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SERMON IV.

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THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS.

JOHN iv. 13, 14. *Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst : but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

WHEN the Son of God, persecuted in Judea, found himself in danger of losing his life before his testimony was finished, he fled that province, and transferred the scene of his ministry to Galilee. Samaria lying between, he necessarily travelled through a section of that country, unless he deviated from the direct route. The deep-rooted enmity which had long subsisted between the Jews and Samaritans, would have furnished to common minds a reason for such deviation. But in the

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mind of Christ, who *loved* his enemies, it excited not a wish to avoid them. He followed the direct way; and having travelled as far as Sychar, and being wearied with his journey, he sat down on a well just without the town, while the disciples went into the village to procure refreshment. At this juncture the providence of God, (ever subservient to his purposes of grace) brought a woman of Samaria to receive instruction; and the prediction is fulfilled—*I am found of them who sought me not.* By the circumstances and incidents connected with this interview, was very naturally introduced the great object of our Saviour's mission. The woman came to draw water—he, being faint, asked to drink. The Samaritan, astonished at such condescension in a Jew, instead of commending what she saw meritorious in his conduct, heaped reproach on him for his nation. He, on the contrary, instead of exasperating her already jealous and prejudiced mind, begins, in his characteristic manner, to teach this ignorant and wicked woman her necessities.—*If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that asked drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* Conversant like Nicodemus with earthly things only, and destitute of spiritual discernment, she treats his pretensions with derision, and contemptuously asks—*Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well?* From Jacob's Lord and Redeemer flowed the answer—*Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever shall drink of the water that*

I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. And what was the sentiment with which Jesus Christ intended to inspire this woman, the representative of an ambitious and sensual world ? What means he by this *living water* in his gift ? Without doubt, my brethren, he intends to inculcate and enforce these important truths :—That *this* world cannot make us happy—that its most *useful* objects, and such as are essential to man's existence here, were never designed of God to be the objects of his chief pursuit, or the sources of his chief pleasure—that, on the contrary, the life of man consists in knowing and enjoying God, and not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. He designed to draw a striking comparison between those things which the world *value*, and those they disesteem ; and to oppose to the former the *true riches*. These then are the topics on which we are principally to dwell ; and to elucidate and apply them, is the object of this discourse. “Whoever—said a celebrated preacher of Louis XIV.—whoever is ambitious of *honors*, however great his station may be, shall never be content to be what he is. Whoever endeavours to accumulate *wealth*, however full his coffers, shall never have enough to sate his desires. Whoever is a slave to his natural *appetites*, shall never be able to satisfy his masters. Whoever seeks to enlarge his *knowledge*, however successful in his pursuit, shall but increase his sorrow.” So say the Christian ethicks.

I. Whoever is ambitious of *honors*, however great his station may be, shall never be content to be what he is. When the son of Macedonia had made himself master of the world—when he had extended his empire to the utmost bound his aspiring mind had marked out, and returned home, covered with all the glory which his achievements could yield—he wept. On the very pinnacle of human greatness, he *wept*. And why? Plainly because homage, grandeur, glory, cannot make man happy. Because the moment his objects are accomplished, his hopes of success realized, and his passions gratified, he thirsts *again*. You are indignant perhaps, and look upon him as a monster, justly cursed with inquietude for an ambition so exorbitant. You promise yourself satisfaction with only a *moiety* of his dominions, with only a ray of his glory. Who then is the weaker man—the most ignorant of himself and of the world? Alexander, who was wretched on the throne of kingdoms—or *you*, who expect to be satisfied with an *inferior* portion of a good of the same nature? Alexander, who was miserable when his acquisitions had equalled his conceptions—or *you*, who conceive the half of them more than enough to gratify all your wishes? If the greater do not fill the mind, can less of the same kind cause it to overflow? Mark the nature and progress of ambition. It never fails to enlarge itself with gratification. Like the traveller of the mountains, it has no sooner gained its proposed summit, than a wider prospect opens, and a cliff still higher meets the

eye, and all *behind* is naught till the highest point is gained. Ambition has its *inns*; it never finds a settled home. The flocks on the less fruitful fields, graze slowly, and contentedly. The pastures grow fairer, and present a richer herbage; then, more insatiable as they advance, they trample on the most luxuriant, still more unsatisfied. *Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like these brutes that perish.* The cup refreshes only at the lip, and like the stream which the over-heated crave, these objects do but inflame the appetite which they are employed to allay. Willingly *unmindful*, rather than ignorant of this, the ambitious man pursues a phantom, and never *is*, and never *can* be blest. The history of six thousand years gives an uniform and decisive testimony on this point. Man's observation and his own experience, concur with this witness. Reason adds her conclusions, from an investigation of the nature of the mind, and the ends of ambition; and over all, the decree of the Most High obtrudes itself upon his convictions, to give certitude to our position. Yet all this evidence he treats as a fable, and pushes on, fool-hardy, through toil and pain and vice, to disappointment, ignominy, and despair.

We leave him to his fate, and follow, in the second place, the votary of Mammon, through a like impetuous career, to a like disgraceful end.

2. Whoever endeavours to accumulate *wealth*, however full his coffers may be, shall never have enough to sate his desires. I say nothing of the *sordid* character of the passion of avarice, as no-

thing was said of the grovelling artifices of the ambitious. I say nothing of the probability, after submitting to all the necessary drudgery of the avaricious, of an entire failure in the pursuit—nothing of its tendency to cramp the genius, and contract the heart—nothing of the *vices* which the passion engenders; or of the corruption whence it springs—nothing of the restlessness it necessarily creates, and of the privations it occasions—but treat merely of the insufficiency of its gratification to promote “our being’s end, and aim.” This fact *alone*, stamps indelible disgrace on the heart under its dominion, and is enough to fix his reprobation, who continues to indulge and cherish it, in opposition to the precept of Jesus Christ, and prefers its indulgence to those means of happiness which he has authoritatively prescribed.

Happily for the lovers of truth, the fact on which our position rests, is attested by the very man who above all others we should select as the most competent witness. Need I name the king of Lydia? His most extravagant desires answered, his coffers full, and his mind measuring man’s happiness by the quantity of his gold and silver, Cræsus, in little pride, displayed all his magnificence before the Grecian philosopher. When he had opened the last box of his treasures, and conducted him to his pavilion, he triumphantly asked Solon if he had ever seen a happier man. The reply was worthy of Solon; and the commotion it produced in the mind of the king, betrayed the emptiness of a heart that derived its enjoyment from such a source.

The mere *denial* that he *was* happy, stripped him of his fancied enjoyment, and evinced the worthlessness of treasures which conferred no good but such as the mere *opinion* of a philosopher could take away. We have another species of testimony from the same witness, however, in a subsequent period of life. For when by order of the Persian general, whose prisoner he had become, Cræsus was ordered to be burnt, and was actually laid upon the pile, he said—‘My exalted state was only an *exterior* advantage—the happiness of *opinion*.’ This honest confession obtained him (and it is a good comment on his testimony) both a reputation for wisdom, and a liberation from the executioner’s hand, which all the affluence in which he trusted were insufficient to have procured. *The fear of the Lord, that is treasure; and a good understanding have all they who do his commandments.* Wealth is indeed a *means* of good; never that good itself. It has purchased liberty of *limb*; never did it purchase freedom of the mind. A mind imbued with the fear of God, needs not its aid. No manacles can confine it, no penury deprive it of the only substantial glory. Money indeed answereth all things; but the *love* of it, is the root of every vice; and though it may gratify some mean passions, it leaves every one that is noble to burn unextinguished, or to be buried in eternal oblivion. Where do you find the man, pursuing this as his grand object, whose avarice is sated—who craves no perquisite of wealth, yet unattained? Legitimate offspring of the horse-leech, he is

hoarse with crying give, give. As often as he drinks, he thirsts *again*. But the decree of heaven, that his possessions shall attend him only in this cradle of his existence, puts another barrier in his way to happiness which he cannot surmount, even were it in their nature to afford it. They do *not* afford it, for a moment. They procure absolutely nothing *essential*, to virtuous felicity, but actually contribute largely to self-reproach. Those caverns which avarice has made the depositaries of her *soul*, have an atmosphere which corrodes and poisons every creature that enters them. Let us withdraw from the place then, and enter next into the haunts of the man of pleasure, destined, like the former, to seek in vain the good of which all men are in pursuit.

3. Whoever is a slave to his appetites, however successful in seeking their gratification, shall never satisfy them. To resist their demands is a difficult task: still more difficult is it to make them yield the fruits of permanent enjoyment. It was kind in God to transmit to us one example demonstrative of this truth—an example to every one who reads the history of the son and heir of the illustrious house of David, sufficient to convince the libertine of every grade and every age, that if he hopes for happiness his expectation shall be cut off. His is a pursuit, in which there is not only no hope, but in which intellect, honor, and the better part of man, have no interest and no share. A pursuit from which, we admit, pleasure is not excluded, but it is a pleasure, remember, which even the do-

mesticated brute, seems ashamed to avow as the chief end of his being. The sensualist himself, though he dignify his vulgar indulgences with the name of pleasures, enters into many of their scenes with studied caution; and his secrecy, proclaiming his shame, seems to say—‘honour, virtue, peace, are not there.’ In hiding his object and misrepresenting his aim, he unconsciously pays deference to that voice which utters in deep murmurs the anathemas of heaven. Is not this fact enough, to condemn his purpose, and convince the world that his steps take hold on hell, and that he himself anticipates some dreaded evil from indulgence? But there are, it will not be denied, some sensual pleasures into which fear and disguise do not enter; from whose pursuit, remorse does not immediately flow. Disgraceful fact, that folly should thus be set in great dignity, and the world combine to sanction contempt of the laws of heaven, and render vice honorable! And is this the only proof that sensuality conduces to substantial bliss—that the taste is so vitiated, and the public sentiment so corrupt, as to connive at downright sottishness? Who made that taste and that sentiment the standard of honour and virtue? And who is ultimately to decide the question, whether sensuality is to be found the highway to happiness? Let HIM answer, who, independent of matter and of man, enjoys himself, and guides his creatures to the enjoyment of perfect bliss. Hear him all ye people! *She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth; and her house, to all who frequent it, is the way to*

death.—Ignorant of good as the couch on which she reclines, or the odour she inhales ; and unsusceptible of the pure delight which waits on virtue, as the vermin which wait for her in the tomb. Such is the testimony of him who wills our blessedness, instructs us in its nature, and who has opened in the Gospel its only source. Who of you prefers the decision of his own weakness to the infallible judgment of God ? I ask that lover of pleasure more than of God, to tell me when *were* you, when *will* you be satisfied ? When you have drunk to intoxication at these cisterns, and bathed every sense in the most limpid streams of sensual joy, were you perfectly at peace ? Was your heaven complete ? Or would you have gladly stolen from the waters unseen, forgotten of yourself, unknown to God, and all the Universe ? Take then your own experience, and bribe it if you can, to stand up and confront the testimony of God. Conscience empoisoned the chalice before you put it from your lips ; and often does memory, faithful to her trust, renew the bitter taste, and force you to live over the disquietude of your guilty hours.—It haunts even your pillow, and disturbs your slumbers. But still you tell me you had enjoyment, and seek it yet again. I thank you for the confession : for had the gratification accomplished the object of your pursuit, you would not thirst again ; and the *recollection* of your pleasures, as well as the enjoyment, would have been unattended with a sting. Unsated like the worm which never dies, the prisoner of despair would as fitly

challenge the possession of any thing like substantial happiness.

4. Repair then, in the last place, to the retreat of the Philosopher, than whom no unchristianized mind has better pretensions to enjoyment—Whoever seeks to enlarge his knowledge, however successful, does but increase his sorrow. Sanctioned as it is by inspiration, we cannot but admit the correctness of the saying—*for the soul to be without knowledge is not good*. Its pursuit so corresponds with the nature of man, as renders it a proper employment of his faculties and time. But the operation of knowledge, and the influence of science *alone*, on man as he *is*, dependent for happiness on the qualities of his *heart*, is analogous to that of the sun on the other parts of our system, supposing his light to be unaccompanied with heat. It would exist, in such case, only to show how useless the one without the other; and how essential their combined influence, to the perfection of this system. The more the mind is enlarged, and the better it is stored with the treasures of speculative knowledge, the more unpropitious to happiness is its further pursuit, while unattended with virtue. The more thorough and extensive its acquaintance with itself, its relations, and every part of the natural and moral system to which it belongs, the more wretched; since it wants a quality absolutely essential to its enjoyment. This one quality, in relation to him who pursues such wisdom as the source of happiness, the apostle had in his eye, when, to convict the philosophers of his

age, he said—*the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom ; but we preach Christ crucified : to the one a stumbling block, and to the other foolishness.* And when he added, in another place—Though I understand all mysteries, were capable of unfolding the sublimest, and bringing to light the most recondite truths ; though I possess a knowledge of all substances—of the foundation of all existences, and were thoroughly versed in the learning of all ages, without this one thing, I am nothing—nothing in point of true glory, or permanent enjoyment ; nothing better than the fool. You can hardly describe more correctly the condition of a soul in hell, than by accurately delineating the state and circumstances of such a man. In point of knowledge on the verge of heaven, and yet, for want of that one excellence, a *holy heart*, unable to pass the line. A man who seems capable of surveying the whole coast of wisdom and excellence, of reaching the sublimest conceptions of the divine perfections, illustrated in his works—who looks through them, and sees how trees, and brooks, and stars, and suns, and seraphs, all exalt his praise, and yet, (that one essential spring of happiness untouched) joins not, for very wickedness, the concert ! The light indeed is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eye to behold the sun ; but let the Zemblian tell how frigid are his beams, to him who never feels their genial influence ; and only knows that something more than light is wanting to complete his comfort, and the glory of that splendid luminary.

There is another sense in which he who enlarges knowledge, does but increase his sorrow. It is the fate of only narrow minds, to derive complacency from the extent of their acquisitions. The man of great attainments has advanced too far in the field for such a triumph. He has travelled upward, till he perceives that the field is boundless; and consequently can derive his complacency only from a humble walk with God. The superficial mind is ignorant how much may be known, and is indebted to its ignorance for its pleasures. The man of great mind, investigating as he proceeds, and finding even in an atom, enough to baffle all his boasted sufficiency to scan the great First Cause of all these wonders, is humbled too; but mortified involuntarily, and every simple story from the heavens, which contents the christian, makes him rave. With every new acquisition the painful reflection is renewed, that the chain of which he has discovered a few links, is of boundless extent: and though at certain stages his appetite grows keener, and the relish higher, and the ardour of pursuit proportionably stronger, yet there are points at which it sickens—not because the appetite is sated, but because his *nature* is not refreshed, and happiness, the end of all his labour, is not gained. Let him drink, and be the draught delicious as it may, he *thirsts again*. Much study is a weariness to the flesh, and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.

Where then is happiness to be found, and who can tell the place thereof? Even *gratified ambi-*

tion sits down and weeps, and her desperation declares—*it is not in me*. The coffer of the man of wealth exclaims, while he looks upon the grim messenger who is to bear him away from his treasures, *it is not in me*. The remorse, which follows from his haunts the man of pleasure, forbids the hope that we shall find it there; and on the gate-posts of every temple of science, is written, in no ambiguous language, the fate of those who expect to find it there.

In this momentary conviction of these salutary truths, allow me to lead you to the fountain which the Son of God has opened—a fountain of living waters, and these recommended by the consideration that they are without price. Drink without incredulity at that fountain, and you shall thirst no more. There, that ambition which burns to one's consumption when it is kindled, nor fails to prey upon *itself* when its fuel is all expended, shall be extinguished; and in its place, the love of divine excellence immortalize your pursuits. There, that passion for wealth and grandeur, which, if *gratified*, yields but a momentary, and that a worthless delight, shall be transformed into a passion for durable riches, in the nature and effects of which the bliss of God instructs you, and of whose influence you can never be deprived. There, that love of pleasure which impoverishes the nature it is wantonly employed to enrich, shall be quenched in the river of God; and the pure stream of the water of life, forever flowing and forever full, shall satisfy your immortal desires. There too, that knowledge

which, unaccompanied with holiness, only increases sorrow, shall be coupled with the love of truth and excellence, and changed to wisdom like that of God, justify your endless labours for its enlargement, and your expectation of endless benefits from its possession. It is a fountain of pleasure thus refined, and solid, and undecaying, that our Saviour speaks of, when he says in the text—*But whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.*

Here, then, we have disclosed the grand secret hidden from sages and the learned, in their pursuit of good, since time began—Here we have unravelled the mystery, which has been so long a scandal to the Jew, and folly to the Greek. This secret, disclosed by the great Teacher, I shall endeavour to make intelligible and familiar to you ; and from this mystery unravelled, attempt to remove the scandal : and to this fountain I would allure, if possible, every man and child, who has been hitherto unsuccessful in the gratification of his unconquerable desire of happiness.

First, the *secret* is—that every creature, to be made perfect in its kind, must have an object of affection on which to dwell, corresponding with its nature ; adapted to its state ; commensurate with its duration ; and adequate to the supply of *all* its wants. A principle, it is true, taught *obscurely* by other guides ; a lesson, read to man from the *works* of God ; a truth, involved in the constitution of

the natural world.—A principle notwithstanding, which for some cause, (*we* say from the corruption of his heart) man is very reluctant to receive, because its application despoils him of his fancied beauty and worth, opposes his taste, and mortifies his pride. A lesson, which, degenerate as he is, he would *never* have learned, (easy of acquisition as his judgment may pronounce it) because it is not suited to his wishes. Nothing is more evident to reasoning observation, than that every creature has its element—a state exclusively suited to its peculiar organization; and removed from which, it languishes, loses its original perfection, decays, and dies. The inhabitants of the ocean, the air, the earth, every mere animal, and every insect, and even the vegetable tribes, have each, organization, wants, appetence, peculiar to themselves. There is an element in which only they flourish—a state, in which only they are complete—a connexion, in which they are necessarily joined—an union with certain objects, essential to their *life*, that is, to the perfection of their natures. How preposterous the thought, then, that *man* alone, in nature superior to them all, the most exquisite piece of workmanship which has proceeded from the Creator's hand, should be exempt from the operation of this universal law of being! How absurd the notion, that *he* should be thrown among the parts of this consistent, this uniform system, the production of one hand, to exist at random—alike perfect in the state of either of the creatures among which he lives! How absurd that *he* should have

no connexion, no condition peculiar to himself, but be transformed at his pleasure, into a quadruped or vegetable, without counteracting the design of his Creator, or impairing the glory to which he destined him! The supposition has to contend as strongly against *analogy*, as against revelation. In the latter, this truth, as you well know, has a *palpable* prominence. Man having an *immortal* nature, immortal objects and connexions are alone adapted to that nature; and the love and pursuit of them, can alone entitle him to pre-eminence, and are alone fitted to give him the perfection, to which he is obviously called to aspire. Without *spiritual* life his existence can never be complete. Having broken the connexion with the God from whom he came forth, he can never be at rest, but by a return to *him*, by reunion with him, by a fellowship of love in the perfections and purposes of the Deity. It is not to be denied, or forgotten, that he has also a sensitive, an intellectual and a social nature. But these all *may* exist, without the other, and leave him, of consequence, destitute of the life which he originally possessed, and which Messiah proffers to human imbecility and wretchedness. And since those which constitute only his *natural* life are of an inferior kind, and his higher state of existence, not at all dependent on the lower, his perfection of nature, and of course his happiness, is principally and essentially affected, by his moral and religious state. He has a *kind* of life, no one doubts, remove far as he will, from voluntary connexion with the Deity. But God is his

proper element. So also have some species of the monsters of the deep, a *kind* of life when removed from their element ; and so have the animals and plants of every climate, when removed from theirs. What then ? Is not their *life*—that which constitutes the perfection of their several *natures*—unfavourably affected by the removal ? Is it not obviously impaired ? It ceases to be, what it was designed to be. It loses its vigor and beauty, the very stamina of its peculiar existence, and ultimately fades and dies.

The remark holds perfectly, in its application to *man*. The light from heaven has thrown such radiance around the truth on this subject, that from none but such as love disguise and darkness, is it capable of being concealed.—*I am come*, said Messiah, *not that they might have life, but that they might have it more abundantly*. Life, animal and intellectual and social, they had without the intervention of his redeeming power—life of a lower kind—but in his gift is a life, he tells you, such as man had lost, and such as it is his prerogative to restore. This, therefore, is a secret whose communication was worthy of a mission from heaven—worthy of being reserved till the fulness of time had come, for the conviction of the world that it was utterly incapable of restoring *itself*, by the devices of its own wisdom, or the energy of its own powers. And thus made known, it is worthy of your investigation, your whole attention, your undivided affections. You may be a *man*, without animal desires ; you may *exist*, without a body ;

you may continue to *be*, far removed from society, and books ; you may *live* beneath the ocean, and above the clouds, and in the very heart of the earth ; but you cannot be a living man, having all the attributes of that being which truth pronounces *very good*, without GOD—without a voluntary interest in his counsels, and character, and kingdom, surpassing all other interests. The dignity of your nature, the perfection of your state, the felicity of which you are capable, and which you so passionately desire, can never be yours, till you seek it in a reunion to God, assimilation to him in the qualities of your heart, in mental purity, in holy affection. The atmosphere of the Deity, the sphere in which his perfections shine, and warm, and ennobles, is the *life* of man, the heaven of the rational world. The place, where he is not seen, felt, enjoyed, is hell. That atmosphere, then, is the element of man. Out of it, he lives indeed, but it is a life like that of the fish in the meshes of the net, or in the sand upon the beach—a restless life, a life in union with nothing great, or good—a vapid life, worse than non-existence—an expiring life ; expiring too without a pleasing recollection, without one salutary or delightful anticipation ; without the enjoyment, or remembrance, or rational expectation of return to his long-lost Eden.

In perfect conformity with these sentiments, is the whole design and drift of that admirable intercession, which the ascended Mediator commenced for his disciples, before he reached the invisible altar.—*Father I will, that as thou art in me, and*

I in thee, these also may be one in us. And to this end it was, he pledged himself before his departure, to send to them from the Father, the Spirit of truth; that their hearts might rejoice only in the Lord, and their joy be incapable of ravishment. These are the waters, my brethren, which are to fill the capacious breasts of his disciples—*living waters*, proceeding from the fountain of all life—*running waters*, flowing without intermission—*pure waters*, cleansing every heart into which they flow. They issue, from beneath the Throne—reviving, refreshing, invigorating waters, restoring the diseased to health. The mystery of the scheme of redemption, was, in the counsels of eternity, concerted between the Father and the Son, and is now revealed and applied, by the agency of the Spirit of life. From which mystery—a cause of incredulity to the proud, and an occasion of contempt to the learned in their own esteem—I am to endeavour,

In the second place, to remove the scandal. You have seen already, that the happiness suited to man's nature, the only good, therefore, deserving or allowed the name, is not to be found in the sources where it is ordinarily, and greedily sought; because they are but broken cisterns, and polluted. You have also seen, that it is promised by Jesus Christ in the blessings of his kingdom, solely as his gift; and freely bestowed in the graces of the Spirit. You are bound, therefore, by the laws of candour and consistency, to wave your objections, and lay aside your prejudices against this scheme

of restoration, 'till you have made the experiment on which Jesus Christ rests the demonstration of the sufficiency of this scheme; and 'till you have suffered the offence of the cross to cease. For what method, so efficacious, could divine wisdom contrive, to convince you that in this scheme your happiness was his object—to persuade you that it cannot be had, out of voluntary connexion with himself? What method so admirably adapted to reconcile you to his character, to the principles of his government, and the counsels and statutes of his throne, as that of the obedience and death of his only and guiltless Son! For this is the sum of the mystery unravelled in the Gospel, that *God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*. He saw that you would be more fascinated with the objects which he made only in subserviency, and bade you make subordinate, to your better interests, than with his own most lovely character. He saw that the terrors of his justice affected you less, than the fear of losing the gratification of your criminal passions. He saw that by your own will and wisdom, you would never escape from your entanglements with the world and the flesh; nor take a returning step in the path of that glory, and honor, and immortality, from which you had descended. He saw that you preferred the career of the fallen and obdurate spirits, who had preceded you in the experiment, and invariably failed of success; and that the farther he withdrew from the heart, and the eye of the mind, to convict the former of its mistakes and its crimes, the more it was pleased

with its fancied independence of *his* arm for its enjoyment—the more boastful of the omnipotence of reason, and the perfectibility of atheistical man; and that the longer man proceeded in his own light, and strength, the more total was the darkness of his deeds, and the impiety of his presumings. It was, therefore, a contrivance the most luminous for wisdom, the most astonishing in benevolence, the most stupendous in design and execution, to call back his erratic steps to *him*, by an event which struck the world with awe, and will continue, in all ages, to arrest its attention to him, through the message and crucifixion of his Son. To shew him, through the destruction of that very flesh which man had made his idol, that there was a better life, and a tranquillity and joy, independent of that of the mere animal and intellectual nature. To draw him to the contemplation of the grand end of man's existence, his duty, his interest, his destiny. To convince him of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, by an event pregnant with all religious truth, and involving at once, peace on earth and the glory of Jehovah.—An event in short, in which the eternal God breathes out all his love, empties all his treasures upon the lap of human expectation, and unfolds the operation and issues of all his perfections, in their relation to his intelligent offspring. Why has he done all this, but to divert man from his purpose? To hide pride from a worm, and to bring the wanderer back to God and happiness, by the way of virtuous example, and a propitiatory sacrifice? And does the cross of Christ, in this

view, scandalize you ? Does the ignominy he sustained for such purposes, and which the rocks could not witness without melting, nor the graves without casting forth their dead, nor the sun without covering himself in sackcloth, nor the moon without bleeding as in sympathy, nor the stars without being shaken from their orbits, nor the very temple without being rent asunder—does *this* offend you ? Do you converse with the witnesses of these scenes, and are not the powers of your mind, and your resolution to persevere in disobedience shaken ? Do you perceive this evidence of Jehovah's desire to effect your happiness, and are you still averse to both the nature, and the method of its attainment ? Are you thus assured, by all those witnesses, that a return to the life of God, from which you are alienated, can alone accomplish that desire, and are you not converted ? Have you not renounced the world, condemned your former life, and made your God your glory ? And while the waters of life are thus flowing at your feet, are you not drinking there ?

See yonder penitent ! Her cheek moistened with the tear of contrition, her eye fixed on Jesus. She approaches, she kneels before the cross. By that cross she is crucified to the world ; the world is crucified to her. She glories, with all her accomplishments, in naught beside. Her heart is prostrate, but at peace. She has found rest in those perfections which received their consummation there. *The love of Christ constraineth* her. She has drank at the waters of that crystal rock

which divine benevolence has opened, and she thirsts no more. You may tempt, but you cannot beguile her : you may *reason*, but she *believes* and *feels*, and will not be drawn away from the simplicity which is in Christ. She finds peace of conscience there, and liberty, and joy in the Holy Spirit—She is happy !

Consenting to be enlightened by the same Gospel, to be assimilated to the same God, to be washed in the same blood, *you* shall be happy too, and both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Thus in the mystery of the cross, is the fountain of salvation opened to all men.

And to this fountain, in the last place, I am to attempt to draw you, by setting forth the sufficiency of its waters, to satisfy your most extensive and unconquerable desires of bliss. Made of one blood, constituted essentially alike, the saint, the savage, and the sage, have in common this one object, and the desire of this is the *only* desire they possess in common. This too, is the most unconquerable. Others may be repressed : others to admit the accomplishment of this, must be extinguished. But the desire of a happiness here and without end, can never be subdued. As if it were the symbol of the omnipresence of Jehovah, it attends us in every period ; no place excludes, no time changes, no condition dispenses with it. Yet nothing, as we have seen, nothing within the compass of mortal things, has efficacy to satisfy this desire. Why, then, since the Son of God invites us to confide in his ability and will

to bestow, what all else is confessedly unable to impart, why should our solicitude go longer unanswered, and his benevolence longer unacknowledged? Come then and test his truth, his ability, his love. 'But to have happiness on *his* terms, I must renounce the world.' True, but the very grace which has efficacy to satisfy so extensive a desire, will enable you to overcome the world, and will convince you that its allurements are deceptive, and that its utmost charms are unworthy of your heart. It will shew you, through a new and just medium, the emptiness of its pageantry, and the worthlessness of its most coveted embraces. It will persuade you, that its honors are burdens, its cares perplexity, its pleasures as fleeting as they are disgraceful, and its rewards as inadequate to your homage and your services, as those services are toilsome and disgusting. It will present you objects infinitely worthier of your affection, and claims of high and endless obligation, whose *practical* acknowledgment brings with it, more than a compensation for the performance of the duty.

'But on the terms of Jesus Christ I must *deny* myself.' Yes; but no real pleasures: for the believer in Jesus, finds his enjoyment in the obedience which God demands. 'But I must deny myself gratifications which are very dear to me, and in which I perceive no moral evil.' Be it so, faith will quicken your perceptions, and change those views, which lead you to call sweet, what God has pronounced bitter. Besides, do you bear no privations for love of the world, and submit to no self-denial for its smiles, and to no mortification and

reproach for the passions and the idols which promise you only *temporary* gratification? And are the claims of God, and the hope of immortal enjoyment, derived from such practical acknowledgment, unworthy of equal efficacy in producing a similar self-denial? Do you count all the drudgery of a worldling, and a slave of criminal passion light, for the gratification of a life which to-morrow is no more; and call the most *rigorous* exactions of piety and benevolence an irksome duty, and a bondage? Take the emotions of those who have *submitted* to such exactions, and who can speak with experimental exactness of the trial.—*Troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus; yet behold we live! and still reckon the sufferings of the present time, unworthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*—Preferring of course, all the necessary heaviness, and affliction of the people of God, through manifold temptations, to the honors and rewards of a world whose fashion passeth away. Here is the faith, and patience of the saints; and such are the triumphs of grace—of grace, remember, no other than is offered to accomplish in *you*, and every disciple, the same triumphs. 'Tis true, to become Christ's disciple, you must bear the cross and burden of Christ. But who, let it be answered, sustains the pressure, and whose is the strength which is to support the weight. The duties of Christianity are the *pleasures* of the christian. Its trials are

not merely an exchange of sorrows ; but an exchange of inquietude and wretchedness, for the most substantial peace.

If then there is something desirable in the very bearing of the cross and its most irksome duties, as they seem to *you*, what think you is to be found in its positive rewards ? See, in the counterpart of your desires, the efficiency of christianity to make you blest. In place of that ambition which it denounces, those criminal passions whose indulgence is prohibited, and that love of sensual pleasure which it reprobates, it substitutes those tranquilizing, benignant and elevated affections, which are the spring of all that is pure, and ornamental, and felicitating to man. We are allowed to seek only the honor which cometh from God ; but in the attainment of *this*, all other is but the foil, which the precious stone scorns to take to its aid. We may not love the world ; but the love of the Father sufficeth us. We may not yield to temptation ; but *how shall he who is dead to sin*, desire to *live any longer therein* ? And since hatred to its nature is the first passion the grace of God engenders, who will pursue the object of his aversion ?

And what say you to the sufficiency of the *favor* of God, to fortify the soul ? Is there nothing cheering in the assurance, that his mercy forever enfolds us, his wisdom forever inspires, his love generously forgives, and his Spirit, as a guardian and guide, attends us ? What say you to the hope of being ultimately perfect ?

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seated, in the same inheritance, beside the REDEEMER'S throne! And when the thin partition between this and the eternal world shall be taken down, what think you of being ever with the Lord! Judge not by contrast. Leave out of view the multitude on the *left*—the miseries of those victims of despair. Conceive, only, what it is to drink at the fountain of infinite perfection, and participate in all the glories of a God, to the extent of your capacity; and to partake of all the holy pleasures which Omnipotence can put within a vessel of your dimensions? Will the subject of such glory and such bliss, think you, cast back a longing lingering look, to animal pleasures, to mere earthly joys? O! will it not be *enough* to be able to lift up the head with joy, when the Universal Lord, in his own glory and in his Father's too, shall make the clouds his chariot; the winds and elements his footstool; the light his robe; the angels his retinue; and come, in majesty like this, to judge the world with equity, and the people with his truth? What, think you, will be the ecstasy of his train, when, resounding through the heavens, the hosts of God, in unity of sentiment and harmony of voice, exclaim—*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the KING OF GLORY may come in!* And when the last and *least* of all his humble train is entered, and those massy gates are closed, never—never to be opened more—

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