent peril, feel the need of help from on high, but have no confidence whatever in the prevalence of their own prayers; they therefore call upon the most pious man they know of, to pray for them. No matter though he be a man whom they have injured and scoffed

at, and scorned, they come to him in lowly humiliation, and beseech him to intercede for them before the mercy-seat. What is this but a practical version of the text, If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you ?

While, however, we thus speak, it is to be remembered that God does not pledge himself to answer our prayers literally in the manner, and at the time we may desire. He answers according to infinite love, guided by omniscient wisdom, and not according to our finite knowledge. He may not give us precisely what we ask for, because he desires to give us something incomparably better. He may not answer us at the instant, but he reserves for us something in the future, tenfold more valuable. He thus, in fulfilling his promises, gives us all the advantage of his omniscient wisdom and infinite love.

We are now, I think, prepared to consider the question, Why have not the prayers of the church of God received, and why do they not now receive, a more abundant answer ?

God has promised that he will do whatsoever his children ask, if they abide in him, and his words abide in them. He has said that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. The whole church daily, and many times a day, prays, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. If it be demanded, When have we seen the answers to these prayers ? I ask in how far is the church of Christ fulfilling

the condition on which the prevalence of prayer depends. Of the millions called by the name of Christ, what is the proportion of those who abide in him? The most numerous church of those nominally Christian, prohibits the reading of the scriptures, and persecutes if possible, even unto death, those who abide in Christ. And if we turn to Protestant churches, where shall we find one that is suffering persecution for the faithfulness of its testimony for Jesus? Where is the church that can be singled out among men as crucified with Christ, victorious over the world, a living and consistent witness for God? It matters not to say that there are good men in all these churches; of course there are. But is not the number of those in whom the Word of God abides, who, without conferring with flesh and blood, follow Christ through evil and through good report, lamentably small? How small is the proportion of those among good men, whose piety attains to the standard of apostolic times. We pray for the conversion of the heathen world, but who makes sacrifices for the souls of the heathen? We pray for a revival of religion at home, but who obeys Christ and devotes any portion of his time to the work of warning men of their danger, and telling them of the love of a Saviour.

If we expect an answer to our prayers for any particular blessing, the word of Christ that has respect to that particular thing, must specially abide in us. If we pray that the kingdom of Christ may come, we must obey those

words of Christ which concern the coming of his kingdom. We must seek *first* the kingdom of God.* We must make the progress of the religion of Christ the real object for which we live. We must labor and suffer reproach, and endure cheerfully the scorn of men, and hold our property and all that we call our own, subject every moment to the will of the Master, that so we may glorify his name in the conversion of souls. This was the type of primitive piety, and hence it was that the prayers of the saints then prevailed mightily to the pulling down of strongholds. Our prayers will never in like manner prevail, until we follow their example. The Lord's arm is not shortened that he can not save, nor his ear heavy that he can not hear. Our God is a living God, as truly as he was in the days of the apostles. The Holy Spirit is as powerful to bow the heart of man in penitence, as it was ever of old. But we must abide in Christ, if we expect him to descend as on the day of Pentecost. The real power of the church of Christ resides neither in numbers, nor wealth, nor social position, nor learning, nor talent, but in holiness. When the standard of piety in the church shall reach the point of self-sacrificing love and simple earnest obedience, to all the words of Christ, then, and not till then, shall the greatness of the kingdom be given to the saints of the Most High.

This subject may also teach us why so many of our prayers on our own behalf remain unanswered. You have been a professor of religion for many years, and

looking back upon your Christian life, perceive that you have made but small progress in holiness. It may be that your evidences of piety grow dimmer as you grow older. Religion has become with you a matter of form, rather than an earnest and ever present reality. You have an obscure hope that you shall be saved, but you can hardly tell on what it rests, for you do not *know* in whom you have believed. You are dissatisfied with yourself. At times you are alarmed at your condition. You tell us that you pray daily for deliverance and for the light of God's countenance, but your prayers are not answered. You sink deeper and deeper in despondency, and you can find no access to the throne of the heavenly grace.

My brother, is there not a cause? You pray, but does the word of Christ abide in you? Are you honestly and earnestly laboring to keep all of Christ's commandments? Have you broken off from everything in word, and thought, and action, that you know is displeasing to him; and are you doing his will at all hazards and at all sacrifices? When you think of submitting your actual, practical, every day life to Christ, do you not know that before you can do this, a great change must pass over you. The world, its wealth, its pleasures, its ambitions, and its society are engrossing those affections that belong only to God, and encroaching sadly upon those hours which should be given to prayer, meditation, doing good, and the social worship of the saints. What self-denials are

you enduring for Christ, what crosses are you taking up and bearing after Jesus? So long as you live thus, it is all in vain to talk about praying for holiness and communion with God. The words of Christ must abide in you, if you would have prevalence in prayer. If you love Christ you must keep his commandments, though in so doing you break loose from every other association, and stand perfectly alone. You never will have the witness in yourself until you make sacrifices for Christ. Until you do your first works, and strengthen the things that are ready to die, your prayers for the indwelling of the Spirit will be as the idle wind. Yea, though you cry aloud and shout, God will not hear your prayer. Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

These same remarks apply emphatically to our prayers for our relatives and friends.

You are a parent. You are anxious, and justly so, about the eternal welfare of your children. You tell us you pray for them daily, and you ask your friends to pray for them. They are nevertheless growing up to be worldly and thoughtless, and are evidently wandering farther and farther from God. Your prayers are unanswered, and it seems as if the promises of God, in your case, had utterly failed.

It may be, Christian parent, that God is making trial of your faith. But before you accuse God of unfaithfulness, it may be well to ask, have the words of Christ

respecting this particular thing, abode in you. Have you brought these children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and sedulously guarded them from every influence adverse to their salvation? You have prayed *for* them, have you prayed *with* them? Have you on every suitable occasion, set before them their danger, and pointed them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world? Have you never, for the sake of worldly advantage, placed them in circumstances under which every serious reflection would naturally be dissipated? When ambition for social position leads in one direction, and the will of God in another, which do you really desire your children to follow? Parents have sometimes desired me to converse with their children on the subject of personal religion, while I knew that they were exposing them to all those influences, which must render every effort for their salvation utterly hopeless. Brethren, if we desire that our prayers should be answered, our lives and our prayers must be in harmony. It is mocking God to ask him to do something for us, and then place every obstacle in our power in the way of his doing it. Unless the word of Christ abide in us, we can never ask in faith that God will hear us.

And lastly, this subject may convey an important lesson to quite a different class of persons. We sometimes meet with persons to whom the subject of personal religion has long been a matter of serious consideration. They have been in the habit of daily prayer and the read-

ing of the Scriptures. They think they have submitted themselves to God, and asked for pardon through the blood of Christ. They can detect some change in their moral affections. The world has lost much of its attractiveness, and the truths of religion awaken in them some unwonted emotion. They, however, find no satisfactory evidence of their conversion to God. They make no progress in their Christian course, yet they dare not go back, though they can not go forward. They are always looking into their own hearts for evidences of piety, and the longer they look the fewer do they discover. They pray for light, for repentance, for faith, for some manifestation of the love of God, but no answer is returned to their frequent supplications.

If now we ask such a person what are you doing for Christ? the answer is, nothing. If we ask what cross are you bearing for his sake? the answer is the same. Have you warned any sinner of his danger, or spoken to any one of the love of Jesus? the answer is, no. Have you so submitted yourself to Christ, that, in sober practical earnest, you have begun to do his will as far as you know it? You will probably answer that you are waiting for an assurance that you are pardoned, before you begin to serve God; and that, if he will only save you, then you will serve him with all your heart.

I would say to such an inquirer, that he is assuming a false and a very dangerous position. In the first place, God never makes compromises with sinners. If we re-

pent of our sins, and submit ourselves to him, it must be without any ifs or reservations. We must acknowledge the justice of God in our condemnation, and plead for pardon, not on account of what we have done, or intend to do, but wholly for the sake of him that has loved us, and given himself for us. He who thus comes will never be cast out. He who comes in any other way, will never find the open door which leads to everlasting life.

And secondly, you know full well the life which a Christian should lead. You say that you have submitted yourself to God. What then prevents you from doing his will in every thing in which he has revealed it to you? Begin then at once, and do it. Is there no duty pressing at this moment on your conscience, from the doing of which you have timidly shrunk back? Is there no unconverted friend for whose salvation you ought at once to labor? Is there no company before which it is your manifest duty to confess Christ? While you continue in the neglect of plain and manifest duty, you can never expect an answer to your prayers. You must begin at once to *do* the will of God, in so far as he reveals it to you, and then shall your light shine forth as brightness, and your salvation as a lamp that burneth. If the words of Christ abide in you, you may ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.

And, lastly, we may learn from this subject that answers to prayer for the conversion of souls, is the sure test of the piety of a church. In all our churches, prayer

is made without ceasing for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. If our prayers are not answered, it must be because we do not abide in Christ, and his words do not abide in us. When, therefore, additions are not continually made to a church, it is a cause for alarm and self-examination. There must be wrong somewhere, and that wrong must be repented of before a blessing can be expected. We should search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. We must abide in Christ, and his words must abide in us, and then we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. The mountain of the Lord's house must be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, before all nations shall flow unto it.

S E R M O N V I I I .

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MORAL CONDITION OF OTHERS.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.—
GENESIS, iv. 9, 10.

THIS remarkable conversation was held between the first born of woman and the eternal God. The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? The question manifestly implied that he was in some sort responsible for his brother's well-being. Cain answers his Maker in the first place by a deliberate lie. I know not, said he, while he knew too well the field in which his brother lay weltering in his blood. Cain moreover observed the implication involved in the question, and he took occasion instantly to repudiate it. Am I, said he, my brother's keeper? God condescends neither to argue with the sinner nor to take notice of the insolence of his reply. He reveals at once his knowledge of the murderer's guilt, and pronounces the sentence which it deserved. What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground. And now thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from the ground.

My brethren, I fear that our fallen nature has improved but little since these words were first uttered. Were God to-day to put the same question to us, it would not be remarkable if he received, in effect, precisely the same answer. Were he to inquire of each one of us, Where is Abel thy brother? where are the persons with whom you have been acquainted, who must have been rendered either better or worse by their intercourse with you? I fear that, with Cain, you would reply, I know not; am I my brother's keeper? I do not hold myself responsible for either the well-being or the well-doing of my neighbor. I am responsible for no one but myself, and my neighbor has precisely the same responsibility. Every one must take care of himself. I never oblige men to sin; if they sin, they do it of their own free will, and for what they do, or leave undone, I am not accountable. I imagine that, as in the former case, our Creator would neither enter into an argument nor take note of our insolence, but, in the words of the text, would say to each one of us, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. Your hands are stained with the blood of souls, and you must answer for it in the day when the secrets of all hearts are made manifest.

There seems then to be a question at issue between man and his Maker. God holds us responsible for the effect of our conduct upon others. We declare that we are not responsible. What God affirms we deny. What

is the truth in the case? Is God right and are we wrong, or is God wrong and are we right? Is the Judge of the whole earth a God of equity, or is mortal man more just than his Maker? This is the question which we are called upon for a few minutes to consider.

I. What is the truth in this matter, if we examine our relations to each other as men?

You say that you are not responsible for the result of your conversation and example upon others; that every one must take care of himself, and bear his own burden; and that all for which we are accountable is the result of our own actions upon ourselves. But I ask, do you not know that others are affected by your example, and that their moral character will be modified by what they hear you say and see you do? This you do not deny, but still you affirm that no one can be either good or bad for another; that sin is the act of the individual sinner; that every moral agent is endowed with perfect freedom of will; that no one need be influenced by you unless he chooses; and therefore you can not be held responsible for the sin of your neighbor. Hence you hold, that though you acted with perfect freedom, and knew what would be the result of your actions, nay, though you deliberately intended to produce this result, you are in no manner morally accountable for the consequences.

Let us attempt to illustrate this case by one somewhat analogous. You take a pan of coals and throw them into your neighbor's house. The house takes fire,

and is consumed. It sets on fire the houses adjoining, these to others, until the conflagration becomes general, and a whole neighborhood is reduced to ashes. You are arraigned for the crime of arson. You admit the fact that you placed the burning coals in his house, but you plead that you did not *burn* the house, that was wholly out of your power. The house burnt itself, and it could not be burned in any other manner. You knew, to be sure, that if you threw burning coals into it, it would be consumed ; but *you* did not burn it. And still more, it burned because it was of wood ; if it had been constructed of stone and iron it would never have taken fire. You do not deny that you knew it to be made of wood, and that it would burn. We ask if you did not know that if this house burned it would set fire to all the houses adjoining ? This you do not deny, but you reply that people should not set their houses so near together, and that every one must take care of his own house. You say, moreover, that the owner of the house should have taken better care of his property, and not have allowed you to do him an injury ; and that he should have put it out as soon as he discovered the danger. The fault is therefore his, because he took so little care of his property. We tell you that he did not bar you out because he had confidence in you. You reply that he had no right to be unsuspecting, for you never told him that you would not set fire to his house. What, I pray you, would all this twaddle amount to ? There are the facts

Before us is this wide-spread desolation. You are the knowing and willful cause of it. It is all the result of your own deliberate act. You intended to produce the first result ; you knew that the others were liable to ensue, and knowing and intending all this, you did the deed and are responsible for it, and for all the consequences.

Let us apply this in the first instance to your own experience. Turn your eyes inward, and observe with care what you are at this moment. Examine deliberately your own character, and weigh with accuracy your own intellectual and moral condition. Go back to boyhood, and recall the various changes that have been wrought in you during your passage through life. You can well remember those critical periods when your biases, your objects, your aspirations, the governing principles of your character, underwent the most important modifications. You will recollect, if you care to recollect it, that those changes in character, by which so much of your subsequent destiny was determined, were to a great extent, if not wholly, the result of the associations which were then exerting a predominant influence over you. Some of the men whom you have known took care to summon you to high resolve, to breathe into your soul noble aspirations, and instill into your forming mind the principles of truth and honor, disinterestedness and humanity. Others, by example and precept, filled your imagination with pictures of wickedness ; they took pleasure in liberating you from moral restraint ; they enticed you into

sin ; they forged those chains of evil habit by which you are to the present moment held in bondage. How do you look upon these two different classes of your associates ? Do you not love and honor and venerate the one, and hate and despise the other ? You look upon the former as your dearest friends, and upon the latter as your worst enemies. The thought of the one fills you with gratitude that softens your heart and makes you better, the thought of the other arouses within you a spirit of hate and revenge, which must be subdued into forgiveness, or it will make you worse. But why this difference, if the good have fulfilled and the wicked have violated no responsibility ? If their precept and example have had nothing to do with your present condition, why should you lay your virtue or vice, your success or failure, at their door ? Your own conduct, your own moral instincts, your own deliberate judgment, all give the lie to your theory ; and you can not but see that if others are responsible for your present moral condition, you are equally responsible for their's.

But we will proceed to other illustrations. We will take the case of a parent. A family is growing up around him, and looking up to him as the model upon which their intellectual and moral character is to be formed. It is right that they should do so, for where else should they look for precept and example. On various occasions, to escape some trifling inconvenience, or to gain some transient advantage, he utters, or he tells them or his

servants to utter, what he knows to be false ; he makes a promise which he does not intend to fulfill, he speaks a threat which he does not mean to execute, or he terrifies a child by setting forth some danger which he knows to be fabulous. He smiles approbation upon some transaction which displays great skill but little honesty. He has never said so, but his children have imbibed the decided impression that he estimates men by their success, and not by their integrity. He talks to them very gravely about the excellence of virtue and goodness, but the deference which he pays exclusively to wealth and position, show very clearly that he is not in earnest. His children imbibe his sentiments and improve upon his example. He finds as they grow up to be men and women, that they have become adepts in all the arts of duplicity and cunning, and that they are putting in practice towards him, the very lessons in which he was their first instructor. He is ashamed to observe that they care far less than he considers respectable, for the means by which wealth is acquired, so long as the end is attained ; and that their associates are men whom he would hardly notice on 'Change. His sons are the companions of sharpers and profligates, and his daughters the wives of adventurers and debauchees. When, and where, and by whom were the germs of all this wickedness and misery nourished ? Whom did God appoint to be the keeper of these children ? Who was it that set fire to that house ?

Take another illustration. Here is a man engaged in extensive business, surrounded by junior partners, clerks, and the various classes of young men employed in a large mercantile establishment. They look upon him as their acknowledged head, whose opinion will determine their position when they enter upon life. They hear him express opinions to a customer quite at variance with those which in confidence he expresses to them. They, not unfrequently, record transactions which are sadly in violation of the precept, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. A neighbor is pressed for money, and a profit is realized out of his necessities, which must not be mentioned out of doors. All this and much like it is of course confidential, and is never spoken of elsewhere. Here it seems to terminate and be forever forgotten. But does it terminate here? Alas, the poison is already at work, corrupting the principles of all those young men. The lesson has been learned by all to whom it has been taught, and the practice commencing where the teacher left it, soon grows into habitual dishonesty. You may trace these men into subsequent life. One becomes wealthy by practices which brand him as a sharper. Another loses all character by a shamefully dishonest failure. One flees his country as a defaulter, and another is convicted of forgery. It is fortunate for the chief if these lessons are not practised on himself, and his account of stock, at the end of the year, does not discover discrepancies hard to be accounted for. Was not this man

the keeper of the souls of the young men in his employ? When, and where, and by whom were these seeds planted? Where is Abel thy brother? Who set fire to this house?

I might take other illustrations. I might ask, who are the men, at this moment, responsible for the well being and happiness of this nation? Who chooses the legislators whose laws we must obey or suffer the extremest consequences? Who elect the magistrates that, in our cities, and states, and the United States, carry those laws into execution? Who select the judges by whom these laws are interpreted, and by whom they may be made the instruments of the direst oppression? Who, in fact, direct the intercourse of this country with foreign nations, and render the United States the richest blessing or the direst curse to humanity? You, my hearers, and such as you, do all this. The interests of mankind are placed in your keeping. God holds you responsible for the well-being of your fellow-citizens and of your brethren of the human race. Every act of oppression, of public wrong doing, of wickedness in high places, can be traced home directly or indirectly to you and such as you; and it will be traced home and laid at your door, and your children and your children's children will reap the reward or pay the penalty to the remotest generations.

But why should I particularize. Look at the history of every day of our lives. We are always talking and

men are always hearing us. We are always acting and men are always seeing us. Every word that we speak and every act that we perform, is contributing something to form the character of the men around us. They are made either better or worse by their intercourse with us, and we can not prevent it. The effect which we produce on them they will reproduce in their intercourse with others. Thus the fountain of moral influence which we open will flow on, growing deeper and broader even unto the end. In the broad daylight of the judgment morning, all this complicated network will be completely disentangled, and the part which each man has borne in forming the character of his neighbor will be traced back distinctly to its author. There will then be no need there of asking, Where is Abel thy brother? for he will stand face to face before us, and every lineament which we have traced upon his soul will be distinctly visible to the universe. Well will it be for us, if at that day, the blood of our brother does not cry out to God against us.

Here let us pause for a moment, to observe the light which is thus thrown upon the sinfulness of sin. It would seem, from all that we know, that moral evil is in its nature infectious, and by necessity reproduces itself forever. That a single sin must mar our own moral nature, and create a tendency to sin, which, unless corrected, must forever gain strength, can be easily shown. That it must from our social nature produce the same effect upon others, is also evident. Thus it is that the

sin of our first parents is the cause of all the sin and misery that have cursed our race to the present day. Every one of our own sins partakes of the same character. What must then be the desert of the sins of a lifetime? What mortal man can measure, much less make reparation for, the mischief which he has wrought in the universe of God? Surely by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified. Well for us is it, that our help is laid upon One mighty to save. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin: for he hath magnified the law and made it honorable. This is the only and all-sufficient hope for a sinner.

II. I have thus far treated of this subject in its relations to men who claim no part in the blessings of salvation. Its bearing is yet more impressive on those who profess to be the disciples of Jesus Christ. Let us look at it briefly in this relation.

It is manifest that the children of God are continued on earth, for the express purpose of being keepers of their fellow-men. They were such under the old dispensation. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord of Hosts. He expected his chosen people to testify for him, and exemplify the superiority of the true religion over every form of idolatry. He looked for the fulfillment of the obligations which they had assumed, when they separated themselves from the heathen and became his people. Surely, said He, they are my people; children that will not lie, therefore he was their Saviour. When they did not fulfill

their obligations, but suffered the lamp of piety to go out in their temple, so that they shed no light upon the surrounding darkness, but through them his name was blasphemed among the Gentiles, he swept them away from the land which they had polluted, and blotted them out of the catalogue of nations.

The teachings of the New Testament are yet more explicit, frequently repeated, and set before us with every variety of illustration. Our Lord represents the world as going to decay, and his disciples as the salt by which it is preserved from decomposition. The world is a mass of unleavened meal, Christ's disciples are the leaven by which it is excited to universal fermentation. The world is a dark room, they are the lamp by which it is to be lightened. The world is shrouded in starless midnight, they are the city set upon a hill, by which the far off traveler discovers his direction and reaches his home in safety.

The meaning of all this can not be misunderstood. We are here taught that our title to discipleship must rest on something more than mere quiescence, having our religion to ourselves, and doing no harm with it. If this be all our piety, we are salt that has lost its saltness, good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot. We are lamps hidden under a bushel, which are just as good as no lamps at all. Christ teaches us that his disciples must be something better than a mere negation, they must exert a real and positive agency on the world around them. The salt must diffuse its saltness.

The city on the hill must scatter light on those near and those afar off. It is by thus doing that we give evidence of our discipleship, and, if we do it not, he will say unto us I never knew you. Christ imposes upon all his disciples the duty of being in this sense the keepers of their fellow-men.

The reasonableness of all this is self-evident. In order that the world should be converted unto Christ, it is necessary that every man should be convinced of the truth of his doctrines, and the authority of his mission. An abundant proof of this may be logically made out, on the principles of historical evidence. But this evidence can reach not one in ten thousand of the human family, and among those whom it reaches, prejudice will cavil where the understanding can make no reply. Christ intended the *conversion of sinners* to be the standing miracle by which it should be proved that he is the messenger from the Father. When men, by belief in him, are transformed from sin to holiness; when the lascivious become chaste, the passionate meek, the selfish self-denying, the covetous liberal, the proud humble; when men are seen trampling upon the idols to which they lately bowed down in subjection, here is a moral victory which nothing earthly can account for. The power which conquers the world must be derived from something the world knows not of. Men may reply to an argument, but there is no reply to a life changed from sin to holiness. It is a fact which every man can ob-

serve, which every man can comprehend, and which can be accounted for by nothing but the power of the Spirit from on high ; and that Spirit acting only through the words of Christ, teaches that Jesus is the Messiah sent of God.

Nor is this all. The Spirit is sent to convert men in answer to the prayers of the children of God. They are the medium through whom the Spirit is imparted to men. God converts the world through the instrumentality of his own children. But their prayers are in vain, and their efforts are a dumb show, unless they proceed from a holy and loving soul. God has thus made the progress of his cause on earth, the salvation of a world perishing in sin, to depend on the holy and consistent lives of the disciples of his Son. For this reason again he declares that each one of us is the keeper of his brother.

Not only are we taught our responsibility in this matter ; the most solemn judgments are denounced against those who neglect to fulfill it, or who, by their example or precept, lead others into sin. This is what our Lord means by offending, or being a cause of offence or stumbling to others. He declares that it were better for us that a millstone were hanged about our necks, and we be cast into the sea, than to be guilty of this sin. Nay, he urges us to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, rather than do it. In other words, he teaches us that we must suffer any privation, lose any advantage, or deprive ourselves of any pleasure, rather than by our con-

duct or example be the means of ruining the souls of our fellow-men. In a word, we are forbidden to do or to leave undone any thing by which the salvation of our brethren may be endangered. The Apostle Paul carried out this precept to the letter. He knew as well as we, that meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we eat not are we the worse, yet, said he, if meat maketh my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth. It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, is offended, or is made weak. It is in this spirit that the Master holds us to be the keepers of our brethren.

And now suppose a professed disciple of Christ to commit any of the sins of which I have before spoken. He does more than lead men into sin ; he stupefies their consciences, and teaches them to do evil without remonstrance from within. Looking upon him as a practical exponent of the law of God, they flatter themselves that what he does is not forbidden, and they may therefore do it with impunity. Suppose a Christian parent to be thoughtless about his word ; in fits of passion to give way to violence of manner and rashness in utterance ; suppose him to labor more for wealth and position than for Christ and his salvation ; suppose him to allow successful wickedness to pass unrebuked, and unpopular piety be made a matter of ridicule, his children will of course follow his example. But this is not all. They will natu-

rally conclude, either that he is no Christian, or that all this is consistent with Christianity ; that there is in it nothing morally distinctive, and that in fact it is all a pretense. Another disciple is a merchant, attentive upon all the ordinances of religion, sound in the faith, and ready on all proper occasions to exhort men to repentance. But follow him to his place of business, and you may find him grasping with an overreaching eagerness for gain, forgetful of truth in his representations, selfish and unfeeling toward those in his power, and capable of littleness, nay of meanness, in financial negotiations. That the young men around him will imitate his example, there can be hardly a doubt. But more than this : they will learn to associate the most solemn truths of religion, and the most devout profession of piety, with selfishness and trickery. The gospel itself becomes to them an offence, and to awaken them to repentance becomes almost hopeless. Who has hardened their hearts and stupefied their consciences ? Was not this man the keeper of the souls of his brethren, and how has he kept them ?

Suppose a disciple of Christ does none of this, but contents himself with doing nothing for his Master. His most intimate friends declare with truth, that he never warned them of their danger or pointed them to Christ ; while they know that he believes them to be, at every moment, in danger of eternal death. He converses with the freedom of a friend on every other subject, but never

utters a word about personal religion. They would gladly receive his advice and listen to his warnings, but on this subject his lips are closed in unbroken silence. They ask, Can he believe the religion which he professes? If we believed him to be in so imminent a danger, we could not let him go unwarned. Thus his very silence hardens the hearts of men. They arrive at the conclusion that there is, after all, no great danger to be apprehended from a life of irreligion, and they go on in impenitence to eternal death.

Again, the Word of God teaches us that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new. Hence, when a man professes to believe in Christ, nothing is so marked as the entire change of his moral affections. The pleasures, the amusements, the ambitions, the gains of the world have lost their charms, and he turns from them with aversion, for they were ruining his soul. His affections are placed on things above, and thence he derives a happiness of which he had before no conception. Happiness was before only a shadow, now he has found the substance. His soul, wearied in the chase of that which satisfieth not, has now found rest in the bosom of God.

But what if this disciple at any time forgets all this, and mingles as before with the world? He enters into its amusements, and drinks as deeply as ever of the cup of its pleasures. The meeting for prayer is deserted for the ball-room, the theater, the opera, and the card-table.

In fact, in all but his profession, so far as man can see, he is just the same person that he was before. Men put these two things together. They say, Here is a man who has tried both sources of happiness, and we have tried but one. After a deliberate trial of both, he comes back to that which we have always chosen. From an adequate knowledge of both, he determines that the world is the better portion. After all this talk about religion, he evidently believes that there is nothing in it. Is not this a natural and reasonable conclusion? And who is responsible for the production of this result? Who furnished the facts from which this conclusion is drawn? When God shall ask, Where is Abel thy brother? will not thy brother's blood cry out against thee from the ground?

And now, if all this be so, Christian brethren, what remains to be done? Does it not become us to form a more definite conception of the character, and estimate more truly the responsibility, of a disciple of Christ? Shall we not humbly repent of the carelessness of our lives and the worldliness of our motives? Shall we not once more lay upon our shoulders the forsaken cross, deny ourselves, and follow in the footsteps of Christ? Shall we not, as Christ did, make the salvation of souls the object in reality for which we live? There is much land to be possessed and we are well able to possess it. Let us thrust in the sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

The encouragements to Christian effort were never so

great since the apostolic age, as they are at this moment. The field is the world, and it is all white to the harvest. At home we may labor under the protection of law, and abroad the heathen are waiting for the Gospel. Of late, God has taught us what he is willing to do, when we seek first the kingdom of heaven. During the past winter, when Christians left the pursuit of gain to meet at morning, at noon, and at evening, to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit, and followed up their prayers by calling on all whom they met to repent and believe, their prayers were abundantly answered, and men by tens of thousands were converted unto God. It was, moreover, mainly the work of private Christians. It was a manifest token of divine approbation bestowed upon the labor of individual disciples. I believe, Christian brethren, that in all this we have as yet seen only the hiding of the power of our God. He has shown us this much that we may hope to see yet greater things than these. Our churches are now prepared to labor for the conversion of this country, as we have never been before. Encouraged and refreshed by what we have seen, let us enter with tenfold earnestness upon the work of the Lord, and give him no rest until the sun of the day of Pentecost again rises upon the earth. Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season shall we reap if we faint not.

THE END.



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