



WORKS

OF

*Rev. Daniel A. Clark.*

—•••—  
SPECIAL EDITION OF FIVE HUNDRED COPIES, FOR PRESENTATION TO  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

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This Volume is Presented to

*Rev William H. Green*

OF

*Orinator*

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

BY

HORACE F. CLARK AND FREDERICK G. CLARK.

—•••—  
*New York, October 1st, 1872.*

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THE WORKS  
OF  
REV. DANIEL A. CLARK.

EDITED BY HIS SON,

REV. FREDERICK G. CLARK, D. D.

WITH

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

AND AN ESTIMATE OF HIS POWERS AS A PREACHER,

BY

Rev. GEORGE SHEPARD, D. D.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF SACRED RHETORIC, BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

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COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

SEVENTH EDITION.

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1872.

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Southern District of New-York.

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THIS PAGE  
IS IN  
AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE  
OF  
JAMES HENRY CLARK, M. D.,  
ELDEST SON OF  
REV. DANIEL A. CLARK:  
INSPIRED BY FILIAL LOVE AND PRIDE,  
HE EDITED THE PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THIS WORK,  
AND WAS CALLED FROM EARTH  
MARCH 6th, 1869,  
IN THE FIFTY-FIFTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.



## EDITORIAL NOTE.

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It is not far from fifty years since some of these sermons were first published. They were received at that time, as ever since, with marked appreciation. It is notable what slight effect half a century produces in the estimate of writings charged with thought and fervor. These volumes have passed through many editions, neither of which was less welcomed by the public than its predecessor. Owing to the protracted illness and death of the original editor, my brother, James Henry Clark, M. D., this work has been a long time out of print. Inquiries for it have nevertheless continued to be made, and orders have come from distant places in this country and in Europe. It is believed that these Sermons have yet an important mission to fulfill, in the hands of theological students as well as of general readers.

They afford a wholesome contrast to the sensational mania of the pulpit. They also encourage young preachers to rely on what Professor Shepard calls the "clear, straight, and strong," rather than upon the questionable expedients of modern popularity.

My brother, Hon. Horace F. Clark, who owns the stereotyped plates, has placed them at my service for this new edition: it being our aim to keep alive our father's influence, not only by offering this work anew to the public, but by an arrangement to donate copies to the students in several of our theological seminaries.

The Christian public, I trust, will kindly welcome this edition of my father's works. His children,\* at least, take great satisfaction in thus giving new effect to a life and ministry which they know to have been devoted to man's good and God's glory.

FREDERICK G. CLARK.

NEW YORK, April, 1872.

\* The children of Rev. Daniel A. Clark are: James Henry, who died aged 55; Horace Francis; Edward Payson; Frederick Gorham; Elizabeth Moore, who died in infancy; Elizabeth Moore (2d), who died in infancy; Mary Elizabeth, wife of Rev. Livingston Willard; and Sereno Barker.



## INTRODUCTORY COMMENDATIONS.

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LETTER FROM THE REV. WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.

ALBANY, May 22, 1854.

J. HENRY CLARK, M.D.  
NEWARK, N. J.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am glad to learn that you are about to publish a new edition of the Sermons of your honored father. I have always considered them as possessing characteristics which fairly entitle them not only to an enduring existence, but to a wider circulation than they have ever yet gained.

My knowledge of your father's mode of sermonizing is derived chiefly from reading these volumes, as I do not remember to have heard him preach more than twice. A week or two after I graduated at Yale College, in 1815, I stopped at New Haven to pass a night on my way to Virginia. As I was conversing with some of my friends, the bell of Dr. Taylor's church announced that there was to be religious service that evening; and without knowing who was to be the preacher, we immediately determined to attend it. A stranger arose in the pulpit, and by his very first utterance impressed me with the idea that he was no common man. There was little of grace in his manner, but there was something that no one could have mistaken for anything else than power. His devotional service was striking and original; while yet it was evidently the simple working of a highly gifted mind and apparently devout spirit. I wondered what bright star it was that had so unexpectedly appeared before us, and I even went so far as to whisper an enquiry in the ear of my nearest neighbor, who it could be, but I found him as ignorant and as curious as myself. From the beginning of the sermon to the end of it, I listened with the most intense interest, though the question would keep obtruding itself upon me, what giant of the pulpit it was that I was hearing? and I had little doubt that it would turn out that he was one of the

most celebrated preachers in the country. Judge then what was my surprise, when, on going out of the church, instead of hearing that it was some illustrious man whose name and fame were known to every body, I learned that it was Mr. Clark, the minister of Southbury, a town some twenty miles from New Haven. It is due to candor to say, that the sermon which I heard from him that evening was one of his ablest efforts—no other than the celebrated sermon entitled “The Church Safe,” which has since been so widely circulated from the press, and which, of itself, is enough to immortalize the mind that could produce it.

The only other instance in which I ever heard your father preach, was at Amherst, Mass., on the occasion of an ordinary Sabbath day service. The sermon had the same general qualities with the one already referred to, except that it was of a less cheerful and glowing character, and was therefore less adapted to please the popular ear. I well remember that it made the sword of the Spirit look naked and glittering beyond what I had almost ever witnessed. In reading his sermons I have often been struck with a resemblance between them and many of Dr. Griffen’s; though there was, perhaps, this difference between them, that the Doctor’s were more splendid and imaginative, your father’s were direct and overwhelmingly pungent.

It would ill become me to express in detail my views of your father’s character as a preacher, after the admirable, and, as it seems to me, perfect estimate of him in this respect, which has long since been given to the world by Professor Shepard. I cannot think that that estimate, high as it is, is at all exaggerated; nor do I believe that the reading of the sermons will disappoint any whose expectations concerning them have been based upon it. And I cannot forbear to add, that I regard them as well fitted to supply or suggest an antidote to what seems to me certain growing tendencies of the American pulpit to exhibitions of high intellectual culture rather than of those simple, evangelical truths, in which the power of God pre-eminently resides. It seems to me that they may be read with great advantage, especially by theological students and young ministers; and if any should find that there is less of intellectual refinement than suits their taste, they will at least acknowledge that they are models in respect to intellectual and moral power.

I am, dear sir, faithfully yours,

W. B. SPRAGUE.

FROM REV. THOMAS H. SKINNER, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF SACRED RHETORIC AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY, IN THE UNION  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF NEW YORK.

The Sermons of the Reverend Daniel A. Clark are among the very best that the American pulpit has produced. Indeed, few volumes of sermons have appeared—none I think since his were first published,—that deserve to be put into a higher rank. Comprehensive, various, and eminently evangelical in matter; lucid, simple, striking in plan; perspicuous, animated, fluent, energetic, pungent in style; close and intensely earnest in application; masterly and powerful in their entire execution, they are entitled to no inferior place among models in homiletical literature. I am not surprised that there is a demand for another edition of these admirable discourses. They deserve, and I hope will have, a wide circulation, and be blest to the salvation of many souls.

THOMAS H. SKINNER.

NEW YORK, Dec. 30th, 1854.

EXTRACT FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO A FORMER EDITION

BY REV. WILLIAM PATTON, D.D.

\* \* \* \* \* It has been judged desirable to retain the name of "Short Sermons" for the plan of sermons, some of which were published during the lifetime of Mr. Clark. They furnish valuable hints, as well as instruction, in the art of planning sermons. Concerning the Miscellaneous matter, it is proper to remark, that many of the pieces first appeared in the periodical press, and at the time awakened considerable interest. Such as are here collected and re-published, are pieces of permanent value. They illustrate one trait in his character, the seizing upon passing incidents, and vividly impressing the mind with some great moral principle. Some of the Miscellaneous matter will be ranked among the happiest efforts of his pen. \* \* \* \* \*

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO A VOLUME OF SERMONS  
PUBLISHED IN 1826.

\* \* \* \* \* Many excellent volumes have been published, and have edified the churches, and have helped mature for heaven a multitude of believers, but which, from their occasional, metaphysical, or exclusively doctrinal character, are judged unsuitable to be read in evening meetings, to which so often even good men bring a mind as well as a body worn out with fatigue, and need for their edification some repast that can hold their powers waking. Discourses adapted to such an occasion, which must often be read badly to a dull audience, must have poured into them all the novelty, vivacity, force and pungency possible. The truth should be condensed, and the doctrines exhibited in that practical shape that will tend to keep up, through every paragraph, a deep and lively interest. \* \* \*

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EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO THREE VOLUMES OF SERMONS  
PUBLISHED IN 1836.

The author's conviction is that writings are often spoiled by too much smoothing and polishing. These volumes are therefore permitted to go forth without remodeling, with their occasional roughness, which, it is hoped, may not give offence, but simply stir up thoughts, and arouse proper feeling. He would suggest a thought with regard to the *manner* of reading, especially sermons. It would heighten the impression if one read *aloud* for the benefit of the family, after preparing himself to read with due *emphasis* and *feeling*. As a general rule, read aloud when alone, remembering that impressions made at once on the ear and eye reach the heart with double force. Let this course be prayerfully adopted, and sermons, and essays, and even the precious Bible itself, would not so often be regarded as dull compositions, but their perusal would be accompanied with power from on high. \* \* \* \* \*

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## BIOGRAPHY.

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DANIEL A. CLARK was born in Rahway, New Jersey, on March 1st, 1779. His father was David Clark, a relative of Abraham Clark, whose name appears among the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He was a warm Whig, and his property was sacrificed, and his life brought into jeopardy often, in consequence of his patriotic exertions. In reference to these trying scenes, the subject of this memoir was accustomed to say, that he "was cradled in a whirlwind." His mother, Elizabeth Moore, was "a mother in Israel." She seems to have been a woman of great strength and decision of character. She was remarkable for plain dealing and Christian faithfulness toward her children, and those under her care; it was a somewhat austere and uncompromising faithfulness, partaking of an age of more rigid authority than our own. She was alone in her efforts for the religious training and the eternal welfare of her children, for the father did not exert any religious influence. Perhaps this double share of responsibility weighed so heavy, as to induce a double vigilance and energy in her own spirit, for the saving of her house.

The following is his own language, descriptive of her influence over himself.

"A child of prayer, he knew a mother's worth,  
Knew well the silken cords she round him flung,  
To hold him back from crime, and woe, and death."

He pays, in another connection, a more extended tribute to her influence and her worth:

"She wonderfully succeeded in attaching herself to the people of the saints of the most high God. In her eyes, the pious were ever honorable; and through her persevering influence, she had many a kind word dropped in the ears of her family, by one and another that had received the hospitality of her house and table. In the earliest times, she surrounded herself with a kind of hallucination that threw around her a savor of heaven. She had the entire confidence of all that feared God in the neighborhood, and often consulted with them when she knew of any iniquity that was about to be practised; especially, if by her influence the children of her neighbors and of the covenant could be kept from vice."

In the "Maternal Contrast," a small volume recently prepared from his

papers, is found a full history of her character, and an extended tribute to her memory. In that little volume, he says, speaking directly of his mother,

“It seemed to me, sometimes, that heaven told her all my history—and she never forgot my sins. She would remember some act of waywardness many moons, if I kept from her presence, and she had no opportunity to judge me. If the testimony was not full, she knew how to secure a confession; and if not, she prayed for me, and turned me over to the judgment of the great day.”

We have still another tribute to his mother's faithfulness, in the account of his conversion, which is given in his own words.

ANDOVER, Mass., Thursday, Feb. 14, 1811.

“Born in 1779, I lived a wicked and a thoughtless life, until I was ten or twelve years old. I presume that I had, in that time, many fears of death, and of hell, but I have no definite recollection of them. My dear mother had instructed me in the Bible, and catechism, but had made but little progress in bringing me to repentance. I hated her instructions, and longed to be from under her control. As often as possible, I absented myself from her kind instructions. I hated to hear so much about sin and hell. I loved play better than truth. My mother, however, would pursue me, and remind me of my danger, and press me to my Bible; but it was like urging the ox to the place of slaughter. She would have found her work much easier, had my dear father yielded her that assistance which he should have done. I should then have been easily governed. But my father would sometimes allow me to disobey my mother. This did me great injury. I felt my mother's word to be law; and a law it was which I seldom dared to break. If she gave me any commands which were grievous, I used to try to have her repeal the law she had made. If she would not, I tried to have my father say I need not mind her. If he would not do this, my conscience constrained me to obey. I often kept out of her sight, for fear she would forbid me some gratification on which my heart was set. I often wished that God had given me such a mother as the other boys had, one who would indulge me more. Thus I hated her for her kindness.

“When about twelve years of age, I went with some of the children of the village, and one wicked boy from New-York, by the name of S——, to the creek, for the purpose of crabbing. On the way our city-comrade advised us to kill a fowl which we saw by a barn, and use it for bait. By his persuasion and assistance we did. On our return, we saw, near the same place, a flock of turkeys; these we stoned until we killed several of them, and went to shaking off apples for our amusement. The man who owned the orchard saw us, and came to forbid us. He did not discover that we had killed the turkeys, for which reason we escaped.

“On returning home I was much alarmed to think of what we had done. I never had before engaged in such a piece of villany, nor should I then have done it had I not been led on. For some time I feared the man would find us out, and would have us punished. I was during some months in constant agitation.

“Thus I began a bold career of wickedness. Nor did I *begin* only, for I made daily progress. My mother now found it difficult to manage me. I began to break over every restraint; but still was afraid to disobey her. She remembered it, if I did, and would reprove me, or correct me, the latter of which I preferred. I dreaded her reproofs. Now it was that my father should have used his authority, but he let me run on, in my desperate course.

“When about fifteen years old, I began to wish to attend balls; but here, my mother could give me no indulgence. There was no way that I could get to one, without keeping it a secret, or disobeying her. Her restraints now rendered me desperate, and I resolved to disobey. One night, when there was a ball in the neighborhood, I went to bed, where I lay till my mother was asleep; I then rose; carried my clothes into the field; there I dressed me; I then took my father’s horse and went to the ball. But my conscience so disturbed me, that I had no comfort. After staying till about 11 o’clock, in constant agony, I returned, put all things right again, and went to bed. Now it was that I felt a part of hell in my bosom. I could not sleep. My whole system was agitated, so that at length the bedstead shook. I began to think that God would bear with me no longer, but would cut me off for my sins. I at length thought that I was struck with death; but resolved to die alone. I was afraid to tell any one the reason of my distress, and knew no one who could relieve me. I thought my hell had begun. I expected before morning to be among devils.

“I forget whether I finally fell asleep or not, but I believe that toward morning I did; probably through excessive fatigue. During my distress I tried to pray, but found it hard work.

“In a few days I forgot all this distress, and went on with as high a hand as ever. I was desirous, above all things, to attend balls. Once I remember going to a great distance to attend one, but came home much more unhappy than I went; this, however, was always the case.

“About this time there was a ball appointed in the neighborhood, of which I became a party. The landlady, being professedly pious, informed my mother that I was there, and engaged in the dance. Like an Israelite indeed, she sent for me home. I refused to go. She then came herself, and ordered me home. Now I knew not what to do. I had waited upon a young lady to the ball, and could not leave her there, and dared not stay myself. I very soon invited the young lady to go home, and thus made my retreat.

“I have often doubted if my mother acted wisely in this matter. She reduced me to desperation. I felt, the next day, ashamed of my very existence. I wished my mother dead. I wished for anything which might free me from restraint. In my heart I cursed that dear mother, who loved me so tenderly that she would have done anything possible for my temporal or eternal good.

“Now if my father had done his duty, I might have been stopped in my course. Alas! he stood silent by. Now it was that my mother wrest-

led for my soul. I used to see her come from her closet in tears, and often used to overhear her prayers.

“My father began to think of putting me to business. The man with whom he wished me to live was very wicked. He was, however, called a smart man, which induced my father to propose my living with him. I began to long for the time when I should leave home, intending then to take my full of sinful pleasure. But God had otherwise determined. My dear mother continued to pray, and God resolved to hear. Before the time had come when I was to leave home, there was, in Elizabethtown, some attention to religion. The preaching of Rev. David Austen was blessed to the hopeful conversion of some, although he was at that time becoming wild in many of his notions. It was, on the whole, a very solemn time. Many seemed anxious about their souls. On the first day of May, the sacrament was to be administered at Elizabethtown, and several were to be added to the Church. I had my doubts in the morning whether I would go to Elizabethtown, or Rahway, but some of my companions inviting me, I went with them to Elizabethtown. The day was warm. Our walk, of three miles, having fatigued me, I resolved to fix myself in a corner of the pew, and during the sermon to take a nap. I took my seat, but as soon as Mr. Austen had taken his text, my feelings seemed very much awakened. I resolved to listen to the discourse. The text was, Jer. l. 4, 5. “In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.” The sermon seemed directed to me. I melted under the word. It was the first sermon to which I ever gave good attention, and I humbly hope the Lord set it home by his Spirit. Thirteen were that day added to the Church. I was much impressed while I saw them *come and join themselves to the Lord*. I longed to be with them. I thought I loved them as I never loved any human being before. I sat in my corner seat till the sacrament was over, pouring out one constant flood of tears. I then sought to hide from my merry companions, with whom I felt that I could never again have communion, unless they were regenerated. I retired in the intermission of Divine service, to a lonely grove, where, for the first time, I poured out my heart to God in prayer. It seemed to me that God was on my right hand and on my left. I never had felt that he was everywhere, before. My first anxious prayer was, that I might hold out to the end. When I came home from meeting, I found my father’s family all absent—they having gone to a conference, I retired to my chamber, and falling on my knees, attempted again to pray. In the evening I went to the conference, anxious to hear Divine truth. Thus was spent that first pleasant day of my life.

“Whether I was that day regenerated, I dare not say: I think this was the case. I had very little previous distress. During the preceding week I had been alarmed, by a solemn account in the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, of a young lady, who, having her heart set on attending a ball,

had one appointed at her request, but was herself buried on the day appointed for the ball. This account touched my case, and drove me to a form of prayer. But I had no convictions, nor was my *heart* at all in my prayers. I prayed because I was afraid I should be damned. I one day felt while I retired to pray, that if I had power enough to pull God from his throne, I would not pray. I had, however, resolved to keep up a form of prayer as long as I lived. In this resolve I should certainly have failed, had not God, as I humbly hope, given me a new heart.

“My knowledge of gospel truth, notwithstanding all the efforts of my mother, was at this time very small. I certainly did not know enough to be a comfortable believer. During a whole year I obtained no satisfactory hope that my heart was renewed. I took much pleasure in the company and conversation of God’s people. They seemed to me the excellent of the earth. I sometimes went six or seven miles to meet with them in conference. I put too much dependence on meetings. I felt as if they were necessary to keep alive my religion. I almost worshiped the man who was the instrument of arousing me. Natural affections were very much substituted for religion. I have often thought, that if I had any religion during this first year, it was as a drop in the ocean.

“Very soon after being awakened, I felt the need of a companion; and God seemed to give me one. A young man in my neighborhood, and one whom I had long enjoyed as a companion in vice, was awakened at a conference, attended by the Rev. Mr. C——. Immediately after the meeting, he sent me a line, in which he opened his mind to me, and gave me great joy. I flew to his embrace, and, I suppose, felt proud that God had answered my prayer. He seemed so deeply impressed, and came out so boldly from the world, that he made me doubt whether I had met with a saving change. For about two weeks, we spent almost all our time together, in prayer and conversation. He then began to be less fond of my company, and soon entirely forsook me. Thus the gourd that had grown up in a night, withered in a day. I suppose God designed, by this afflicting stroke, to wean me from man, and bring me to himself. I felt more than ever the importance of having a religion which would live without any support but from heaven. To convince me still more thoroughly of this important truth, God so ordered it in his providence, that I should go into the employ of that man whom I have already brought into view. In this thing I think my father was wrong. He ought now to have provided for my growth in grace. This new situation, in which my rebellious heart had formerly anticipated much delight, was now very unpleasant. I lived in the midst of oaths and curses. They laughed at my seriousness, and tried many ways to make me dishonor religion. And, O, my soul, too often they succeeded! I had now very little opportunity to read, or attend religious conference. All this tended to drive me into retirement, where I might pray. Many times in the day I used to leave the wicked throng which surrounded me, that I might spend a few moments alone. Many of my evenings were spent in tears. My life was gloomy as death. I spent much of my leisure time in reading the Bible. Having a Bible of small

print, and setting up to read it until late at night, I found at length that I had almost ruined my eyes. They became so weak, that for several years afterward I could not read a chapter in the Bible with any comfort. This also tended to make me feel that I must have a religion which came from God only, and which he would nourish by his Spirit.

“During the first year of my seriousness, I had a very bad opinion of my heart, till at length I concluded that I had no religion. I was distressed, for fear that I had never been acquainted with Christ. I certainly was very ignorant of his character. Sometime in the latter part of the winter, I happened to discover in the house where I lived, an old, dirty pamphlet; which, on examining, I found to contain two sermons of Doctor Hopkins, one on the law, and the other on the gospel. The text of the latter sermon was, “Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” These sermons suited my case. They convinced me that I was very ignorant of Christ, and threw me into great distress, which continued many months. During this time, I felt as if I could not pray. There seemed to be a cloud of brass between me and God. Sometime in April, my distress, one Sabbath morning, arose so high, that I thought I could not live. I took my hymn-book and walked the fields. Every thing I saw seemed as gloomy as death. I several times fell on my face, and despaired of mercy. I tried to pray, and could not. The whole day was dark and dismal. In the evening I attended a conference, and all was dark yet. After the conference, the Rev. Mr. Chapman, (who was then my minister, and who felt very anxious for me, and had already, at my request, propounded me to the church,) inquired of my feelings. I told him, “*Gloomy as death.*” He immediately pointed me to Christ. I told him that I was afraid I had never found the Savior. He told me then, that my religion was vain. His conversation was the means, I hope, of bringing me to be better acquainted with Christ, and of dispersing my darkness. I had a charming evening and night, almost all of which I spent in the same fields where I had despaired in the morning. My cloud of brass now seemed to be penetrable. I thought I had near access to God. I continued more comfortable, until, on the first day of May, (just one year from the time of my first feeling the change,) I joined the church, and took my seat among the followers of the Lamb.”

He soon after formed the purpose of preparing for the ministry; and in 1802, commenced his academical studies, under the care of Rev. Dr. Finley of Baskenridge. In March, 1805, he was summoned home to see his mother die. She had no anxiety but for the souls of her children. He heard her speak of God’s goodness, of her joy in the light of his countenance, and her readiness to depart: he saw her depart in peace, and in the clear hope of a glorious immortality. The loss of such a mother affected him deeply.

He entered Princeton College in 1805, and graduated in 1808, with so high a reputation for scholarship, that the proffer of a tutorship was made

to him, which, however, he declined, that he might enter at once upon his professional studies.

The following letter to his uncle and aunt, written in the latter part of his college life, is interesting for the sentiments it contains, and the pious spirit which it breathes.

“PRINCETON, N. J., Jan. 10, 1808.

“*My Dear Uncle and Aunt :*

“I take it for granted that you are so much interested in the welfare of all your friends, as to wish to hear from them. I regret that so wide a space parts us, as to forbid our intercourse. Since the dissolution of my father’s family, I feel more interested than before in the smiles of my other friends. How good is God in this! that when one of the streams that convey satisfaction and delight to our minds dries up, he allows the same sweets to reach us by other channels. His mercy forbids, or the days of mourning would be protracted to the grave. This is a world full of changes, and as full of disappointments. We often forget on what we lean until it gives way, and exposes us to a fall. Friends often lean on friends, instead of an Almighty arm, and provoke God to cut them off by death, that they may return and put their trust in him. Since my very agreeable visit to your country, I have felt greatly interested in the welfare of your family. I often picture you, in my imagination, standing on the border of Canaan, looking forward with joy to the fields of light, and hailing the inviting dawn of the resurrection morning: and, at the same time looking backward with no less delight, to see your children walking in that blessed path, that must terminate at the gates of the New Jerusalem. O, how great is the portion of the Christian! He possesses either the reality, or the certain promise of every good. He walks through every danger without hurt, and shall at last stand on the ashes of the universe and triumphantly say, *I have lost nothing*. My dearest friends, let a young pilgrim admonish you to keep your eyes fixed upon your ascended Redeemer. Your only hope, you know, is in him; your only safety in him. If he smile on you, ten thousand hells could not hurt you—but if he frown, as many Gabriels of light could not administer a drop of joy. To serve Christ is the whole business of life, and and if we refuse to serve him, we ought to be generous enough to leave the world he made for that purpose. He intended to be served here when he laid the foundation of the earth; and the sons of God looking forward to the glory of his kingdom, shouted for joy. I hear with joy that Christ is making daily encroachments upon the kingdom of the prince of darkness. Newark and Elizabethtown witness, at present, some of the most interesting scenes that ever passed in review before the eyes of men. The stoutest hearts yield to invitations of the gospel. The child of eight years and the sire of ninety, unite their harmonious songs to the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed them unto himself by his blood. From this town I have no good news to tell you, unless it be that upwards of twenty-five, are here preparing to blow the gospel trump. But what God will do with this people I know not, for they are nearly all asleep upon the brink of death. I know

not of a worse evil that can happen to any people, than that of being forsaken by the Spirit of God.

"Uncle will see in the printed sheet which accompanies this letter, the happy state of the College, which he will please make as public as possible.

"Yours, very affectionately,

DANIEL A. CLARK."

Some of his contributions to periodicals, during his College course, evince much thought, and maturity of intellect.

Mr. Clark commenced his theological studies under the direction of the Presbytery of New York. In May, 1809, he left Newark, in company with Dr. Griffin, for Andover: the latter to be a teacher in that then infant Seminary, the former a student. His residence at Andover was from one to two years, he having entered the second (middle) class. This was the third class formed in that Seminary, which left in 1811.

In the course of Mr. Clark's residence at Andover, the place was favored with a revival of religion, in which he was very deeply interested, and for the promotion of which he labored with great zeal and success. Some account of this work, and of his own exercises in view of it, is found among his papers. The following extracts from his diary may not be uninteresting, as indicating his spiritual state while in a course of theological study.

"ANDOVER, Mass., Sabbath, October 15th, 1809.

"Again somewhat unwell. The day is dull, and the preaching poor. The week past, however, has been pleasant, because the Lord was among us. O, how good is it to see sinners inquire the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward! It seems to make us forget that we are in a wretched world, and we begin to feel ourselves blest. And truly they are blest, whom the Lord permits to rejoice in the displays of his Sovereign grace. They seem to sit around where Jesus is, and to feel a part of heaven.

"*Evening.*—Spent with the Misses E—, and two of my brethren, conversing about Christ, the Savior of sinners. I hope Christ was there. Blessed be his name, for meliorating the woes of this sublunary scene, by setting up a Church in it, and giving his people to see the displays of his grace in the salvation of sinners. What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits? How shall his poor people make him any return:

For all they are and all they have is God's,  
 He saw them weltering in their blood; cast out  
 And lying in the open field, forlorn,  
 Without an eye to pity, or an arm  
 To help; nor was there found in heaven, or earth,  
 Or in the world of woe, a heart to feel,  
 Save His who felt (moved by the sinner's pains,  
 Or rather by his own eternal love,)  
 And flew from heaven to save, and snatch them thence,  
 And healed their wounds and made their hearts rejoice.  
 Yes, all they have is His, and His are they.  
 They love to serve their King, and shout his praise,  
 Yea, gladly would they burn with seraph's flame  
 Until the sacred fire had made them pure.

“WEDNESDAY, November 29, 1809.

“Our brother dies\*—and why is God dealing with us so early in wrath? What is God saying to us in all this? He is in heaven, and we on the earth, and our words must be few. I am to prepare an address on the occasion. But I know not what to say. May the Spirit of the Lord direct me.”

“ANDOVER, Sabbath Morning, July 1st, 1810.

“I perceive that I have neglected my diary for two months. A part of that time I have spent very agreeably in Beverly, where the Lord is shedding down his showers of grace. It was sweet to be there. How pleasant to stand still and see the salvation of God! To see the sinner melt under the word, and hear him inquire, what he shall do to be saved?—this is delightful. I remember to have often prayed, that God would cast my lot where he was pouring out his Holy Spirit. I have now spent six weeks in such a place, and hope I have received some advantage. I think that I long to be always in such a place—to be always where God reveals his gracious name. I long now to live near to him, to have every day some view of his face, to feel every morning and evening the same fervent glow of affection. Must my soul ever again leave my God? Upon what object can it fix, if it should act so unwise a part? Will it try again to be pleased with earthly objects, and fix its hopes on sublunary good? Oh, no! these have all been tried. I have found by long and painful experience, that earth has no one charm for my soul. It may play for a moment around some painted earthly object, but it soon remembers its home, and begins to mourn. Hills and groves sometimes delight it a moment, but soon it feels a longing desire after an acquaintance with the God who founded and painted them. Imagination soon leaves the scenery, and bears me to the fields of light, where the redeemed gaze for ever upon that more lovely object, the Lamb of God. Oh, my God! is not this eager desire after a better object, some faint proof that my soul has been renewed by thy Divine grace? Do I not love thee?”

It appears from the preceding, that Mr. Clark, at this period, was not neglectful of his own spiritual interests, or of those of others, but watched, and labored, and prayed, that souls might be saved, and Zion prosper, and Christ be honored.

There is other testimony, to the same effect. One who was in the same original company from Newark, writes, under a recent date, that

“His character for devoted piety was eminent in the Seminary. He was active and useful in a season of religious interest, which commenced in the south part of the town, during the fall vacation of 1809 in the Seminary.”

Another respected minister, who came into the Seminary about the time Mr. Clark left it, writes,

“My wife, who was somewhat acquainted with him while at Andover, and who became interested in religion during the first revival at A.,

\* Mr. Badger, a fellow student with him in Andover Theological Seminary.

in which your father, with some others of his classmates, bore a conspicuous part, remembers and speaks of him with great affection; and thinks he was one of the most useful instruments which God was pleased to employ in that blessed work—a work which gave a new tone and character to the piety of the church in that place, and the influence of which has been felt from that day to this, among that people.”

In October, 1810, before finally leaving Andover, he was examined, and licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of New Jersey.

In 1811, he visited Portland, where a work of grace was in progress, and engaged in earnest labors for its promotion. He occupied, for several weeks, the pulpit of Dr. Beman, then one of the ministers of Portland, and who was absent, for a season, in consequence of ill health.

On January 1, 1812, he was ordained a minister of the gospel, and installed pastor of the Congregational Union Church of Braintree and Weymouth. In June, of the same year, he was married, at Portland, Maine, to Miss Eliza Barker, daughter of Dr. Jeremiah Barker, of Gorham.

The field in which Mr. Clark commenced his ministry, was a somewhat difficult and rugged one; and he seems to have entered and continued in it with many trials. He complains, in a letter, that there are but few to pray for a revival; that many have taken offence at his preaching—some because he endeavored to raise the standard of piety, by which they were cut off from their hope that they were Christians; others, because his preaching was directed against coldness, covetousness, balls and cards; others, probably, from his heavy and demolishing assaults of the Unitarian heresy, which he never was in the habit of sparing.

The following letter, to the parents of Mrs. Clark, is instructive, and it indicates his anxiety for the spiritual good of his relatives.

“WEYMOUTH, March, 12, 1813.

“*Dear Parents*—We thank you for your friendly letters, and regret that we have not expressed our gratitude sooner. It always gives us pleasure to hear from you, but never have we felt this pleasure to so high a degree as when we received your last communications. We can assure you they gave us joy that was new. We now anticipate much pleasure in future communications of feelings, in which, we humbly hope, we can mutually share. The doctrines upon which you appear at last to have founded your hopes, are, I believe, the only sure foundation.\* We cannot open the Bible but our eyes meet some black line, bearing reproach and shame against human nature. Man has corrupted his way before the Lord. The iniquity which appears in his life, originates in a heart at enmity with God, and with everything holy. Such a heart has rendered him unfit for the kingdom of heaven. It must be renewed, and none can renew it but God. A way must be contrived in which God can consistently pardon and save the sinner. This way was devised by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and is made

\* This letter is a reply to one received from his father-in-law Dr. J. Barker, announcing his conversion from Socinianism to orthodoxy.

known in the gospel. Christ must die, and his blood become the fountain in which the sinner is cleansed from his guilt, and the price which buys him a pardon. Blood, of such value, cannot be the blood of a mere creature. Christ must be the Jehovah of the Scriptures. If God save sinners he must save all, or must choose whom he will save, or must find out some other way to make the selection. No other way having been discovered, and there being wise reasons why he should not save all, he elects some to everlasting life, and leaves others to reject the gospel and perish. Those who perish are not injured, those who are saved receive nothing but grace. Those once lost can never be saved, because they will have no Savior. Christ will have gathered in his elect, and have given up the kingdom. Then he that is filthily must be filthy still. Thus is there a concatenation in Divine truth. *One* acknowledged, we must acknowledge *all*, or be inconsistent. Destroy one link, and the whole series falls to the ground.

“It is, however, a distressing fact, that men often become convinced of these truths in their understandings, yet never embrace them with their hearts nor act them out in their lives. Such were they who are accused by the apostle of holding the truth in unrighteousness. But I have always supposed that such men may be easily known. We shall see that their lives do not correspond with their doctrines. They will be likely to neglect many important duties of religion. They will not be spiritual in their conversation. Their favorite theme will not be the religion of the heart. They will appear trifling in their manners. They will at least show, while conversing on the truths of the gospel, that these truths have never made much impression upon their hearts. You may easily see that it is their wish to be esteemed pious. They will be likely to tell you that they have thought much on these things. You will find them unwilling to make much sacrifice for the truth. If truth is not very popular in the company where they chance to be, they will either remain silent, or by some crouching, well directed sentences, will throw their weight into the scale of error. In this way they will steer along, free from persecution, will please all parties, and offend none.

“O, how different is this conduct from that of the martyrs! *They* confessed the truth, till their tongues were stiffened to a coal, and would do their office no longer! May the Almighty God give me this lot, rather than the lot of those who act the coward, and betray their Master. Such time-servers can never be useful. Half the time they are counted among the friends of Zion, but the other half, they swell the ranks of the foe. If God be God, we ought to serve him, but if Baal, then let us serve him. Halting between two opinions ruins the soul. I love to see correct sentiment, but more yet a holy life. Religion must bear fruit. When the Spirit of God has taught a man the truth, it is delightful to see the effect it will immediately have upon his life. Let a man be savingly taught this one truth, that sin has polluted his soul, and you will immediately see the effect. If morally polluted, he will feel that he lies at uncovenanted mercy. This will effect his prayers, his hopes, his fears, and his joys. He will feel that a polluted creature ought to be modest, humble, meek, fearful, cautious.

watchful, and thankful. Every action of such a man will tell you that he has seen his heart. *Every* gospel truth will have a similar effect. No sooner is Christ formed in our heart, the hope of glory, than the lineaments of that impression will be drawn out in the life.

“And then the world will be angry. Real religion cannot appear in such a shape as to please unrenewed men. No, you might as well join noon to midnight. If *unholy* men are generally pleased with us, depend upon it we are not *holy*. The world will love his own. As soon as we begin to follow Christ they will cast out our names as evil. We shall be hated of all men for his sake. But those who persevere are blessed. An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reserved for them in heaven.

“My dear parents, excuse my freedom. I knew not what I should write when I took my pen, but the sweet subject opened before me, and I could not stop. We are all in good health. We have friends and enemies. We love God so little that we have but little spiritual joy. I hope, however, that the Spirit of God is among us, and will give us a little reviving in our bondage. The girl who lives with us seems to be under deep and solemn impressions. I really believe that God is about to bring her home to himself. We have established an inquiring meeting—and they are sweet meetings. But I must stop. The Lord bless and comfort you. Eliza joins with me in assurances of affection.

“Your obedient son,

DANIEL A. CLARK.”

Mr. Clark remained at Weymouth, strongly and pointedly proclaiming the great truths of the Bible, till the fall of 1815; when the state of his wife's health, which demanded a milder climate, induced him to seek a dismissal. This he obtained, and removed to New Jersey, and labored through the succeeding winter at Hanover, amid scenes of religious interest.

In January, 1816, he was installed pastor of the Congregational Church in Southbury, Connecticut. Of his labors here, there is no record at hand. We only learn that here, as elsewhere, his labors were blessed. It was while at Southbury that he prepared and preached the sermon entitled “The Church Safe,” which has been so generally read, and so warmly admired.

Not only did he perform the duties which devolved upon him as a minister in this field; he also taught, gratuitously, for a considerable time, a large school, that he might raise the standard, and promote the cause of education in the place and the vicinity.

Upon determining to leave this place, Mr. Clark received invitations from the churches in Waterbury, and in North Haven, Connecticut, and from the church in the West Parish, Amherst, Mass., which last he accepted, and was installed, Jan. 26, 1820. Rev. Mr. Porter, of Farmington, preached on the occasion.

At this time, Mr. Clark was in the maturity and full strength of his faculties; and it was here that he prepared and preached some of his ablest sermons. Amongst those listened to with peculiar interest, was a

series on the text,—“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” which, with many more of his best discourses, were unfortunately lost, by being lent to a clerical friend.

There was one season of more than usual religious interest, during his ministry at Amherst, which he watched over with great solicitude, and labored most abundantly to promote. The work was more in the outer districts of the parish than at the centre. He sustained meetings in these districts, and many of them he describes as very solemn and searching. Professors of religion were constrained to give up their hopes, repent, and do their first works, and begin anew the Christian life. Some of the dead in sin were awakened, and hopefully converted to God. The precise number is not known.

There was at this time also a revival in the College, which acquired impulse and strength from his bold and fervid preaching. “As there was no church, and no preaching on the Sabbath in the College,” says Dr. Humphrey, in his account of this revival, “the students attended worship in the village, and enjoyed the ministry of Rev. Daniel A. Clark, which was well adapted to show them their guilt and danger, and which seems to have been very much blessed in the conviction and conversion of sinners. Had the trumpet, at this critical juncture, given an uncertain sound—had any human voice cried ‘peace, peace,’ in contradiction to the word of God, which declares that there is no peace to the wicked, how many might have lingered and perished on the plain, who, it is hoped, fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel.”

Mr. Clark was dismissed from his pastoral charge at Amherst, in February, 1824. He remained, however, for a season, and discharged his ministerial duties; and, amongst other things, prepared and published his “Conference Sermons”—“a volume of sermons to be used in religious meetings where there is not present a gospel minister.” This book was very favorably received, and met with a more extensive sale than the author anticipated.

He was among the first in projecting and laying the foundation of Amherst College; gave largely of his means for its support, and spent some time in traveling and collecting funds for its permanent establishment.

At length Mr. Clark withdrew from Amherst, in acceptance of a call to the church in Bennington, Vt., where he was installed, June 14, 1826. His early friend and teacher, Dr. Griffin, was a member of the Council, and preached the sermon on the occasion. It was a peculiar satisfaction to him to be in the vicinity of that venerable man, to whom he owed so much, and whom he loved so well. Dr. Griffin was often at his house, and in pleasant familiarity would pat him on his shoulder, and call him his boy.

His ministry here seems to have been a laborious and successful one. As heretofore, he proclaimed the truth, and assailed wickedness with great faithfulness and boldness; and the Spirit gave it efficacy, and stubborn wills were bowed beneath it. But while some submitted, others were excited to bitterness. The following instance of threatening hostility, with its remarkable result, used to be related by himself with peculiar emotions.

“A few fellows, in their desperation, banded together violently to break

up an inquiry meeting, held at the Court House. They armed themselves with stones, and proceeded to the place. When they came in sight of the house, they were met by a power they had not thought of. The stones fell from their hands, and the greater part of them went reverently in, and submitted their minds to the instructions and influences, which, just before, in their hatred, they meant to abolish."

The following paper, from two gentlemen, members of the church in Bennington, gives other particulars of his ministry in this place :

"Mr. Clark being the only pastor of our denomination in the town, embracing a population of nearly four thousand, there being, also, several small villages remote from each other, his labors were necessarily severe. Enjoying good health, he spared no pains to do everything in his power for the benefit of his people. In addition to preaching three times on the Sabbath, he held several other meetings in different parts of the town, and a stated weekly meeting at the factory village of Hinsdillville. At this latter place, early in the fall, a precious revival commenced, and spread with surprising power to the other parts of the town. A day of fasting and prayer was now appointed. One of the large factory buildings was prepared for the accommodation of the people, and probably a larger concourse of persons came together on that occasion than had ever before assembled in the town. An occasion like this could not fail of eliciting Mr. Clark's best powers. The truth fell from his lips with overwhelming power and energy, and being accompanied, as was very manifest, by the Spirit's agency, it cut its way, like waves of fire, to the sinner's inmost soul. A considerable number, on the spot, were convicted of sin, and it is believed were converted to God. The cloud which had been hanging over us, now seemed to burst, and to deluge, as it were, with salvation, the whole town. The Church, fearing that Mr. C. would sink under his multiplied labors, called at this time to his aid a faithful brother in the ministry. Meetings were now held every evening in different parts of the town, in connection with the general meeting once a week, held at the centre village. The work went on with great power and steadiness, and continued through the winter, and resulted in bringing more than one hundred converts into the Church, most of whom have done honor to their profession, and many, we trust, are now enjoying the society of their beloved pastor, in that bright world where they have met, to part no more for ever. We have lived to see many revivals, but never have we witnessed one of more thrilling interest than this, or when the power of God was more discernible.

"Mr. C. was happy, in devising means for blessing the dear people of his charge. The revival had no sooner subsided, than he began to contemplate, with a melancholy interest, the ravages which Intemperance had made, and was still making, in the town. At that time his people had not the light which has been shed by the present Temperance Reform, to guide them. Even good men had labored hitherto under the mistaken notion, that a moderate use of alcoholic drinks is not only not hurtful, but beneficial. Mr. C. felt, however, that something could, and must be done, to stay the ravages

of the destroyer. He came forward with this proposition, 'Let the name of every individual in the town be obtained, who is willing to report faithfully, *what amount of distilled liquor he has used in his family during the current year.*' Strange as it may seem now, only *twenty-five* persons, among a population of about *four thousand*, could be induced to go even that length. As loose, however, as this compact was, it still resulted in great good, for it demonstrated, what had not yet been found out among this people, that total abstinence from ardent spirit was a practicable thing. The year came round. *None!* was appended to the names of *eight* out of *twenty-five*. This result was both surprising and encouraging. The second annual report was still more gratifying. The Society now numbered more than one hundred members, most of whom had wholly abstained from the use of distilled liquors. The sale of liquors in the town had been reduced nearly one-half. At this meeting the Society ventured to advance another step. It was accordingly resolved to practice *total abstinence from distilled spirit*. This, at that time, was thought to be a very ultra measure, and stirred up the united wrath of the rum-drinkers and rum-sellers of the place. But this only served to inspire Mr. Clark with increased zeal and energy in carrying forward the cause of his Master. The Society went steadily forward, increasing in numbers and in usefulness: It has now adopted the total abstinence pledge, and numbers over twelve hundred members, and is one of the most thorough and efficient societies that we are acquainted with in any part of the country. With all this before us, we cannot help remarking, that the day of small things is not to be despised.

"One fact, in connection with the Temperance Reform in Bennington, we cannot refrain from stating, as it is an illustration of Mr. Clark's manner of unmasking error, and of his boldness in preaching the truth. The temperance cause having advanced so far as to admit of a question whether professors of religion ought to be engaged in the traffic or not, a Church meeting was called to discuss the subject. At that time we had a very worthy Deacon who was trafficking in the poison, who came forward, and in a labored argument, tried to convince the Church that, as the sale would go on, it had better be confined to conscientious persons, who would be more *decent* about it than others. The Deacon had no sooner resumed his seat, than Mr. Clark arose, and replied in substance, as follows: "Strange doctrine this! The argument of my brother goes too far. It would prove that all the theatres, and brothels, should be kept by conscientious men, that sinners might be *guided down to hell the more decently*. No! no! If it must be sold, I would place at the tap the same *old lying serpent* that handed Eve the apple, that it might appear to be the very infernal traffic that it is.'

"The Bible was a precious book to our beloved pastor. He was not only himself a diligent student of it, but was unwearied in his efforts to promote in others a knowledge of the sacred word. During a considerable portion of the time while he resided at Bennington, he superintended three weekly Bible classes, in different parts of the town—the one on the Sabbath, at

intermission, he called his '*Bibliary*,' to which all the congregation were invited. These, many can testify, and ourselves among the number, were seasons of great profit and interest. It was a source of high satisfaction to him, to impart from his great and well-stored mind, the results of his deep research and profound reflections upon Divine truth.

"Mr. Clark was not only indefatigable in his efforts to promote the knowledge of the Scriptures, but he was, also, a warm patron and supporter of schools and lyceums. As evidence of this we will state, that as one of us was engaged, during our whole residence in Bennington, in conducting a high school, if we were at all successful in that labor, (and the public must now judge to what extent we were,) we owe that success more to his counsel and hearty support, than to any other cause.

"A spirited Lyceum, through his influence, was established, and supported with ability, while it had his presence to encourage and stimulate its members, and the benefit of his lectures.

"Mr. Clark, as a preacher, was bold, original, pungent, direct. No one could listen to him during a single discourse, without feeling that he was in the presence of a great and master spirit. He wielded the sword of the Spirit, like some mighty giant, tearing, as it were, the stubborn oaks up by the roots, and sweeping away the refuge of lies, dashing in pieces the false hopes of the Church, giving no quarter to sin, in any shape or form, in high places or low. No difficulty nor trials could daunt him, or divert him a moment from his purpose. Whatever *was truth*, he would advocate it, no matter what the opposition. Surrounded as he was with a mass of infidelity and ungodliness, it was not to be supposed that his bold and fearless course would awaken no hostile feelings. Very soon after the great revival of which we have spoken, the elements of wrath began to combine. His exposures of iniquity, both out of the church and in, were too glaring to be endured in silence. Nevertheless, so great was the charm that accompanied his preaching, that some of his bitterest enemies never failed to be among his auditors, although they would curse him the moment they left the sanctuary. And some of them, so great was their desire to hear him, —and they were not willing to do it in an open manner,—were found in secret places, as they thought, unobserved, listening to the truth as it fell from his lips, and yet would not come to Christ, that they might have life. Infidelity was struck dumb before his powerful arguments, and some of the most learned and able of all the sceptics in that place were brought to embrace the Savior during his ministry.

"The above account, we are sensible, does but slender justice to the faithful, talented, and devoted ministry of your honored and lamented father in Bennington. The revelation of secret things only, we believe, will fully unfold all the beneficial results of his untiring labors among that people."

Mr. Clark received a dismissal from his charge here, and in the fall of 1830, went to Troy, N. Y., and again occupied the pulpit of Dr. Beman, who found it necessary to travel to the south, on account of ill health. He

appears to have entered upon this field with great earnestness; and during his stay, to have performed a vast amount of labor.

The following brief sketch of his labors in this city, is given by Rev. Dr. Beman :

“ Your father commenced his labors in the first Presbyterian Church, in the Autumn of 1830. My own health had been for some time impaired, and I had concluded, by the advice of friends, to spend the approaching winter in the southern States. It was a great object with my congregation and myself, to procure a suitable and efficient supply for my pulpit, during my absence. My thoughts were first directed to your father, from the fact, that I had known him intimately in early life. He had supplied my pulpit, during a temporary illness on my part, in Portland, Maine, in 1811; and I was at that time much interested in his preaching. I had been informed, before I recommended him to my congregation, in Troy, that he would probably be willing to leave Bennington, if a promising field of labor were to present itself.

“ He accepted the invitation given to him by the Session of the First Presbyterian Church, and after being dismissed from his pastoral charge, he commenced his labors in Troy, in the fall of 1830, soon after my departure for the south. In this station, Mr. Clark was acceptable as a preacher, and the Church and congregation were kept together, and increased under his ministry.

“ About the close of the year 1830, after mutual consultation and advice, Mr. C. and the Session of the Church appointed what, with perhaps a single exception, was a new thing in this part of the country—‘ a four days meeting.’ As the time approached the responsibility of the undertaking seemed to increase, and they all felt it deeply. They betook themselves to the throne of grace, and resolved to repose their trust in God, and meet the occasion. They did so. Mr. C. enjoyed the labors of some faithful brethren in the ministry, and a deep impression was made during the meeting. Many were convicted. Some ‘ who came to scoff, remained to pray.’ All before had been as quiet as death. The Churches in the city and neighborhood had been, for some time, in a state of religious declension; but a blessed revival now commenced, which spread through the city, and extended to several Churches in the country.

“ In the congregation to which Mr. C. ministered, the shower of mercy was extensive and refreshing. The revival continued, with greater or less power, through the winter. The Church was much engaged, and many who had lived without hope and without God in the world, were converted. The blessed fruits of this awakening are seen and felt in the Church to this day. Some of the converts have already gone in triumph to heaven, and others are walking with God on the earth. No doubt very many will feel the benefit of Mr. Clark’s labors and this revival, in an endless eternity.

“ In the month of March, one hundred persons were received to the Church, on profession of their faith; and a number more, as the fruits of this revival, at subsequent communions during the year. The Church, to thus

day, look back to this time of refreshing, as one of the most blessed they have ever enjoyed.

“Mr. Clark continued, as the supply of this congregation, till some time in the month of June, when the pastor returned and resumed his labors. His preaching was characterized by solemnity, directness, and power. The Church felt it—and sinners felt it—and long will the memory of Daniel A. Clark, as an able and faithful servant of God, be embalmed in the affections of this people.”

The following is an extract from a letter by an intelligent layman, in relation to Mr. Clark's labors at Troy :

“Whilst a degree of deadness seemed to pervade the minds and hearts of the Church, fears were entertained that the congregation would suffer from the absence of their pastor. After laboring a few Sabbaths, Mr. Clark called a meeting of the Session, and the question was asked, what could be done to interest the minds of the congregation on the subject of their spiritual interests; or, in other words, most directly and powerfully to promote a revival of religion? It was proposed that a ‘four days meeting’ should be held, during which the truth might be constantly held up before the minds of the Church, and such of the impenitent as might be disposed or induced to attend. In accordance with this plan, such a meeting was appointed about the middle of December, and this was the *first* of those assemblages in that section of the country, which have been since denominated, ‘Protracted Meetings.’ The blessing attending it exceeded the expectation of the Church, and of those whose happy lot it was to labor in it. During this meeting Mr. C. was favored with the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Kirk of Albany, and Mr. Tracy of Nassau; and subsequently, during a week, or more, in the month of January, with that of the Rev. Dr. Griffin of Williams College. Many were convicted and brought to a knowledge of the Savior, and a powerful revival extended throughout the city, and to many places in the vicinity. Many were added to the Rev. Dr. Beman's Church, and great accessions were made to the other Presbyterian Churches, and to Churches of other denominations.

“In adopting this novel measure, much solicitude was felt on the part both of Mr. C. and the Church, and a fear lest the blessing might be withheld led them, no doubt, to cast themselves on God for help. In Mr. C., this feeling seemed manifest in addressing the assembly on one of the first days of the meeting. Early the next morning, at a prayer meeting held at a private house, a number of impenitent sinners presented themselves to be made the subjects of prayer. From this period the work progressed with interest to the opening of the spring. Many who labored with the preacher through those interesting scenes, will ever remember the deep feeling and the interest manifested by him in behalf of inquirers, lest they should continue to resist the truth, or settle on some false ground of hope; and in behalf of converts, lest they should fail of deriving instruction and consolation from the Word, necessary to their progress in the Christian race, and growth in holiness.”

Mr. Clark's labors in this place resulting as they did, were of course highly appreciated, and will be remembered by many with joyful interest, to the ages of eternity. He subsequently labored in Utica and vicinity, in places where God was pouring out his Spirit. His preaching was much sought after, and very highly prized in these scenes of hallowed interest. He took up his abode for a short season in Utica. On his way to this place, on board one of the canal boats, he met with an accident which very sensibly affected one of his modes of communication and address. He broke the thumb of his right hand, by which he was rendered incapable of writing, except with the greatest difficulty, and then very illegibly. He left Utica the latter part of June, 1832. He moved with his family on Thursday: the cholera commenced its ravages three doors off, on the following Sabbath, and before Wednesday, it had numbered two victims in the very house Mr. Clark had left. Such Providential interpositions he always observed, and was much affected by them.

On July 17, of this year, Mr. Clark was installed over the Presbyterian church in Adams, Jefferson county, N. Y. This was his last charge, and his labors were very brief; being obliged, by the state of his health, to withdraw at the end of little more than a year. His iron constitution, which had stood firm under the hardest labors and most heaving emotions, now gave way. "The first indication of the fatal change," says one of his sons, "occurred in this way. He had been laboring at Sackett's Harbor, a town on the lake, and returned on Saturday evening, to supply his own pulpit the next day. On Monday morning early, a carriage was sent, with the earnest entreaty that he would immediately return to Sackett's Harbor, as the truth uttered by him on Saturday, had taken effect. To my mother's amazement he refused to go, having ever showed the utmost readiness to engage in such labors. On the same day he prepared a skeleton of a sermon, and handing it to my mother, burst into tears, and said, 'My dear, I am done—I cannot read that paper—I leave you a widow and my children orphans.' Never shall I forget, to my dying day, the manner in which my father received the unwelcome evidence that his disease had assumed a fatal character. His great strength was now gone. From that time he failed gradually, till God called him home."

Being no longer equal to the duties of a settled minister, he took leave of his people at Adams, and removed, in the fall of 1833, to New York, where his children resided, and were engaging in business. He was attacked, soon after he came to the city, with his first stroke of paralysis, which, however, was so slight, that his friends were not sure of its nature. He employed himself, partly, in preparing contributions for religious periodicals, and in supplying, for a few weeks together, the vacant pulpit of some neighboring church. Another and prominent labor of these days of weakness, was getting ready for the press, and getting out, the three volumes of Sermons which appeared in 1836 and '7. His labor upon these was doubtless a relief to his mind, as he intimates in the preface. "But since his health has failed and he can no longer stand in the holy place, rather than

bear the agony of living to no purpose, he has decided to arrange and issue these three volumes."

This "agony" he felt upon receiving, about this time, an eligible call to settle; and he wept that he could not accept it. He knew that a change had come over him, but the nature of that change he could not understand.

His friends hoped much from a southern voyage and residence. In the fall of 1834, he took passage for Charleston, S. C., where he spent the winter, amid the hospitality and kindness peculiar to that city. Though in a feeble state of health while there, he used both his voice and his pen. He preached, occasionally, with some of his usual earnestness and energy; and he contributed to the *New York Observer* his "First impressions of Charleston," over the signature "A bird in the air." He also contributed considerable matter to the *Charleston Observer*. At times his strength would seem to return, and he would be capable, for a little season, of great mental effort: then again, his disease would come back, and in a moment change all this strength to utter feebleness.

In the spring of 1835, he returned with no improvement in his health. Frequent depletion was resorted to, and continued while he lived, in order to prevent the obstinate determination of blood to the head, which was the ever pressing symptom.

In the fall of 1837, he was removed with the family to New Haven, in the hope that a more quiet residence might prove beneficial to him. Here new scenes, and new friends, seemed, at first, to produce a change for the better. It was here that he preached, with great difficulty, his last sermon, from the words: "Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst." Jer. iii. 5. He was soon after seized with a fit of paralysis of so severe a character, as to threaten a speedy termination of his life. His sons were summoned from New York, with the expectation that he was then to die; but God's purpose was not so. The paralysis affected the right side, and the organs of speech. After this, he was not able to walk with ease and take active exercise, as he had before done. His condition, at this time, is prophetically depicted by himself, on pp. 628, 629.

In the spring of 1838, finding that the removal was of no benefit to him, the family returned to New York. During this year he gradually failed, and was henceforth incapable of any mental effort. His disease came upon him in renewed and severe attacks, till it broke down the strong texture of his mind. He often expressed the wish that he might die in the full possession of his faculties, and with his hopes of heaven firm and bright. While he was favored with some seasons such as he desired, it was often his lot to lie either spiritually or mentally under a cloud. He sometimes expressed the fear that he should be lost; that he had never been born of the Spirit, and washed in the Redeemer's blood. When asked, why then he attended meetings with so much interest, he replied, with emphasis, "That he loved to see the cause of Zion prosper, and souls brought in, even if he had no part in those provisions himself."

He evinced great tenderness of conscience, and said it grieved him that

he had ever requested any one to receive less than the stated price for any article. His seasons of protracted depression and gloom were occasionally relieved by the pleasing illusion that he was surrounded by old and dear friends, who had been long dead; and that two of his sons, who were traveling in Europe, had returned, and were by his side. In one of his dark hours, a friend said to him, "The Lord says, 'In six troubles I will be with you, and in seven I will not forsake.'" He replied, that he had no objection to the interpretation, and appeared composed and soothed by the thought. It was pleasing to his friends to observe, that at those times when the light of reason was dimmed by the thick and heavy darkness of his disease, there were decisive indications of the strong religious habit of his mind, and of his warm attachment to the cause of Christ. After he had lost the power of speech, and even of consciousness, as it was thought, a friend related in his room the particulars of a work of grace then in progress in Broadway Tabernacle, where he loved to attend church when he was able. He received the intelligence, and it seemed to thrill his bosom; for he cast forth at the close a beaming glance, and then burst into tears—the way he had for a long time expressed all kinds of emotion. Zion, for whose welfare he labored in life, he appeared to love in death.

He was faithfully attended during his protracted illness by his intimate friend, Dr. James C. Bliss, of New York, in whose skill his friends have ever reposed the utmost confidence. His disease was one of rare occurrence—the ossification of the arteries of the brain. On the third day of March, 1840, he was released from suffering, and quietly passed away.

His funeral was attended on Friday, the 6th, by a large number of clergymen and friends. The procession moved to the Broadway Tabernacle, where appropriate exercises were performed by Rev. Dr. Parker, (who delivered the address,) and by Rev. Dr. Patton and Rev. Dr. Adams, in presence of a large concourse of people. Solemn is the scene when the minister dies, and becomes the subject of the services he had so often performed over the remains of others; and preaches, not with the living voice from the pulpit, but with silent eloquence from the coffin. On Saturday, his remains were taken to New Haven, and after religious exercises in Rev. Henry G. Ludlow's Church, were consigned to the family resting-place, in the beautiful cemetery of that city.

The remains of Mr. Clark were subsequently removed to The Woodlawn Cemetery, near New York, where a fitting monument has been erected by his children.

In the *social character* of Mr. Clark, there was much simplicity and frankness. He was always ready to express his sentiments with freedom and independence. His moral courage was unlimited. In influencing men, he relied mainly upon the force of truth, and very little upon worldly tact and management. This course, as might be expected, made for him many warm friends, and some as warm enemies.

His solicitude for the right conduct, and present and future welfare of his children, appears in letters which he wrote to them when absent from him. The following items of advice, to a son in college, are sententious and forcible:

“O my son, it is easy to tell you how to be happy, and I will spend the rest of this page in telling you how. Set your heart on God. Say to yourself, God made me, and has a right to me, and shall have my whole heart. Make it your business to prepare to be useful. Do nothing, merely because you love to, unless it be wise, and right, and good. Do nothing, that you will have to deny you did. Do nothing that you will be ashamed to have it known you did. Do right. Do unto others as you would have them do to you. Be the best scholar you can be. Lose no time; time is money. . . . Read your Bible daily, and every day pray for heavenly wisdom. . . . Refuse to be found a moment in the company of vile men. Remember that character is made up of morsels; every look, and gesture, and word, and smile, and frown, constitutes each its distinct morsel of that character. . . . O, my son, you cannot cease to be, till the sun goes out, and time runs out, and eternity wears out, and God shall cease to be. Now one that must live so long, and whose happiness through all that long life, depends wholly on character, cannot take too much pains in forming that character just right. I embrace religion, of course, in my calculations respecting character. What will render us estimable in the sight of *God* as well as in the sight of men, is above all price.”

“Again in another letter: . . . “It will soon be too late. The College character is fixed the first year; and the character for life fixed in College, and the character for eternity, fixed in early life. Now you must love your Maker, or what can you love? and must care for what he says, or whom can you care for, or what? How tremendous are the months that are now revolving over you—months that will tell on your character and destiny when myriads of ages have rolled away?”

He was remarkable throughout his whole life for his industry. A gentleman, who is a member of the Assembly in his native state, said of him: “He was always busy, never lost any time, and entered with all his soul into whatever engaged his attention.”

In his *religious character*, Mr. Clark seems not to have been characterized by the cheerful and hopeful. In the fine language of Robert Hall, he did not so much “soar to the heights, as sound the depths of Christian piety.” Instead of “regaling himself with fruit from the tree of life, he was often on the waves of an impetuous sea, doing business in the mighty waters.” With all his experience of human depravity, and his profound estimate of its malignant and dreadful energies, he had firm confidence in the greatness of the atonement, and the greater energies, already pledged and soon to be put forth, in the subjugation of a world to Christ. He loved to contemplate God as on the throne, the Almighty Sovereign in the kingdom of nature and of grace, achieving his benignant purposes, bringing into service the wrath of his foes, securing the redemption of unnumbered souls, and the glory of his own great name.

It is very manifest through all the preceding narrative, that Mr. Clark was a great lover of revivals of religion, and he showed this attachment by the zeal and power of his labors to promote them, while preparing for the ministry, and through all his pastoral life; and after he ceased to be a pastor

his heart seemed full and intensely glowing when in the midst of a revival scene.

Mr. Clark loved the sanctuary, and the services and ordinances of God's house. "I would do," he says, "without a roof to cover my head, and have my lodging in the clefts of the rocks, but I must go to the house of the Lord and fix my dying grasp upon the horns of the altar." It was strikingly so; for the very last time he ever went out, it was to stagger to a Methodist Church near his dwelling, that he might still again worship God in "the sanctuary."

Mr. Clark loved very ardently the cause of the Bible and missions, and all those operations which are sustained for the saving of the nations, and the ushering in of the day of millennial glory. No one, who has read the "Church Safe," throughout which the *heart* seems to speak, can doubt Mr. Clark's warm attachment to the benevolent doings of his times. "When the bosom of charity shall beat a little stronger, if there shall be necessity, men will sell houses or farms to save the sinner from hell, and the child will sit down and weep, who may not say, that his father and mother were the friends of missions. And what parent would entail such a curse upon his children, and prevent them from lifting up their heads in the millenium? I had rather leave mine toiling in the ditch, there to enjoy the luxury of reflecting that a father's charity made them poor. Poor! They are poor who cannot feel for the miseries of a perishing world, to whom God has given abundance, but who grudge to use it for his honor. Teach your children charity, and they can never be poor."

Mr. Clark loved and honored prayer. He seems to have laid great stress upon it as the life and power of all other means. He sought it for himself through all his ministry; he sought it with great earnestness for a dying world. "The observance of the first Monday in January as a day of prayer for the conversion of the world," writes the Rev. Leicester A. Sawyer, "was first proposed by Rev. Daniel A. Clark, to the Presbytery of Watertown, N. Y., at a semi-annual meeting of that body, held in February, 1833. A memorial was addressed by that Presbytery to the General Assembly of the same year, requesting the Assembly to take order in favor of the observance of that concert. The memorial was favorably received, and led to the recommendation of the annual concert to the numerous churches in connection with the Assembly. Mr. Clark was chairman of the committee which reported the memorial above mentioned, and was the author of that interesting document." Mr. Clark prayed himself like a man who was accustomed to the exercise. He prayed in the sanctuary with great fervor, often with a surprising richness and scope of sentiment. His range and variety were indeed remarkable: few men whom we have heard in public prayer exceeded him in these respects. He was loth to cease praying with others, even after his faculties had become exceedingly impaired. In his clearer seasons, he would often call his family around his bed, and pray with them; and he continued to do this, after he had so far lost the power of articulation, that they could not understand him. Entering by accident a female prayer meeting, among the last days he walked out, he was supposed not to hear; and when asked to take a part, he at first refused, but

soon broke out in a fervent, heavenly prayer, with an originality of conception and freedom of utterance which astonished his friends. It is, indeed, as the poet says,

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air ;  
His watch-word at the gate of death—  
He enters heaven by prayer."

In his *professional career*, Mr. Clark was hearty and laborious. He labored, we have seen, for the intellectual elevation of his people. He labored for their moral improvement, for their deliverance from intemperance and all degrading vice. He labored more especially for their conversion to God, and preparation for heaven. He sought this end in pastoral visitation. During one whole winter, in one of his most arduous fields, he appointed on the Sabbath, family visits for every morning in the week ; and he met the families designated, and the neighbors who came in, making sometimes quite a congregation ; and his labors of this sort, were greatly blessed. He sought the same great end in his preaching. He loved to preach ; and he gratified this affection by actually preaching a great deal, both in season and out of season. He was accustomed to go out and preach statedly in the neighborhoods of his society. It was not uncommon for him to preach three times on the Sabbath, and on every evening in the week. And then when he went from home, he would preach as he could find opportunity. Even, when on a journey, as he stopped for a night in a village, he would sometimes make his arrangements, issue his notice, cause the bell to be rung, and preach to those who might assemble, and in the morning go on his way. His repeated declaration was, "I must work while the day lasts," and he did work with great constancy. His constitution was a strong one, as it must have been, to sustain the earnest labors of twenty-one years, with the loss of but a single Sabbath from ill health.

We here introduce extracts from two letters, written by two clergymen of the Presbyterian Church, witnesses of Mr. Clark's labors at the time, which bring out still further the traits of his religious character, and professional course.

The first, an esteemed minister in Vermont, writes :

"I would speak first of how much Mr. Clark was loved and admired as a preacher by his friends, which were many. I had the privilege of sitting under his ministry one year. I have ever esteemed it one of the most precious years of my life. I lived three miles from the place of worship, yet I do not recollect that I missed of hearing him a single Sabbath. The reason was, I could not bear to forego the luxury of attending upon his preaching. I speak the words of soberness when I say, that during that time I never heard a sermon but I was sorry when it was done.

"The effect of his eloquence, of the boldness of his conceptions, of his striking and appropriate figures upon his hearers, was often very great. A lady remarked to me, that at one time, his eloquence had such an over-

powering effect upon her, that she felt afraid that she should die if he proceeded farther. I am conscious of having experienced feelings somewhat similar more than once, while listening to him. We felt, when he spoke, that there was *power* --power of thought, power of illustration, accompanied by a powerful voice, whose deep tones seemed at times to shake the foundations of the sanctuary.

“ Though Mr. Clark prepared his two written sermons every Sabbath, still he excelled as an *extempore* preacher. This I had abundant reason to know, as he often attended a third service, in the chapel in our village. One Sabbath afternoon, a gentleman, who was about to go out as a foreign missionary, preached for him, from the words, “ The night is far spent, the day is at hand ; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,” &c. In the evening, Mr. Clark came to our chapel, and preached from the same text two full hours. During all this time, every eye was fixed upon the speaker ; there was not one exhibited weariness. Many were heard next day to say, “ We were sorry when the sermon was done—we should have been willing to have listened two hours longer.” That sermon was a topic of conversation in the village for weeks after it was delivered. Indeed, his sermons were generally a topic of conversation in our village, for the week following. I remember distinctly feeling every hour, for more than a week, the impression that one of his sermons made upon me, from the words, “ Wherein is he to be accounted of ? ” And though ten years have elapsed since the evening I heard the sermon, I remember that he told us how the text came to his mind, while lying awake at the solemn hour of midnight, and how the sentiment of the text unfolded to his mind and impressed his heart.

“ Mr. Clark’s sermons were *filled* with thought, often original, always concisely and strikingly expressed. I was often impressed with this fact, while a student in the classical seminary at B. The teacher gave us an exercise every Monday morning, to repeat one or more thoughts of the sermons we had heard the previous Sabbath. I observed that we always had an abundance of them when Mr. Clark had been the preacher, sometimes a meagre supply, when others had preached.

“ The power of God, as exhibited in governing a revolted world, a race of rebels, seemed to have deeply impressed Mr. Clark’s mind, and to have given shape and character to his conceptions. He loved to dwell on the text, “ Thou shalt make the wrath of man to praise thee, and the remainder thereof thou shalt restrain.” He loved to tell how God controlled, and overpowered, and changed the hearts of his enemies, while in the undisturbed exercise of their free agency. He abounded in anecdotes illustrative of this great truth.

“ Mr. Clark excelled in his knowledge of the unrenewed human heart ; in portraying its desperate depravity, its opposition to God and to holiness. His faithful exhibitions of the native human heart procured him many enemies, and the exhibition of their enmity, which he saw and felt, but served to give him a more vivid impression of their wickedness, and to induce him to hold up more prominently their fearful guilt. Perhaps he erred some-

times, in needlessly exasperating the impenitent, by too honestly giving utterance to his heartfelt and unmitigated abhorrence of their guilt and rebellion.

“Mr. Clark was not one of those preachers who think it expedient to hold back some of the doctrines of the Bible, during seasons of great religious excitement. The first time I heard him preach, was under the following circumstances. A powerful revival had just commenced in a manufacturing village in the town of B. A great number were awakened, and deeply alarmed, but there had been but few conversions. In view of the existing state of things, the Church had appointed a day of fasting and prayer. The meeting was held in a large dry-house, connected with a woollen factory. It was computed that nearly one thousand persons were present. The deepest solemnity and stillness prevailed, interrupted only by the occasional sigh or groan of a burdened heart. A neighboring minister preached in the morning. Mr. Clark, in the afternoon, to the surprise and grief of many, myself among the rest, preached on the sovereignty of God. But that sermon told on those awakened guilty hearts, and from that hour, the revival went on with increased power. As a master work man, he looked over that immense audience, and saw how and where to strike the blow.

“In conclusion, I would remark, that Mr. Clark eminently excelled in imparting Biblical instruction. His knowledge of the Scriptures was great, and he possessed a peculiar faculty of imparting that knowledge to others. All pressed to his Bible classes, young and old, infidel and Christian.”

The other, a respected clergyman in western New York, says :

“When I was a youth, while residing in Milford, Mass., I became deeply interested in the writings and character of Mr. Clark, by reading his tract, ‘The Church Safe.’ My pastor, the Rev. David Long, thought so much of that production, that he caused it to be publicly read on the Sabbath.

“My first acquaintance with Mr. Clark was formed at the time he visited Homer, Courtlandville, and vicinity—I should think, in 1831. A ‘four days meeting’ was attended at McLean, in Groton, Tompkins County. It was conducted by several pastors, who invited Mr. Clark to preach. He complied, enlisting his whole soul in the work. I recollect several of his texts:—Jer. iii. 5. “Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.” While he was preaching on that text, such was the view of human depravity which he gave, and such was the sense which I had of my own native depravity, that a faintness came over me; and I really believe that if it had not been for the hope which I had in the atonement of Jesus, I should have sunk to the floor. Another text was Luke x. 11. “Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” This was the closing sermon of the meeting—it was most affecting. He told the people, that as he should depart from the village, he would pause on yonder hill, and pour one more flood of tears over sinners in that place, who had rejected the kingdom of God, though it had come so *nigh* unto them.

“On one of the days of the meeting, a pious woman inquired of me, ‘Is that the Mr. Clark who wrote *The Church Safe*?’ On being assured that it was, ‘Then,’ said she, ‘I *must* speak with him. Immediately she was introduced. As she took his hand, she said with much emotion, ‘*That tract—The Church Safe—has done my soul so much good, that I felt as if I must shake hands with the man who wrote it.*’ ‘My good woman,’ said Mr. Clark, bursting into tears, ‘I am thankful to the Lord if my poor labors have been useful to you.’ I was delighted with his Christian simplicity, and more still, with the sincere gratitude which he so feelingly expressed, for the evidence that he had been useful to an humble individual.

“It was either a little prior, or a little subsequent to the meeting at McLean, that I had the pleasure of visiting with Mr. Clark, at the residence of a mutual friend of ours, or rather, his particular friend, and the friend of my ancestors. Mr. Clark and this pious layman, had been intimately acquainted with each other at Amherst, Mass. This good man had passed through changing scenes; he was once in a situation among New England farmers, which is denominated by the significant phrase, ‘good circumstances.’ But at the time of our visit, he was a laborious tenant upon the farm of another. He was at a little distance from us, stooping down, busily engaged at his toil. Mr. Clark, standing in a thoughtful posture, fixed his eyes upon him, as if he were taking a serious retrospect of his past history, when, addressing himself to me, he uttered the following expression, with an emphasis which I can never write—‘*God loves that man.*’ I suppose that it is impossible for me to convey to others the impression which this remark made upon my mind.

“Mr. Clark’s sermons, I find, are most valued by that class of Christians who are intelligent, who have been much in the furnace of affliction, and who are best acquainted with the deep recesses of their own hearts. His sermons will not be appreciated by those who just run them over, glancing at the heads and the conclusion. They must be read studiously and devotionally, then they will do the soul good. I consider them as admirably adapted to be useful to Churches that are destitute of preaching. ‘God loved that man,’ I have no doubt, and loves him still more as his spirit mingles amid the spirits of the just made perfect.”

“It is a gratifying circumstance, when the sermons of one, who was heard with so marked interest and profit, are given to the public. Those who heard Mr. Clark, will be glad to get possession of his printed discourses. The eloquence that thrilled us, when we listened to the living voice of its author, we long to take to our closets and read. No person of discernment can read far in these pages, without perceiving that the author possessed a strongly marked intellect, which he could easily put under the highest pressure of feeling; that he was not remarkable for the refined, the acute, the hair-splitting, but for the strong, the massive, the weighty; that the reasoning faculty in him was of the practical, common sense sort; the imagination, within certain limits, vigorous and good; the power of language, original and striking.

Perhaps the attempt to sketch the characteristic features of these sermons, in the same volume which contains them, is superfluous, as every reader has an opportunity to judge for himself. We ask, however, to be indulged in this respect, that we may complete the estimate of Mr. Clark's powers as a herald of the everlasting gospel.

These sermons are constructed not for a temporary, but a permanent and progressive popularity. They have not the light and frothy brilliancy which would fit them to be gazed at and admired for a day, and then to be forgotten, but they possess those at once solid and attractive qualities, which will cause them to be read in far future times.

The subjects upon which these sermons are written are of a general and permanent interest. While they are not so prominently experimental as are found in the discourses of some preachers, they are such as the mind and heart respond to, and are deeply interested in. Mr. Clark seems not so much at home on topics which lead to a nice analysis of the spiritual man, as upon those which are connected with the security, and the certain triumph of the Christian on the one hand; with the depravity, the madness, the impotence, the sure defeat and the utter shame and ruin of the enemy of God on the other. The two contrasted subjects, "The Church Safe," and, "Nothing Safe but the Church," furnish the field, over which he ranged the most adroitly and powerfully. Mr. Clark takes pleasure in accompanying the Church through her conflicts, and developing the stability of her basis, and the invincible might of her Protector. He loves to group together and accumulate on his pages the perfect evidence of her safety.

We find all the great doctrines of the Christian system brought out in the sermons of Mr. Clark, with the utmost distinctness. The trumpet in no place gives an uncertain sound. We do not read far to learn, that the author is a firm believer in the doctrines of the Trinity, of the atonement, total depravity, regeneration, election, the saints' perseverance, and eternal reward and punishment.

Whilst the sermons are not formally, dryly doctrinal, in them all we have discussions of great truths and principles, which give them a solid and instructive character. On one page, the attributes and glory of God meet and awe us; on another, the love and offices of Christ attract and give us peace; from another, the Comforter offers to come into our hearts; in this discourse, a picture of human vileness pains and humbles us; in that, the law draws upon us its two-edged sword; in the other, mercy points to the place of refuge from the avenging stroke. The whole gospel is here strongly and indiscriminately presented. Mr. Clark contended earnestly for the faith and the order of the gospel. His arguments and efforts were rather with the semi-Christian, who professedly received the gospel, but rejected its great doctrines, than with those who rejected the Bible and all that was in it; or with brethren who differed from him in some minor shades of sentiment.

In the general arrangement and structure of his sermons, Mr. Clark exhibits a good degree of simplicity. They never appear so elaborately studied, or curiously drawn out, as to cause perplexity to the mind; or as

to lead us to the bones for the most striking part of the structure. He frequently adopts the textual mode; and where it is not a breaking up of the words of the text into the heads of the sermon, which he sometimes does, there is a very free statement of topics, one after the other, as they are naturally suggested by the passage chosen as the basis of the discourse. For instance, the forty-sixth sermon—" *The honest and faithful ministry,*"—on 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

The textual division has this advantage; the preacher has an opportunity to bring out the full and rich meaning of the passage in hand. The sermon grows out of the text; separate from the text, it can have no existence; it is biblical and authoritative. We ought not to despise the textual style of proceeding, though some seem to do it, as not being so scholarlike, so conformable to rule, so favorable to unity, and to a logical and symmetrical discourse as some other. It is the style which the heart often inclines to, in its earnest desire to bring forth and make effective the simple gospel upon the souls of men. We have thought, sometimes, that when we have the least disposition to preach ourselves, we have the strongest inclination to arrange our matter in the humble, unpretending, textual way.

This more biblical mode, in the hands of Mr. Clark, is admirably vindicated. Few men have the power he exhibits of building striking and interesting paragraphs upon very common-place heads. The plan may be almost stupidly textual; but in the filling up, there will be original and vigorous thoughts, in very cogent language. Perhaps there is no better test of real power than this. The preacher, who will take the common subjects and the common topics of discourse, and imbue them with a more energetic spirit, and invest them with a deeper and more commanding interest, has the very best power and qualification for his work, and will secure the best kind of popularity.

Mr. Clark is not at all a hortatory preacher; he furnishes a good proportion of clear and weighty discussion. He does not assail us with fierce, unbased appeals; never attempts to carry the heart by hurling against it volleys of rattling words. He first packs together a solid body of truth, and then brings that body in contact, either as fire to melt, or as a hammer to break the rock in pieces.

He invariably employs the popular and rhetorical style of reasoning. His arguments are remarkable for a reliance upon Scripture facts to give them force and conclusiveness. In some of his best efforts, there is no other reasoning than a logical adducing and linking together of scriptural facts. The first sermon, entitled " *The Church Safe,*" is a fine example of this. Assurance of the proposition is made out, 1, " *From the firmness and stability of the Divine operations.*" Under this head, expectation is excited. It is strengthened, 2, by a view of " *What God has done for his Church.*" Under this head, the prominent Divine interpositions in favor of Zion's interests are graphically and rapidly sketched. 3. " *God is doing now just such things as he has done.*" 4. " *The expectation is consummated by a glance at the promises and the prophecies.*" As a specimen of the graphic and condensed style with which Mr. Clark proceeds in this kind of writing, we

adduce a paragraph or two. In his sketch of what God has done for the Church, he says :

“ Let us retrace, for a moment, a few pages of her history, and we shall see that when the Church was low, he raised her; when she was in danger, he saved her. Amid all the moral desolations of the old world, the Church never became extinct. And he at length held the winds in his fist, and barred the fountains of the deep, till Noah could build the ark, and the Church could be housed from the storm. How wonderful were his interpositions, when the Church was embodied in the family of Abraham! In redeeming her from Egyptian bondage, how did he open upon that guilty land all the embrasures of heaven, till they thrust out his people! And he conducted them to Canaan by the same masterly hand. The sea divided, and Jordan rolled back its waters; the rock became a pool, and the heavens rained them bread, till they drank at the fountains and ate of the fruits of the land of promise. . . . When the Church diminished, and her prospects clouded over, he raised up reformers. Such were Samuel, and David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and Daniel, and Ezra, and Nehemiah: such were all the prophets. Each in his turn became a master builder, and the temple arose, opposition notwithstanding. . . . Again, under the apostles, how did her prospects brighten! In three thousand hearts, under a single sermon, commenced the process of sanctification. The very cross proved an engine to erect her pillars; the flames lighted her apartments, and the blood of the martyrs cemented the walls of her temple, and contributed to its strength and beauty. Every dying groan alarmed the prince of hell, and shook the pillars of his dreary domain.” See pp. 44, 45.

We set down “The Church Safe” as, on the whole, the most admirable production of its author. Few sermons have made a stronger sensation on their publication. It was extensively sought and read, and contributed not a little to awaken the benevolent energies of the Church, to the enterprise before her. The writer vividly remembers the evening when the village, where he resided, were summoned together to the reading of this sermon, by a young man who had brought it in from abroad. It is no small achievement to have prepared and put forth to the world one such discourse.

The sermon, entitled “The Enemies of the Church made to promote her Interests,” page 481, is another fine specimen of argumentation from facts. Here, as in the preceding, they are marshalled in the most admirable order. There is a quick and strong movement; at once rhetorical beauty and flow, and argumentative clenching. The sermon is a good example of a discourse, in which unpalatable truths are set forth and firmly established by the simple force of facts. The facts are so employed as to hedge up the hearer to the conclusion he hates to come to. The obnoxious point is God’s sovereignty in the use and disposal, the award and punishment of his rebellious creatures,—a point kindred with that which our Savior, in a similar way, fixed incontrovertibly upon his hearers, in the village where he had been

brought up. It is an example worthy of imitation, whenever we are to propound truths in the face of strong prejudices and passions; let the preacher keep to the ground of God's simple sayings, and the admitted facts of his Providence, and the deep unsilenced monitions of conscience, and if he does not produce conviction and belief of the truth, he will do something toward checking cavils and silencing objections.

Mr. Clark bears some resemblance to President Edwards in his manner of reasoning and discussion. Neither of them falls into the gratuitous blunder of attempting to shore up the Divine affirmation of a doctrine, by their own arguments. The doctrine is received upon the Divine testimony. This perfectly establishes it. The main object of the argument or illustration is indirectly to do away objections and prejudices, and directly to commend the truth to the hearer's conscience; to make it real, vivid, convicting, arousing to the sinner's mind. It is the blindness of men which constitutes the grand barrier to the progress and the redeeming results of truth. If the preacher can but give to truth breadth and body, and impart reality to its disclosures, men will see it; and the next thing with many will be, they will feel it; finally, the Spirit helping, they will receive it.

The *reductio ad absurdum* is a form of argument, in which our author seems to be much at home. He wields it now and then with terrible, almost annihilating power. In connection with it, there occasionally appears a little spice of satire; and a disposition to confound his opponent and cover him with shame, instead of satisfying and recovering him to the path of truth. In some instances, he runs, in the first place, the erroneous position to its legitimate results, and holds up the glaring absurdities of the case, and then breaks out in a strain of the most vehement reprobation of the obnoxious point. For example, on the error that Christ is a finite created being:

“*He* indebted to another for his own existence, but *we* must trust in him for eternal life; he our shield, and still he has no power of his own to protect; he our guide, but another must enlighten and guide him; he our intercessor, and still he cannot know when we pray. . . . If there is a scheme, which rather than any other, charges God foolishly, makes the plainest truth a mystery, and the whole Bible a bundle of absurdities, and proudly conducts its votaries to death, it is that which thus quenches the light of Israel. Must I choose between it and open infidelity, I would be an infidel. By the same dash with which I blot the name of the Redeemer, I would obliterate the Father, and believe the grave the end of me. I would not waste my time and strength, and torture my conscience, to mutilate the book of God; but would believe the whole a lie, and warm myself in its blaze, and wish I were a brute. Then I would calmly expect one day to be a supper for the worms, free from dread of the worm that shall never die.” See p. 343.

There is a similar strain in another sermon, in which the same low views of Christ as above are opposed. Our author is speaking of the incalculable injury, which even a doubt of the proper Divinity of Christ would be to the believer:

“That doubt would mar their creed; for they must yield *other* doctrines, when their Redeemer has become a creature. That atonement, which he only could make; that ruin of our nature which he only can repair; that ever-enduring hell, from which he only can rescue us; that Sabbath, which his rising made; that Comforter, whom he kindly sent; and that plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, which establishes his Divinity, must all be plucked from their creed, and it would stand then, like a pine, lightning-smitten, scorched in its every leaf, and rived to its deepest roots, to be the haunt of the owl and the curse of the forest. When you shall blast my creed like this, you may have, for a farthing, the remnant of my poor, mutilated Bible, and I will sit down and weep life away, over this benighted world, to which is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”— See p. 295.

These passages are exceedingly powerful and striking; they were written, unquestionably, under a mighty tide of emotion. Mr. Clark, we think, often wrote in this mood; and in the rush of feeling and strength of expression dictated thereby, now and then there would escape from him a sentiment, very nearly transcending the bounds of truth and propriety. We cannot but doubt the correctness and wisdom of declaring or implying, in any connection, that absolute infidelity is rather to be chosen, than that form of Christianity, which denies the Divinity of its author.

The style of Mr. Clark is throughout very decisively characterized by strength. It is manifest that he aimed chiefly at this; that to this he was willing to sacrifice the light and winning graces of language. In his preface, he expresses the conviction, “that writings are often spoiled by too much smoothing and polishing. Hence the present volumes are permitted to go forth with those occasional roughnesses, which, it is hoped, may not give offence, but simply stir up thought and rouse proper feeling.” Mr. Clark’s prominent faults and excellences, both in language and spirit, are to be traced to the reaching forth of a fervid and powerful mind for great strength of thought and diction. There is uncommon compactness and condensation in our author’s style. There are but few words which can be safely blotted out; nor, by recasting, can we diminish the space a thought occupies. There is a very sparing use of epithets and qualifying terms. The principal words are selected with so much precision generally, that he succeeds in conveying his idea without the aid of thronging expletives and adjuncts. When reading him, we are constrained sometimes to pause and admire the amount and pungent force of meaning, conveyed by some single word, or brief combination of words. This is one of the very highest excellences of style—every word fraught with meaning. It takes some a long time to get weaned from their love of the jingle of adjectives and adjuncts, though assured, from every quarter, that no other single thing does more to encumber and enfeeble the style. One of the great rhetorical sins in preaching, it seems to us, is overdoing—saying too much on the topics introduced, and especially taking up altogether too much time in saying what we do say.

Mr. Clark has not only strength—he has frequently a simple elegance and harmony. This harmony, indeed, is very common, when it is not disturbed by a bold and startling harshness. The following is a fair specimen of the often easy and musical flow of the sentences. “Individuals may prosper most when they are nearest destruction. The old world and the devoted cities were never more prosperous, than when their last sun was rising. Men may be ripe for the scythe of death, their cup of iniquity full, while yet their fields wave with the abundant harvests, and the atmosphere is fragrant with the odors of the ripened fruits and flowers, and echoes with the song of the cheerful laborers.”

Another attribute for which Mr. C.'s style is remarkable is vivacity. There is nothing about it dry, abstract, dead. Every thing is living, moving. He is almost constantly giving us vivid pictures. He shows great skill in gathering and grouping the interesting circumstances of a scene or case. It is this skilful touching of some characteristic circumstance, which brings before the mind the picture of a whole scene: “How many, once as rich as you, are now poor; or as healthy as you, are now in the grave; had a home as you have, but it burned down; had children, as, it may be, you have, but the cold blast came over them and they died. And was it not kindness in God, that saved you what you have?” Another example: “Where had we been if the hand of God had not been under us? To what world had we fled, *when some friend was closing our eyes?* How employed *on the day of our funeral solemnities?*” Once more: “Were Christ to come again, and put himself in the power of sinners, would not many of our communicants *leave the sacrament, and go away to crucify him?*” It is very obvious that nearly all the peculiar freshness and force of these passages, is owing to the striking pictures brought before us. Mr. Clark's writings abound in examples of what Campbell calls “speciality” in the use of terms; that is, the seizing upon those which are particular and determinate, which, of course, present a more vivid image. He was more remarkably characterized by the use of this figure, if it may be called a figure, than any preacher of our acquaintance. We perceive it in every paragraph, almost in every sentence. Everywhere we are met with the specific stroke. Hence, common things are said in a way to be very striking. For instance, “The cause of intemperance moved on briskly, till it was discovered that the Church held in her fellowship those who would drink of the cup of devils, but was stayed in its march *till she had time to entomb her inebriates.*” In another somewhat rough extract, “If the article must be sold, for the use, and ruin, and utter damnation of men, I would *place at the tap* the same lying serpent that handed Eve the apple, that it might appear the very infernal commerce that it is.”

To speak of a property kindred with the above, we may add, that Mr. Clark's style is enlivened and strengthened with a great deal of rapid and bold metaphor. It is everywhere a leading characteristic. He speaks of “reining in the passions;” of “cradling the corrupt passions;” of “feeding the appetite;” “blunting the reason;” “killing the keenness of conscience;” of “hewing down men in the prime of life;” of “being harnessed for the

Divine service;" of "digging after comforts;" of "fencing the truth from the sinner's dying pillow;" of "wading to the grave in tears."

We find in our author none of the extended, overwrought figure which we so often find in President Davies' Sermons. Clark frequently does in a line, when the imagination is addressed, what Davies employed a page in doing. Perhaps the former was too quick and glancing in his strokes of this sort; certainly the latter did more execution on the popular mind; the former has this praise, that he is more Demosthenæan. Mr. Clark often uses Scripture facts metaphorically, and with good effect. "Paul had gone to lay waste that very Church, which, a few days after, it was his honor and joy to edify. The devourer was caught with the prey in his teeth and made a lamb." Again, "The gospel may produce wrath and still be a savor of life. The tenant of the tombs raved, and then believed." The writer has a vivid recollection of an instance of this sort in hearing him some eighteen years since. The simple stroke did in his mind the work of a dozen sermons. Mr. Clark was addressing Christians at the Lord's table. The sentiment was in substance this: 'Perhaps some are in a luminous, happy frame, and in it they feel confident that they shall no more betray the interests of Jesus, as they have done. Beware of this confidence, Peter thought just so once; yet he went directly down from the scenes of Tabor, and swore that he never knew him.'

It may be remarked in this connection, that our author generally derives his figures and illustrations from obvious and common sources. There is no going out of the way for pretty, and fragrant, and sunny things. There are no singing birds, nor silvery lakes, nor glistening dew-drops to charm us; "nothing here of *the fringes of the north-star*; nothing of *nature's becoming unnatural*; nothing of the *down of angel's wings*, or the beautiful locks of cherubims; no starched similitudes, introduced with a "thus have I seen a cloud rolling in the airy mansion," and the like. Such things are not fit for the pulpit; they seem profane in so sacred a place. They certainly have no power there. The truly drastic men have nothing to do with them. They are not afraid nor ashamed to lay hands on familiar objects. These are understood, they are felt by the hearer. "I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down." What can exceed this in strength and impressiveness? The Bible is full of the most cogent figures; cogent from the commonness of the objects. In this way Mr. Clark attained to a startling power in many of his illustrations. "The truth exhibits impenitent men as playing the fool with their own best interests. A madman who in a paroxysm of his disease, has butchered his family, and half despatched himself, and has waked to consciousness in the very act of suicide, is scarcely a sorer picture of wretchedness and ruin, than the sinner upon whose conscience there has been suddenly poured the light of truth." Speaking of the fact, that the wicked are occasionally strangely spared, while the righteous are cut down, he says: "the basest of human beings have sometimes measured out a hundred years, have attended the funeral of every pious contemporary, and have even blown the trumpet of revolt in three centuries." On the passage, "Christ gave himself for us,"

&c., he says: "How easily could he have blighted all our hopes in that dark hour. Had he sent Judas to his own place, or rendered him an honest man when he came to steal the betraying kiss; or had he struck lifeless that midnight band which came to apprehend him; or had he let down into hell that senate chamber with its mass of hypocrisy, and paralyzed the sinews of the soldiery that crucified him, then had there been none to betray, arrest, or murder the Son of God."

When speaking of the sinner's perdition, our author sets it forth commonly in the most terrific imagery of the Bible. Had there been a little more of the mild, the gentle, the winning, had there been a less frequent appeal to the terrible motives of truth, more of the imbuing of that love which bled on Calvary, Mr. Clark would have stood as a preacher, pre-eminent and complete. But we may not leave what we have to say upon the general strain and spirit of these sermons without adding, that, with all his stemness, and hard, unbending fidelity, Mr. Clark has the power of the pathetic to a very considerable degree. This power grows out of another we have ascribed to him, namely, the power of moral painting. Some parts of the "Church Safe" are fine specimens of the pathetic. The entire sermon, entitled: "The industrious young Prophets," is throughout graphic and tender, and must have strongly and deeply moved the feelings of the auditors. Speaking of Christians who have gone from abounding privileges, and are now living far away in regions of moral desolation, he says:

"They cannot educate for themselves a ministry, and build in the wilderness the unnumbered conveniences they left behind. They have turned their eyes to us, and if we refuse them help, we cover them with unmingled despair. . . . The mother who had devoted her children to God, and has gone with them into the western wilds, must die crushed with the tremendous thought, that she became a mother merely that she might people the realms of death. Already she has hung her harp upon the willows, and there it must hang, till some kind missionary enter the door of her cabin, and wipes away her tears; and this missionary *we* must educate. Ten long years must still roll away before he arrives, and she, in the mean time, bleached by the frosts of age, trembles on the brink of the grave, but dares not die, till her hopes are accomplished and her children saved." See p. 403.

On the whole, we must be permitted to affirm the opinion, that Mr. Clark deserves to hold a very high rank as a preparer of sermons. With some peculiar faults, he possessed rare and substantial merits. He was not an imitator; there appears nowhere upon him the marks of any other man's stamp. As a student of Dr. Griffin, he was probably incited and influenced by that gigantic model. Yet his style is not Griffin's, nor does it bear any resemblance, except in a bold, rough, independent power. Every thing our author said came forth with his own characteristic impress.

Having now examined the instruments our author employed, their material and their structure, it seems necessary to the completeness of our esti-

mate, that we look at our author's style of wielding the instrument ; in other words, that we view him *as a preacher of his sermons*. His smiting was generally with a blade which he had previously fabricated and furbished, though he could make a good one at the time when it was necessary ; in other words, he ordinarily preached on the Sabbath, sermons which had been written carefully and in full.

We wish to say distinctly, that these sermons were delivered in a way to give them their strongest effect. Mr. Clark did not *read* them, he *preached* them. He took the matter not from his memory ; he took it from his paper, and preached it : and it was as really a specimen of preaching, and good preaching, as any improviser can give.

Mr. Clark admirably vindicated manuscript preaching ; he showed that it need not be dull preaching, that it may be warm and stirring to the highest degree. Most will concede that Mr. Clark is sufficiently pungent and heated. We love to meet with new instances of stirring power in the use of the pen. We are grateful to our author for these warm-hearted specimens. We deprecate the coming of a time, when ministers shall lay aside the pen in their pulpit preparations. With it they would lay aside one half of their power. There will then be an end to extemporaneous preaching of the highest order. We very much doubt, whether there ever was or ever will be a first rate extemporaneous speaker, who was not, at the same time, a good writer. The discipline of the writing is necessary to impart order and richness to the speaking. Let all writing be done with, and the extemporaneous product grows diffuse and comparatively empty. The man, who writes in part vigorously and well, will proceed with closeness and order in the sermons he does not write. He may make his written sermons warm, searching, effective ; and the unwritten will catch from the written a thorough imbuing and seasoning of the same sterling qualities.

Mr. Clark was an arresting preacher, with all the alleged disadvantages of his paper before him. He had a remarkable power of seizing and holding the attention. If he did not awaken spiritually the auditor, he kept him awake physically. From what we have said of his style, it would be inferred that the house in which he preached would not be much infested with sleepy hearers. They might disbelieve the preacher, they might execrate his sentiments. They could not but hear them if in the house. He must have been doubly stupid, who, by any opiate or any magnetism, could get to sleep under some of the discourses and parts of discourses which proceeded from our author. Whoever, at such a time, might attempt to sink into repose, would not proceed far, before some crashing thunderbolt would compel him to open his eyes, and see what was happening. The roughness and ragged points of Mr. Clark's style were admirably adapted to keep the mind well spurred and jogged. Sometimes a sentence or paragraph would come suddenly like a great rasp across the audience. A sermon may be adjusted, and harmonized, and polished into perfect tameness and insipidity ; the whole moves off, in a gentle, uniform, mellifluous flow, which reaches and

stirs nobody, and which nobody cares for. "The words of the wise are as goads." Such should be a portion, at least, of the words of the preacher.

Mr. Clark's person, voice, and entire manner were in perfect keeping with his style;—a large masculine frame; a voice harsh, strong, capable of great volume, though not very flexible; an action, for the most part, ungraceful, but significant and natural; a countenance bearing bold, strongly marked features, at every opening of which the waked and working passions would look intensely out; then, thoughts and sentences such as we find in these volumes coming forth;—all together gave the idea of huge, gigantic power. We were reminded often of some great ordnance, throwing terribly its heavy shots. Who could, who dared go into unconsciousness before such an engine?

Mr. Clark had an unusual power of impressing the memory. Perhaps in nothing do preachers differ more than in this. We hear one deliver a sermon, and are very well pleased with it. It is made up of substantial and important matter. We endeavor at the time to give earnest heed to the things which we hear, lest we should let them slip. But somehow, do all we can, they will slip; soon the whole is utterly gone, and all that we can say about it is, that at such a time, we heard such a minister preach a sermon. We hear another; we give no closer attention; we are in no better mood. But the sermon inheres; parts of it, at least, are lodged within us too deeply and firmly to be thrown out by the rudest jostlings of amusement or business. Mr. Clark had this prime excellence of preaching, to an unusual degree. Those who listened to his preaching, a score of years back, find that they can remember a great deal that he said. They retain, doubtless, clear conceptions of entire discourses, which on their delivery ploughed deeply into their minds. The power of condensed, graphic enunciation, by which light, strength and beauty were combined and concentrated, in part enabled Mr. Clark to sink these fixtures in the memory. The power of moral painting, also of graphic presentation, which has been referred to, did much to give the adhesiveness in question. The truth, which we are made to see, we cannot forget, as we do the truth we only hear. The value of this power upon the memory in a preacher is not soon estimated. It helps him to insert the good seed beneath the surface, where the birds will not eat it up, nor the winds blow it away. Truth so inserted will often rise up and be thought of; conscience will reiterate the sermon in far future years. The Spirit may give it power; so that it shall result in the conversion of the soul, after the voice, that originally preached it, shall be still in death.

Mr. Clark frequently exhibited in his preaching the ability to make very strong religious impressions. His sermons were not in the strict sense revival sermons. They were never vaguely, loosely declamatory. There were no tricks of eloquence, no play upon the passions. There was, perhaps, too much sentiment, too much solid, searching truth in them for the greatest immediate movement and effect. His was not the right sort of loading and aim to do the most execution in a flock. His preaching was adapted rather to impress deeply a few minds than more slightly many **minds**. He did not operate upon the surface; he struck heavy and shook the very foundations of the character.

It is sometimes said of a preacher that there is a great deal of Christ in his sermons. This is deemed, and it is, a high commendation. It was a commendatory trait in Mr. Clark's preaching, that there was a great deal of God in it. We think, as we have said, that his exhibition of the Divine character, at times, was not sufficiently mitigated. Still there is often placed before us, God, the great Sovereign and Agent, the subduer or the punisher of his foes, the unfailing protector of his people and his cause. God in his awful glory and purity, man in the moral baseness of his character,—in the black and stormy elements of his depravity,—were placed clearly and terribly side by side. The effect produced was, in some instances, awful and overwhelming. Mr. Clark's preaching searched and incited the true disciple, pressing him up to a higher standard; it agitated and cut down the sinner, convincing him that there was no help in himself; it stripped and laid bare the hypocrite, bringing to his own view his own ugliness. Many of all classes, we doubt not, were persuaded by him to flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them, some of whom are now amid the conflicts of time, others amid the glories of eternity.

Subordinate to the spiritual results, and quite inferior in worth, yet highly valuable, was another effect of Mr. Clark's preaching. It wrought powerfully upon the intellect. It waked up the mind and set it to work. It was bracing; it made the hearer feel stronger than he felt before; he went out ready for achievement. We happen to be acquainted with those who acknowledge an indebtedness to Mr. Clark, in this respect, beyond what they owe to any other living mind they ever came in contact with. They met him in their vernal and forming period. He interested them, he seized them, and bore them forward in a quickened and more robust growth. It is always, in some respects, an original and ascendent mind, that thus stimulates, and moulds, and makes stronger other minds.

Mr. Clark's printed sermons have much of the same power. It was the significant query of Fox, respecting a noted speech, "Does it read well? Depend upon it, it was not a good speech, if it does not read well." Mr. Clark's sermons bear this test. Very many books of sermons have failed to bear this test, and in consequence have gone speedily to oblivion. Indeed, the fame of the preacher is very apt to be diminished, if not destroyed, by the service of the printer. It is no uncommon thing for plain, sensible people to have their swelling admiration of some corruscating preacher, whose name and glory have come awfully towering to their conceptions, nearly withered and swept away by the unfortunate occurrence of theirighting upon a printed volume of his sermons. We fear no such result in the case of Mr. Clark. Indeed, he has passed this ordeal in safety. He has found many admiring readers of his sermons: persons of education, of good sense, of deep piety, have read and re-read with interest and profit. Others still will love to recur to them, and will feel that they are benefited by the perusal.

These sermons will do good to the Christian in the closet, and to others, if they will read them. "No one, I presume," says a discriminating writer, remarking upon Mr. Clark, "whose conscience has ever been probed by his

searching appeals, or whose heart has ever been warmed by his fervid and glowing piety or whose spirit has ever been overwhelmed by his melting eloquence, or whose sense of duty has ever been quickened by his forcible and practical illustrations, but must rejoice in the privilege of reading at his leisure, and praying over in secret, such productions of such a man."

They will do good in the family. We like the suggestion, made by the author in the preface to a previous edition, "That the parent, or some one selected by him, read aloud for the benefit of the family, after preparing himself to read with due emphasis and feeling." Have we not erred in laying aside the custom, so much practised by our fathers, of reading a sermon at stated seasons in the family? There are many living witnesses to its spiritual and eternal benefit. Children and domestics have received truths and impressions which they never could rid themselves of, but which became the power of God to their salvation. Our fathers honored sermons—their descendants are getting to despise them. It is not well to do so. Admit these sermons to the family circle, and there allow them to preach to the conscience and the heart, and they will assuredly do good.

They will do good also in the conference room, and in the Sabbath congregation, where there is no minister present. Not all good sermons will answer for this service. Those who have had upon themselves the responsibility of these occasions, have been troubled to find discourses of that strong, graphic, penetrating character, which will arrest the mind, and be effective on the heart, as read from the printed page. Mr. Clark's sermons have been tried in this respect, and not been found wanting. Let them be tried again, and they will not disappoint expectation.

Finally, these sermons are fitted to exert a wholesome influence upon the pulpit. We deem them good sermons for preachers to have intercourse with. If any have fallen into a miserable, mincing way of writing or speaking, let them read these sermons. If any have come so under the dominion of false or excessive taste, that they cannot say a thing out clear, straight, and strong, let them read these sermons. If they are affected with languor and tameness, as they stand in the pulpit, and afflict their hearers with the same oppressive qualities, let them read these sermons. If any are given to exquisitely fine spinning, or extravagantly high soaring, more in love with the sublimated than the sublunary, let them take in hand these coarser and weightier productions. They will do good by their astringency and impulsiveness. They will help to make closer, warmer, manlier preaching. We rejoice that the productions of Mr. Clark are now put forth in a form so convenient and neat; for hereby, we believe, an important service is rendered to the cause of truth and of God.



# SERMONS.

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## SERMON I.

### THE CHURCH SAFE.

ISAIAH XLIX. 16.

*I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*

THE Jewish Church, during her captivity, would be led to conceive that God had forsaken, had forgotten her. To effectually remove this impression, God by his prophet appeals to one of the tenderest relationships of life. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Thus would he give to Zion, assurance of his unchangeable love. His people should multiply, till the land, where their foes destroyed them, should be too limited for their increased population. Kings and nations should serve them, and do them honor. Zion was dear to him as the apple of his eye. He would engrave her upon the palms of his hands; her walls should be continually before him.

In those days, it was the custom to paint upon the palms of the hands such objects as men wish to remember, in allusion to which custom God assures his people, that he had graven Zion upon the palms of his hands. Thus should her walls be continually before him; he would not forget her a moment, nor suffer any foe to injure her. We have here a broad and sacred pledge, to be kept in mind by the people of God in all ages, and plead in their prayers, that he will foster and bless his Church, and will employ his vigilance and his power to secure her safety, and advance her honors.

Thus is *the Church safe*, and the people of God need have no apprehensions, nor weep a tear, but over their own transgressions, and the miseries of that multitude, who will not be persuaded to take sanctuary in her bosom. I shall argue the safety of the church, from *the firmness and stability of the divine operations*; from what God *has already done* for his Church; what he *is now doing*; and what he *has promised to do*.

I. We assure ourselves, that the Church is safe, *from the firmness and stability of the divine operations*. I now refer, not merely to the unchangeableness of God, which will lead him to pursue for ever that plan which his infinite wisdom devised; for that plan lies concealed from us; but to that uniform and steady course with which he has pursued every enterprise which his hands have begun. That he is of the same mind, and that none can turn him, is a *thought* full of comfort; but that he has finished every work which he took in hand is a *fact*, which intelligences have witnessed, and one on which we may found our richest expectations.

The worlds which he began to build he finished. Not one was left half formed and motionless. Each he placed in its orbit, gave it light, and laws, and impulse. And ever since this first development of the divine stability, the wheels of providence have rolled on with steady and settled course. What Omnipotence began whether to create or to destroy, he rested not till he had accomplished.

When he had become incensed with our world, and purposed its desolation, with what a firm and steady step did he go on to achieve his purpose. Noah builds the ark, and God prepares the fountains, which, at his word, burst from their entrenchments to drown an impious generation.

How have suns kept their stations, and planets rolled in their orbits, by the steady pressure of the hand of God; by their revolutions measuring out the years of their own duration, and by their velocity urging on the amazing moment when they shall meet in dread concussion, and perish in the contact. How fixed their periods, their risings, their eclipses, their changes, and their transits. And while they roll, how uniform is the return of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. How certain every law of matter, gravitation, attraction, reflection, &c. The very comet, so long considered lawless, how is it curbed and reined in its eccentric orbit, and never yet had power or permission to burn a single world.

How sure is the fulfilment of prophecy. Ages intervening can

not shake the certainty of its accomplishment. Jesus bleeds on Calvary four thousand years subsequently to the promise which that event accomplishes. Cyrus is named in the page of prophecy more than two hundred years before his birth, and at the destined moment becomes the Lord's shepherd, collects the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and builds Jerusalem. The Jews, as prophets three thousand years ago foretold, are yet in exile. The weeping prophet, now at rest, still sees the family he loved peeled and scattered, and the soil that drank his tears, cursed for their sins; and confident that God is true, waits impatient the certain, but distant year of their redemption.

Wretches that dare his power, God will not disturb his plan to punish. The old world flourished one hundred and twenty years after heaven had cursed that guilty race. Sodom was a fertile valley long after the cry of its enormities had entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. The Amorites were allowed five hundred years to fill up the measure of their iniquity after God had pledged their land to Abram, although Israel wore away the intervening years in bondage. Many a murderer has been overtaken by the hand of justice, half a century past the time of the bloody deed. God will punish all the workers of iniquity, but he waits till the appointed moment. Like the monarch of the forest, he comes upon his enemies, conscious of his strength, with steady but dreadful steps. In his movements there is neither frenzy, passion, nor haste. While his judgments linger, his enemies ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" but let them know, that he has appeared, and discomfited many a foe; and the inference is that *they* must perish too. Whatever God begins, he finishes: no unseen embarrassment can turn his eye from his original purpose.

Now the argument is, that as God has begun to erect a Church, he will act in this matter as in all others. If one of light character, a man given to change, had laid the foundation of some mansion, there would still be doubt whether it would ever receive its topstone. But suppose his character exactly the reverse, and the moment he breaks the ground, imagination sees the mansion finished: now only make God the builder and the argument is perfect. Whether we can trace his footsteps or not, he moves on to the accomplishment of his purpose with undeviating course. Every event, in aspect bright or dark, promotes the ultimate increase and establishment of his Church. Or shall this be the only enterprise to which his wisdom, his power, or his grace, is inadequate?

In this solitary instance shall he begin to build and not be able to finish? What would be thought of him in hell, if the mystical temple should never receive its topstone? Its fires may go out, the worm may die, or some infernal genius bridge the gulf. Heaven too would lose all confidence in its King, and every harp be silent.

Thus before we examine the history of the Church, or read the promises, if we believe that God ever had a Church, we have the strongest possible *presumptive* evidence, that he will watch her interests, will feed the fires upon her altars, will bring her sons from far, and her daughters from the ends of the earth, and will never leave her, nor forsake her. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

II. Our expectations brighten when we see what God *has done* for his Church. My first argument went to show, that if God had only laid the corner-stone of this heavenly building, it would rise and be finished. We are now to view the building half erected, and from what *has been done* argue the certainty of its completion. The Church has been under the fostering care of heaven too long to be abandoned now.

Let us retrace for a moment a few pages of her history, and we shall see that when the Church was low, he raised her; when she was in danger, he saved her. Amid all the moral desolations of the old world, the Church never became extinct. And he at length held the winds in his fist, and barred the fountains of the deep, till Noah could build the ark, and the Church be housed from the storm.

How wonderful were his interpositions when the Church was embodied in the family of Abraham! In redeeming her from Egyptian bondage, how did he open upon that guilty land all the embrasures of heaven, till they thrust out his people. And he conducted them to Canaan by the same masterly hand. The sea divided, and Jordan rolled back its waters; the rock became a pool, and the heavens rained them bread, till they drank at the fountains, and ate the fruits of the land of promise. Their garments lasted forty years, and the angel Jehovah, in a cloud of light, led them through the labyrinths and dangers of the desert.

When the Church diminished, and her prospects clouded over, he raised up reformers. Such were Samuel, and David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and Daniel, and Ezra, and Nehemiah: such were all the prophets. Each in his turn became a master-builder, and the temple rose, opposition notwithstanding.

Again, under the apostles, how did her prospects brighten. In three thousand hearts, under a single sermon, commenced the process of sanctification. The very cross proved an engine to erect her pillars; the flames lighted her apartments, and the blood of the martyrs cemented the walls of her temple, and contributed to its strength and beauty. Every dying groan alarmed the prince of hell, and shook the pillars of his dreary domain.

But the Church again sunk, and hell presumed that her ruin would be soon achieved, when the sixteenth century lifted upon her the dawn of hope. In Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and Zuinglius, her interests found able advocates. They appeared at the very juncture when the sinking Church needed their courage and their prayers. Like some mighty constellation, which bursts from the east at the hour of midnight, they rose when moral darkness was almost total, and like that of Egypt could seem to be felt. By their aid the Church emerged from the wilderness. By their courage her grand enemy was made to tremble on his ghostly tribunal. The power of the Pope had then outgrown the strength of every civil arm. Every monarch in Europe was at his feet. Till Luther rose no power could cope with him. There was a true Church, but she had no champion. The followers of Jesus paid for the privilege of discipleship with their blood. He who dared to be guided by his own conscience, committed an offence that could not be pardoned. The heavenly-minded saw no relief but in death, and thirsted for the honor of a martyrdom that would place them in a world where conscience might be free. But God appeared and redeemed his people. The theme is pleasant, but time would fail me to rehearse what God has done for his Church. Every age has recorded the interpositions of his mercy; and every land where there is a remnant of his Church, bears some monument that tells to his honor, and which will endure till the funeral of the world.

Now the argument is, that he who has done so much for his Church will never abandon her. If he would float her above a drowning world, would redeem her from bondage, would escort her through the desert, would rain her bread from heaven, would reprove kings for her sake, would stop the sun to aid her victories; with his smiles, light the glooms of her dungeon, and by his presence cool the fires of the stake, there can be no fear for her safety.

God *will do* just such things for Zion as he *has done*. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." His arm is not shortened, nor his ear heavy. The Church was never nearer his

heart than *now*. And he now hates her enemies as really as he did Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nero, or Julian. He then governed the world for the sake of his Church; and for her sake he governs it still. "The Lord's portion is his people." We know not that he ever had but one object in view in the events that have transpired in our world; and that one the honor of his name in the redemption of his people: and this object sways his heart still. The destruction of the enemy is a part of the same plan. Still may the Church invoke the Lord God of Elijah, may rest under the protection of the God of Bethel, and wrestle with the Angel of Penueel. If she should be in bondage there will rise another Moses, another cloud will conduct her out of Egypt, and the same heavens will rain her manna. If darkness should overshadow her, there will be found among the sons she hath brought up, another Luther, Calvin, or Knox, to take her by the hand, to protect her honors, and recruit her strength. Shame on the Christian who knows her history, and yet is afraid. Afraid of what? That God will cease to defend the apple of his eye? Afraid that the city graven upon the palms of his hands may be captured and destroyed? If God continue to do such things as he *has done*, the Church with all her retinue is safe. "God is known in her palaces for a refuge."

III. God *is* doing *now* just such things as he has done. We saw laid the corner stone, and drew thence our *first* argument. Then we saw the building half erected, and were furnished with a *second*. We are now to view the edifice covered with builders, and from their exertions derive our *third*. We may now reason from things that our eyes can see. We may appeal for testimony to the very saw and hammer, and make the scaffold speak.

It may be that some of my readers are not sensible in what a day of heavenly exploit they live. Do you know what amazing events are transpiring? Have you learned that Bible societies are forming in every part of Christendom? and that the Scriptures are now read in perhaps a hundred languages, in which, till lately, not a text of inspired truth was ever written? Do you know that the late editions of God's word have commenced their circulation, are traversing the desert, taming the savage, and pouring celestial light on eyes that never met its beams before?

Do you know the prevalence of a missionary spirit? Have you learned that youth of the first character, of the fairest prospects, and of both sexes, aspire to be missionaries of the cross? Some have gone, and others wait impatiently till your charity shall

send them. Many a mother has devoted her daughter to the work, and waits for opportunity to give her the parting kiss; and many a daughter, on whom has fallen Harriet's mantle, aches to visit her tomb, and rest under the same turf till Jesus bids them rise. And what daughter of Zion is not ambitious of a martyrdom like hers?

How numerous and extensive the revivals, which at present we witness in our land! Even where there is no stated ministry, the showers of grace descend, and the waste places are made fertile. What other page of the Church's history, but the present, could record an almost universal concert of prayer? Christians of every continent employing the same hour in the same supplications. How unparalleled the success of every Christian enterprise! No plan of mercy ever fails. The active Christian is amazed at the result of his own exertions.

Much that God is *now doing* is evidently preparatory to *future operations*. Bible and missionary societies may be viewed as the accumulated energies of the Church. Hitherto our exertions have been insulated and feeble. The little streams fructified the plains through which they flowed, but could easily be dammed or evaporated; but their junction has formed a mighty river, destined to penetrate every moral desert, and carry civilization to every province of our desolated world: fed with the showers of heaven, and every day flowing on with deeper and broader channel, the wilds of Arabia, the heaths of Africa, and the plains of Siberia, can oppose no effectual barrier to its influence.

What age but ours was ever blessed with Theological Seminaries, where might be reared at the expense of charity, young evangelists, to go out and carry the bread of life to a starving world? Fortunes, collected for other purposes, are poured into the treasury of the Lord, and thus are erected batteries to demolish the strong-holds of the prince of hell. Jehovah bless their founders!

Churches and congregations, who, in seasons of coldness, grudged to support the gospel at home, are now equipping young men for the missionary field, and for their own edification. And it has at length become so disreputable to stand idle in these matters, that the man who would save his money, feels himself in danger of losing his character.

Not long since, young men of piety and talents, who longed to fight the battles of the Lord, must equip themselves, and then find poor support in service. But now the scale is turned. Where there is no fortune but piety, a thirst for knowledge, and a talent

to improve, the way is now open to all the honors of the camp of Israel. The pious mother, who can only drop her two mites into the treasury of the Lord, but whose example and whose prayers have saved her son, may bring her Samuel to the altar, to be fed from its offerings, and reared to all the honors of the prophetic office. While I am yet writing, hope springs up, and a joy not felt in ages past, thrills through all the habitations of pious poverty.

The late revivals possess one peculiar characteristic. There have been among their fruits an unusual number of males. When there was little else that could be done for Zion, but pray and weep, and love her doctrines, and glow with heavenly affections, the *feebler sex* could furnish the Christian world with soldiers. But now, when the kingdom of darkness must be stormed, Zion needs the aid of her *sons*, and God, it would seem, accommodates the operations of his Spirit to the interests of his Church. Paul was not converted till his help was needed, and it was not needed till the gospel was to be carried to the Gentiles. Every revival of late contradicts that libel long legible on the records of infidelity, *that religion evinces its emptiness by its exclusive operation upon the feebler part of our race*. Recently the strong and muscular, the very champions of the host of hell, have fallen before the power of truth, and are harnessed for its defence. Moreover, men of science, and of strong mind, have in their own esteem become fools, and have sat down to learn truth at a Savior's feet. Our late revivals have penetrated schools and colleges. Satan's cause has been well pleaded, and God now intends to plead his own: and palsied will be the tongue that is silent.

Does God without design raise up these instruments? Would one pass through a whole kingdom, and employ every skilful mechanic, unless he intended to erect some mighty edifice? If, then, we see God enlisting *men* in his service, *men of strength and science*, does he not intend to achieve some wondrous design? Assuredly the heavenly building will rise. These talents will be, and they are already employed in extending Emanuel's empire. India, with other benighted lands, has already received our missionaries, and her Moloch, with all his cursed family of gods, sicken at their prospect. The dark places of his empire have been explored, and the sceptre begins to tremble in his palsied hand. And poor Africa, more debased still, has found a tongue to plead her cause. Conscience, long asleep, and deaf to her rights has waked, and now, her sons, fed at the table of charity, are preparing to carry

her the bread of life. My country, deeper in her debt than all other lands, has begun to pay its long arrears.

Who could have hoped, a few years since, that he should ever see a day like this? If, twenty years since, one had told me that *sixty* years would so electrify the Christian world, I should have believed him visionary, and, like the unbelieving Samaritan, should have pronounced it impossible, unless God should make windows in heaven, and rain Bible and Missionary Societies from above: but God has done it all without a miracle. And blessed be his name—will my readers join me in the thank-offering?—blessed be his name, that he cast us upon such an age as this. Blessed be his name, that we were not born a century sooner. Then we had never seen the dawn of this millennial morning, nor heard the glad tidings which now reach us by every mail, nor had an opportunity, as now, to purchase for our offspring, an interest in the Lord's fund. Charity was then in a deep sleep. India bowed to her idols, and Africa wore her chains, unpitied and unrelieved. Buchanan and Wilberforce, angels of mercy, were then unborn. Infidelity then desolated the fairest provinces of Christendom, and wars were the applauded achievements of states and empires.

But the age of infidelity has gone by, and the bloody clarion has breathed out, I hope, its last accursed blast. Events are transpiring which bid fair to bind all nations in the bonds of love. I had *read* of such a period, but how could I hope to *see* it? The present repose of nations augurs well for the Church. Christendom can now unite her efforts to evangelize the world, while the sailor and the soldier have leisure and opportunity to read the precious Scriptures. And must not all this put our unbelief to the blush, and cover us with shame?

The past twenty years have so outdone our highest hopes, as to render it impossible to predict what twenty more may do. God has begun to work on a scale *new* and *grand*; and the inference is that he will go on. After what we have seen, we could hardly be surprised if twenty years to come should put the Bible into every language under heaven, and should send missionaries, more or less, to every benighted district of earth. Let benevolent exertion increase in the ratio of the past seven years, and God add his blessing, and half a century will evangelize the world, tame the lion and the asp, and set every desert with temples, devoted to the God of heaven. When the bosom of charity shall beat a little stronger, if there should be the necessity, men will sell houses or farms to save the heathen from hell; and the child will sit down

and weep, who may not say, that his father and mother were the friends of missions. And what parent would entail such a curse upon his children, and prevent them from lifting up their heads in the millennium. I had rather leave mine toiling in the ditch, there to enjoy the luxury of reflecting, that a father's charity made them poor. Poor! They are poor who cannot feel for the miseries of a perishing world; to whom God has given abundance, but who grudge to use it for his honor. Teach your children charity, and they can never be poor. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Can this promise fail? Then we can all leave our children rich, and the heirs too of a fortune they can never squander. We can purchase for them the privilege of drawing upon the exhaustless resources of heaven. What a privilege now to be a *parent*!

But I must return to the argument. God is doing so much for his Church, as to warrant the inference that he will do still more. The hopes he raises he will gratify. The prayer he indites he will answer. To see what God is doing, I find it impossible to doubt his intentions. The present is a prelude to brighter scenes. God would not have done so much for his people had he intended to abandon them. The Church will live and prosper. Instead of trembling for the ark, let us weep that we ever thought it in danger.

IV. We build the same expectations on the *promises* and *prophecies*. The building which we see rising God has promised to finish. He has all the materials; the silver and the gold are his. He has enlisted the builders, and prepared the necessary instruments. The decree has gone forth that Jerusalem must be built, and God will redeem his own gratuitous pledge: he will do as he has said.

Early in the reign of Emanuel there will be universal peace. The nations are to "beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all" God's "holy mountain." "They shall sit, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid."

But "the gospel must first be published among all nations." On this promise there pours at present a stream of heavenly light. The angel, "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth," is beginning to publish it "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Kings are to be to

the Church nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers ; and they have already taken hold of the work with interest. Their charity their influence, and their prayers, have already contributed to deepen and widen the channel of that river which is making glad the city of God. In the progress of this work a nation shall be born in a day. The instance of Eimeo may be considered as embraced in this promise. "Thy watchmen shall see eye to eye." This promise has commenced its accomplishment in the harmony manifested in the formation and support of Sabbath schools, and Bible and Missionary Societies. The Jews are to return to their land, and to the God of their fathers. There shines some light upon this promise. Many are at present migrating to Palestine from the north of Europe ; some have been converted to the faith of Jesus, many not converted are members of Bible societies, and exertions unparalleled are making to bring them to the light, while individuals of their number are proclaiming to their deluded brethren the unsearchable riches of Christ. Soon the Bible will supplant the Talmud.

"Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Who does not see this promise fast accomplishing ? Her chains are falling and her mind expanding. There have commenced a train of operations that promise the richest blessings to the children of Ham. Soon the Gambia, the Niger, and the Nile, will grace their shore with Christian temples, will lend their waters to fertilize a gospel land, and bear to his station the zealous missionary. In the mean time the wretched Arab, exchanging his Koran for the Bible, and tamed, by its influence, to honest industry, will settle the quarrel with the family of Jacob, and worship in the same temple.

If we turn to the threatenings against the enemies of the Church, there open before us large fields of promise. Like the cloud that severed Pharaoh's hosts from Israel they pour impenetrable darkness into the camp of the enemy, while they light the tents of Jacob. "The day of the Lord shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord ; that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Perhaps the complicated miseries which began in the French Revolution, and were finished at Waterloo, might commence the accomplishment of this threatening. But doubtless other storms will yet beat upon the camp of the enemy, more tremendous than anything which they have yet experienced. Some believe that the fifth vial has not yet been pour-

ed out upon the seat of the beast ; and all agree that the forty and two months, during which the holy city must be trodden under foot, are not yet expired. It is acknowledged that the period is twelve hundred and sixty years, and that it commenced with the reign of the beast, and will probably terminate in the present century. Possibly our dear children may live to see the precious moment that shall close the period. Then the messenger of the covenant shall make his glorious ingress, shall destroy his enemies, shall purify the sons of Levi, and cleanse the offering of Judah. Then the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Jesus shall take possession of the inheritance promised, "and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

Can the dejected Christian *read* all this, and *believe* it all, and despondingly weep still ? And for what does he weep ? God has begun to erect a heavenly temple ; the work has never stopped, and he promises that it never shall. He never did abandon any work which he began, nor did there ever drop from his lips a promise that was not, or will not be fulfilled. And what more can he do ? Christian, you may weep on, but let your tears be tears of penitence or joy. Every harp should be snatched from the willows, new joys should be felt, and new anthems sung in all the assemblies of the saints. He that *shall* come, *will* come, and will not tarry ; and every bosom should respond, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

#### APPLICATION.

1. If to any it is a burden to join in the general concert of prayer for Zion's increase, they can excuse themselves, and the glorious work will still go on. There are those who consider the duty a privilege. If the Church could live without them, and duty did not prompt them to pray, they would weep to be denied the privilege of bearing her interests to the throne, and of waiting for the redemption of Israel. Such may wait still upon the Lord, and may wait with confidence, that every prayer will be answered, every tear preserved, and every hope accomplished. But are there those who would wish to be excused from this service ? who have no pleasure in the duty, and no faith in the promises ? Well, they can act their pleasure, and the Church will live. But, whether such will have any share in the glories of that kingdom, whose approach they dread, "demands a doubt."

2. If any grudge to contribute of their wealth, for the advance-

ment of the Church, they can withhold. If they have a better use for their money, or dare not trust the Lord, there is no compulsion. *Some happy beings* will have the honor of the work. It is to be accomplished by the instrumentality of men, and if any are willing to be excused, and insist on doing nothing, they can use their pleasure. And if such would ruin their children, by holding them back, they can. They can form them to such habits that the world will never be disturbed by their munificence. They can prejudice them against all the operations of Christian charity; can make them deaf to the cry of the six hundred millions; can keep them ignorant of what the Christian world is doing, and what God has commanded *them* to do. And there can then be very little doubt but they will have children in their own likeness. But whether God will not finally lay claim to their wealth, and cause it to be expended in beautifying his holy empire, we dare not assert. The silver and the gold are his.

But the work will go on. *Once* our fears on the subject were great. We doubted whether the Christian world would ever give the heathen the gospel. But our fears are removed. We have now no apprehension as to the issue, and can only pity those who are blind to their duty, their interest, their honor, and their happiness.

3. If any are willing to remain out of the kingdom of Christ, they can act their pleasure in this matter too, and yet the marriage supper will be full. The kingdom of Christ will be large enough; large as he expected, large as he desired, large as the Father promised; large enough to gratify the infinite benevolence of his heart. If any do not wish to live in heaven, the mansions they might have filled will be occupied by others. The celestial choir will be full, and the name of Jesus will receive its deserved applause from myriads who shall be redeemed from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

If sinners can do without God, he can do without them. They will not be forced, reluctantly, to the marriage supper of the Lamb. There will be enough who will come willingly. Heaven will be as happy as it would be if more were saved. And the prison of despair will contain exactly that number, whose ruin will exhibit to the best advantage the character of Jehovah: and the smoke of their torment, which shall ascend up for ever and ever, will form a stupendous column, on which will be written, legible to all heaven, HOLINESS, JUSTICE, TRUTH.

The vast accession made to the Church in the late revivals, and

the still greater increase in the future years of millennial glory, will swell the number of the saved beyond all calculation. Sinners who now join the multitude, and are thus secured from present reproach, will soon find themselves attached to an insignificant and despicable minority. It would seem at present that the number of the lost will be great, but you may multiply them beyond the power of human enumeration, and still there is no fear but the number of the saved will be greater.

If any, then, would prefer to remain out of the kingdom, they have their choice, and the shame and ruin will be their own. God intends to let them do as they please, and those who love his kingdom most, anxious as they now are for the salvation of their fellow-men, will at last be satisfied with the number of the saved. We invite none to become the subjects of Christ's kingdom, but those who will esteem his yoke easy and his burden light.

4. If any should be disposed to enter into league with the lost angels, and oppose the Church, they can do so, and still the Church will live. Earth and hell united, can make no effectual opposition to her interests. God is in the midst of his people, and will help them, and that right early. In these circumstances, one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

Some opposition is necessary to awaken her energies. Solomon was seven years building the first temple, when all was peace; but Ezra, with the trowel in one hand, and the sword in the other, could build the second in four. The enemy has always promoted the interest he wished to destroy. God will make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. If any would make opposition to the growing interests of Emanuel, they can; but they will accomplish their own ruin, and perhaps the ruin of their children. It never was so dangerous as now to be the enemy of Christ's kingdom. All such must be crushed under the wheels of that car, in which the Son of God is riding in triumph through a conquered empire. To make opposition is as unavailing as if a fly should make an effort to stop the sun. There await the enemies of the cross, certain defeat, shame, and ruin. "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings shall come down upon his own pate." In the mean time the Church is safe. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

5. Fathers and brethren in the ministry, this subject will raise your hopes. Are you stationed where it is all darkness around

you, and have the hosts of hell alarmed you? cheer up your hearts. Try to penetrate the surrounding darkness, and you will soon be convinced that your fears are ill-timed. Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward. If night does seem to hover about us, still is it manifest that the day has dawned upon the hills. The Church has never been in danger, and we ought to be ashamed of our fears. Be at your watch-tower, dear brethren; turn your eye to the east, and you will soon descry the light. If there is any truth in the promise, and if a thousand transpiring events can speak, we shall soon have opportunity to hail Emanuel at his second coming. If our courage fails us in a day like this, we have only to lie down and die with shame. While the victory was doubtful, you might be afraid, and yet save your character, but none are afraid now but the coward. Shall we hesitate to die, if necessary, in securing a victory already gained; and to gain which the Captain of our salvation, and many of his soldiers have spilt their blood? Our missionary brethren have carried the standard of the cross, and planted it within the entrenchments of the enemy, and their courage has not failed; and shall we tremble in the camp? We shall then have no share in the spoil. Dear brethren, I will not insult you; you are not afraid; you will die at your post, and the victory will be secured.

6. Dear Christian brethren, you see the royal canopy which your Lord casts over your heads; or rather the shield he spreads before you. If you are not officers in the camp of Israel, you are soldiers; if you may not command, you may fight, but not with carnal weapons. Let the subject raise your courage. A few more conflicts and your toils are ended; the Church is safe, and you are safe. Only believe, and soon you will see the salvation of God. And as the Savior approaches, and you see him, you may say with the prophet, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

## SERMON II.

### NOTHING SAFE BUT THE CHURCH.

DEUTERONOMY XXXII. 9.

The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

WHEN God exhibits himself, as the portion of his people, we feel no surprise. He can be to them all they need, can gratify all their wants, and all their hopes. But what can his people be or do for him? How can they so rise in his estimation, that he shall style them his portion and his inheritance? The God who has built a thousand worlds, who thunders in the heavens, and holds the stars in his right hand; can he value his people above them all? And yet this precious truth is prominent in the text, and is demonstrated, by the whole course of providential events, since the creation of the world. If that is the dearest to God *which cost him most*, as is often the fact in our history, then indeed there is an obvious reason for the truth of the text. Worlds took being at his word, and will perish at his bidding, but he redeemed his people with the life of his Son; hence his high regard for them. And hence a reason for all he intends to do for them in futurity. He will guide them with his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory.

Hence to God's people the text contains a very precious truth God has selected from the works of his hands, as what shall stand the highest in his estimation, his redeemed people. Not that he has alienated his right to any thing. Every world that he has built is his, and his foes are his. But in his Church he will take peculiar pleasure. He will employ all his energies to make his people happy, and himself happy in them. This was his purpose when he built the creation, and when fully accomplished, "The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

But there is a truth *implied* in this text of solemn and dreadful import. It makes worthless every thing in this world, but the

church of God. And what is worthless is not safe. Hence I purpose to illustrate this doctrine, *There is nothing safe but the church.* My intention is to look at facts, *ancient and modern*, together with *what God assures us shall transpire in future*; all going to show, that while God has always cared for his Church, he never did place intrinsic value upon any thing else.

I. *I notice ancient facts.* When the world was built, it is believed to have exhibited to the eye of its Maker unmingled beauty; and would seem to us to have had intrinsic value. But it was only holiness that God valued. Sin entered,

“Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of wo,  
That all was lost.”

There were then generated the thorn and the thistle, and the curse of God lighted upon every part of this creation. A holy God could set no value upon a world bereft of moral rectitude. It would not have been surprising, had he destroyed it, and built another, to be filled with beings who would obey his law, and be worthy of his kind regards. But his wisdom devised a remedy, and he set up in that apostate family a Church, whose interest has ever since then given to every thing else its price. When the Church increased, the world was valuable, and when it diminished, the world became in the estimation of God comparatively a pile of stubble.

Cast one look at the antedeluvian history. The Church had dwindled to a point, and became at length embosomed in a single family. To save that family no pains were spared; but all else, men and things, except what was needed to feed the floating Church, and enable his people to cultivate and stock the new world, perished. Wealth and magnificence had now lost their value. If God had pleased, he could have avenged himself of his adversaries, and still have spared that vast amount of wealth, which perished in their overthrow. But why do it? The treasures of the old world had ceased to be valuable, when the Church was gone. Their innumerable cities, walled up to heaven, and filled with precious things, were all swept away. How wonderful, to see Jehovah restrain the deluge one hundred and twenty years after his purpose to destroy had gone out, till the ark was prepared, his long-suffering evinced, and a happy family housed from the impending desolation! This done, he collected into that

house of safety all that was valuable, his little Church and what they needed to sustain them during the solitary year, their food and raiment, and the materials for reanimating the new world. He could then smile at the tempest, and stimulate the storm. O how great is God out of his holy place! How sadly unsafe are that people, and those treasures that have no connection with his kingdom!

There was offered another argument in support of the same truth on the plains of Sodom. A branch of the true Church had been located in that dissolute valley, and was at length in danger of being swallowed up in the gulf of depravity. The population was too wealthy to be wise, had too much of the meat that perisheth, to regard that meat that endureth to everlasting life. The Watchman of Israel, as he surveyed the devoted plain, saw his whole Church in a single house, and what was his he saved, but swept away the residue. The abandoned population, their palaces, their gold, their merchandize, their flocks and harvest, their gaudy apparel, and all their guilty instruments of idolatry and lust, were in God's account of no value, were no part of his inheritance. The moment Lot was gone, the guard that kept the plain was called in.

It will not be denied that God could have avenged upon that guilty community his broken law, and still have spared their riches, but these had no value when his Churches had retired. If Lot or Abraham could have been more holy or more happy, God would have spared them the treasures he consumed. But he chose here to display his vindictive justice, and create them other and better comforts. All that in his estimation was valuable, he saved.

So in the land of Egypt, God collected his people into Goshen, and there spread a canopy over them, while he poured out his plagues upon their oppressors. Out of that little territory, there was nothing in all that idolatrous land, on which he seems to have placed the smallest value. Its population, having filled up the cup of their iniquity, and their monuments of grandeur, and skill, and oppression, were the merest vanity. The life or liberty of one believing child of Abraham out-priced them all. Hence over his precious fold he placed one hand, while with the other he wrote *Tekel* upon the walls of Egypt, and spread desolation and death through its fields and its streets. The plagues I know raged under the divine control: but they might destroy any where except in Goshen.

So at the Red sea the surest laws of nature were suspended, for

the deliverance of Israel; while the pursuing enemy seems to have been as worthless, in the esteem of Israel's God, as their beasts and their chariots. When the Church had reached the Arabian shore, and the rear-rank was out of danger, God suffered the raging waters to find their level. He had saved his people, and there was nothing else to save. The Egyptian army were God's enemies, and their overthrow an act of retributive justice, and while the tender heart bleeds over the grave of that ill-fated multitude; we are not forbidden in the midst of our tears, to reason on the palpable insecurity thus shown us of all but the Church of God. He would open a path through the deep for his people, but would not employ his power to hold back the sea a moment longer than the safety of his Church required.

So the Amorites and Moabites melted away in their contest with Israel. And the Canaanites, when the family of Abraham needed their lands, were the merest stubble, and the breath of the Lord consumed them. They cried to their gods, but they perished in the midst of their devotions: their idols could not save them. There even went out in behalf of Israel this edict, "The kingdom and nation that will not serve thee shall perish." Thus the world was taxed for the benefit of the Church. Nations held their existence on the sole condition, that they should be found useful to Israel, and perished when God ceased to have need of them. "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee."

Now as we travel down the tract of ages, we shall find constant illustrations of the fact that God values nothing else but his Church. This one interest, as far as God has been seen to operate in this world, appears to have engrossed his whole care. The Church is that monument which has stood and told his glory to every new-born generation. Other kingdoms, rapid in their rise, and dominant in their power, have gone rapidly into oblivion, and heaven has kept no very careful record of their obsequies. The Assyrian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and Roman empires, with all their multitudes, their wealth, their science, and their military prowess, have perished in the wreck of time; while through all these periods not a promise of God to his people has failed, nor a pious hope been unaccomplished. The little stone, cut out of the mountain, without hands, has become a great mountain, while the rock, from which it was hewn, is seen to crumble and perish. Empires dazzling in the eye of man, but inimical to the Church of Christ, were worthless in the esteem of God. Their proud statues, their triumphal arches; their mausoleums, their heroes and

their gods, he swept away with the besom of destruction. Baal, Dagon, Moloch, and Jupiter have perished with their hosts of worshippers, while not a saint has wept unnoticed, nor a prayer remained unanswered.

Not for one moment has God forgotten his covenant, while he has thus swept away from time, and life, whatever that covenant did not include. In that darkest hour of Israel's history, the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, God loved and comforted with his presence; felt all their oppressions, reproved kings for their sake, put their tears into his bottle, and minuted all their wrongs, that he might apportion to each, in the coming life, his appropriate weight of glory. And the archives of heaven can never be lost. The history of every suffering believer is written as with the point of a diamond on a rock, and will remain legible in the day of retribution.

But I must return from this digression. I am giving you the sad history of what was *not* the Church. There came a period when Jerusalem changed its relationship to God. The Church's light went out, and the religion of the sanctuary was reduced to unmeaning and polluted ceremonies. The house of prayer for all nations, became a den of thieves. From that moment the interest which God had taken in the holy city and sanctuary was alienated. No longer would God be known in palaces of Zion for a refuge. The people of Jerusalem had become as worthless as those of Moab or Edom. Then the moment was, that God could without regret see their city demolished, and the last stone of their proud temple thrown down. He loved his people, and loved Jerusalem, and the temple, while they were holy: but when the priesthood became corrupted, and the temple profaned, and the divine glory forsook the mercy-seat, he then abandoned the consecrated spot, as being no longer a section of his inheritance, and suffered the hedges of his vineyard to be broken down. And he now cares no more for the holy land, than for other lands. If the time shall come again that his covenant people shall be there, walking in his statutes, he will build again the walls he has thrown down, and render Jerusalem a theatre of his glory. Up to that hour, Syria and Egypt, shall be as sacred as Canaan; and the stones and dust of his temple be as uninteresting and unholy, as the ruins of demolished Babylon; a place of dragons and of owls.

II. I come now to look at *modern facts*, expecting to find here the same testimony, as in past events, to the truth of the doctrine,

that nothing but the Church is safe. In the convulsions of our times, we have seen everything placed at hazard, but the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every revolution demonstrates that God has no other interest in our world. In the past half century how low a price has he set upon crowns and kingdoms. And the lives of armies, composed generally of ungodly men, how unworthy have they seemed of his care. The fowls of heaven fatten upon their bodies, and the soil is enriched with their blood. The thousands that fell at Waterloo, if impenitent, were in the estimate of heaven as worthless as the clods that covered them. But if there died in that murdered multitude a pious soldier, angels will watch his ashes till he rise, and God be more interested in the turf that covers him, than in the splendid monument that stands upon the tomb of the hero. An empire of his enemies is in God's esteem of more trifling amount than one obscure believer. The hosts that have died in the fields of modern battle, perished because the Church had no farther use for them. Else that promise would not be true, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or *the world*." And well may we ask with the poet,

"What are the earth's wide kingdoms else,  
But mighty hills of prey?"

In all this a believer will find no mystery. The Bible and the Spirit of God have taught him, that nothing has intrinsic worth but holiness, and that God can place no value upon what is worthless. Hence he lets loose his winds, which go teeming forth with desolation. Navies are wrecked upon the reefs, and cities torn from their base. Earthquakes spread the cry of death, and open a thousand graves at a shock. Kingdoms are shaken, and whole islands, with their wealth, and pride, and enterprise, sink into the opening gulf. The wealth of ages perishes in the twinkling of an eye, and with it talents, eloquence, wisdom, science, the curiosities of antiquity, and the close kept records of a hundred generations. All this time the promise holds to God's people, "No evil shall come nigh thee." Things are rich and splendid in the view of men, which weigh nothing in the account of God. If one saint must share in the general calamity, him the Lord watches with his eye, supports him in death, and lightens the glooms of his sepulchre. But men who have filled up their cup, and the wealth that brought their perdition, all these God values at nothing.

The fact is, and no fact is more interesting, the world was built

for the use of the Church. Holiness only, and that which promotes holiness, are valuable. The walls and hedges of a vineyard, are useful while there are vines to protect, and may be burned or demolished when the vines are withered. Kingdoms have been built and perished, and armies been congregated and slaughtered, to serve the interests of the Church. Hence, said the apostle, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Hence to Zion's interest bends every other, is decreed every revolution, contributes every storm, rolls every ocean, and flows every tide. Earth is barren or fruitful as her interests require. As on the whole kingdom of Israel it might not rain for two and forty months, when God's people needed the protection of a judgment so long protracted, so may we presume that at the call of Zion's interests, God now withholds, or imparts blessings.

The amount of the whole is, that nothing has value, that does not contribute to advance the one interest which God has made paramount in this world. Royal blood, when the king is not his servant, is base and degenerate. The blood of David he watched with care, knew every artery in which it flowed, for he had promised to his seed the throne of Israel: but the blood of Saul became petrified in its channels. The blood of saints and martyrs is royal, the blood of prophets and apostles; for these he hath promised, shall sit on thrones, and wear crowns of glory that shall never fade. Thus are the passing ages gleaned of every relic that belongs to the saints, and when the gleanings are finished, the stubble is promptly consumed. The world is still under tribute to Zion, as in the ages that have gone by, and we must leave it with God to say, whether he will relax the rigor of his requisitions, till all the nations have perished, and the redeemed are all brought home to heaven. I am to look,

III. *At the events which God has assured us shall transpire hereafter.* If by the light of promise and of prophecy we look into futurity, God is still seen in the attitude of fostering his Church, and overlooking every other interest. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord. Holiness to the Lord is to be written upon the bells of the horses, as if to teach us that nothing shall exist, but that which is consecrated to God. The highest offices of state are to become subservient to the interests of Zion. Kings are to be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the Church. It is evident, on almost every page of the

prophecies, that Zion's interests are one day to absorb all other interests.

The world seems already to be shaping itself to become one holy empire under the Prince of peace. I would be neither an infidel nor an enthusiast; but would fear all that God has threatened, and expect all that he has promised. I read, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth;" this promise I calculate will be verified. I read again, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" this threatening I would fear. The wealth which men would not expend in blessing Zion will perish in the using. Pearls worth each a kingdom, God intends shall be melted down in the last conflagration. When the Church shall need their aid no longer, sun, moon, and stars will lose their fires and their light. The heavens and the earth which are now, as we are assured by the word of God, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Thus I see the grand system consummated.

But through all these scenes, and even this last, God will be kind to his people. He will not usher in that period, till the last believer is sanctified. The orb of day will continue in full blaze, till the last pilgrim is lighted home. When Christ has opened the portals of everlasting life upon the rearmost of the ransomed multitude, then the lights of heaven will go out. Christ will wake his people, and bid them escape to heaven, before the last fires are kindled. Thus *to the last* the Church is safe, and nothing else. This one interest God ever made his care, and it will continue to be his care for ever.

#### REMARKS.

1. If it should be objected to this reasoning, that there have been periods when the Church seemed *unsafe*, while its foes were *safe*; it may be replied, that the Church still lives, and, therefore, up to this time *has been safe*, while every other interest has been placed at hazard. All the ancient foes of Zion, who for a time seemed to prosper, have gone to their own place. Scarcely a trace of those kingdoms, which employed their power to destroy the Church of God, can now be found. And her individual foes, unless converted into friends, have all perished, or we see them on their way to perdition. On this point we have the direct testimony of God.

Moreover, we have never seen Jehovah make bare his arm for the *destruction* of his Church, as of her foes. He has often rebuked

his people when they sinned, but they repented, and he forgave them. "In a little wrath he hid his face from them for a moment; but with everlasting kindness he had mercy on them." Not so with their enemies. God has swept them away as with the besom of destruction. The storms of wrath came down upon them, and they did not repent till God had utterly *destroyed* them. It was not with them a temporary rebuke and then mercy, but an utter consumption. Thus the two cases infinitely differ.

2. If it be objected that the subject exhibits God as indifferent to the welfare of some part of the human family; we reply, he will do none of his creatures wrong. The objection arises from viewing sin as a *calumity* rather than a *crime*. If wicked men deserve only wrath, God, in destroying them, does right.

Moreover, God offers all men his love, and a sure sanctuary with his people. If they will not have him to reign over them, then God will appear gracious, while he provides for those who trust in him, and just and holy while he leaves all others to eat the fruit of their doings, and be filled with their own devices.

3. Let me suggest that "all are not Israel who are *of* Israel." While we have thus celebrated the safety of the Church, and have seen all else in danger, let it be remembered that it is the Church *invisible*. If a false profession would secure us, the way to heaven would be *the broad way*. But when any section of the visible Church became corrupt, it perished. A false professor is of no more value in the esteem of God, than an infidel. Judas and Julian had a seat among the disciples, but their ruin was none the less prompt and consummate. It is holiness that God values. When the Lord Jesus shall come the second time, without sin unto salvation, if he find any of his people without the fold, he will save them; and if he finds his foes within, he will recognize them, and send them away into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

4. The subject we contemplate shows us that God is interested in every large or small community, more or less, as it contains a greater or less amount of holiness. Show me a kingdom where there are none of his elect, and with the word of God in my hand I can predict its destiny. It will prolong its existence only while in some way it serves the church, and will then become extinct. But let a nation embosom a large body of believers, or let its energies be expended to serve the Church, and it has the surest possible defence.

Hence all that confidence which, in times of political distress,

we place in *men* and *measures* is a delusive trust. It is the presence of moral rectitude, and the prayer of faith, that render God a nation's guardian. Yes, lovers of your country, fill our land with temples, and Bibles, and truth; let it stand pre-eminent in the work of spreading the gospel; let our officers be peace, and our exactors righteousness; and we are more ably defended than we could be by all the armies that were ever congregated, and all the navies that ever rode upon the sea. Nations may boast of their strength, and array their forces, but if they do not please God, and he despise their host, they fall an easy prey.

So in a *city* or a *town* where there is no holiness God has no interest. He will not care for our improvements in trade or industry, or take pleasure in our accumulated fortunes. By how much we subserve the interests of his kingdom, so will be the kindness he will feel for us, and the care he will take of us. Unless held in requisition for God, all we have is dross; "our gold and silver are corrupted, and our garments are moth-eaten."

So in *churches* and *congregations* God has an interest, and exerts an agency in their behalf, exactly in proportion to the amount of holiness found there. Let a Church be very corrupt, and God will care but little for it; let all its members be holy, and it stands high in the estimation of Heaven. Not in exact accordance to their numbers are the Churches arranged on the records of heaven. In many a case shall the last be first, and the first last. And it is not presumption to say, that God will apportion the visits of his mercy to the aggregate of holiness that shall operate to invite down his gracious and life-giving influences. How forlorn, then, is the hope that God will grant seasons of refreshing where there are none to pray; and will give a new heart and a right spirit where there is no house of Israel to inquire of him.

Still, when men are the most deserted as to spiritual blessings God may allow them temporal prosperity. It is all the heaven he will give them. Men may prosper *most* when they are nearest destruction. The old world and the devoted cities were never more prosperous than when their last sun was rising. Men may be ripe for the scythe of death, their cup of iniquity full, while yet their fields wave with the abundant harvests, the atmosphere is fragrant with the odours of the ripened fruits and flowers, and echoes with the song of the cheerful laborer. Men often perish *the sooner* because they prosper. Riches increase, and they set their hearts upon them. Any people who become *rich* faster than they become *holy*, have this very destiny to fear.

Inquire, then, brethren in *Christ*, what is the extent of God's inheritance among you? This is a question which I feel willing to press upon your consciences with the weight of a world. Answer it, and you have determined the extent of God's regard for you, and his care of you. The number of real believers, and the progress they make in holiness, are the facts that are to measure your consequence under the government of God. I know this thought exhibits wealth, and birth, and talents, as comparatively of little worth, and is *humiliating* as it is *true*. God is not attached to places and names as we are, but to holiness. The territory where the seven churches were, and even where the Shechinah blazed, God has forsaken: and he will treat you as he has others. He will never forsake you while you serve him, nor your children, if they are holy, nor your seed, to a thousand generations, unless they forsake God. They that despise him shall be lightly esteemed; but let us draw near to him and he will draw near to us.

This subject is calculated to comfort pious *families*. If we aim to render our children holy, God will build us up a sure house for ever. The poor family, who walk in the fear of God, he will consider more worthy of his patronage than a whole community of the profane and the proud. He will not command that house to become extinct where he is feared and worshipped. The angels will pitch their tents there, and

“What ills their heavenly care prevents,  
No earthly tongue can tell.”

If God be for us who can be against us? if he resolve to prosper and bless us, we and ours shall be safe, amid every storm that blows. No plague shall come nigh thee.

The *individual* believer may take all the comfort possible from this subject. No matter what his station. God regards the pious slave more than the impious master. The poor widow that can pray, and is happy in her closet, can do more to save her land, than the prayerless monarch. She can sit down calmly, and look at the gathering tempest, and ask her Father to manage and control its violence. We shall ever find that thought, so beautifully expressed by the poet, true,

“The soul that's filled with virtue's light,  
Shines brightest in afflictions' night:  
And sees in darkness beams of hope.  
Ill-tidings never can surprise  
His heart, which fixed on God relies,

Though waves and tempests roar around  
Safe on a rock he sits, and sees  
The shipwreck of his enemies,  
And all their hope and glory drowned."

But finally the *ungodly* are not so ; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Shocking indeed beyond all description is the condition of that man whom God does not love, and for whose happiness he will make no provision. He may, if God's plan permit, enjoy long the bounties of a gracious Providence, but if God suffer him to live, and makes him an instrument of his glory, it will all be no evidence that he loves him. And a day must soon come, when he will know his own character, and feel all the guilt, and shame, and misery of his condition. To be safe or happy, we must become a part of God's inheritance, and have a character that shall interest us in his love. The sinner, then, who will change his character, may wipe away his tears ; but if he will continue impenitent and unbelieving, he 's exhorted to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep.

## SERMON III.

### PERDITION A DARK SPOT IN THE MORAL LANDSCAPE.

EZKIEL XVIII. 32.

I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God.

EVERY other doctrine of the Scriptures must be compatible with this one. God has done enough in the work of saving sinners from hell to show beyond controversy that he cannot delight in their blood. The covenant of redemption, and the descent of Jesus Christ to tabernacle in the flesh, and especially his death on the cross, must have satisfied even devils that God had no pleasure in their blood. And then, when God gave the world the scriptures, and directed that men be pressed with the invitations of mercy, how could the truth of the text be doubted, even in the place of torment? Shall the very men whose way to hell God is hedging up, while he opens before them the portals of everlasting life—shall they have any doubt of his mercy? Every Sabbath, and every offer of pardon and every mercy the sinner receives from the hands of God, testify to his unwillingness to destroy, and his willingness to save lost men.

And if, on the other hand, because sinners are abundantly convinced that God is *merciful*, they are brought to doubt whether he is *holy* and *just* and *true*, is there not an assault made upon the Divine character, which no ingenuous being would be willing to be charged with? May he not condemn and punish the unholy, who will not repent, while yet he does not delight in the death of a sinner?

In all governments, divine and human, the laws must be executed, and the administration of justice must be certain. If mercy interpose, it must not be *in every case*, else the law loses its sanctions, and the motives to duty are lessened. And yet in every government, there may be compassion the most warm in the heart of him who administers justice. Nor will any thing tend so much as this to honor the law and the government. When the parent,

while he corrects the child, weeps over him, more is done to impress his conscience with a sense of guilt than can be accomplished by any other means. And the judge who finds it impossible to suppress his tears, while he reads to the criminal the sentence of death, makes a deep and dreadful impression on the conscience of the culprit. He puts on his chains again and goes to his dungeon a sober-thinking man.

And the same principle must operate in the divine government. God has assured us that upon some he intends to execute the full penalty of the law. And yet over these he bends with a sympathy indescribably tender, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zeboim? my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hidden from thine eyes." Judgment is declared to be his strange work. He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. God may see the necessity of executing his law while he may wish there had not been that necessity, and that his kingdom could be as safe and happy in administering *mercy* as in the display of justice. It is when the destruction of the sinner is viewed in itself, separated from the bearing it may have upon the general welfare of the universe, that God has no pleasure in it. Of this we shall be satisfied when we consider what is implied in the ruin of a soul.

1. *It is painful to see such noble affections misplaced.*—The very spirit that falls under the divine condemnation, and goes to endure the outer darkness, and gnawing worm, is capable of putting forth the best affections. The sinner was created capable of loving the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, with all the subjects of God's holy kingdom, his law, his gospel, and his service. True, he could not have comprehended entirely their nature, but he could have known enough to have risen to the most ardent glow of affection. Though he could not have loved as angels do, could not have glowed with the ardor of cherubim and seraphim, yet could he have reached a sublimity of holy emotion which would have rendered him glorious in their eyes, and entitled him to a station high and honorable among the hosts of heaven. The *Savior* he could have loved with peculiar affection, such as angels cannot feel. In the strain of praise which told of dying love, they would have yielded him the highest note; and probably when ages of ages had given him

opportunity to improve his powers in the salubrious climes of heaven, there might have appeared far less difference between his powers and theirs than now, and eternity might at length have seen him rising through a thousand grades till he had filled a station by their side, and had beamed with an ardor of attachment not inferior to theirs.

But these noble affections are all misplaced. Neither God nor the holy subjects of his kingdom have any share in his affections. He glows with no pure desire; he sees nothing in God, nor in what *he* loves, that in his account has any worth. That which charms the angels and enraptures all the holy family has nothing in it that can move one affection. His own polluted self, his foul person and ruined character, engrosses in his eye all the loveliness in the universe. He can hate most cordially that which good beings love. He calls home every affection, and becomes himself a little world, engrossing every care, every wish, and every hope. Thus can he love himself supremely, while all others consider him the essence of deformity.

Now can any suppose that God has pleasure in seeing such noble affections so misplaced? Would he not rather delight to be their object, and satisfy their immense capacities with his own immensity? We shall be still more deeply impressed with the sentiment of the text on reviewing again the state of the lost sinner to see

II. *Such keen sensations tortured.*—When God shall execute his law upon the sinner, every sense, both of body and mind, will be come an inlet of misery. The body will be fuel for the flames, and, if we can learn any thing from Scripture, will welter in brimstone and fire for ever. The rich man lifts up his eyes in hell, being in torment, and begs a drop of water to cool his tongue, while between him and heaven there is an impassable gulf. We read, “that they shall gnaw their tongues for pain,” “their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched.”

And while the body thus suffers, the soul will be the inlet of another species of misery not less dreadful. It will be subject to envy, wrath, shame, guilt, disappointment, and despair. And all these corroding passions will live commensurate with the duration of the soul. To see heaven happy, and heaven will be for ever happy, will feed the flames of envy. The quarrel continuing between God and the sinner will for ever produce new sensations of wrath. The law continuing in full force, with all its dreadful sanctions,

will fill the soul with guilt that can never abate, and this guilt will produce correspondent shame. The memory alive to recollection, will perpetuate the sensation of disappointment, while the certainty that God remains unalterably true, will render despair eternal. Thus will there be some fuel to feed the flames of every passion, while these passions will corrode the mind and fill the whole soul with misery.

Every new inlet of light will kindle anew the fires of the pit, while, till the judgment, the still increasing number of convicts will exhibit living testimony that God is resolved to be respected and loved by all his intelligent subjects, or treat them as outlaws in his kingdom. And when the pit shall be full, and every cavern shall ring with the howlings of despair, it will be seen that just enough are lost to express suitably God's everlasting resentment of sin, "and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever," as a living testimony of his unchangeable holiness, justice, and truth. At their dreadful expense the righteous will for ever cry Hallelujah.

Now to see such sensations tortured while they might have been the inlets of pleasure unspeakable, must be a sight which can have nothing in it calculated to please Jehovah. He is a God of tender compassion; possesses bowels of mercies. God feels when his creatures suffer, as much more sensibly than we feel as his heart is more tender and his soul more benevolent. Hence he is represented as moved by the entreaties of his people, and is said to avenge his elect, who cry day and night unto him. How can such a being have any pleasure in the miseries of the damned? But when we see

III. *Such great expectations disappointed*, the doctrine of the text is still more firmly established. The sinner on whom we have fixed our eye, was born perhaps a child of promise. Over his very cradle his parents planning his future course, imagined that they saw opening before him a luminous and useful track. They assigned him first earthly distinctions, and then a crown of life. Perhaps he was the subject of many prayers, and consequently of many hopes. As he advanced in his course there kindled up great expectations in his own breast; he set out to be great below and greater still above. Perhaps his early life promised much, and his hopes far outwent his prospects. His friends and neighbors had their expectations raised it may be to an amazing height. And in the mean time his Maker, (for His property in us must not be for-

gotten) had a right to calculate on his future usefulness and greatness. He had made him a noble spirit, furnished him with abundant light and means, and watched his opening genius with more than paternal solicitude. He had formed him fit for the noblest service, and why had he not a right to calculate on his future greatness? I do not mean that God could be disappointed or could be grieved, in the sense that we may, but the Scriptures do warrant us to say in reference to a case like this, "It repented God that he had made man upon the earth and it grieved him to his very heart." How dreadful that man should so conduct himself as to extort a sigh like this from the bosom of his Maker, thus, as it were, defeating the great end of his being, and laying prostrate every hope that hung upon his existence.

Now view the man in misery, and see all these expectations lost, and for a moment weep over him. He meant to wear a crown, but found a halter; he aspired to a throne, but reached a gibbet; he hoped for heaven, but sunk to hell. He intended to be an heir of God, but inherited everlasting burnings. He aspired to become an angel of light, but became a fiend of darkness. How dreadful to see such hopes withered, such reasonable expectations blighted by the frosts of the second death. How can there be in such an object any thing that can fill the heart of God with pleasure? Were it the seat of malevolence instead of mercy, it could hardly fail to weep over such costly ruins. The unexpected extinction of a thousand suns would not exhibit equal hopes extinguished. God could light a thousand more, and thus repair the breach; but souls he never will annihilate, nor build again their ruins; then how can God have any pleasure in the death of him that dieth?

IV. *We contemplate him again with still deeper regret to see such useful talents lost.*—View some great man now in torment. While on earth, his spirit, although cumbered with a dying body, exhibited amazing enterprise. He could count the stars and measure the diameter and distance of every planet. He could conceive the noblest projects, and trace to its final result every enterprise. Now free such a soul from its cumbrous clay, give it angel's wings, light well its track, let its powers grow and enlarge through eternity, and what could it not achieve? Conceive of Locke or Newton now in hell, after exploring every labyrinth of the moral and the physical world. Or if men so heavenly in contemplation may not be mentioned in connection with hell; think of Hume,

and Voltaire, and Bolingbroke, men of noble minds, but who hated the Son of God. See them in torment. Had they been as good as they were great, how useful! And must their gigantic minds dwindle to the stature of a dwarf, and only be to be degraded? What a pity! What an evil! What a loss! What a loss to themselves! Their greatness but prepares them to be miserable, while it might have made them happy. What a loss to all heaven! There their noble spirits would have found employments suited to their nature. What noble projects of holy ambition might they have originated! What inspiration might such spirits have breathed into the songs of heaven! What new discoveries of God and truth might they have made in the clear light of that celestial world! What anthems might they have invented! What strains of hallelujah! How a soul, so noble in its structure, could swell and sweeten the music of the heavenly choir! Imagine it redeemed from hell, and joined to the choir of heaven, as a soft sweet viol, tuned to please an angel's ear, and swelling every note it sings to the sweetest, softest melody, and what a pity, that such a viol should be converted into fuel, and feed the fires of the pit. And if you suppose every spirit of equal dimension, and differing only in the structure of its clay organs; then suppose that the ten thousands who have gone to despair are ransomed and joined as so many well-tuned instruments to the music of that happy world, and what a revenue of praise would redound to God! Who can view the subject in this light and not feel pained that souls must perish? "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Oh, the cursed tragedy of the fall, which placed noble spirits where they are utterly lost. For they can be of no use to each other in the place of misery. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." Were there accumulated in hell all the noblest talents of the created universe, they could not escape the hand of justice. They could neither bridge the gulf that partitions hell from heaven, nor extinguish the fires that consume them. So satisfied of this was the rich man, that he begged he might never see his brethren in that place of torment. If, then, the noblest talents would be useless in hell, and could be so well employed in heaven, what a loss is the damnation of a soul! And why will not the loss, although it would have been a greater loss to save them, impenitent, be felt forever? If any government should be under the necessity of imprisoning for life its noblest geniuses, would not the loss be

felt and be deplored by the very monarch who barred their prison ! Yes, and God will be sensible forever of the loss of talents in perdition, and will forever view that world as a dark spot in his creation, although rendering the remainder more beautiful. How then can he have any pleasure at all in the death of him that dieth ? And we shall be convinced of this truth when we have taken one more view of the lost sinner, and see

V. *Such a noble vessel polluted.* He was calculated to be a vessel of honor, prepared unto glory, and might have been the everlasting recipient of eternal mercy. How largely might he have received the overflowings of infinite benevolence ! And if the soul had perpetually enlarged, and been kept full of love, and joy, and peace, what a rich and lovely treasure would such a spirit have been ! Angels would pay respect to such a soul, and God himself would be pleased. But the vessel is polluted. "The gold has become dim and the most fine gold changed." If you should see a golden goblet filled with the defilements of a sink, how incongruous ! how repulsive to the sight ! But how much more disgusting to see a heaven-born soul filled with the corruptions of sin ! If it should be our destiny to be lost we shall be forever disgusted at ourselves ; and angels and God will view us with eternal loathing ; devils, our companions in misery, will despise us and themselves much more. The lost spirit will be the most filthy object in the universe. God will be for ever happy, but his joy, his life, his pleasure, must be in other objects ; and if the deity may not be pained, so neither may he be pleased with the scenes of the pit ; and will he not cover it with a cloud of smoke which shall obscure its defilements from the vision of the blessed ?

#### REMARKS.

1. God will not damn any who do not oblige him to do so in order to secure the honor of his name and kingdom : judgment is his strange work. If he takes no pleasure at all in the death of him that dieth, how can we believe that any will perish whose eternal ruin is not necessary to show the justice, the truth, and the holiness of God, to vindicate his law, or honor his government ? None, then, of my readers will perish but such as make themselves vile, and continue obstinately disobedient, resisting the influences of the Holy Spirit, till God gives them up to their own hearts' lusts, and swears in his wrath that they shall not

enter into his rest. And even such he will spare as long as the good of his holy kingdom will permit.

2. Hence we see why sinners who will finally be lost are so long kept out of hell. God abhors the work of destruction, and will spare them till there is no hope of their repentance, and even when hope is gone, may spare them still, unless the good of his kingdom require their immediate destruction. And I know not that any sacred text has assured us that sinners shall perish as soon as they are given over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. The probability is that they are spared longer, that God may appear infinitely gracious while he destroys them.

3. He not only spares them, but follows them with the invitations of his mercy. He gives them line upon line and precept upon precept. Minister after minister is raised up to proclaim to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. He stands and pleads with them "till his head is wet with the dew and his locks with the drops of the night." He seems reluctant to destroy them, and so varies the means and arguments that urge them to repentance. He tries every gracious method to move them, sends judgments and mercies, and, when all means have failed and they are joined to their idols, he lets them alone.

4. No more will finally be lost than is absolutely necessary. No more than just enough to clear his character from impeachment, and his law and government from reproach.

5. There must be something very odious in sin, since God so abhors it, that he will destroy men who do not repent of it and are not sanctified, although he hates the work of destruction. While we thus see the heart of God moved with compassion for perishing men, and as it were grieving at the necessity of executing upon them the rigors of his law, and yet determined upon that execution, it seems forever to settle the question, that "sin is that abominable thing which his soul hateth." For that some will perish after all that has appeared of the divine compassion, there can be no doubt. Divine veracity is pledged for the destruction of all those "that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And the divine character must suffer, if finally the whole human family should be saved. Hence every honest man, as he reads his Bible, is there taught to expect an event, which, undesirable as it may be in itself, is rendered necessary by the obstinacy of sinners. And if it should be inquired, Why does not God save all by sanctifying their hearts? we can only answer, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy

sight." Perhaps the excellency of the law could never be so fully seen as in the destruction of sinners, and perhaps heaven could never be so happy, were not its joys contrasted with the miseries of the second death. Be these things as they may, it is evidently the purpose of God, that, in the ruin of the lost, sin shall show its odious nature as it never did before. It has compelled Jehovah to kindle the fires of tophet, and as he shall be seen to feed their flames for ever, that he may suitably express his abhorrence of sin, there will be none in all the universe who will question its odiousness. As much as men love sin now, they will yet be brought to see that it is a viper whose fangs convey death to the soul. And it will yet appear hateful even to the lost.

6. The weakest saint need not fear but that God will bring him to heaven. Justice will not require him to condemn any of his people, and he will condemn no more than is necessary—no more than justice requires. Not one that has ever believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, need have any apprehension that he will be lost. God will find enough who have rejected the Savior to the last to answer in their destruction all the purposes of his vindictive justice.

7. We need have no apprehensions that any decree of God will keep men out of heaven, who are willing to comply with his terms of salvation. God has always felt as he felt in the days of Ezekiel. If so, there never was a time when he could make any cruel decree that will now oblige him to do what his soul abhors. His decrees secure the salvation of as many as it will comport with the best good of his kingdom to save. Hence none need be afraid to believe lest some decree of God should still cut them off from life. Indeed the decrees of heaven are the purposes of love. Had there been no purposes of election he must have condemned all our race. To prevent this he resolved to make some willing in the day of his power.

8. As it is a fact revealed, that some will perish, and as their ruin is a thing in which God takes no pleasure; and as we cannot doubt but that God will still be for ever happy, so we see that his people may for ever sing and rejoice, while they shall know that some of their fellow-men are for ever miserable, and shall see the smoke of their torment ascending up for ever and ever. With the limited views we have now it would seem that it must make us unhappy; but the saved will see more clearly than we can at present the necessity of those dreadful measures, and they will not wish nor dare to suppress their hallelujahs.

They will not be destitute of sympathy, nor look even with cold

indifference at the miseries of the lost, but so supremely will they regard the glory of God, and so distinctly will they see the necessity of vindictive punishments that they will be satisfied.

And now will not this subject urge sinners to repentance? If God, in view of the worth of the soul, is so unwilling to destroy it, and yet will proceed to destroy if men will not repent, then they ought to repent. He will surely reverse the doom of all who do repent. He is waiting on sinners that they may save him the necessity of destroying them. He will be glad, then, to see the prodigal turning his eye towards his father's house, and will haste to meet him, and will pardon him and love him. He will be glad to make you happy. He has no pleasure in your destruction, but will be glad and happy in your salvation. He has always been blessed, since there were creatures, in making them blessed, and will be as joyful in blessing you as he has been in blessing others.

9. How infatuated is the inference that men of corrupt minds have drawn from these expressions of the divine compassion; that since God does not delight in the destruction of sinners, he will destroy none! He has asserted the contrary; that some shall go away into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, that the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever; that their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched; that where Christ is they can never come; that it had been better for them if they had never been born; that they shall depart accursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Still, having asserted that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, they will believe that his threatenings mean nothing; that he will falsify his truth to gratify his mercy; will let his *word*, and his *law*, and his *honor* perish, because he does not delight to make his creatures miserable. That system of universal salvation thus built professedly on the mercy of God is the most impious system that the enemy of souls has ever fabricated; oh, it is the cold and bloody climax of depravity; it offers to God an open insult; it would turn his own truth against himself, and breed confusion and war in his own councils

## SERMON IV.

### THE SANCTUARY.

PSALM XX. 1, 2.

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee, send thee help from the sanctuary and strengthen thee out of Zion.

THE house of God is the emblem of all the divine institutions. With its prosperity has ever been identified the blessedness of that community who have made it their rallying point. It told the state of Israel under the varied scenes of prosperity and adversity. When its treasury was full and its altars in repair, and the daily sacrifices were offered, and the court was guarded from pollution, and the priests consecrated themselves, and the tribes came up, the tribes of the Lord to the testimony of Israel, then it went well with the people of God. But when the devoted house of prayer was made a den of thieves, and the Levites had gone every one to his field, and the buyer and seller, and the money-changers occupied the consecrated sanctuary, then had the glory departed.

And in all the ages since in lands where the true God is known, if at a single glance one would learn the state of any people, let him follow the sound of the church-going bell and look into their sanctuary. There he can read their condition in unequivocal lines. I would lie without a roof to cover me, and make my bed in the clefts of the rock, but must find my way to the house of the Lord, and fix my dying grasp on the horns of his altar. All that is thriving and healthful in any section of Christendom is suspended on the interest taken in the house of God; and if things are not prosperous, and men would see their captivity brought back, they must seek their help in the sanctuary, and be strengthened out of Zion. God is the only source of their help and their salvation. They may try all other means first, as many a wretched people have done, but they will only pine away in their bondage till they build the house of the Lord.

But why—inquires that multitude, who have no confidence in

the over-ruling providence of a wise and holy God—why must help come from the sanctuary? I answer,

I. *It is the place where God's honor dwells.* When Israel would have the help and guidance of Jehovah they made application at the temple where his glory was seen in the holy place, and where he had appointed to respond to their supplications.

If famine, or war, or pestilence preyed upon them, their immediate resort was to the temple. I know that under the gospel dispensation there is less of the *visible* and the *tangible* in religion, than in the times of Israel, yet is there none the less of the reality. We have as firm an assurance, as had the ancient church, that God is present with his people, and fills the sanctuary with his glory, and that we may with the same assurance apply for help at the place where his honor dwells. And where is that place found rather than where his gospel is proclaimed, and his people congregated, and his ordinances administered, and his everlasting covenant ratified with his chosen, and his sanctifying Spirit sent down to cleanse and to purify? What place can be favor more? Where make a richer deposite of his glory? Where rather lend a propitious ear to the cries of his people? At his sanctuary we may calculate to meet with God, and the people who cut themselves off from that holy place can expect no help in their straits and their distresses. Had some wayward tribes of Israel refused to have any connection with the tabernacle and the temple, that tribe must have been without any light or guidance from Heaven. The history of the ten tribes is in proof. Refusing to repair to the place where God had appointed to meet them he met them *nowhere*, would not respond to their cries, or guide them in the day of trouble. They wandered in darkness as the blind grope at noon-day.

And wherein is the case altered now? The people who forsake the sanctuary, or leave others to sustain and enjoy its worship, are without God and without hope in the world, and their conduct will soon tell on their character and their condition. There will some plague await them that will be entailed to their children, and portray their folly at an hour too late perhaps for them to become wise. When the captives hanged their harps upon the willows of Babylon, they remembered the sanctuary, how things prospered with them, when the "tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, to the testimony of Israel." But they had neglected the institutions

of Heaven too long, and the decree had gone out that most of that generation should die in their bondage. The enemy had been advertised of their mistake, and tauntingly said, "Sing us one of Zion's songs." And their desponding reply, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land," portrays the misery of that people *in gospel times* that go not for help to the sanctuary. They must waste away in their miseries, till they shall know and their children after them, how terribly God can avenge himself on his enemies.

II. The house of God is *the place of united and fervent prayer*. We hazard nothing in saying, that all who pray meet there. Such cannot voluntarily and habitually absent themselves from the place where God has appointed to meet them, and hold communion with them. And they come to pray and unite their prayers, and the promise of God is, that whatever they shall ask it shall be done for them.

The infidel only will doubt, whether prayer has efficacy. God's promise to hear, and the believing assurance that God has heard him in the time accepted, and in the day of salvation has succored him, begets confidence in the use of prayer. And its increased efficacy, when *united and fervent*, and the assurance that it will have *unity and fervency* in the sanctuary, point out that place as the source of their help in the hour of danger and of suffering. Any privilege but the immediate smiles of God, I would dispense with sooner than have no share in the prayers of God's people offered in the holy place. I would be without the means of self-defence, without the protection of law, and without a shelter for my head at night, but should not dare to be cut off from an interest in the prayers of the sanctuary. Let no shower or dew fall on my territory, or breeze fan my habitation, or genial sun warm me; but let me not be excluded from the health-bearing influence of the house of prayer. Others can go to their farms or their merchandise, or their journeys, or their book-keeping on the Lord's day, and let the prayers of the sanctuary go. But if there does not come a blight over their fading hopes, and they do not find that moth and rust corrupt their treasures, then we have mistaken the ways of God. We shall watch to see what destiny overtakes their property and their children after the lapse of a few years. If facts may testify, the interests of the present life as well as the life to come, depend on the identity we establish between them and the supplications of the house of prayer. The

prompt and faithful supporter and constant attendant upon the sanctuary may calculate to prosper. "Them that honor me I will honor." The less frequent attendance and the less prompt and generous support may be associated with a kind of paralysed and stationary prosperity. "To the froward thou wilt show thyself froward." The entire neglect will be the harbinger of darkness and decay. "They that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Neither prosperity nor character are sure where there is wanting the guardianship of prayer. Not the pointed rod which turns away the lightnings, answers a purpose more kind, in the natural, than prayer in the moral world.

III. The house of God is *the radiant point of sanctifying truth*. It was the prayer of the Lord Jesus for the destined heirs of salvation, "Sanctify them through thy truth." And God has revealed it as his purpose, "By the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Hence from the lips of the *living preacher* go out those doctrines that operate to sanctify the hearts of men. And who dare hope that society can prosper, where no hearts are sanctified? "Ye are the salt of the earth." A whole unregenerate family constitutes a very dark house, where insubordination kindles many a fire; and a town, or county, or state, where there were none regenerated, would be an unmanageable community. Society owes more than it will acknowledge to the influence of piety. It lays upon men a restraint even where the number of the pious is small, that is productive of more peace and order and prosperity, than all other means combined. Survey those lands, where no sanctifying religion operates to mould the manners, and fix the principles, and restrain the passions of ungodly men. They are desolated. The passions excited, with no power present to tame or restrain them, spread a destruction wide and wasteful as human power can generate. After this survey, if you do not feel glad that your lot is cast into a gospel land, then will we abandon the argument and help you lay the temple prostrate. At one glance you will see a religion that eats up its population like a pestilence. At another you will see prevailing falsehood, and fraud, and theft, till no man sees another in whom he places confidence. Domestic happiness, and conjugal fidelity, and parental and filial regard, are things for which their language has not a name. And everywhere where the gospel is not, there prevails a government that rules with a sceptre of iron. The hardest despotism is rendered necessary by the absence of moral restraints

If *piety must be or misery*, there must be that truth which sanctifies, and the sanctuary whence that truth issues. Throw prostrate the altar of God, and there will be no power found that can sustain the sanctifying doctrines of revelation. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." The house of God ever has been and must be the grand receptacle of light from heaven, and thence it issues to restrain the passions, and mould the manners, and repair with the divine blessing the ruins of the apostacy.

IV. The instruction of God's house is the *grand agent in the formation of public sentiment*.

I now refer to an influence that goes out from that holy place, to affect all men, whether they will or will not be controlled by that influence. To the ungodly, public sentiment is an irresistible law. You could bind the thief and the robber by it. Surround them with only purity of sentiment, and you would make them honest. No man can habitually do what all about him disapprove. The most depraved would be perfectly wretched, embosomed in a holy community, till they could break from their prison, and find some fastness in the mountains, where they could associate with men of their own stamp. Human laws are weak and inoperative, but as they are sustained by public sentiment; murder is committed with impunity in those lands where a public depraved sentiment is stronger than law. I would not give a straw for that defence that law holds out in the absence of a correct public opinion to sustain it. And there is no means powerful like the house of God in the formation of that opinion. There issue thence not merely the doctrines that sanctify, but the sub-principles that moralize, and mould, and restrain the public mind. And this influence it exerts not merely upon the sabbath assembly, but the men that despise the control of principles that either God or man can enforce. The men who attend the sanctuary bear out into society and act out in their deportment its principles; and others catch the moralizing influence and spread it wider and still wider over the surface of an apostate and degenerate community, till the whole mass is leavened. Hence that portion of society which stand aloof from the house of God, and perhaps gnash their teeth at its holy solemnities, are blessed through its influence. It bears obliquely upon them, but is mighty like no other law they listen to. It gives them indirectly all their civil privileges, the peaceable possession of their rights, security of life and exemption from midnight depredations and from hourly oppressions. It sets a

watch about them at the expense of others, a watch which they should be ashamed to let their fellow-men sustain alone, but without which society would be a den of thieves. When we say of any one that he is a shameless fellow, what more can we say to give him the lowest character? But to become shameless, what is it but to hold public sentiment in utter contempt? It is this that keeps our world from becoming a shameless community, and for this kind guardian of our best earthly interests every man is indebted to the sanctuary.

V. The house of God *sustains all the other civilizing and healthful institutions.* Identified with it are a preached gospel and the ministry of reconciliation. These all sustain each other. And hence the sin of disturbing, with controversy and disunion, a regular sanctuary-going people, is one of no ordinary magnitude. The Sabbath, too, is sustained by the sanctuary. When or where was there ever a Sabbath kept by a people who were regardless of the public worship of God? Will there be a Sabbath in the private circle, where there is no solemn Sabbath-keeping assembly, and the inspiration of the church-going bell is not felt? No, no. Trace the world over, and no such thing can be found. If men tarry at home, they will be about their secular concerns, and the day will be amalgamated with the days not sanctified. Hence in those lately dark places of the earth, where they have recently got up a Sabbath, they have simultaneously erected them a sanctuary, and the one sustains the other. And all the means of education stand on the same basis. Schools, academies and colleges owe their very existence to their connection with the house of God. The ministers of religion have ever sustained these institutions, and they perish, sure as the frosts of autumn strip the wood of its foliage, soon as they aim at independence on the higher institutions of religion. After the darkest times, when learning seemed to have taken its flight from the earth, its embryo was found to have been sustained in the retreats of the priesthood. The retributions of heaven have developed its purpose, that religion and science be indissolubly yoked to the sanctuary, as their foster-mother. And the evidence on this point is brought to our very doors. In those districts of our regular Sabbath-keeping congregations, where the population have abandoned the sanctuary, their schools decline, and the *merest being*, that has impudence enough to apply, will be intrusted with the immortal interests of their children. It is common as life, to find some low-minded,

foul-mouthed Sabbath-breaker immured in the schools in those districts, which are not represented in the Sabbath assembly. And why expect it otherwise? Men will not look far above their own standard to find a teacher for their children. They will not wish one whose example reproveth their own practice, and whose creed reprobates their infidelity. Now, let a whole town become like one of these abandoned districts, and its schools, if any thing that deserves the name remains, will all be of the same character. A palpable darkness comes over the whole community. All improvement of intellect is undervalued, and the people verge towards heathenism by sure and rapid strides. A coarseness of attire, and a clownishness of manners, and the growth of all the low and vulgar vices, close in now upon the retreat of mind and morals.

And in the mean time men suffer in their *interest* ten times the cost of sustaining the gospel. Restraint is removed from vice, and the enemies of virtue, sustained by a perverse public sentiment, walk undisguised their guilty round of midnight depredations. Vice, that law was invented to punish, claims its protection. Acts of inebriation, and lust, and profanity, and falsehood, and every other daring outrage upon the laws of God and the peace of society are at length, perhaps, unblushingly committed, rendering insecure every interest of man, temporal and spiritual. The prudent man must now expend, upon the vices of his children, many times the sum that would have nobly sustained the gospel institutions. But, alas! he withheld his support from these to buy his offspring the means of their eternal undoing. He saved the price of helping to build the sanctuary, and the pittance required to support the ministry, and equip his family for the occupancy of their pew; and, added to these, he saved all the earnings of the Sabbath-day, but he saved it to put it into a bag with holes; to bequeath it to an infidel, a debauched and profligate offspring. If a very small portion of the estate had been expended for their religious education, and they had acquired some knowledge of God, and a conscience rectified by his word, they might have been men, and possessed more than the virtues of a father, and been entrusted with his estate and the honors of his house, to hand down his name and his praise to unborn generations. But the self-abused father now on his dying-bed sees nothing else to do but put his large estate into the purse of vagabonds where it will evaporate like the dew of morning, or rot and breed corruption, and carry death through the whole field of its pestiferous exhalations. It does not bless his sons, but renders them the more capable of be-

ing incurably profligate. The merest poverty, depriving them of the means of beastly indulgence, might have begotten hope of their redemption. But the poor father must now disinherit his children, or totally damn them. And in the mean time through his money and his heirs pours out pestilence upon society, and generates a plague to operate the ruin of unborn generations. But that father has only himself to blame. His son formed the best character he could with the means his father furnished him. Among these means there was no sanctuary, nor Sabbath, nor ministry, nor valuable library, nor school, nor domestic piety, nor parents' holy example, to give him character and virtue, and render him a man. And while this individual loss is going on, by the sacrilege of the sanctuary, there is a gradual and yet perceptible sinking of the interest of the whole community. The original population are perishing. And no change of inhabitants will alter circumstances for the better. For the man of decent habits who has any character or interest to lose will not take up his residence in a territory so desolate and approaching evidently towards a still grosser desolation. Sinking property will ever be held above its value till it reaches its lowest price. Hence no exchange of population will be for the better, but all for the worse. They may get rid of many a low and mean and troublesome family, but must invariably receive in exchange the very dregs of some other ill-fated and miserable community. It will now infallibly result that every inch of territory is subjected to perpetual depreciation. Had the town sustained the sanctuary at any price, and from no other motives but to keep up the value of its lands, it would have told well on their interests. But the day of their prime has gone by, and a public sentiment is generated that is adverse to that only measure that would cure their calamities. It may be that a single individual of large interest would do well as a worldly calculator to build a sanctuary, and establish a ministry, and institute a Sabbath. He would thus secure his heirs from ruin and his interest from prolonged and fatal depreciation. The very best sections of Christendom would run precipitately back to heathenism, only break down the house of God. Who but *heathen* can be expected to set any price on *heathen territory*, upon habitations which have become infested with a moral plague, and fields over which there blow perpetually the withering and the deadly blasts of a burning desert. And there is fled in the mean time about all that rendered life valuable. Conjugal fidelity, and parental tenderness, and filial confidence and duty begin to be more scarce and less valued

than in Sabbath and sanctuary times. And where are now the family altar, and the social bible-reading, and the evening fire-side hymn, and the respect for age, and the kind attention to the poor and the houseless; where all the precious endearments of home? And where the authority to put down iniquity? And the wholesome public sentiment to sustain virtuous deportment, and guard individual rights, and cradle into calmness the tumult of riot? All these disappear along with respect for the sanctuary and attendance upon the ordinances and institutions of religion. It is not in the nature of things, and evidently is not the design of Providence, that these healthful principles shall survive the moment when the bittern and the owl have their home in the old weather-beaten and time-worn sanctuary. And I need not say that all heathen lands are destitute of the public sentiments and the humanizing principles that bless mankind and that lie at the foundation of social happiness. And facts assure us that a territory that *has been* Christian can run back to heathenism rapidly as time can speed and virtue decline. Hence those who have made up their minds to dispense with gospel institutions must calculate on a diminution of their catalogue of comforts, beyond what any miserable people have presumed, till they had made the awful experiment. Could the people have known where flourished the seven churches of Asia,—could they have *dreamed* what a desolation would sweep over them, laying waste scores of generations, they would have taken the warning given them, and not have suffered the candlestick to be removed out of his place. And could any abandoned section of Christendom have known, ere they parted with the gospel, how soon all their comforts would flee, they would have made one more dying effort, and would have perished if they must by the horns of the altar. And even now if there could be awakened a pulsation of spiritual life, the rock would rise from the quarry, and the timber come down from the wood, and the sanctuary lift its spire, and the “church-going bell” utter hints of salvation through all that dreary territory of death. Men grow poor by robbing God. There inevitably follows the abandonment of the gospel a train of litigations and bankruptcies, and imprisonments and divisions, which no human power can control. Some solitary families may seem for a time to thrive, may grow wealthy through the vices of the people, or because they had no share in procuring the desolation, and are not included in the ruin. But even these, unless they flee soon from the midst of such a Sodom, will become partakers of her plagues. They will see their children contami-

nated, and vile encroachments upon the stillness of their Sabbaths, and the peacefulness of their evenings, and the innocent enjoyments of their interest. They must send away their children to be educated, and send out their capital from the desolated territory, or employ it contraband, in distilleries, and grog-shops, and usury, the only institutions that flourish in the absence of the gospel; and then God will curse their estate, and curse their children with it, and their good name, till they and theirs become amalgamated with the surrounding moral ruins. Thus, when the sanctuary is let go, all goes. Men find their counsels turned into foolishness, and they pay a tribute to vice twenty times the assessments of virtue. Hence, when men imagine themselves unable to bear the expense of divine institutions, they should inquire if they be able to live without them.

VI. From the house of God are selected the subjects of his grace.

Those only who frequent the sanctuary are at all likely to be regenerated. We have pronounced it the radiant point of sanctifying truth. And it is truth, we must not forget, in the lips of a living ministry that God has pledged himself to bless. "By the foolishness of preaching he saves them that believe." When our Lord had commissioned his apostles, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he promised, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Thus *the gospel that they would carry*, and that would sound from their lips, and that of their successors, was to be the grand instrument of salvation. In connection with this divine promise, facts assure us, that when God sends a revival among a people, the subjects of it are generally taken from sanctuary-going families:—"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."—If others in such a period come round, and seem interested, and are awakened, still seldom do they make their way to Jesus Christ. More generally you see them, soon as the revival is over, returning back to their Sabbath-breaking and their cups, like "the dog to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," and we hear not from them till perhaps another revival summons them again to come and gaze upon the moving scene. But those who give evidence of renewed hearts are more generally from the people who have sustained the honors of God's house. In them Christ is found the hope of glory. Hence to the house of God the Church must look for its recruit, and the world for its saviour and its light. And when the public worship of God ceases, we

hear of no revivals, or if we hear of them, we frequently hear that their fruits have perished in some wild and wayward fanaticism. Hence the Church must dwindle and become extinct without the sustaining influence of the sanctuary. There are at length neither creed, nor covenant, nor communion, nor aught else remaining, but some indistinct recollection that once God had there a people, or perhaps some hoary-headed believers, that once ate the consecrated bread.

And what is there worth saving, what that God will watch over or care for, where he has no people; as in the old world when the ark was ready, and in Sodom when Lot was gone? The eye of a vigilant Providence sees nothing to occupy it where there is none of his image, nothing but chaff and stubble—"Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world." Humiliating as the thought may be, none may alter or soften it. "Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." If men are mortified that such is their character as to sink them below the smile of Heaven, and render them and theirs not worthy to be guarded, they must adjust the concern with God. If they will not build him a house, or if they abandon the place where his honor dwells, they cannot complain if he care not to build them a sure house for ever; it is only walking frowardly toward them as they have walked frowardly towards him. He will think it right to make every other interest bend to that of his Church, the world willing or not willing, pleased or displeased. "The Lord send the help from the sanctuary." It would be curious to mark the process by which a people lose the blessings of the gospel and bring upon themselves and upon posterity the plagues that have been enumerated. There is usually discovered

1. A satiety of hearing the word of the Lord. This is indicated by an infrequent attendance upon the sanctuary, by a tardy approach, by a half-day worship, by a dull and drowsy attitude in the house of the Lord, by a neglect of the week-day occasions of hearing the gospel, and by a score of other signs, which say that they are no longer hungry for the word of the Lord. How different from all this was the spirit of the Psalmist when he sang: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." Precisely the opposite of all this longing, and fainting, and crying out after the courts of the Lord, is the spirit of supineness and death, that is seen coming over a people on whom God in righteous retribution is about to send a famine of the word. As every movement of the sinking patient is slow, and the pulse feeble and respiration la-

borious, and to think or speak a burden, till death at length is seen standing hard by his pillow ; so that people who are about to make the experiment of living without the gospel, will be seen, perhaps for years, putting on the symptoms of moral dissolution, till at length there remains no longer the power of action, or the sense of danger, or the hope scarcely of resuscitation and life. And we have noticed

2. That the spirit of decay esteems the support of gospel institutions a burden. The cost of the sanctuary, and the ministry, and the thousand varied appendages of evangelical worship and ordinances begin to be considered lost. Then comes the inquiry, What am I the gainer by sustaining the gospel? How am I drained of the means of accommodating my family with conveniences! How many acres of territory might I have purchased with the sums that the gospel has cost me! How poor have I kept myself and my family by the offerings of the temple! Could I have them paid back, *the whole* would be a fortune for my children! Thus men grudge the Lord the sacrifices he demands as the very price of their prosperity ; and the children learn how reluctantly their parents support religion, and how gladly they would rid themselves of the galling burden. Hence, as soon as their parents are asleep in death, and their property is in their hands, they are all disciplined for the business of pulling down the institutions of heaven, and making the experiment of bartering away the truth for money. Unhappily, all their respect for a parent's judgment goes to establish them in the belief that the gospel does but oppress and impoverish them. Thus the parent dug the grave of his offspring. He incautiously taught them principles that *undermine* his house and *blast* his memory. He had not counted up the cost, how the absence of gospel institutions would alter and injure the character of his offspring, how it would neutralize the Sabbath, and remove the means of becoming wise, and break the grapple of conscience, and lessen the worth of morals and the estimate of character, and throw down his children from the elevation they occupied, and his whole posterity from the position they might have held, into the bosom of a besotted, and mean, and miserable community :—how, with the removal of the gospel there would vanish all the blessings it brought ; the sweets of domestic intercourse, the bonds of the social compact, the elevation of intellect, all the means of being great and good in this life, and holy and happy in the life to come. Unhappy father, he sprung a mine under his own house that threw his offspring, and his name, and his

estate, to the winds of heaven, while a title of his income, paid honestly to the Lord, would have ensured the whole, down, perhaps, to the funeral day of the world. He saved indeed his money and taught his children to save it, but God took vengeance on his inventions. And there follows of course,

3. A disrespect for the ministry of the reconciliation.

That ministry can be useful no longer than respected. When men begin to speak of the office as a mere sinecure, they are not to be expected to derive any great profit from it; and when they treat the men who occupy it with coarseness, they may calculate that they are ruining their offspring. He that Heaven has commissioned to negotiate with a rebel world, while he may claim nothing on the score of personal importance or elevation, may still demand that men hold the *office*, and himself, because of the office, in due respect. And in the absence of this respect there is lost to the world the whole influence of that highest *means* of its redemption, a *preached gospel*; and what is more, there is laid the train that is to carry moral devastation down through unborn generations. But,

FINALLY—There is one token of approaching desolation so marked in its character as to deserve a distinct and prominent notice. I refer to the case when the *people of God* feel that *they* are not obliged to make *greater sacrifices* than others to sustain the sanctuary, and hand down to unborn generations the blessings of the gospel of peace. I consider no one sign so articulate, that God is about to remove the candlestick out of its place. God's people *ought* to do more than others; and if the world would come forward and act so liberally as to save them the necessity, it would be a curse to them. A Christian can pray better when he is making great sacrifices for the Lord, and will grow more rapidly in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, God will feed the most plentifully, and smile the most graciously upon the child that serves him the most cheerfully. Christians receive more blessings than others through the gospel. In a minor sense, it blesses *all*, but in a major sense, believers. All learn truth, and receive elevation of character, and enjoy comforts, through the influence of the gospel; but the believer, through its influence, is sanctified and made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light. The one has temporal and the other temporal and spiritual blessings. The temporal blessings are worth a thousand times the cost of them to the unsanctified; hence, by what measure can we calculate their worth to him who hopes to reach hea-

ven through them? It is for them, as well as for the world, a wise appointment that they shall do more than others. We would not have them exempted if we could.

Now, when the people of God begin to stand aloof from his sanctuary, and to fear they are bearing an undue burden, and are ready to let it fall, unless others will lift as laboriously as they lift, then you may expect a famine of the truth. When the professed people of God, who are called by his name, and tell of being bound to him by an everlasting covenant, who profess to have laid up their treasure in heaven, and to look for "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,"—when these will shrink from any sacrifice to sustain the gospel of his Son, and suffer an institution that prospers all others to fail through their covetousness, then who, can it be expected, will stand and prop the sinking honors of God's house? It is feared we could point you to a great many gloomy sections of this ruined world where this very cause has operated, and is now operating to turn the fruitful field into a wilderness, and render some of the holiest territories in Christendom cheerless and dreary as the very caverns of death. On this point one need not fear to say too much, the professed Christian, who grudges the drafts made upon his purse by the gospel, and is ever poor when *its* claims are presented, is to be classed with Dêmas and Judas, and to be held up to the world as its greatest foe, and to the Church as its darkest and deepest blot.

How charming is the place  
Where my Redeemer, God,  
Unveils the beauties of his face,  
And sheds his love abroad!

Not the fair palaces  
To which the great resort,  
Are once to be compared with this  
Where Jesus holds his court!

Here, on the mercy-seat,  
With radiant glory crown'd,  
Our joyful eyes behold him sit,  
And smile on all around.

To him their prayers and cries  
Each humble soul presents:  
He listens to their broken sighs  
And grants them all their wants.

Give me, O Lord, a place  
Within thy blest abode,  
Among the children of thy grace,  
The servants of my God.

## SERMON V.

### MIRROR OF HUMAN NATURE.

PROVERBS XXVII. 19.

As in water, face answereth to face; so the heart of man to man.

THIS text has received various interpretations; but there is among them one more generally approved by the friends of truth than any other, and which, it would seem to me, is its plain and obvious meaning:—As a man looking into the water, (used anciently as a mirror,) sees there an exact transcript of his own countenance, so every heart has, by nature, precisely the same moral character with every other unsanctified heart. However men may differ, as to the *circumstances* of their being—as to their *age, country, habits, and education*—still every child of Adam, till renewed by Divine grace, has, in the view of Omniscience, the same moral aspect.

Many, who still wish to be considered believers in Divine revelation, have asserted, that the parts of Scripture which give unregenerate men a deformed and polluted character are not applicable to men of the present day. When Paul says of the unregenerate world, and quotes the saying from another inspired author, “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one; their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes.” When he says all this it is roundly denied, that in civilized lands—lands enlightened and polished—there can be found beings of so barbarous a character. It may possibly suit the Turk, the Arab, and the Tartar, and may be adapted to some few outcasts in more favored lands; but, as a general description of unregenerate men, it is rejected with proud disdain.

In this style the Bible has of late been rudely mangled, till

many feel themselves quite at liberty to deny the application to themselves of any text that would go to neutralize their creed, or wound their high sense of the dignity of human nature. It is hence considered important to show,

*That men, in all countries and ages, and under every variety of customs and manners, have had, and continue still to have, naturally, the same moral character.*

This doctrine it will be my object to illustrate. But I shall first notice some of the circumstances which have contributed to make men differ in their conduct, who have by nature the same moral character.

In the first place, *grace* has made a wide difference in men who were by nature alike. This has been the case in most countries, and in all ages, since God first set up his Church in the family of Adam.

In the second place, the difference in *the instinctive passions and affections* has made men to differ in their conduct.

In the third place, some have not the *talents* for doing mischief that others have. This one cause may operate, when there is no other, to produce the greatest difference of conduct, where there is the same temper of heart.

In the fourth place, some have not the *opportunity* to do mischief that others have. There may be the disposition, and the talents for gigantic iniquity, but opportunity may be wanting. Nero and Julian *had the opportunity*, while many a wretch during their reign, possessing perhaps equal talents, obtained no celebrity in the service of their infernal master. There are men base enough to burn a world, who will die after having done but little mischief.

I remark, finally, that one man may achieve less mischief than another, because *more restrained*. One man is held back from iniquity by his conscience. In another, pride prevents him from descending to the deeds of sin which he would love to do. In another, interest is the restraining principle. Hence the most decent among all the ungodly, may have a heart that will compare in its every feature, with that of the thief, the robber, and the assassin; though restrained from their deeds of death.

Having thus noticed some of the circumstances which have made men to differ in their conduct and appearance, who have by nature the same character of heart, I proceed to illustrate the doctrine, *That men, in all ages, and under every variety of customs*

*and manners, have had, and still continue to have, naturally, the same moral character.*

I. We might infer the truth of this doctrine, prior to any argument, from the similarity of origin, aspect, and general habits, that belong to all ages and all nations of men. All men sprang from the same first parents; in their veins flows the same blood; they have the same general spirit; feed on the same food; and have all naturally the same general habits; and prior to any extraneous applications, have, as we analogically infer, the same temper of heart. For the same reason that we expect to find the lamb and the dove harmless, and the lion and tiger ferocious, through all their generations, and in all countries where they are found; we expect man to be, in the temper of his heart, the same in all ages and in all nations. When we have settled the point that the human family are all of one species, analogy so far decides the truth of our doctrine, as to cast the burden of proof on those who venture to deny it. But there is on this subject more direct and positive testimony. I would then remark.

II. That we can hardly fix our eye on any individual or community of antiquity, but we can find its exact resemblance, in some individual or community with whose character we are familiar. I shall make my selections chiefly from scripture history, and shall notice those whose deportment made it manifest that they were not born of God, or if otherwise, were left to act out their native character. When I look back to the family of Adam, I see in Cain the prototype of many a man born sixty centuries after him. He saw that his brother's offering was more acceptable than his own, became envious, rose from envy to anger, and gave vent to his malice in a deed that rendered him a fugitive and a vagabond. Now who is so ignorant of human nature as not to see in society men of precisely the same description in the present day; men who covet another's distinctions, and from coveting become malicious, and would destroy, if human law did not interfere, the object of their spleen. Every generation and every country gives birth to just such men, and they are found amid every community, from the highest to the lowest order of men. Witness the whole list of duellists, from the prince who settles his quarrel in style, to the poor kidnapped African who hews to pieces his antagonist with his hoe or his scythe. When their envy does not terminate in blood, it rises often to a horrid pitch of desperation.

In the family of Jacob there was seen all that variety of evil disposition witnessed in later families. There was parental partiality, and filial impiety; there was envy, and jealousy, and pride, and revenge, and vanity, and lust, and deceit, and, finally, all the unhallowed passions, that go to poison the harmony of domestic circles in every country.

In the character of Balaam, the false prophet, who pretended a high regard to the divine authority, and a sacred respect to the decisions of conscience, while yet he loved the wages of unrighteousness, and would gladly have permission of Heaven to curse the Lord's people, we have the features of many an evil mind in the present day. Like him, when they cannot do wrong conscientiously, they lay conscience aside, and proceed by the meanest measures to gratify their envy of the Lord's people. Can they bribe Heaven, or force the Bible, or plead the example of the Lord's people, to justify them, they prefer to sin conscientiously, but finally their wrath is too malicious to be restrained by the laws of decency, humanity, or honor.

Look, if you please, at Shimei, who cursed David in the day of his adversity, and tell me if the present age, and all countries, are not filled with men of precisely the same spirit. While their neighbor is prosperous, has wealth, and power, and influence, they are the merest sycophants; but when the scale is turned, and they have nothing either to fear or hope for, they can display the meanest spirit of malevolence. They have souls the most mercenary, and no opinion of their own, till they fall in with some current of public scorn, when, all at once, they seem the most decided of all men. Who has not witnessed, when public sentiment has set in upon some good man, of whom the world was not worthy, what a multitude will then for the first time discover that he is not fit to live. Witness that most noted of all cases—when our Lord was arrested, the very multitude, whose blind he had made to see, and whose deaf to hear, whose sicknesses he had healed, whose lepers he had cleansed, and whose dead he had raised, could immediately cry out, "Crucify him, crucify him." A few hours previously, his enemies were afraid to arrest him, because his standing was so high in the public estimation. But his character was unaltered. He did not all at once put on that unworthiness that became an excuse for their wrath. He was the same when feeding the multitude, as when hanging on the tree. Tell me, if from the time of David down to this day, society has not been thick set with men

of precisely the same spirit with that miscreant who cursed the king of Judah in his flight.

I name Joab, David's chief captain, ambitious, jealous, impudent, profane, revengeful—and ask if society is not cursed in the present day with just such men. They will retain their place, and their honors at any expense; will violate truth, and betray confidence, and direct their stab at reputation and life; will carry revenge in their bosoms for years, and will finally violate all the laws of righteousness, and cover their souls with indelible guilt to gratify an unbounded ambition.

Let me name one among that sex where it grieves me to find any fault,—the wife of Ahab; and tell me if every age and kingdom has not had its Jezebels. You remember her as the abettor of falsehood, fraud, oppression, persecution, and crime in every varied form into which unbounded depravity could mould itself. She entailed upon her husband the horrid reputation of having done more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the kings that were before him. Now you have but to divest her of royalty and power, and you will find her likeness in every considerable group of the world's present population. She was noisy and impudent, bold and masculine, controlled her husband, guided his measures, made him avenge her quarrels, instigated him to deeds of oppression, hated all that was holy, abused the Lord's prophet, and honored Baal, and finally was eaten of dogs, and went to her own place. Now can it be doubted but that you could find in every district of this world's population many a daughter of depravity, after her own likeness, whom you have only to vest with power and clothe with royalty, and yoke to a weak and wicked prince, and you have another Jezebel, prepared to pollute all that is fair, and blight all that is flourishing in the Israel of God!

You may go out of Israel, and survey all nations of all ages, and you will find all that variety of character noticed in Israel, and seen in our day, and our land. You may select the worst man that has lived in any age or kingdom, or the best of all the ungodly, and you will trace his resemblance in every period and in every tribe of the human family. We allow that circumstances may favor or retard the growth, and the unbridled exercise of the passions in one nation, or at one period more than another; but still a general comparison of this world's population, at different periods, will lead invariably to the conclusion that, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man,"—that the revolu

tions of time have yet brought round no golden age, in which there was not displayed the same temper and disposition, and when there were not born men of the same general character. I proceed to a

III. Argument. There have prevailed in all ages and nations the same crimes, calling for the restraining influence of the same laws.

Men have been in all times and places inclined to wrong their fellow-men of their property. Hence fraud, theft, robbery, and oppression have been blots in the history of every people who have inhabited the globe. It will not be denied that the immediate descendants of Abraham were the most moral and civilized people of their time; yet these crimes prevailed in Israel. One would steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, and this vice must be restrained by the penalty of restoring five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. Another would turn his beast into his neighbor's field and cause it to be eaten up; and must make restitution of the best of his own field. Another would remove his neighbor's landmark; in which case there must light a curse upon his head, to which all the people must say, Amen. There were those who vex and oppress the stranger, those who would exact usury, those who would take in pledge a neighbor's raiment, those who would not pay the tithes that God had enjoined, those who would take a bribe, who would follow the multitude to do evil, who would profane the Sabbath, who would bear false witness, who would covet a neighbor's wife, or ox, or field. And all these crimes prevailed, to a still greater degree, among the nations bordering upon Israel, who had not upon them the restraints of God's written law. And who will deny, that these crimes are still common? Have we not the usurer, the slanderer, the thief, the oppressor, the profane, the adulterer, and the Sabbath-breaker? Have we not in use similar laws to those which curbed to decency, and honesty, and integrity, the family of Abraham? What reason have we to assert, that a single statute in the law of Moses went to restrain a crime that has since then become obsolete? Hence what reason to believe, that human nature has become better? What reason to believe, that the descriptions of depravity which applied to Israel, Babylon, Egypt, Syria, and Sidon, or even to Sodom, will not apply with equal propriety to the men of this land, and of all lands and all generations when circumstances favor the growth and the practice

of the same vices? "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." I draw my

IV. Argument from the fact, that the Bible has never become obsolete.

It describes men of other periods, and the description suits the present generation. Some parts of the Bible describe men as they acted three and four thousand years ago; other parts as they conducted eighteen hundred years since; and it informs us how men will act down to the end of time. Now, sinners in the present day, soon as they gain some knowledge of themselves, find a faithful description of their hearts in the same Bible. It proves, wherever there is a spirit of self-application, "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." We have sometimes seen persons greatly astonished, to find, all at once, that they had in their house a neglected book, that could tell them all the secrets of their hearts. And this circumstance has not unfrequently persuaded them that the Bible was written by the finger of God.

But if human nature has gradually become better, as some would pretend to believe; if the awful descriptions of depravity given us in the Bible would suit only the generations or communities, of whom they were originally given, the book would not seem adapted, as it does, to men as they now feel and conduct. When the unregenerate world shall have become as much better, as it has become quite fashionable to believe, the Bible will be no longer adapted to our condition. It will not then be a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. I can believe that the *spirit* of the divine law will be in force in heaven, but that detail of the law, found in the Bible, and adapted to a race of sinful and polluted men, must go into disuse when there shall be born a race free from entire depravity. The Bible was intended to follow men into the labyrinths of vice, and there warn, and admonish, and threaten, and reprove. Hence when men shall not thus run into sin, they will need, and God will inspire them a new Bible. It was intended to block up the way of death, and save men from destroying themselves; but when men shall no longer love to tread the way to perdition, the Bible will not be the book they will need, and God will recall his word, and give the world other instructions, adapted to their altered and better condition. Hence whatever evidence we have that the Bible is still the very book we need, we have equal testimony that men are by nature depraved, as they ever were. For if the civil law of Moses would suit well the present generation,

though written more than three thousand years since ; and if the Prophecies and the Psalms, written five and seven hundred years later, are descriptive of just such men as we are ; and if the Gospels and the Epistles, of still later date, seem adapted to the moral character of the present generation ; with what face can men assert that their native heart has changed all its character ? Must not the honest man believe still, that “as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man ?” I close with

## REMARKS.

1. We see one source of those corruptions of doctrine with which the world is filled. Men have determined that human nature has grown better, and that men are born now very different beings from the antediluvians, or the Jews, or the Romans, or the whole Gentile world in the time of our Lord. Having settled this point, independently on the divine testimony, they infer that the same Bible will not suit the different ages and nations : that what God would say to the ignorant, barbarous beings that once peopled the world, he would not say to the present enlightened and polished nations of Christendom. Thus one error has conducted to another. They have been led, by the deceitfulness of their hearts, to believe one lie, and then, to be consistent, must believe another. Had they but correct views of their own hearts, they would believe that the same book, which lashed the consciences of sinners two thousand years ago, is still the best book for us that God could inspire, and that it needs no altering. This is the opinion of awakened sinners. When God makes men acquainted with themselves, the Bible looks them through, as if an omniscient eye was fixed in the centre of every page ; and it needs then no mutilations or amendments. Oh, would those who think they see an inappropriateness in the Bible doctrines, look once into their own hearts, that look would be a sovereign antidote to their heterodoxy ; and the Bible would soon be found appropriate and precious. They would patiently read its most doleful pages, and trace, with moistened eye, its portraits of human depravity ; discovering every feature of themselves in its most darkened lines. In the character of the old world, and of the Sodomites, Paul’s description of Gentiles, and in the character of Judas, they would see no touch of the divine pencil too dark for a delineation of their own carnal mind. It would rather seem as if the whole had been intended to portray their own likeness, in the fairest colors that truth could use. Their proud brow would gather sadness, their heart would sicken, and

falling down into the dust, they would cover their faces and cry, Unclean! unclean! Wo is unto me.

2. The subject justifies a kind of preaching, as plain and pointed as any thing found in the law of God, or in the communications of Christ and his apostles. Those who have anathematized a discriminating, bold, and plain exhibition of truth, have all gone upon the mistaken presumption, that men, as the ages have revolved, have gradually bleached their moral character. They have no idea, that were the Lord Jesus to visit the earth again, he would denounce us as a sinful and adulterous generation, or address the very worst of men as serpents, and a generation of vipers, hardly escaping the damnation of hell;—he would not *now* say, “that the whole world lieth in wickedness,” and that “except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;”—the *ignorant* and *barbarous* Jews needed to be born again; as also some of the less civil among the Romans, and a few of the more unlettered among the Grecians; but the term has no meaning in an enlightened congregation in America.

But all this is false and mischievous. Men have just such hearts as they always had; and need a gospel as plain and pungent as that preached by the Lord Jesus. The old serpent needs to be dislodged *now* from his usurped throne and dominion, by the same coarse weapons, if you please to call them such, as were used eighteen hundred years ago. We may dream that we are conversant with celestial beings; that our readers are all in a fair way for heaven; but while we are amusing them, they may, one by one, steal away to their death-bed, and from thence to a bed in hell. And what minister of Christ would not rather make them feel unhappy all the way to perdition, than find at last, that, while he has been preaching a smooth and polished gospel, one soul has been lost for ever through his negligence?

Every unregenerate man in this world has, in the view of Heaven, the same moral character with those who vexed the righteous soul of Noah, and Lot, and Elijah, and Malachi, and Jesus Christ, and needs to be addressed in the same plain, and pungent, and discriminating style. Why should totally depraved men wish any other gospel than that prepared for the totally depraved? What other gospel can reach their case, and alarm them, and save them? How cruel, if they do wish it, to amuse them with fair words, and smooth speeches, and thus prevent their hearts from aching, till their destiny is sealed. May the blessed God save his ministers from such deeds of treachery!

No, the world needs just such a gospel as was preached in Jerusalem, and Rome, and Corinth—needs to hear the thunders of the same law that issued from the smoke of Sinai, and to see the vivid flashes that glared upon its summit. Not enough better has the world become to admit the softening down of one accent of those denunciations that fell from the lips of Jesus. And he who thinks otherwise, has only to look around him, and within him, and see now the human heart belches forth its moral corruption, poisoning domestic and social joy, and contaminating every district of this unfortunate and ruined world. Let him attend our courts of justice, and see how men will perjure themselves; let him read the catalogue of divorcees; let him spend an evening in the grog-shop; let him stop a moment at her door, whose “house is the way to hell;”<sup>\*</sup> let him enter one of our criminal prisons; let him penetrate once into the secrets of his own heart, and stay there till the light is let in; and if he shall then wish any other gospel than the one he has, we will unite with him in beseeching the Eternal to take back his terrible communications.

3. The subject furnishes ungodly men the means of knowing their own characters. They have but to read the history of the world, and learn what sort of beings once peopled it, and that history is the mirror in which they can see themselves. We do not say that every two unregenerate men are alike in their exterior; but we assert, on the testimony of God, that every two unregenerate hearts have, in the view of God, the same moral character. Hence the most decent of the ungodly may look at the most abandoned, and learn exactly what themselves would be, were God to remove all restraint. Hence spake our Lord of whited sepulchres, that appeared beautiful indeed without, but within were full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. And he elsewhere assures us, He that has been angry with his brother without a cause, though he may not have spilt the blood of any man, is a murderer; and he who has cast a lascivious look, is an adulterer; and he who has not paid his tithes, has robbed God. Thus Heaven looks at the marrow and the pith of character; and if men would know themselves, they must be willing to be measured by the same rule.

4. We argue from this subject, that men must all pass the same second birth to fit them for the kingdom of God. The whited sepulchre, as well as that which is neglected and decayed, needs to be cleansed *within*, else it remains full of dead men’s bones and

\* Prov. vii. 27.

all uncleanness. The best man among all the unregenerated is a great sinner, and must become greatly ashamed, and must hate sin, and must put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, or he must be as surely shut out of heaven as the vilest man that breathes. Men, we know, may do different degrees of mischief; one may draw sin with cords of vanity, and another with a cart-rope; and still both may, with equal assurance, be pronounced on the way to hell. And in that world, it is not denied, that there may be different degrees of torment; but it is denied, that either the better sinner or the worse can escape perdition, unless he be born again. Hence it becomes every man, honorable or mean, to be inquiring what he must do to be saved. The man who stupidly imagines that any elevation of character raises him above the necessity of repenting, and of taking a believing grasp of the atonement by Jesus Christ, has mistaken his own character, and is blind to his approaching destiny. He may compass himself about with sparks of his own kindling, and walk in the light of his own fire, but shall have this at the hand of God, that he shall lie down in everlasting sorrow. Haste, then, ye very best of the ungodly, and be found at a Savior's feet, that ye may have life through his name. If the world esteems you a benefactor, and you can see no fault in yourself, still you must be born again, or die in your sins, and where Christ is, can never come.

Finally, We see why there need be but one place of destiny in the coming world for all the unregenerate. The little shades of difference that now appear in the ungodly, are too insignificant to mark them out for distinct worlds. When God takes off those restraints that now make unholy men differ, they will be so much alike that none will impeach his justice when he assigns them all the same outer darkness, the same gnawing worm, and the same quenchless fire. He that has stolen his neighbor's property, and died a felon, and he who has concealed the article found in the street, or the mistake made in his favor, or has purposely become a bankrupt, to escape the obligations of honesty, will appear too much alike in the judgment to require any material diversity in their final sentence. The same perdition will suit them both, though one drops down to hell from the gallows, and the other is borne there on a downy bed. The duelist and the assassin, the usurer and the pickpocket, the forsworn and the profane, the wine-bibber and the sot, the fashionable adulterer and the inmate of the brothel, must be seen to differ so little, when God shall tear away the fictitious drapery from the more honourable sinner, that it will

seem no incongruity to place them at last in the same hell. God will consider his law as openly violated, and his authority as egregiously insulted, by the man who sinned in accordance with public sentiment, as by the man who did his deeds of depravity in full and open violation of the civilities and customs of human society. Men make wide distinctions where God will make none. Hence the same condemnatory sentence, the same prompt execution of it, the same place of punishment, the same duration of misery, and the same total despair, will be the destiny of the patrician and the plebeian transgressor. Does the man die out of Christ, this is enough; no matter whether he was lothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, or went to perdition a beggar or a slave. It will be the same thing to God; and for all the millions who repent not, he will build but one hell. Perhaps the meanness and coarseness of his associates may prove at last, to the more accomplished sinner, an ingredient in his cup of misery that shall more than counterbalance the honors and the pride, which, in this life, gave him his fictitious elevation above the vulgar transgressor. Could I make my puny voice be heard, I would thunder this sentiment through all the ranks of elevated crime, till the highest prince should find his adulterous bed a couch of thorns, till the honorable murderer should feel in his own bosom "the arrows of the Almighty,"\* and till the boldest in blasphemy and the meanest in knavery should fear alike the same award, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

\* Job. vi. 4.

## SERMON VI.

### THE SON OF GOD MUST BE REVERENCED.

MATT. XXI. 37.

They will reverence my son.

OUR Lord, in the context, represents the ingratitude and the barrenness of the Jewish church, by a parable of a vineyard leased for several successive years to unworthy husbandmen, who would not yield the owner any of its fruits; but treated unmercifully every servant sent to receive them. They “took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. But, last of all, he sent unto them his son; saying, *They will reverence my son.* But they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”

We read, that the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and Judah his pleasant plant. He had given them his written word, and had sent among them his prophets. He had displayed before them his glory, and had, as it were, surrounded them by a munition of rocks. The early and the latter rains had rendered their lands fertile, and the blessing of God had prospered them, in all that they set their hands to do. Thus Israel was emphatically a vineyard. But when God had a right to expect that the vines he had planted and nourished would bring forth grapes, they brought forth wild grapes. The very people he had chosen, killed his prophets, polluted his worship, and hewed down his altars; and finally imbrued their hands in the blood of his Son.

Hence the parable, delivered by him who spoke as never man spake, must have had amazing point and force. It aroused their anger, and they would at once have laid hands on him, if they had not feared the multitude. God had a right to expect that they would welcome to their sanctuary the promised Redeemer, and would hail his birth as the pledge of their redemption. But in their cruelties to the Son of God, they acted out the native temper of the human heart, and showed themselves to be just such men as lived before and have lived since the period of the Savior's advent. What is said of Israel may be said of men in all ages:—

*It might have been presumed that they would treat kindly the Son of God.*

This doctrine may be established by the following considerations :—

I. That men would treat him kindly, might have been justly presumed, *by the divinity and glory of his highest nature*. He had a divine as well as human nature : he was “God manifest in the flesh.” Previous to his coming, it had been as distinctly asserted, that he was divine, as that he would be human. That prediction of him, “To us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” had been read by the posterity of Abraham ; and foretold him in his divine and in his human character. They had reason to expect a Savior, who built the worlds, and who governs the worlds he built. Hence the thought of treating him with contempt was impious—like offering direct insult to Jehovah. And he had no sooner appeared, than both his natures became manifest. As man he hungered, while as God he created bread to feed the multitude : as man he thirsted, but as God he converted the water into wine ; as man he could suffer, and bleed, and die, while as God he could make the sufferer whole ; and even summon the dead from their graves. Thus the accusers, the judges, and the executioners of the Lord Jesus, could have no want of evidence that he was the mighty God. Hence, it might have been presumed, that if he must die, God himself must slay him. He must come to his sepulchre by the immediate hand of Omnipotence. No one would dare to betray him, no soldiery would have hardihood enough to arrest him, no miscreant would sit to judge him, no multitude would insult him, none would dare to crucify him. And we should seem to reason correctly in all this, carrying ourselves back to the period before his coming. And still we should reason contrary to matters of fact.

We should have said, anterior to his offering himself to men as their Mediator and their friend, that they would all accept his proffered friendship. When God himself offers to save, how can man reject him ! He who now stretches out his hands to the wretched and the lost of my readers, is the same infinite Redeemer who called Lazarus from the grave, who fed the multitude, who stilled the waves, who burst the bands of death, and proved his divinity by ascending triumphant on high. Angels, and other beings who

might know what an offer men would thus have of salvation by Jehovah himself, could not have believed that sinners would treat him as they do;—that from Sabbath to Sabbath they would hear his overtures, and turn their back upon him. They would not have conceived it possible that men, after all he has done, would question his divinity, and rob him of his glory, and persecute his people.

If God should render himself visible, and stand from Sabbath to Sabbath with pardons in his hands, pressing men to accept forgiveness and live, the obstinacy of sinners would appear just what it is. For one who is divine does thus stand. He appropriates to himself all the glories of the Godhead, has the titles, does the works, possesses the attributes, receives the worship, and claims the honors of the Father. He is adored in heaven, under the appellation of the Lamb, in every anthem. And still he stands knocking unheeded at the door of the sinner's heart, till his head is wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night; till we hardly know which is the most surprising, his condescension or the sinner's obstinacy. "They will reverence my son."

II. It might have been presumed that the Lord Jesus would be kindly treated by men, *from the perfect excellence of his character as a man*. There was nothing in him to provoke the anger of good beings. There was neither pride, nor jealousy, nor selfishness, nor passion, nor any of those evil affections that so often involve men in disgraceful broils. He was meek and lowly of mind. He had a character of perfect loveliness. His lips were charged with blessings, and not with curses: "there was no guile found in his mouth." He loved the souls of men, more than he loved his life. There was nothing in him for men to blame or quarrel with, but every thing that could be desired to draw forth their strongest emotions of gratitude and love

Who could conceive of a race of beings so vile, that they would quarrel with an angel; yet angels have no such worth as was found in the Son of God. The prophets had human nature left, and might provoke the rage of their enemies, and tantalize their persecutors. They might demand the fruit of the vineyard in a manner, not the most condescending and kind, and might contribute, by their own unworthy conduct, to fan the fires that were kindling to consume them. And the apostles were men of like passions with those who mocked them, and stoned them. While they demanded boldly, and promptly, the fruit of the vineyard, they might, per

haps, sometimes make the demand rudely. But "they will reverence my son." Nothing that was wrong in prophets and apostles was found in him; and what was wanting in them, was in him. He made every doctrine plain, and every duty clear and obvious. He never pressed the conscience till he had enlightened the understanding, nor used an argument that was not sound and good. His honesty, and integrity, and wisdom, entitled him to the credit and kindness of all men.

Now, are ungodly men aware, that it is this same kind and good Redeemer, who now offers to conduct them to the abodes of glory, but whose kindness they spurn, and whose love they despise? Could it have been believed by those who knew him and adored him, that men would thus treat him, as do all the impenitent? "They will reverence my son."

III. It might have been presumed, that men would treat kindly the Lord Jesus, *from the reasonableness of his claims*. He came not to reap where he had not sown, or gather where he had not strewed. He came not to demand allegiance when another had a better right to the sceptre than himself; he came not to a world that had another for its creator, its benefactor, and redeemer. He is emphatically represented as having come "to his own, but his own received him not." This world belongs to the Lord Jesus, from its foundation to its topstone. To him pertain the wisdom of having planned it, the glory of having built it, the right to govern it, and the authority to judge it. All creatures in him live, and move, and have their being. Hence he has a right to our services, independently on his redeeming right. The breath he gives he may require to utter itself in praise; the arm he nerves he may tax with duty; and the eye he enlightens he may reasonably expect to regard him with perpetual complacency.

And when we take into account the ransom price he paid, his own blood, by which he purchased anew the world that was his before, his claim to us and ours is too manifest to be disputed. "He gave himself a ransom for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." In demanding our hearts, then, he demands what is his by a double right; the right of creation and of purchase. We owe to him all we have, and all we are, and all we hope for. We can adore no other sovereign without treason against him, and serve no other master without robbery. All the angels of God are directed to worship him; and if angels, who are his by feebleness

ties, must pay him supreme respect, then his right to us, and his property in us, none but devils, surely, can have the audacity to question. Hence, from the justness of his claims, it might have been presumed that men would treat well the Lord Jesus Christ. The vineyard and all its fruits are his.

IV. It might have been presumed that men would treat well the Lord Jesus Christ *from the condescending kindness of his intentions*. He stood in no need of us. He would have had an empire large enough to be the organ of his praise, if we had perished. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." And if men had been passed by, and not redeemed, he would, no doubt, have drawn out to view, in some other way, his mercy and his wisdom, which now display themselves in the economy of redemption. He might have redeemed, for aught we know, the lost angels; or might have displayed redemption among the population of some other forlorn and ruined world, or might have revealed his gracious character to us, as he has his eternity, through the word of inspiration. Christ was not dependent on us either for the stability of his throne, or the promulgation of his glory, or the felicity of his being. No motive brought him to our world but pure benevolence. He "so loved the world" that he gave himself as its ransom. Its miseries moved his pity, and he stooped to help us. He would not have come, had he not been kind and gracious. True, he showed a special regard to the law; would have it honored; would not allow one jot or tittle of it to fail; and hence he may be viewed as having come "to establish the law;" but it must be remembered, that the law might have been honored in its execution upon the guilty; so that, independently on the idea of saving sinners, there was no need of the death of Christ, in order to honor the law. Hence his errand into our world was emphatically an errand of love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The love of Christ was the basis of the covenant of redemption. It led him to lay aside his glory, and cover himself with a veil of flesh, and become "acquainted with grief."—"Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." He who built all worlds, condescended to say of himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Thus, "by grace are we saved."

Now, it might have been presumed that the Lord Jesus Christ on an errand so benevolent would have been treated well. His design was too kind to deserve any other than the kindest and most prompt reception. Had he gone to devils instead of men, it would seem impossible but they must have received him kindly, when on such an errand, with such heavenly designs. The very pit, it would seem, must have echoed with his praise. Hence, if men have a better character, as they boast they have, ask them how they receive the message of divine mercy. Does the Lord Jesus possess the throne of your heart? Is he the sovereign object of your fear, your love, your hope, and your worship? If not, then cast from you that exalted opinion of yourself, which raises you a single degree above the tenants of the pit.

V. It might have been presumed, that men would treat well the Lord Jesus Christ, *from his known ability to save*. Had he come in such weakness as would have rendered the enterprise doubtful on which he had entered, there might have been a temptation to despise him. Had he failed in making the atonement, or been unable to change the heart, or proved inadequate to the work of leading on his people to victory and glory, after he had enlisted them, then had he brought all the measures of his mercy into contempt, and angels would have refused to do him homage. But he was able to do all. He had but to lay down a life which none could take from him, and the price of our redemption was paid. He had but to speak the word, and the veriest rebel bowed to his mandate. And he has always with consummate skill, led on the sacramental hosts of his elect to the abodes of paradise. Hence, he is said to have "trodden the wine-press alone;" he is represented as "travelling in the greatness of his strength;" is said to "gird his sword upon his thigh;" and to "ride forth conquering and to conquer."

Now, we needed just such a Redeemer: one who was "mighty to save." We were in a condition too forlorn to be redeemed by any other than an almighty Savior. Hence, when such a Savior was offered, how could men do otherwise than kindly receive and joyfully embrace him? How could he fail to gain their confidence and love, and be chosen Captain of their salvation, their Lord, and their king? "They will reverence my son."

VI. This might have been presumed, *from his ability to destroy, as well as to save*. The Savior comes, it is true, with an offer of mercy; but he comes, too, clothed with all the authority of the God-

head. He will one day say, as in the parable, "These, mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me." The offers he makes to sinners they cannot with impunity reject. A blessing offered us by our fellow-men may be received or not, as we please, and, if rejected, there accrues no guilt: not so the offer of mercy by Jesus Christ. He comes to demand our hearts as his throne; and will bless us if we receive him; but we are cursed if we reject him.

And the sinner, it would seem, must *know* that he is strong to destroy. He hurled the rebel angels from heaven, and fastened them in chains under darkness till the judgment of the great day. He drowned a world, when it would not have him to reign over it. And all his foes he has sent to a hopeless perdition, as fast as they have evinced themselves incorrigibly wicked. Kind as are now his overtures, and extensive his promises, and prolonged his endurance, still, if you remain impenitent, he must stain his raiment with your blood. His eyes will be as flames of fire; and out of his mouth will go a sharp sword to smite the ungodly; and on his vesture and on his thigh will be seen written, "King of kings and Lord of lords." How tremendous the thought, that the very Lord Jesus, at whose feet so many sinners have found pardon, will rise upon the finally incorrigible in all the greatness of his strength, and "tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury!" To such a Prince, how fair the presumption, that every knee would bow and every tongue confess

FINALLY, it might have been presumed that sinners would treat kindly the Lord Jesus, *from their necessities*. He found them "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." He passed by, and saw them as an infant "cast out into the open field," in the day that it was born. We had fallen under the curse of the broken law—had neither righteousness, nor holiness, nor happiness, nor hope. There was nothing for us but misery now, and "a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, that must devour the adversary." Thus, our necessities put us in need of a friend—an almighty friend—one that could pity and help the most miserable. Could it, then, have been presumed, that, should such a friend offer his aid, beings so lost and miserable could reject him!!

One could sooner conceive that a beggar would spurn the plenty and the pleasures of a palace, and choose to lodge in the street; or that the blind would choose to grope their way to the

grave, when they might have vision ; or that a dying man would refuse the touch that might give him life and health.

I close with three

REMARKS.

1. The sinner's final ruin is *unnecessary*. All the purposes of his personal perdition may now be answered in the Savior. The law can be honored, and God honored, and he escape damnation. All the purity of the precepts, and all the attributes of the Godhead, are displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ, far more amply than in the volume of "smoke that ascendeth up for ever and ever." O yes ; the cross, that everlasting monument of a dying Savior, reveals the Deity far more intelligibly than the "everlasting fire." Hence, the sinner is lost, not because of any necessity for his ruin ; not because of any doom that chained him down to death ; not because his salvation was impossible ; not because heaven could devise no other expedient for securing the divine veracity ; not because of anything we can think of—but that he "chose darkness rather than light"—and "death rather than life." Hence,

2. His ruin will be *self-induced*. By this, I do not mean merely that he is a voluntary agent in breaking the divine law. This sin always implies. I intend more than this. The sinner puts forth his hand, and thrusts from him the charter of forgiveness. He might have had life after he was condemned ; after his death-warrant was written and sealed ; after the pit had been prepared to receive him. Nay, when hell itself was begun in his bosom, and the divine anger was consuming him—even then eternal life was possible,—but he "chose death !" Hence,

Finally, his ruin will be *wanton*. He will be viewed for ever as having sported with his soul ; as if it had been a pearl, and he had run with it to the mouth of a pit, and cast it in ; or as if it had been a combustible world, and he with a torch had set it on fire. He employed himself in scattering fire-brands, arrows, and death, and still professed himself to be in sport. The man who plunges the knife into his own heart, does not more wantonly die, than the sinner is wantonly damned. Oh, how affecting, that hell should be thus peopled by a world of suicides, who dared the vengeance, and tantalized the compassion, and despised the forbearance of the Eternal ! It might reasonably have been presumed, "*They will reverence my son.*" But no ! insulted Jehovah ! they pour indignity upon his name and his cross, despise his messengers, and "perish in their sins," rather than do him homage, and humbly seek redemption through his blood.

## SERMON VII.

### THE TWO CHAMPIONS CONTRASTED.

ISAIAH XL. 30, 31.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.

THE sentiment is often entertained, that religion is suited only for the weak, the aged, and the infirm; but is quite *useless*, if not *injurious*, to the young, healthful, and prosperous. When we have yielded all the respect we can to men who advance this sentiment, we must still pity their delusion. It can never be said that piety injures the young man. He may cultivate in connection with it all the amiable properties of human nature. May be mild and affable; may be decent and ardent; modest and courageous. These lovely and noble qualities religion does not eradicate, but cherish. Can it cast a shade of deformity over them, to add the love and fear of God, who is supremely amiable? Are men so hostile to their Maker, that respect for him, and obedience to him, must make a wound incurable in one's reputation? Then must it be acknowledged, that this is indeed a fallen world.

Is it feared that religion in the young man will cramp his genius, and stop the march of intellect? It would be strange indeed, if a taste for the noblest of all sciences, the knowledge of God and his truth, should narrow the mind, and limit the flight of genius. Such a result would contradict all experience, and give the lie to the first principles of mental science.

Is it feared that piety will wither and paralyze the native fearlessness of youth, and render tame and cowardly the man whose courage and daring might have astonished the world? Does then the love of God, the very principle that makes alliance with the hosts of heaven, and with God himself, diminish our courage, and make us fly "when no man pursueth?" We should expect it to be far otherwise, and should look for a bravery that no danger could daunt, when there is for our defence a host of angels, and One "higher than the highest." The Psalmist reasoned thus, and said, "The Lord is my strength, of whom shall I be afraid?" And

Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

What is it, then, that in the esteem of the ungodly, renders religion so uncomely in the young man? Where does it fix deformity? True, it does render him less covetous of this world's goods, and less ambitious of its honors, less daring in its deeds of darkness, less deceitful, and less intriguing. But is he the less a man and deserving of less esteem? In such a suggestion there is an infidelity too bare-faced to be hidden. The amount of it is, that piety implies the fear of God; and this is, to the ungodly, the most offensive of all attributes.

The text will lead us to look at the two characters—the youth who sets out to press his way through life and death by the dint of native courage, and the one who waits on the Lord, and thus gathers strength from heaven to bear him on to victory and glory.

I would here premise, that this is a stormy life. Upon every man, more or less, the tempests will beat. Be his character godly or ungodly, he will have foes, and meet dangers, and suffer hardships, and feel afflictions, and will say, before he gets through, that he is passing a desert world. Now we must encounter the calamities of life by native prowess, or by the courage of piety: Which will aid us the best? This is the question which I wish may be pondered with solemnity for a few moments.

*I shall mention some of the storms of life, that we shall all be sure to meet; and inquire, as I pass on, which has the safest defence—the mere man of the world, or the man of piety.*

I. We shall all probably part with beloved friends. The ties that bind them to us are slender, the sport of every wind that blows, and every dew that falls. They are ours only by loan, and must be resigned. We may have warnings of their departure, or may have none. They may be torn from us at the moment of our highest attachment—when our life is bound up in theirs—when it shall seem to us that *we* have nothing to stay for, if *they* must leave us. This calamity will certainly come, alike upon the good man and the unbeliever. Which will sustain it best? They stand together by the death-bed of a mother, a father, a sister, a brother: they have the same instinctive passions; they both feel the stroke, and must try to outlive it. But by what principles shall they brace their minds against the storm?

The unbeliever may hope to forget his sorrow, or find some other friend as good, or draw from something else, the comfort he

has enjoyed in his dying friend. But all this is a distant and uncertain relief. He will find it difficult to forget his friend, and he dare not wish to, and months, or even years, must elapse before he can hope to. Nor will he find it easy to supply the place of his friend. Such friends do not rain down from heaven, do not spring up from the ground, cannot be bought. A mother, for instance,—who can supply her place? Who, like her, will wear out her nature to serve you, and watch by your sick bed, and feel every pang, and wipe away your tears? What friend will become dear to you as your brother, and suffer to befriend you, and endure any thing but death to save you? I know “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;” but he is the friend of the godly, not yours. And you will find it difficult, if you have lost a friend, to secure the same amount of enjoyment elsewhere. Friends are our choicest blessings. Wealth is trash, and fame is air; but a *friend*, in this cold-hearted world, is a precious pearl. See then how distant and doubtful is the consolation of the ungodly.

Take some of the still nearer and dearer friends, and the case is more hopeless still. The mother must see her child taken into the cold embrace of death. And she tries, does she? to live through it without divine support. Now where and when will she find one, who will call her mother, and feel her pains, and watch her tears, and sooth her miseries? Oh, I hear her say, unless she has still another son, “My gray hairs will come down with sorrow to the grave. I shall go weeping to the sepulchre for my son.”

Or the dying friend is a wife. Go now, and find, if you can, one who will be a mother to your children. Try if you can forget her endearments. Try if you can find in any other object the amount of joy you had in her. Oh, how the agonies of the ungodly wring pity from our hearts. This is the onset when “the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.” No native vigor can enable one to brow-beat a storm like this, and not be, in the result, a hopeless and desponding sufferer. The heart loses its courage, soon as it enters the conflict. No cold philosophy can reason down affection, or mitigate the agonies of separation. And the poor survivor, if an unbeliever, can only “lie down in sorrow.”

But not so the Christian, who waits upon the Lord. He has in heaven a better Friend than he has lost, and can smile at the ravages of death, as hurting only some of his minor interests. He can immediately transfer the affection he fixed upon his friend to

God ; and reap, in an hour, a return infinitely better than any fruits of earthly friendship. He holds all his living friends as the loan of Heaven, ready to be transferred to their original Proprietor. And in the hour of trial his soul utters with deep sincerity, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." He has not to wait till he can forget his friend, or find another, or procure a substitute. He "waits upon the Lord," and is thus strengthened for the hour, and becomes happy in the midst of tears. He passes through the waters, but God is with him ; and through the floods, but they do not overflow him. He walks through the fire, but is not burned, neither does the flame kindle upon him. His song is, "The Lord liveth ; and blessed be my Rock ; and let the God of my salvation be exalted." He never calculated on any very durable good from earthly things, as does the unrenewed man. Hence he is not disappointed. His best hopes are not cut off, nor his richest prospects darkened. God has been as good to him as his promises, and better than his own fears. His trials will soon end in heaven. There he will join a circle of friends to whom he has been long more attached than to any other. Thus he mounts as on eagles' wings, scales the very heavens, runs and is not weary, walks and is not faint.

At how many funerals have we witnessed this wide contrast between the native prowess of a mind unsanctified, and the fortitude of a man of God strengthened for the trial by the light of *his* countenance.

Come, then, my young friends, let me assure you, how only you can be happy in the hour of bereavement. You may suppress your tears when you attend the funeral of your mother, or your brother, but nature will feel. You may put on the stoic, but the heart will bleed. You may try to cheer your spirits, but your strength will fail, unless God, in that hour, is your refuge, your very present help. If you intend to live without him, you need hope for nothing but that his waves and his billows will often come over you, while there will be no comforter. You have twenty dear friends, and one may die each year, these twenty years ; and ere then you may die yourself. Thus the heart will bleed, and you will be covered with the weeds of death all the way to the sepulchre. I should not choose to be one of your friends, unless I could believe that you would think of me when I was gone one year ; that my funeral solemnities would create a cloud, that would cast its shade upon you till the sun had performed at least one annual revolution. Let each friend make the same demand, and you have no divine

support under your bereavements, and you readily see that the whole of life is a cloudy and dark day.

I have noticed yet the loss of friends *by death* only; but we may lose them more tremendously *by desertion*. Let the hour come when it shall not be popular to be your friend, and when many who have sought your acquaintance, and received your hospitality, and waited to know and do your pleasure, shall hide their face from you; then is the hour when "the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." I know there is a buoyancy in the human heart, that may seem for a moment to sustain you. You can despise the man whose sycophancy deceived you, but who was never your friend, and has now only uncovered to you the rottenness of his heart. You can resolve to despise the men who are the friends of your prosperity, but not of your adversity; and they deserve to be despised: but you will feel a pain dart through you in that hour, which you must sustain, either by your native prowess or by a higher courage. Would you trust in an arm of flesh? Ah! but this arm fails you; and then, where will you lean? Now, the good man has no misgivings in such an hour. With him it is a living maxim, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." Paul could keep up all his courage while in the midst of a people who not long before would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him, but were now become his enemies because he told them the truth. And the Lord Jesus Christ, who had all the tenderness of our nature, could, without despair, hear the cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!" uttered by that same multitude whose blind he had made to see, whose lame to walk, whose lepers he had cleansed, whose sick he had healed, and whose dead he had raised. All this one can easily sustain who has an almighty friend in heaven. He can pour a holy contempt upon the wavering men who have no principle, and will desert him when he needs their friendship most. He can stand erect, because *God* is with him. But how can *you* stand, who have no such friend, but whose whole kindred are in this deceitful world? Here is the spot where it will again happen that "the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

II. Amid the changes of this ill-fated world we shall all be liable to suffer the loss of property. No treasure but that which is laid up in heaven is secure: our houses may burn down over our heads; our streams may fail; a foe may rob us of our rights; we may be called to spend all we have upon physicians; we may lose our spirit of enterprise; our reason may desert us. All the good things of this life are ready to take wings and fly away.

Now, can the man who has no treasure in heaven sustain his spirit, as can the man of faith and of prayer? By what consideration can he comfort his soul, when ye shall have taken away his gods? When he is robbed of his best treasures, of *all he has* in the life that now is, while he has nothing in the life to come, how can he fail to sink? Says the sacred penman, "*Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.*" He who has no interest in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, how can he part with his temporal habitation? He who has no treasure which moth and rust cannot corrupt, how can he part with his corruptible riches? He who has no greatness or glory in the kingdom of God, how can he dispense with that which renders him great in the present world? Made once poor for time, how can he hope for any thing else but eternal bankruptcy! If he should hope *to rise again*, still this is "a hope deferred which maketh the heart sick." If he try to be great in his poverty, still, in a world like this, he will find it difficult, not to say impossible. If he would try to be happy, while yet he is small, here pride erects an insurmountable barrier. He lacks all the means of being happy. The good he values, his only good, is gone. The heaven he built for himself had no foundation, and the storms have swept it away. Poor soul, how completely is he made a bankrupt and a beggar! and how impossible that he should retrieve his circumstances, till he is altered essentially in his disposition and character!

But things are not thus desperate with the good man when he finds his estate diminished. We read of those who "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." The friends of God have laid up for themselves "treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." They have provided themselves with "garments that wax not old," and have "a house not built with hands, eternal in the heavens." In the midst of losses they often see that the riches they have parted with stood between them and God, and made them less happy and less holy than they may be with-

out them. They held the heart divided, and kept it cold, and worldly, and selfish, and sordid. Now the clog is removed, and they can mount up as on the wings of eagles. They have now *nothing but heaven* to care for; what they have lost they could have used but a little while, and they can mount higher without it. They still have all that God ever promised; their bread and their water is made sure. If they can never be rich *here*, still they can hope for durable riches and righteousness in the life to come. If they must toil hard, still their rest will at last be long and sweet. If they must be small and unnoticed, still there awaits them "a crown of glory" in the life to come. Thus, how evident that no native prowess can enable one to conflict with the storms of life like the grace of God.

III. But let us try the prowess of the two champions in another conflict. While one storm shall beat upon friendship, and another upon property, another still may make its assault upon character. This you know is valuable as life. "A good name is better than precious ointment." Being depraved, we are vulnerable at every point. "There is no man that liveth and doeth good and sinneth not." We break the laws of God and of man; we violate the dictates of conscience, and the rules of righteousness; and that man knows nothing of himself, that does not acknowledge all this,—hence we become justly exposed. Men can injure us, and say the truth.

But what is more yet, the utmost uprightness of character does not secure from the attack of slander. If men cannot find enough that is true, they can unblushingly fabricate the rest. And no man, godly or ungodly, is wholly secure. The godly are forewarned, that as men have called the Master of the house of Beelzebub, so much rather will they calumniate the household. And now, which, think you, will be the best support through this storm, native prowess, or supernatural grace? You have known the ungodly man to be slandered. Men have accused him of deeds he never did, have wronged him, and abused him. And he set himself to oppose the tempest. He cursed his accusers, and returned every blow they dealt, and raved at the foe, and sinned more grossly than he ever had before. He plotted revenge, and pursued it, and perhaps obtained it. But after all was done, was he not rather the vanquished than the conqueror? Did he stand on more elevated ground when he *quit*, than when he *began* the conflict?

Ah, he overcame the evil with evil, and sunk the deeper by his attempts to rise.

Let us view the most favorable case. The man abused is ungodly, but has the properties that constitute an amiable man. He meets the assault with all the calmness and all the patience he can command. He reasons, "If they destroy my reputation, they take my interest too, and then what have I left." Having no sense of sin, he is not humble, and will not be very patient. He will not exercise a spirit of forgiveness, nor a spirit of meekness, nor see the wisdom of God in the appointment, nor hope for an augmentation of his enjoyments as the final result. Hence he must be unhappy and must be a loser. His courage may in a sense sustain him, but while he stands he will still be wounded, and perhaps destroyed.

Now the man of God in such a conflict has a *heavenly* armor. In the very onset he takes the shield of faith. He is *patient*, because he sees it to be the hand of God. He is *calm* from the conviction, that, dark as the storm may lower, he is safe. If his character should be injured, it only assimilates his condition to that of his divine Lord. He has that sense of sin that renders him *humble*. He exercises a spirit of meekness and of forgiveness, and this renders him *happy*. In the event, as a divine appointment, he sees the wisdom of God, and hopes and believes that in the issue God will be glorified, and his own best good promoted. "To me," he can say with the apostle, "it is a very light thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." Can he only hope to stand approved in the last great day, all decisions of fallible men to the contrary, have not, with him, the weight of a feather.

Would an angel care, if the whole population of this world should assemble in a mass, and pronounce him a sinner or a fool! He would know that he might still hold the same standing in the sight of God. So the man of faith can soar and act the angel in the hour of onset. He does not, and dares not depend on any native strength of his own, "but waits upon the Lord, and renews his strength."

IV. We are all liable to disease and death. God has not exempted his people, and certainly not his enemies, from this calamity. Disease and death are the wages of sin. And here it often happens literally, that "even the youths are faint and weary." We have seen nature struggling with disease even in the very moru-

ing of life. The young man, strong and vigorous to-day, panting for breath to-morrow, and in a few days sinking into an untimely sepulchre.

Now the man who hopes to meet all this by native courage, it would seem must be destitute of the power of reasoning. The very nature of the calamity augurs that he will have neither strength nor courage to bear it. It is the very first effect of disease to render faint and weary—to dishearten and unnerve. The veriest Goliath is a child, when he wrestles with the plague or the pestilence. How then can he stand in the contest ?

The mind is enfeebled with the body : hence he cannot reason down his alarms and his apprehensions ; cannot sustain his own sinking spirits. He who a few days since would not have feared to meet single-handed the hardest foe that might take the field, cannot now raise his head, and is in fear, where no danger is. He may have some consolation from the hope of recovery. But this one hope, tremulous and often forlorn, is the only stay of his soul that remains. If he must die, he is lost for ever.

But here the man of God does not thus sink and perish. He is conscious that he deserves the chastisement ; hence has no quarrel with the power that afflicts. He submits and is calm. He has the promise that God will sustain him, will be with him in six troubles, and in seven will not forsake him. "When flesh and heart fail him, God will be the strength of his heart and his portion for ever, —all things shall work together for good to them that love God ;" and these promises were all made with design to be fulfilled. Hence the good man, when he suffers, can leave himself with God. Every care and every interest he rolls over upon his generous and almighty Supporter. To him "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He can cheerfully wait his "appointed time," and can hope that there is laid up for him "a crown of life that fadeth not."

But what is over and above all this, he enjoys the smiles of God. These lighten his pains and give him joy and peace. Hence sung the weeping poet,

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileged beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven."

On the very dying-bed have we heard the triumphant song. "I mount, I fly." Infidelity may declare all this visionary ; but it is none the less a reality. It is what God has promised, what his

people expect, what the diseased and the dying have told us they enjoyed, and is no more incredible than the new birth, at which the ruler of the Jews marvelled.

Now take from the mass of the ungodly the sturdiest youth you can name, and let him go to his chamber and grapple with disease and death; and place in the adjoining chamber the man of prayer, in precisely the same distressing attitude; and tell me which shall have the palm. The one shall use all his native mind and muscle, shall brace himself against the paroxysms of disease, and cheer up his spirits, and resist the fear of death, and to the full extent of his power, stay his false hope, and wake up his courage. His brave associates shall come round him and ply their sophistry to put down his pains, and put out the eye of conscience, and hide hell from him, and God from him, and his own history from him. And no Bible shall be near him, nor pastor near him, nor prayers be offered. He shall have through the whole conflict all the help that earth and hell can give him. The other shall but make use of prayer and faith, shall stay himself upon his Redeemer, and encourage himself in the Lord his God, and cast the anchor of his hope within the veil. Now tell me which of the two will triumph in the storm. Ah! I see the strong one bow. Ye that hate the Lord, let me assure you, your champion is foiled in the contest, "Even the youths shall faint."

V. I have thought of several other occasions where the ungodly man and the man of faith will have opportunity to test their prowess in the same conflict, but I will add only one. They must both pass the review of the last judgment. "We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." And to set any value upon a spirit of enterprise or of daring, that will not carry us through that last scene, is to play the fool. I wish to cultivate the principles that will carry me through.

Now follow, if you please, one of the most daring of the unbelievers to the last tribunal. How will he manage there? Can he hide his sins? Can he palliate them, or neutralize them? Can he prove that the law was too severe, or the penalty unjust? Can he offer any eloquent plea why he should be acquitted? Will any angel plead for him? Will the blessed Redeemer be his advocate? Will his courage live and thrive in that conflict? If weighed in the balance, will he not be found wanting? If convicted, will not sentence go forth against him? Will devils be afraid to convey him to the place of torment? Suppose him, if you please, to have weathered

every other storm, how will he conflict with "everlasting burnings? By what daring arguments will he keep hope alive in hell, and resist the embrace of despair, or put out the "unquenchable fires?" Come, ye that intend to brave it through without grace, that dare to live, and expect to die, without an interest in the Lord Jesus, approach the precincts of the pit, and inquire how your champion fares in this last conflict! Does he stand or fall? Does his courage abide by him? May you venture, or not, to join your destiny with his? Let this point be settled before you venture into your dying chamber without the grace of God.

And how does it fare with the *man of faith* in the same conflict? He ventures not to come to the judgment-seat alone, supported by any courage which his depraved heart can generate. He comes clothed with a Savior's righteousness, owns his guilt, and pleads the atoning blood of the Redeemer. When bid, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" his reply is "When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" Then will be heard from the throne of judgment, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." You recollect the amazing result. They who come to that throne in their own name, and hoped to stand by their own native prowess, "*shall go away into everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels.*"

Let me say, then, fellow-sinner, while you resolve to trust in man, or in any thing short of an omnipotent Savior, there remains for you "no hope" but a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." If it seem to you, however, that your cause will succeed, you have only to make the trial. Storms will beat upon you: but if you still think your own heart can generate all the prowess you shall need in the conflicts of life, and death, and judgment, then you must try. It is my duty, however, to assure you, "that even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall."

But, on the other hand, there is "strong consolation to you who *trust in the Lord.*" The promise is, that "you shall mount up on wings as eagles, shall run and not be weary, and walk and not faint." Now God will do all that he has said; will succor you as he has promised, will enlighten your darkness, will provide you a retreat in temptation, will cover your head in the day of battle,

will give his angels charge concerning you, and in their hands they shall bear you up, till you have trodden the whole desert through, and passed over Jordan, and entered the New Jerusalem, to go no more out for ever.

While, then, "*the wicked perish at the presence of God,*"—while it becomes *them* to "*weep and howl for their miseries that shall come upon them,*"—"let the righteous be glad ; let them rejoice before God ; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice."

## SERMON VIII.

### THE SOUL RELUCTANTLY MADE FAST TO EARTH.

PSALM CXIX. 25.

My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

THE Christian is a man of heavenly birth. That world where Christ is he considers his home, and, till he arrives there, he views himself a pilgrim and a stranger. *There* are his best friends, *there* he has deposited his treasures, and *thither* faith often directs his flight, and fixes his delightful gaze. Hence the Christian is never more unhappy than when he becomes attached to the things of the earth. If the dove should lose her wings, with which she used to soar among the branches, and be constrained to crawl with reptiles, and feed on the serpent's food, she would not be more expatriated, than the man of heavenly birth when cleaving to the dust. Such a state, guilty as he may be in every step of his decline, can hardly be said to be his choice. It is a state over which he mourns, and at which he is himself astonished. He is dissatisfied, and, like a dislocated bone, aches to be restored. If he should find himself contented and happy, while alienated from God, it would cut off his last shred of hope. The less he hopes, and the more unhappy, the more hopeful is his case.

The text contains a *confession*, a *prayer*, and a *plea*.

I. It contains a *confession*, "My soul cleaveth to the dust." The Psalmist felt that his mind had become sordid. The things of the earth occupied too much his attention, and engrossed too exclusively his affections; and the dreadful consequence was that he lost his relish for heavenly things. He was, in his own esteem, a wretched outcast, and calculated to remain a vagabond till God should be pleased to quicken him. If any would know whether this is *their* state, I will endeavor to afford them help. It is a diseased state of a heavenly mind, and the disease, like all others, has its peculiar characteristics.

1. One in such a state will *neglect duty*. It is a burden, because there is no pleasure felt in the performance. Thus he may justify his neglect, and may half believe that what he thought duty, in

the days of his espousals, was a mistake. But surely, *then* was the time, and not *now*, to decide what is duty. Then the conscience was tender, then was felt a lively gratitude, and a strong sense of obligation. Then the rules of duty, as far as they were known, were regarded. The question then is, what did we think to be duty in the day of our espousals to Christ? Do we act, as we then resolved to act in all the varied relationship of life, and especially in our relationship to Christ? Do we pray as often and as fervently? Do we read the Scriptures as diligently and as prayerfully? Do we walk as circumspectly? Are we as faithful to admonish, as free to speak, for God, as diligent in searching the heart? And is the thought of sin repelled with that promptness and with that holy decision exercised during the first week of our regenerate state? Or do we cleave to the dust? Then we soared on heavenly wings, our conversation was above, our treasures there, our home there, our all there.

If you doubt, whether in the fervency of your first love was the time to fix the laws of duty, I ask when can we best judge how worthy God is to be loved and served, if not when our hearts have been warmed with his love? When would you be willing that your friend should decide how he should treat you? When his attachment was strong, or when, for some assignable cause, his affections had become alienated? The amount of these remarks is, God has given us general laws, and commissioned conscience to apply them to our particular circumstances. When shall conscience enter upon this duty? If when tender, and before it has been injured by the coldness and wickedness of a relapsed state, how will matters stand with us, as it regards the discharge of duty, on measuring ourselves by this rule?

2. A state of relapse is generally marked by a *heartless performance* of those duties which are not entirely neglected. A wandering mind in prayer, accompanied with deadness, dulness, formality, and a total absence of all that fervor, affection, tenderness, and heavenly aspiration which characterize the duties of the saint awake, are the dire symptoms of this disease of the soul. As an observing believer once remarked, "Christians in such a state pray as if they were not acquainted with God." They do not go to him melted with filial affection. They lie like slaves beneath the throne. Ask them to pray, and they exhibit guilt; and come to the mercy-seat, as the convict approaches the gallows, with the halter about his neck. They will hide in corners that they may not be asked to officiate in the duties of religion, and consider it a

calamity to be discovered. They are sometimes distressed at the approach of the communion season. They are too *guilty* to have a *right* there, and too *dull* to have an *errand* there. The very Sabbath aggravates their miseries, by compelling them to attend to duties for which they have lost the relish. Thus the frost of an untimely winter chills every duty, and blights every privilege.

3. The state I describe is always attended with a pressure of worldly care. The mind ever presses after some object. To the believer, acting in character, God is that object. His heart is above, his hopes are there, and there centre his warmest affections. But when he descends from that centre, he comes within the attraction of earth, and basely gives the creature those affections he used to fix on God. It is as true that where the heart is there will his treasures be, as that where the treasure is there will the heart be. And our treasure will always need our care, will engross our time, and employ our energies. Hence the Christian whose faith is low, and who lets go his grasp of heaven, as necessarily becomes a worldling, as the man who has never risen above the clod he treads. How long he may remain astray is uncertain, surely not so long but that God will quicken him before he die. But his injured Lord may bring him back with stripes. The more he loves his children, the more certain is it that he will chastise them. Probably not long will he be permitted to be a *worldling*, if God has intended any very eminent station for him in heaven.

4. The wandering believer must be the subject of *small enjoyments*. The new-born man can never love this poor world with *all* his heart. He could have a higher relish for its pleasures if he had never known a better good, if he had never had a glimpse of heaven. The peasant is quite content with his cottage, but make him once a prince, and then reduce him to poverty, and his cottage has lost all its charms. He may through necessity tarry there, but it can never be animated as it used to be with his smiles, and his songs. So the Christian, however worldly he may become, however sordid and terrine, can never entirely forget that in heaven he has a better home. Having made by faith one excursion into the third heavens, it must be impossible that he should afterward do anything more than pitch his tent below; he cannot project the idea of a permanent home in a world that loves him so little, or rather hates him so cordially. Hence the impenitent man can find in earthly things a more satisfying good than the strayed believer

And while he is thus forbidden to be happy in the things of earth, he is also cut off from any sweet intercourse with Heaven. He loses his hope of future blessedness. And the more readily he relinquishes a hope which has no present holiness of life for its support, the better evidence will he give that Christ is formed in him the hope of glory. He in this gives evidence that he understands the nature of holiness : that it must bear fruit. Or he may retain his hope, but it will not be very big with consolations. His spring of comforts is dried up. The Sabbath used to be to him a day of holy, happy rest, but now its hours are dark, and disturbed with the goadings of a guilty conscience. The gospel was once to him a river of life. He guided his steps by its precepts ; he hung his hopes on its promises ; he fed his soul on its doctrines, and his prospects were illumined by its prophecies. He heard it with joy, considered it the voice of Heaven, and pressed it to his bosom as his richest treasure. Now it has become a sealed book, a dead letter. In the ordinances, he used to banquet with his Lord, forgot his cares, softened his trials, had sweet foretastes of heaven, and stanch'd every wound with the balm of life. But they are now become mere beggarly elements. The closet is covered with the darkness of Egypt ; where he *used to be* so happy, where he caught his prospects of heaven, where he often wept away his miseries, and had enjoyments with which the stranger intermeddled not. His alliance to the saints, once the sweetest bond on earth, has lost almost all its charms. Thus the saint relapsed is cut off from the enjoyments of both worlds. His conversion has spoiled the present world, that it cannot be to him a source of high delight, and his relapse has placed a cloud between him and heaven. A heavenly mind in such a state, is more an object of commiseration than any other on which the sun, in all his course, can look. To cleave to the earth after being born of God, is a fall, like which, there has been nothing similar since the angels made their bed in hell.

The moral disease, which I have thus endeavored to describe, is *prevalent, contagious, sinful, and ruinous*. It is, in every view we can take, the deadliest plague that ever spent its fury upon a heaven-born soul.

It is *prevalent*—many of our churches throng with professors who are so earthly and sensual as hardly to be distinguished from the mass from which they have been selected. And it sometimes happens in a Church, that there are so few that may be considered exceptions, that one would suppose they had acted in concert, and

had agreed, unanimously, to become apostates. Were not the evil so prevalent it would be less deplorable. Could we always be sure that there were enough awake to watch the interests of the Church, the danger would diminish; they might exert an agency, if any foe approached, to arouse their brethren. The very savages could teach us a lesson. When *they* meet to indulge themselves in the pleasures of inebriation, they are careful to select several of their company, who shall have no share in the brutal pleasure, that they may keep watch over their brethren in their defenceless state. It would be well if a Church, when they intend to sleep, would appoint their sentinels, who might alarm them if danger approached, and wake them before the bridegroom came.

This dire disease is *contagious*. If the Christian could sleep, or become stupid or worldly, without infecting his brethren, it would be a smaller evil. But we are so constituted that imitation is one of the most powerful principles of our nature, and is a prime-agent in the formation of character, and we naturally imitate those we love. Hence, when a believer falls to sleep, becomes worldly, or neglects the means of grace, those who love him stray with him. And the influence he has, while it qualifies him to do the more good, enables him also to extend sterility and death to the full extent of that influence.

It is not easy to describe the *sinfulness* of thus forsaking God. It is offering him direct and legible insult. It reads to the world this lying lesson: "We have tried the pleasures of religion, and find them poor. Its duties and its cares result in disappointment and misery; and we return to serve mammon." Whether God will endure this insult, judge ye.

It cannot be a light thing to break covenant with a pardoning Redeemer, and trample under our feet the seals and blood of that covenant. To give all his promises the lie, and to barter away our hopes of heaven, for the pleasures of a dream, is a course of conduct which God will not, cannot readily forgive.

But the crime will glare yet more when we read its ruinous consequences. The backslider endangers his own soul. I know that God's everlasting covenant secures the salvation of every believer, but how shall it be known who is a believer? "We shall know the Lord *if we follow on to know him.*" We shall be saved, "*if we endure to the end.*" We shall, finally, be fitted for the kingdom, *if we do not put our hand to the plough and look back.* God will work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, *but we are*

*to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.* Hence the believer, by remaining in a state of relapse a single day, darkens his evidence of faith, and increases the dreadful probability that his hope is false, and his state alarming. Thus he suspends his own soul over the bottomless pit.

And we have already said that his disease is *contagious*. Thus he exposes his brethren to the same hopeless, comfortless, and fearful state. The injury he does himself may be the smallest part of the evil. He wounds himself, but he may, by his example and his influence, inflict a deeper and a deadlier wound in the hearts of his brethren. Bad conduct will have more influence than good. In doing wrong we fall in with the full tide of human depravity, and press men *downward*, the way they *incline* to go. It is far easier to damn men than to save them. With a very small exertion one may stain his garments with blood, but to save a soul from death is a great work.

And we must not forget that not upon his brethren merely does the backslider exert a baneful influence, but upon all about him! Sinners never feel so justified in their deeds as when they copy the example of a professed believer. Many a time have they shamed us with this remark, "If mine is the path to hell, your Christians will perish with me." And how dreadful to escape to heaven, and carry with us the recollection that we have sent others to hell! To look about us, as we enter heaven, and see on our skirts the stain of the blood of souls! To descry from the battlements of the upper temple, our neighbors, our brethren, our children in the pit, lost through our example! Then, brethren, we shall want a place to weep. And many a time, it would seem, must the heavenly song be interrupted, by the recollection of the mischief we have achieved.

And who can say that the redeemed soul may not itself be a loser forever by every instance of relapse. It stints his growth. Could you make a plant to grow, if you should remove it from the sun and the rain, and place it in a vault. Leave it there but a single week and then return it to its wonted bed, and who can doubt, but that the injury it has sustained, will be visible on the approach of winter? And why will not the believer, if he arrive at heaven, be forever a smaller vessel of mercy, because of his backslidings? While he cleaves to earth he ceases to grow in knowledge and in grace. The work of sanctification is stationary, and the powers of the soul cease to expand. It is a state of disease, and the spirit pines, till the return of health. There is no relish for the previous

provisions of the gospel, the soul's food. Hence it decays; loses its beauty and its strength; is the prey of famine, and thus stints its future growth. One may lose as much in a period of decline, as it can gain in thrice that period. And why will not the evil be visible forever? The degree of blessedness to which we shall be admitted when we die, will bear proportion to the life we live. "Every man shall receive according to his works." He whose pound had gained five pounds was made ruler over five cities; and he whose pound had gained ten over ten. There will be a difference in heaven we know, as one star differeth from another star in glory. And we cannot see how obedience can be rewarded, unless our future crown shape its glory by our present improvements.

It is believed that glorified spirits will be the subjects of endless increase in joy and blessedness. Hence, if we begin our heavenly growth with different statures, why will not the difference widen, and widen, and widen for ever? Each will be perfectly happy; each will find its cup of enjoyment full; but one will be a larger vessel of mercy than another. Hence, why will not the fatal effects of our guilty relapses extend and widen through all the years of heaven? And what pity a heavenly mind should have any thing to impede its growth. How incalculable is the calamity that a spirit, born with the faculty of endless expansion, should be cumbered and compressed with clods of clay! Yet such is the distressing fact; a fact at which the angels might well be grieved, and at which God himself pours out lamentation, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Depend upon it, brethren, that is a great calamity which can awaken such sympathy and create such regret in the eternal mind.

If any objector should say, "If God so tenderly loves his people, why does he permit them to do themselves such incurable mischief?" The answer is obvious;—God does not intend to make them as happy as he could make them. He could have made them angels instead of men. He could have made them *men*, and yet possessed of nobler capacities, fitting them for sublimer enjoyments. But every question on these subjects is impudent. And for the same reason that God created them as he did, he permits them all to be less happy than they might be, and makes some happier than others. To measure their future happiness by their present conduct, is to treat them like rational creatures, and if he

at last raise them to a glory bright as their capacities can endure it is all they can ask, or expect, or receive.

Some have supposed that the promise, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God," implies that their very backslidings will advance them in holiness. Perhaps this is a mistake. It would be hardly safe to entrust such an imperfect creature with such a promise. It is safe to assure him that all the events of divine providence, shall conspire to render him holy and happy ; but let him know that his own sins will have the same effect, and he is bribed to transgress. He is tempted to indulge in sin because he wishes to be holy : but this would be an absurd experiment.

No doubt some have advanced faster towards heaven after a state of relapse. God in dealing with his people may direct that their "backslidings shall reprove them." But whether as a general principle it is true, that to forsake God is the readiest way to make us more like him, demands a doubt. The grace of God may abound toward his recovered children ; he may forgive them and love them after they have grievously offended him ; and may advance the work of grace in their hearts, though they deserve to perish ; but why ascribe to their sins, what is due to the grace of their Redeemer ? Peter was a valuable apostle, but perhaps none the more valuable for having denied his Lord. When he was converted he strengthened his brethren, but would perhaps have strengthened them more had he needed converting but once. If the backslider could hope in the midst of his wanderings, that his sins would prove a blessing, that hope would be illy calculated to bring him back ; and if there was such a *promise*, he might grasp at such a *hope*. There is something dreadful in the thought that the believer should embrace an idol, and feel himself comforted in his crime by the prospect of thus increasing his sanctification, and brightening his crown of glory. If the experiment would be dangerous such an application of the promise is false ; and the backslidings of the believer himself is not among the all things that shall eventuate in his everlasting good.

II. The prayer—"quicken thou me." In a sense, the whole text is a prayer. When David confesses "My soul cleaveth to the dust," he must be viewed as laying open his case to God. He thus dates his prayer, in the very dust of death, as you have sometimes seen a petition dated in the recesses of a dungeon. I think see in all this deep humility and open ingenuousness. He felt

and confessed that his habitation was in the dust, and in that position not attempting concealment, commences his petitions. As if he had said, "Here, Lord, I am embracing the dust." Never was a heavenly mind in a more miserable condition. All ambition to rise is gone. My situation is precisely the object of my choice. "I *cleave* to the dust."

Believer, if you fear that your condition is but too well described in this humiliating confession, and you would hope to be restored again to the favor of God, erect your prayer on a very ingenuous confession of your sins. If you venture upon any petition to your injured Sovereign, date that petition from the place of your guilty retreat. Without any reserve, mention in the ears of your Redeemer, the place of your abode, and the meanness and guiltiness of your present employment. Suppose the prodigal had dated a line to his father at that moment when he came to himself, how do you imagine it would have read? I apprehend this would have been its purport? "From a far country, poor and friendless, without home or shelter; destitute of a father or counsellor; in the employ of a menial servant, feeding swine; naked and perishing with hunger." How a line thus dated would have melted the heart of his father. And, brethren, if any of you have wandered, and are willing to return to God, you must practice the same ingenuousness. You can date your prayer after this manner, "From a world lying in ignorance and wickedness, where I have engaged to shine as a light, while my example increases the aggregate of darkness; an inconsistent professor; a senseless, careless, stupid worldling; buried up in cares that have no concern with thy kingdom; too guilty to hope, too dull to pray, and too depraved to repent." Such a confession, deeply felt and cheerfully made, may be the prelude to any prayer you may utter. "And before you call God will answer, and while you are yet speaking he will hear."

We see in the prayer of the text a deep sense of dependence. Quicken *thou* me. David felt that none but God could revive him. His case was hopeless, unless there came help from Heaven. He was too far gone to be resuscitated by any other power than that which raises the dead to life. God must be his helper, or he never rises again from the horrible pit. Probably he had made some ineffectual efforts to restore himself, and had by every such effort sunk the deeper from the reach of human aid. The exertions of a sleeping man to wake himself, are of all efforts the most worthless. Convinced at length that he must die in his dreams or be waked by another, he raises his eyes to heaven, "quicken *thou* me."

Christian brethren, if any one of you find your case a similar one, your eye must be fixed on the same Divine helper. And yet you must strongly feel, that the more need there is that God should quicken you, the more guilty you are, and the more undeserving of his merciful interpositions. This remark is *predicated* upon the simple fact, that we are agents, that we go into voluntary exile, and remain there because it is our choice. But all this increases the necessity of divine aid. If we are so base that we can choose to depart from the Lord, he must subdue that dreadful choice or our case is hopeless. Let us then feel our need of Divine aid, and hang all our hopes upon the timely interposition of his quickening power.

It sometimes happens that the backslider entirely neglects to pray, in which case it is easy to perceive that he cuts himself off from the last resource of help. While the wanderer can summon courage to pray, and can weep over his wanderings, there is hope in his case. However weak one may be in himself, prayer takes hold of everlasting strength. It enlists angels, it enlists God himself on the side of the believer. It wakes in his behalf the watchful eye of Heaven. But I proceed to notice

III. The PLEA used by the Psalmist in his guilty and gloomy circumstances. "Quicken thou me *according to thy word*," i. e., according to thy gracious promises. In making this plea, the Psalmist discovered both his humility and his faith. It was evidence of his humility as it was his *only* plea. He asks no favor because he was the king of Israel. He pleads not that he was the man after God's own heart. Nor even does he mention his covenant relation to God, though this would have been a proper plea. God of his mere mercy had made promises to his people; these he believed, and on these he hung his hopes, and grounded his prayer, "Quicken thou me according to thy word."

Brethren, there is no plea in our distresses so prevalent with God, as that in which we plead his promises. He loves to do, and he intends to do as he has said. He issued the promises with a perfect knowledge of our sins, and our unworthiness. He has never repented of one promise that he ever made, nor wishes to be excused from their accomplishment. "He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," and all the promises are in Christ, yea, and in him, amen.

God loves to have his people acquainted with the gracious things he has said. When we have been wandering in the fields

of promise, our prayers smell of their perfume. We must have often read the promise, and must have treasured it up in the mind before we can apply it to our case, and make it our plea at the throne. Hence, when we go to God, filling our mouths with his promises, he knows that we are acquainted with his word. And we may in such circumstances come boldly to the throne, assured that we shall "obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need." It is very remarkable that to almost every individual case there is at least one promise, if not more.

Brethren, if any of you feel guilty, you may plead, "Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." Or you may pour out your soul in this language, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage." If God hide his face from you, you may make this plea, "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." If your trials multiply, if your estate consume, and your friends die, if one trial comes in upon another as wave follows wave in a stormy sea, you may plead this promise, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." I will be with thee in six troubles, and in seven I will not forsake thee." If no light from heaven seems to shine upon your path, you may plead this promise, "Whosoever believeth in me shall not abide in darkness." If you fear that God has utterly forsaken you, you are not without a promise, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee." If you apprehend that you have wearied his patience, and that having revived you so often, he will never revive you again, you may remind him of this precious text, "My mercy will I keep forevermore," and this, "Mercy and truth shall go before thy face." If you even fear that God may break his promise, there is a plea for you, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." If it should seem to you that God even delights in afflicting you, as if he meant to break down your spirits by the combined efforts of various calamities, you may plead this promise, "Though the Lord cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies." But, brethren,

I have entered a field which I did not hope fully to explore. Almost every page of the book of God, and in some instances, every line contains a promise. Could I recollect them *half*, I could occupy your time till that sun had set, and risen and set a score of times. I could tell you of the promises made to them that *fear* God, to them that *hope* in him, to them that *love* him, to them that *obey* him, to them that *trust* him, and to them that *honor* him.

But if the backsliding Christian can only be waked from the slumbers of his relapse he can read the long catalogue of promises, and make them all his own, and found upon each some plea at the throne. Oh! how sweet to come thus. Remembering the kind things that God has said, and resting the soul firmly on the truth of his word, the backslider should hasten to the throne. To stay away is to prolong his miseries; to stay away, is death.

## REMARKS.

1. The subject gives us a humiliating picture of the human heart. That men should not wish for communion and fellowship with God, who never yet have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, is not surprising; but that the Christian should forsake the Lord, and go after his idols, what a proof of remaining corruption! We have heard of the savage, who, after being civilized, wished to return again to the wilderness, and the chase. We have heard of the prodigal, who, after being restored to his father and his home, returned again to his paths of profligacy. But what have we ever heard of that resembled the consummate folly of him who, having tasted the sweets of Christian enjoyments, could barter away his hopes and his pleasures for the enjoyments of time and sense; could quit the bosom of his Redeemer, where he was so happy, and try to live again on the husks that the swine eat. Do you think there is one in heaven that could be persuaded to lay aside his harp and come down to our world again if you would give him the whole of it? And Christians have tasted of heaven, and may drink deeper of its joys if they please, and how can they ever barter them away.

2. The subject gives us enlarged views of the mercy of God, that he will make beings so depraved the objects of his affectionate regard. How strange! Look at some lapsed believer, scarcely differing from the world in a thing that can be named; sleeping, it may be, most profoundly, while the outcry of anxious souls is heard all around him; less thoughtful than men who have never tasted nor seen that the Lord was gracious, buried up in worldly

care, and engrossed, soul and body, in the affairs of the life that now is! And, tell me, is there any measure to that mercy, which can pardon all this, and raise such a soul to heaven. How unworthy of heaven, and how unfit for heaven, and how ungrateful, to the God of heaven; and still the mercy of God can lead him to cast all his iniquities behind his back, and still save the poor miserable backslider. I know that the backslider should entertain no such hope, but should believe himself in the gall of bitterness, and under the bonds of iniquity. But if one such case has been since there was a church, and we should, at last, see that soul in heaven, how it will exalt the compassion of a pardoning God! How his long-suffering patience will shine, as in glowing capitals, among the perfections that will be seen to cluster in his nature.

Finally, my Christian brethren, I have taken up this subject with the apprehension that some of my readers may be slumbering at this very moment. There is some cause, and where is that cause, and what, that the work of God seems at a stand among that class that seemed the first to wake.\* There are many of your acquaintances, probably, in middle life, who know that they are sinners, and feel that sin has ruined them, and would give a moiety of their estate were they safe from the fear of hell; and there they stand, ready to go forward if they must, or backward if they may. Now, is there not some stumbling block not removed out of the way? The preacher would ask his own heart, Is it there? And he would ask every brother, Is it there? Oh, it would be dreadful if any of us should stand in the way of the Lord, and keep souls out of heaven. It would be dreadful not to do that which would bring them to heaven. To find a soul, at last, on the left hand, and know that we had blocked up his way to life. We shall then feel that we had better have died when the Lord began to work; our death might have awakened him, and while he has stumbled and fallen, at our example, he might have wept and repented over our grave.

How can a professor calculate that any thing shall ever wake him, if he sleep now? We tell the impenitent, and we have much Scripture and many facts to support the remark, that if he wakes not now, he must probably sleep the sleep of death eternal. And if so, with how much assurance may we say to the slumbering professor, that, probably, he is not asleep but dead, and must be aroused by the same new-creating voice, that must bring to life the dead in trespasses and sins, or he never bestirs him in the ways of God. If he can now see all classes of sinners quitting the

\* Alluding to a work of God then in progress.

ways of death, and sitting down clothed and in their right mind at the feet of Jesus, what event more electrifying can he hope to witness, till he see the dead rise and the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. He would do well to resign his hope, and place himself among the anxious and the inquiring, and begin a Christian life anew. The exhortation of the apostle, "Repent, and do thy first works," is applicable in all its force to the professor of godliness who finds himself inactive and uninterested in a work such as God is doing in this place. It is wicked for him to calculate that he has been born of God, to presume that God will make him happy, or to hope that he has any inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ. Amen.

## SERMON IX.

### A LIKENESS TAKEN IN THE FIELD.

I CORINTHIANS X. 31.

Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

THERE is one feature in the mind of God that none have ever been infidel enough to doubt,—his unlimited love of happiness. He delights to pour out blessedness into every heart that he finds prepared to receive it. When, at length, his kindness came in contact with a lost and ruined world, it contrived and developed a plan of redemption. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” He “was rich yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich ;” and the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ must be like him. “If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his.” Hence, the first inquiry of every new-born soul will be with him of Tarsus, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?” The proper answer to this question will show, *how the Christian is to act out the spirit of his Master in efforts to promote the conversion and the salvation of the world*

I. Let me begin by saying that the Christian should devote to this work *his personal services*. It is the work we see God doing, and both duty and interest require that we be workers together with God. And the only measure there can possibly be applied to the service is the power we have to serve. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” By this rule God has limited his requisitions. “If there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not.” The hand is used in Scripture to mean our whole natural ability. It is even used in the same sense in reference to God. “The hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save ;” whatever faculty, then, of our nature there is, God has claimed it for himself.

If we can think and reason we are to employ our understanding to save men. We can know their character and their danger, and expose their condition, and, by a thousand motives, urge their

speedy escape from the wrath to come, their emancipation from the power of sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. In this very work the infinite mind of God is occupied, nor can we say that he has any employment to which he plies his thoughts with more untiring industry than in the work of redemption. How does he propose to sinners that they let him reason with them, and what arguments that none but God could invent does he urge upon their consideration! "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as snow." How mistaken, then, are the little beings in the shape of men, who suppose they have minds too dignified to be employed in the redemption of souls! They would not, perhaps, grudge to be occupied on the bench or at the bar, but it would degrade them, it seems, to plead the cause of an insulted God with a rebellious world. They would spend life in studying out the laws of nature, or in defining the properties of a plant, a mineral, or an insect, but look down contemptuously upon the business of making men acquainted with God, and winning them back to loyalty and duty! The work of counting money and appraising merchandise is not beneath them, but it would be quite a stoop to be employed in studying the word of God, and gathering arguments with which to thwart the gainsayings of an infidel and perverse generation! But if the human mind, as infidels have plead, is a scintillation from the infinite mind, how can it have a nobler employment than in winning souls to Him?

It is the legitimate work of every mind to hail the perishing within its reach, and shed upon them an enlightening and sanctifying influence! Not the authorized ministers of the sanctuary alone should feel the pressure of this enterprise, but every intellect that took pattern from its Maker, and wears a trace of his likeness. The power of reasoning was given to us to associate us with God in doing the same work, as far as may be, that he does, and the human mind should feel itself meanly occupied, if even from necessity, held away from its appropriate work, and compelled for a time to be devoted to the drudgeries of this life. If one has not the knowledge, or the talent, or the leisure, or authority to preach the everlasting gospel, he may not be idle. There is some field open at his door to do good. He can learn, and wield with the hundreds that cross his track, the arguments that sustain the religion of the gospel, can fling out his warnings upon the ear of the gay, and the worldly, and the dissipated, and the drunken, and the profane. He can watch, and wake the slum-

bering believer, and cheer and sustain the ministry, and stanen the heart of the disconsolate, and plan the measures of benevolence, and put in successful motion a thousand other minds, mightier perhaps than his own, that shall push on the enterprise of redemption, after his own has escaped to heaven, and his bones have been mouldered a thousand years. He may be a small man in his own esteem, and insignificant, too, in the sight of God, and still may give healthful impulse, and a right direction, to a moving world. "Worm Jacob may take in his hand a new, sharp, threshing instrument, having teeth, by which he shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them." Let the Christian be only willing to be in his place, and there will be presented soon some nook for him to occupy, where he can strengthen and edify the spiritual temple.

And let it not be forgotten that there is no amount of other duty, in which we operate by proxy, that can possibly exonerate us from performing all that may be of this personal service for the Lord Jesus. No matter what the aggregate of duty done through other agencies, we must do this service too. If we could educate a thousand ministers, and buy the services of ten thousand others, and freight the Word of Life to a score of nations, and thus, by proxy, evangelize half a world, if there was still a soul within our reach over whom we could, by the use of our own minds, exert a sanctifying control, we must answer to God for the proper use of that opportunity. Still it would remain incumbent, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Still must we be instant in season and out of season, in warning, and rebuking, and admonishing the wayward and the perishing. The maxim would then apply, "These ought ye to have done, but not to have left the other undone." There is no proviso in the law of God freeing me from being a preacher of the gospel, in the sense now advocated, if I could send out among the lost an army of evangelists numerous enough to begirt the world.

Nor can any Moses plead that he is slow of speech, and throw the whole responsibility on Aaron. There is no mind so mean but there is some mind it can reach and instruct, some conscience or heart it can approach and rectify, and, by the Spirit's co-operation, mould into holy and heavenly form. Let men only become willing to be the Lord's servants, and he will find them a field of labor. And how can the good man be willing that there should be any heart about him unsanctified, or mind unenlightened? Can he rest

in indolence when, if he would act, he could enlarge his Lord's empire? Can he see his Master dishonored, and his law trampled upon, when his own exertions would produce obedience? And how then can he have hope that he loves his Master. Piety is a living principle, a power that can generate action and give impulse. The healthful state of the soul depends, I know, on the agency of the Holy Ghost; yet, as God will give his Spirit to them who ask him, his people can always put forth an energy that shall act on others. Hence, if the man of God might, with a good conscience withhold his personal services, he would not, but will place himself between the living and the dead, and stay the plague that is paralyzing the energies of a world.

When the Church shall feel on this point with sufficient strength every Christian will be virtually a preacher, and God will ordain strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. Every profession of godliness will recruit the soldiership of Christ, the stammering tongue will speak plainly, and many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased. Men who have purposed to reject Jesus Christ will feel unhappy till they give up the controversy; and, at length, no one shall have need to say to his brother, Know the Lord, for all shall know him, from the least even unto the greatest.

It may be that God calls us to serve him with the *pen*. The man who has talents at this service may not withhold. The pen is that engine by which one mind may bear with energy upon other minds, and, associated with the press, is that lever that can pry up a world. And this weapon, which shook the world in the sixteenth century, will shake it yet more mightily as the millennial morning shall be seen projecting up the sky.

The *world* understand the worth and the might of the pen, and the Church might have learned, if she had not been slow to learn. The lowest scribbler can send his lying puffs abroad in behalf of the theatre, and the politician, who cannot spell his mother tongue, will write and print his electioneering paragraph, then why should not the Christian who can wield an able pen be occupied in this service while the world is perishing. And if one cannot use this instrument of good himself, he can procure it used. And we may, some of us, yet live to see half a million of writers employing ten thousand presses in defending the truth, and sustaining the honor of the Lord Jesus.

And if our *minds* seem not to us our noblest part, then may we and something to do for God with our *hands*. We can toil instead

of those who have better minds, and let them serve, in our behalf, the interest we love. Here something has been done, but not the thousandth part of what should be. Let the hours that are thrown away by the great mass of the Christian community be employed in laboring for God, and the avails would soon renovate the world. And the labors done with such design would produce habits that would tell on the health, and plenty, and cheerfulness, and sanctification of the Church. By such a practice, when universal, how would crime disappear, and credit rise, and health increase, and life be prolonged, and the laboring community throughout Christendom stand, at length, on an elevation that would cover the whole territory with a halo of glory. Thus the personal services of every man, woman, and child in the Church of God may be put in requisition to redeem back an alienated world to its rightful Lord and Master. God of mercy grant that the question may soon cease to be asked, either in or about the vineyard, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

II. I assert, that the Christian must *use his influence* in honoring his Master. I refer now not solely to that direct effort that one man makes to control another, but to that ascendancy of moral principle which one acquires, by which he leads other minds on in his own track. It consists in a good name, and implies a good example, and may have relation to family and blood, and place and opportunity. Every man has more or less influence, can exert control over some minds, and sway all who will suffer themselves to drop into his wake.

Wicked men have influence, and will seldom fail to use it to further the interests they love, and destroy the souls they are obligated to save. How baneful has been its use in all the pages of human history. The influence of Jeroboam ruined ten of the tribes of Israel; and the house of Ahab, his descendant, bred mischief in his kingdom that never could be cured till the kingdom was extirpated; and the influence of Jezebel laid a train of mischief and guilt that even her own blood could not wash away. And all who are acquainted with history know how blighting has been the influence of Voltaire, spreading over a whole continent, and reaching down now through a century; destined, we fear, to mark its track with the blood of souls through the space of a thousand years. And the miserable Paine, who had all his baseness of principle, though wanting his greatness of mind, did mischief in his little day, and put moral machinery in motion that has been widen

ing the sphere of devastation, till thousands of souls will acknowledge him the father of their damnation.

Now the people of God can put forth the same kind of influence in a *better cause*. They can mould the manners of men, and shape their principles for heaven, and turn the eye of the multitude to truth, and duty, and God, by the use of their influence, the agent by which others have spread through creation darkness and misery. Let them throw their whole hearts into this better interest, and be as prompt and indefatigable for God as were these sons of Belial for their master; and we see not why men may not reach the same gigantic influence in the ways of God, and make their life as conspicuous in the Church as were these foes of God in the ranks of death.

There can surely be acquired more greatness of soul, and more fixedness of principle, and more steadfastness of purpose, in the cause of God than in the service of the adversary. And there can be used as much industry, and courage, and perseverance, in making the world holy, as in degrading it. We can place against the polluted names we have rehearsed a Baxter, a Brainard, a Martyn, a Hale, a Luther, a Wesley, and a Whitefield, and a thousand other names; and what these holy men were others can be, and we might have a whole generation on the stage at once. As the starry night has its galaxy, so the moral world will have, when the Lord's people shall try to shine in all the glory of their Master. They can easily make their influence be felt as it never has been, and as soon as they shall *try*, their exertions will tell on the character of the Church and the world.

On the Church an influence may be used with advantage, as there cannot be supposed any prejudice to counteract it. We can lead on the people of God to higher spiritual attainments, to a more devoted benevolence, to greater industry, to more prayer, and bible reading, to a closer covenant keeping, and to equipment and discipline in the whole round of heavenly soldiery. The men of the world exert constantly a deadening and adulterating influence upon the Church, which should be industriously counteracted by the servants of Jesus Christ. What does the covenant mean, if Christians are not to be putting forth an influence toward each other that shall tend to their mutual sanctification? And how can the Church, as a community, throw out a sanctifying influence upon the wide world till this is done?

It is one of the first duties of the ministry, you know, to edify the body of Christ, and why should not each believer exert upon

her, as far as possible, the same control? When we shall make the people of God feel that we love them, and our example shall testify that we are followers of Christ as dear children, we shall take a hold of their hearts, and exert over them an influence that shall be moulding them into holy and useful habits. We can help form their creed, and rouse their courage, and correct their wanderings, and inspire them to increased energy, and skill, and impetus, till the Church shall shine forth like the morning. And while we are thus blessing the Church we shall be able to influence the world also. We sometimes mistake the amount of our influence with worldly men, and think it small, when more exertion would show it to be mighty. Let us bear with a steady and uniform pressure against their vices, and urge upon them the thoughts of death and the judgment, and the perdition that ensues, and we shall find afterward that we *have controlled* them. We may rouse their impatience, however, at the moment when they are coming under the power of our influence. I know the world would lessen, and have always hated the Church's influence, while yet they feel it and writhe under it, and have no shield to ward off its point and power. But when they have uttered all their calumnies, and flounced and bled for a time, still if the Church bear down against their deeds of darkness they sin with heaviness. Virtually they ask leave of the Church, and wait her consent at every step they take in sin. I know they would not own this subjection to a foreign influence, but this alters nothing. Every man must see that no vice can be current against the Church's loud, and steady, and prayerful testimony. They cannot even desert her sanctuary till professors do, nor pollute her ordinances, nor trample on her Sabbath, nor profane her Redeemer. When the Church rose upon the theatre, and joined with decency to scowl it out of use, it became from that moment a sinking concern, and the stock can never rise again in the market till she will send up to its obscenities, her proud, and gay and prayerless representation. Oh, can she ever do this? Tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Askelon! And the game of whist, and the dance, and every other licentious and ensnaring pastime, will go down when professors disuse them. The Sabbath is coming into more general repute through the Church's use of her influence and example in sustaining it. The cause of temperance moved on briskly till it was discovered that the Church held in her fellowship those who would drink the cup of devils, but has stayed in its march till she can have time to entomb her inebriates. Fast

as any vice shall cease to have its abettors in the house of God it must go down. And when the Church shall use her whole influence she will be able to control the manners of *the world*, and make and rectify the public conscience.

And when all this is done the people of God can do more, can render men *awakened*, and *convicted*, and *regenerate*. Not that they can do all this, or any part of it, without the agency of the Holy Ghost, but God has appointed the means that he will bless, the presentation of his truth by the human voice, in that kindliness of form which is applicable to the human affections. In this work his people can be employed. They know the truth and can watch for the kind moment of presenting it, and pray the God of heaven to bless it and give it power. Thus have they the means of subjecting to the Lord Jesus Christ all the men about them, and are blameworthy if these souls quit the world unsanctified. We shall know at the last, and it would be well if we would know it now, how high a bearing our present deportment has upon the character and destiny of the ungodly. We shall see *then*, that the quiet of conscience, and the self-complacency, and the calmness, and content, that make the face of the unregenerate world so tranquil, is criminally associated with the Church's slumbers. Soon as she awakes the world is anxious, and when the people of God shall sleep no more, but make their whole influence be felt, then may we safely predict that the world's slumbers are ended.

The revivals which marked eighteen hundred and thirty-one, as the year of the right hand of the Lord, and will probably distinguish it till the judgment as of all the years that preceded it, the Church's holiest, happiest year, are but the glorious result of the Church awake to God's interest, and God graciously attentive to hers. The Church has tried a little her influence, not to the extent she will hereafter, and she has seen the heavenly building rise at every push she gave, and every shout she uttered. Now let the Church, for once, throw off wholly her long-protracted paralysis and she may urge on her conquests till earth's entire territory shall be redeemed to the Lord Jesus.

But there will be need that every child of God enlist under the banner of the Lord Jesus. As they must all be sanctified they will all need the discipline of laboring for God; and can, then, all aid in the song that sings the conquest ended, and the victory won? And those whom God loves so little that he will permit them in this age of action to plod on in the rearmost rank of the

sacramental host, may well doubt whether they shall have any part in the shout of victory.

Sectarianism will die out as the millennial year comes in. There will be union in this enterprise, "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." The watchmen shall see eye to eye; the grand benevolent institutions of the opening and glorious age shall be ably sustained, and men will be furnished, and money, and prayer, and faith, by means of which the Lord Jesus will honor his people and reinstate himself in his own repurchased empire. The bulwarks erected against the rising kingdom will be sapped, and the foe be disheartened, and the barley-cake will demolish the tents of Midian. The Church will have learned how to make her influence felt in the moral pulsation of the world, and the blessed results will continue down to the period of its dissolution. How happy are the men that are to come after us, and how blessed the generation that shall watch the rising sun and bask in the noon rays of the moral world.

In the mean time the people of God must consecrate to the conversion of the world their *money*. Hardly need this have been said. When men shall have devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ their personal services and their influence, they will not withhold their wealth. This gives them the means of reaching the hearts and consciences to which they cannot extend a personal control. We can here operate by proxy, and put in motion a moral machinery, that may multiply our usefulness a thousand fold. There is wealth enough in the Church, if the world should withhold its first and last penny, to buy back to its Master the government of the kingdom. Nor can men or angels conceive of any other reason, why it is there, but that the Lord hath need of it. It rusts and cankers the piety that *covets it*, and the piety that *keeps it*. It is in every such case a millstone about the believer's neck, and will hold him from rising heavenward more than stripes, and chains, and dungeons. All experience agrees, that absolute beggary befits better a heavenly mind than riches. The man of wealth then has but one question to ask: how shall I employ my mammon? And here the field is wide. Let him furnish the world a ministry. There must go with the Bible the living preacher. This is God's appointed means. By the foolishness of preaching he will save them that believe. The harvest may be so wide, that one cannot personally explore its limits, and yet by his money he may fill the field with reapers. Here, as in some of the bloody conflicts, when life went out in a torrent, a single man can enlist and equip an

army, and carry on a war long and desperate, till he shall shake the pillars of the opposing empire. This is a crisis when one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. The Church has the means, and the world must not need a ministry and the gospel presents the motives that shall draw these means forth. If they remain in the Church, they but nurse idolatry, and thus corrupt her integrity, and mar her beauty. But riches associated with benevolence, are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. And they are occupied, and will be yet more extensively in replenishing the ministry. The millennial year, if her star is risen and her day has dawned, cannot roll up her sun to his zenith, till our rich men have discovered this use for their money. And when their wealth has made a ministry, it must *sustain it*. This is a sordid world. Men will feed their destroyers rather than their benefactors. Any profession can live better than the ministry of the reconciliation. We must furnish and feed a hundred thousand missionaries. And it is a blessing, and not a curse, that the church has this service to do, has this outlet for her wealth. It had begun to stagnate and breed pestilence, like the river of Jordan, till a dead sea was furnished to drink up her waters. It is a blessing to the older Churches that they have all this to do, it is their honor and their salvation, and the wealthy Christians have only to learn how, and they will do it, or Christians have not the temper of Jesus Christ.

And we have not yet told the half they have to do. They must fill the world with Bibles, reading in every language under heaven the lessons of mercy to the tribes that sit in darkness, and the same wealth must sustain the tract cause, and rain down the leaves of the tree of life upon the sickly and perishing nations. They must furnish to the ignorant and the poor Sabbath-schools, and Bible-classes, and all the other means of making mind that the renovation of a world require. There is faith and not infidelity in asserting that the millennium cannot come till the Church learns better how to use her money, and it will not tarry when this lesson is well learned. Ride on, blessed Lord Jesus, and assess thy Church to the full amount of all the promises, and buy thee a kingdom with it. and reign thou over us and our house for ever

And then, beyond all this, the people of God must give him their children, and a title to their whole house. What right have we in our offspring, vying with the right that the Savior has? He did not give us children, that we might worship and serve them instead of him. He did not commit their souls to us, that we

might with them officer the hosts of his enemies and furnish the Church her bitterest foes from the house of her friends. He did not send us children that we might absorb ourselves and all that we have in their rearing, and thus place their interest at war with the interests of his kingdom. He did not make them children of prayer that they should mingle with the world, and profane the privileges of his family to the furthering of their own undoing. He had designs of mercy, and we should know it, and set our hearts to gather them into his kingdom early, and have them servants of his Son soon as they become intelligent. And then we can make them know that we have in our hearts and on our knees devoted them to Jesus Christ, that we are rearing them for his honor, that *we* have nothing that we can do with *them*, and *they* nothing that they can do in the kingdom of God, if they will not devote their hearts to him, and their all to him. We must teach them to *toil* for him, and *calculate* for him, and *live* and *die* for him. Till this is done, as we have not yet been accustomed to see it in Christian families, the Lord Jesus will delay his coming. To see the father of a family praying for the millenium, and the mother laboring to evangelize the world, each eagerly grasping at intelligence of new victories achieved by the Captain of their salvation, here there is promise, but if in their house there is no prospect of a holy succession that can push on the enterprises of benevolence when the parents are glorified, how dark it looks. And these children, too, are fed and clad with the Church's money, and destined, perhaps, to inherit a large estate and alienate it for ever from God. To die the parent of such a family, is more to be deplored than to die childless. If we would faithfully devote our all to the Lord, it would not so happen with us; he would sanctify our seed and build us up a sure house for ever.

And not the children merely, but the whole house should be the Lord's. There should be the fear of God in every department of domestic life. That religion that is confined to the parlor, and exhausts its last impulse while yet it has exerted no salutary control over the domestics of the family, which seems regardless of the soul that toils on the farm, or drudges in the services of the house, or waits at the door, a religion that leaves three-fourths of a family heathen, will never evangelize the world. If we do not pity the souls at our door, our philanthropy was never born in heaven, and will do nothing to save the heathen who are sitting in the region and shadow of death. Oh, there is something fatally incongruous in such domestic arrangements, and it must be cured

in the Church, or our example will make heathen at home faster than our charities and prayers will save them abroad.

Here every householder in Christendom has a noble field for labor. Let him carry the Bible into the apartment of his domestics, if any he has in his employ, and pray there, and read them the tidings of Zion's increase till every spirit that serves him, shall wish to serve his Lord. Then let him look up the heathen around him till there is not one within the circle of his influence, and then let him become a missionary, and spread the gospel through the wide world.

## SERMON X.

### THE PERFECTED GOOD MAN

2 TIM. III. 17.

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

THE context reads, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Thus God has given the Christian minister all the instruction he needs to qualify him for the work of the ministry, and has given to every Christian the instruction he needs to qualify him to be a finished man of God. I shall consider the text in this widest application. If the perfection spoken of in the text be considered a perfect freedom from sin, then we are taught that the truths of God's word are adapted to promote this design, the question still remaining unsettled, as it regards this text, whether the Christian will in any one case, attain to this perfection till death. Other scriptures settle the point, that there is no man that liveth, and doeth good, and sinneth not; and that if any man saith that he hath no sin, he is a liar. But there is a perfection that belongs to believers in the present life, and to which it seems the apostle has reference in the text. Every Christian must have on all the attributes of the child of God. He cannot be wholly wanting as to any one of the Christian graces. As the child born yesterday is pronounced a perfect child, because he possesses every feature of the man, although feeble, and exhibiting, perhaps, a very faint development of some of the manly features; so every child of God must have every feature of piety. He may not lack wholly either faith, or hope, or love, or humility or any other of the Christian graces. One Christian grace may outgrow another, as in the human body we sometimes see a *member* that has taken uncommon magnitude, while yet every other *member* may have place, though not exact proportion. For instance, we have seen much zeal where there was but little knowledge, too little to guide the man

the most safely through this wilderness. And we have seen, on the other hand, abundant doctrinal knowledge, where there seemed not sufficient zeal to kindle up devotion. And we have seen professed believers who wanted wholly some grace of the Spirit, making it manifest that God had not stamped his image on their heart. That the Christian must be perfect, insomuch, that he must more or less exhibit every grace of the gospel, I argue,

I. From the fact that *every grace is the result of the operation of the same Divine Spirit*, whose work will ever be perfect. We are assured that "the works of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." All this catalogue of graces, then, will be found where the Spirit of God is. He moulds every feature of the Christian man, and will not leave his work unfinished. He generates the temper that displays itself in every grace. The renovated heart in view of God, loves, adores, and rejoices; in view of sin, is sorrowful and penitent; in view of Christ, believes; under injuries, is meek; under afflictions, patient; at the sight of miseries, compassionate; and in view of its own polluted self, is humbled. Thus, the Holy Ghost generates, at the first, in the heart of the believer, every grace that will be there when he is ripened for glory. One and another of these graces may grow as circumstances may demand their increase, and finally, attain different degrees of strength and vigor. They are sister affections, which the same Spirit will not fail to generate in every heart he renews. Hence their harmony and their oneness is sure.

There may be in men, by nature, the semblance of some of these graces, which the Holy Spirit has not produced, and we shall see in that case that some are wanting. It will be a morbid and monstrous religion. There will be zeal, perhaps, without humility; devotion, without benevolence; there will be apparently a part only of the *new man*, as if there should be born the limbs only of a human body, or the head or the trunk while every limb was wanting. Now we infer, from the fact that it is the Holy Ghost that creates men anew in Christ Jesus, that there will be in the kingdom of God no such monstrous production. It may not always be easy to settle the question, what extent of morbid growth there may be found in the real believer, and where there are seen deficiencies enough to decide the point that the work is not of God. There may be, where there is no grace, a tameness that may look like humility and meekness; and where there *is* grace, there may

be a harshness that shall resemble the operations of unsubdued nature. There may be a natural liberality in men who have no pretensions to faith, that shall shame the remaining covetousness of the believer. And still it is true, that where the Spirit of God operates, he turns the soul right in every respect. He leaves not one new-born soul supremely selfish, or proud, or unbelieving, or malevolent, or under the controlling influence of any one unholy affection.

II. That the Christian will exhibit every gospel grace, and be, in this respect, perfect, we argue from the fact, that *the moral actions of the renewed man take their character from the heart that has been the subject of a radical renovation.* While the heart was unsanctified every moral action was wholly sinful: "out of the same fountain proceed not sweet waters and bitter." And though, after regeneration, the heart remains partially depraved, still its sanctified character will operate in all the varied actions of life, and be as sure to produce one Christian grace as another, and be sure to produce them all when the occasion requires. Place the man, whose heart has been renovated, where he must see iniquity, and he will hate it; where he must suffer abuse, and he will be meek; where he must see want, and he will be charitable; where he comes in contact with the interests of others, and he will be honest; where he must bear testimony, and he will be true. You will see ready to operate, a holy nature, and the man will be, in every aspect, a Christian. I do not say that, on every point, he may not sometimes *disobey*, but that he will more frequently, on every point, *obey*. A good heart will habitually generate holy affections in all the various attitudes in which the different moral objects may present themselves. The new man is formed after the image of God. Christ is said to be in his people the hope of glory. Hence, so far as the new nature operates, and it will operate habitually, it will produce actions and affections of the same moral character. You may then look at the good man from any point, and you will see him uniformly the man of God

II. We argue that the Christian will exhibit every grace of the gospel, and will, in this respect, be the perfect man of God, from *the harmony of truth* which is the medium of his sanctification. "Sanctify them," said our Lord, in that prayer which he offered for his people, "sanctify them through thy truth." As there is in truth an infinitely extended harmony, no one truth clashing with

any other, so the character it shall form will have the same consistency and harmony. The change of character produced at regeneration through the medium of truth; that same truth sustains and renders fixed, when once established like itself, and every feature of that character will harmonize with every other, and with *all* the others.

If truth so bears upon the mind, through the influence of the Holy Ghost, as to render it humble, we are sure, from the nature of truth, that it can never so bear upon the mind as to render it proud. If truth is made to work repentance, neither the same truth nor any other truth will so operate as to produce malice and revenge. Truth will not produce opposite or clashing results. It will not lead a man to love God and hate his neighbor; to love his Bible and hate the Sabbath. It will not generate kindness towards one class of men, and unkindness towards another. It will not produce a spirit of *praise* and *prayer*, and yet a spirit of *negligence* and *sloth*. As there is in truth throughout a perfect oneness, so will there be in the character that truth, in the hands of the Holy Ghost, is made to produce.

In falsehood there is no harmony, nor in the character it forms. We do not wonder to see every contradiction and absurdity in the character of an ungodly man. He may be prodigal in his expenditures, and yet covetous; may be mean, and yet proud; may be impudent, and yet impatient of contradiction; may be a tyrant in spirit, and yet a boisterous advocate of liberty. All these, and any other contradiction and absurdity, may be in the man who has subjected himself to the forming and the control of the father of lies. But the believer is rooted and grounded in the truth, and truth is consistent and harmonious, and will make a character harmonious like itself.

IV. We argue from the *nature* of the *Christian graces*, that they must all be where one is. Where one is wanting the man of God is not perfect. Love to God contains, in its very nature, hatred to what is opposed to God. Opposed to God is sin, hence love to him embraces hatred to sin, and repentance where sin has been committed. Humility implies a deep sense of unworthiness, and becomes meekness when abuse is offered. If we feel that we are unworthy, and humility feels this, then the unworthy may not promptly and passionately resist evil. If I have those low views of myself, that I feel as if I deserved to be trodden down, that man who treads me down shall not incur my deadly and implacable

wrath. If I love to converse with God, and his people are like him, I shall love to converse with them; hence love to God and Christian affection are twin exercises, and will both be where one is. If I am benevolent, and I see my fellow-men suffer when my money will relieve them, I shall be liberal; hence benevolence and Christian liberality are associate affections.

Now the same result will follow if we compare any two of the Christian graces; they are all harmonious in their very nature. They are all the spontaneous affections of the same renovated heart, as it contemplates different objects. When moral beauty is discovered, it is loved; when moral deformity, it is hated; when misery is seen, there is felt compassion and benevolence; when afflictions are endured, there is submission; when insults from man, there is meekness; when earth, with all its sins and miseries, is contemplated, there is pain, and sorrow, and regret, when heaven, in all its holiness and happiness, is thought of, there is approbation and joy. Thus the Christian affections all harmonize. They are branches of the same graft, through which circulate the same juices and the same life stream; hence one cannot be without the whole: unless we can suppose, with regard to some grace, a total remove from the objects that can call it into action.

V. We shall come to the same result if we observe *how* God, in his word, *characterizes his people*. He designates them by one Christian grace, and applies to them his largest promises under this limited appellation. Abraham is spoken of as one that *feared* God, and the largest promise is made to him: on another occasion he is said to have *believed* God, and it, his faith, was accounted to him for righteousness. Said the Psalmist, "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that *fear* thee." But if the fear of God, and faith in him, did not imply love to him, and all the other Christian graces, then they would have been all named in appropriating the promise.

We read that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that *fear* him, and delivereth them."—"There is no want to them that *fear* him."—"He will fulfil the desire of them that *fear* him, he will hear their cry, and will save them." Thus, to those who possess one of the Christian graces are made his largest promises, and this could not be if the possession of this grace did not imply the possession of all the others.

We find the same is said of them that *love* God. "The Lord preserveth those that *love* him. He will show mercy to thousands

of them that *love* him, and keep his commandments. All things work together for good to them that *love* him."—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that *love* him." All this could not be, were it not true that those who love him fear him and trust him, and submit to him; or the lack of one Christian grace cuts off from heaven, and from the presence and everlasting favor of God.

The *righteous*, it is promised, shall be glad in the Lord, and all the *upright* in heart shall glory. "Light is sown for the *righteous*, and gladness for the *upright* in heart." Thus all that could be desired is promised to the *righteous*.

So those who *trust* in the Lord may hope for his largest benefits. "Let those that put their *trust* in thee rejoice, let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them."

So to *faith* the whole is promised. "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

To the *humble* there opens the same field of promise. "God forgetteth not the cry of the *humble*. By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honor, and life. Whosoever shall *humble* himself as a little child, the same shall be greatest in the kingdom of God. Whosoever *humbleth* himself shall be exalted."

We might travel thus through the Christian graces, and show that God characterizes his people by any one of them, and promises all the comforts of this life, and the joys of heaven, to the person who possesses any one of them. But this could not be if the possession of one did not imply the possession of all.

By turning to the threatenings we shall see, on the other hand, that the want of any one Christian grace cuts off the soul from the favor of God. "Wo to him that *striveth* with his Maker:" here the want of a spirit of submission is woful. The want of a spirit of *trust* is ruinous: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." The want of *humility* is ruinous: "The proud he knoweth afar off."—"The Lord shall cut off the tongue that speaketh proud things."—"Every one that is proud is an abomination."—"The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low." Thus we might proceed through all the list of threatenings.

Now compare these two views, and they will furnish an argument of great strength. God's richest blessings are promised to

the possession of one Christian grace, and his curse denounced against those who lack any one. Now, if it cannot be true that the good man shall live, because he has one attribute of life, and die, because he lacks one, then he that has one has the whole. He cannot enter into life because he fears God, and be lost because he is proud. Hence every Christian has all the Christian graces. They are all connected, all proceed from the same renewed temper, are wrought by the same sanctifying Spirit, are nourished by the same code of truth, and lead, each one, all the others in its train.

VI. The *experience of believers* will prove to them that there is this indissoluble connection between the Christian graces. They have all known by *happy*, as well as by *unhappy* experience, that if one grace flourish all the other graces flourish with it, and if one withers all wither together.

Let us first look at the brighter side of the picture. The Christian is placed where one of the graces has special opportunity to grow and flourish. He is seen to grow in the love of God. He increases in the knowledge of God, has admiring apprehension of his character, is absorbed in the wondrous views of his greatness and goodness, and is in the process of being imbued with his image from glory to glory. He now increases in the love of his children. His repentance now for sin is more deep and pungent than in times past. He increases now in humility, in the fear of God, in a spirit of prayer, in heavenly-mindedness, and, consequently, in the hope of glory. If afflicted, he is now submissive and patient; if abused by men, he is now meek and forgiving. At every point you will see improvement, if you see improvement in one point. Nourish one branch and all the branches thrive, and show signs of increasing health and vigor. There is, probably, no believer who has not been sensible of these truths from his own experience, nor has he ever been sensible of the contrary. He has not known the time when one grace flourished, and the others decayed. He cannot remember when he became more humble, and, at the same time, less prayerful; more attached to God, and less attached to his people; more heavenly-minded, and less patient and submissive.

If there has been anything that looked like this in the experience of the believer, it cannot be difficult to detect the fallacy. That was not real humility, but its counterfeit, that flourishes while the man was becoming less prayerful. The very views of

God and of sin that would humble him, would also lead him to prayer. Nor was that genuine love of God that increased while he grew cold towards his children, where is seen his image, and where beams his likeness. No; the Christian has never been sensible of the decay of one grace in consequence of the increase of another.

But the other view of this subject will not fail to accord with the experience of all the family of God. They all knew when one grace withered, all the graces withered with it. They knew when worldliness increased, and it cast the frost of death over every grace; "they grew cold in prayer, forsook the people of God," were proud and impatient, and vain and covetous. They remember when they indulged some sin, and it immediately disqualified for duty. They were ashamed to go to their closets when they had sinned; they were ashamed to attend ordinances, and perhaps dare not read their Bibles. "They thought on God and were troubled, and their faces were ashamed."

They felt the wound they had given their piety in every part, lost their confidence as the children of God, their hope sunk, and their everlasting prospects were clouded over. Now why need every grace wither because in one point a wound was inflicted; why did there circulate a poisonous fluid through all the branches of the plant of righteousness, when only at a single point there was inserted the sting of death, unless it be that all the parts of the new man are connected, draw their nourishment from the same fountain, and are fed, if I may keep up the appropriate figure, from the same circulating medium. If we did not know that the head and the arm are united, still when we find that on amputating the head the arm grows cold, we are led to believe that there was such a union, and that one member has died by amputating the other.

So the Christian graces all spring into being by the same impulse, and are nourished and kept in vigor together, or together wither and decay, as every believer's experience can testify. I close at present with a single

## REMARK

How much of the wisdom and goodness of God is seen in the renewed man. With propriety is the work of creating the heart anew styled the new creation. It may well be compared to the work of building a world. To see a moral being filled with ungovernable passions, creating in his bosom perpetual war, resem-

bling the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters continually cast up mire and dirt, so formed anew, that the war and the confusion all subside, and every affection harmonizing with every other; how does a work like this display the glory of God! In creating man at the first there was nothing in the clay to oppose the wishes of the potter; but in creating man anew there is a nature produced which is at war with the nature renewed. The whole current of the soul is turned. Probably to no single work that ever God did, have the angels looked with more admiring praise than to this new creation. Here God appears in all his wisdom, and greatness, and goodness. Here are the finishing strokes of his power and his skill. And, doubtless, some of the sweetest songs in heaven will dwell eternally on the grand theme of the new-birth.

## SERMON XI.

### THE PERFECTED GOOD MAN.—NO. II.

2 TIM. III. 17.

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

I PROPOSED in the preceding sermon as my object to show that the Christian must exhibit all the graces of the gospel; I attempted to prove the doctrine from the fact, that the Christian graces are all the operations of the same Divine Spirit; from the fact that all the moral affections of the new man, take their character from the renewed heart; from the *harmony of truth* which is the *grand medium of sanctification*; from their *very nature*; from the *manner* in which God in his word *characterizes his people*; and from the *experience of believers*. I then concluded with one *remark*, How much of the wisdom and goodness of God is seen in the renewed man. I now proceed to remark

2 The subject will help us to solve the question whether any one of the *Christian graces*, will certainly take *existence prior* to any other one. It has been contended by some that *repentance*, and by others that *faith*, will be, without fail, the first Christian grace. But I see not, if the view we have taken be correct, why any other grace as readily as these, may not be first in order of time. No one will precede the rest by any long space of time. That exercise will be first which has the first opportunity to utter itself. Suppose the man born again in some paroxysm of distress; who can say that he may not put forth submission previously to either repentance or faith? Or suppose him to be operated upon by the Spirit of God, at the moment when he is listening to some lucid description of the Divine character, how do we know that he may not love that character previously to his having that view of the Divine law, and of his own heart, which can produce repentance? and so of any other exercise of the new heart. If among all the Christian graces there is a perfect harmony, if they all spring up together, and together flourish, or together decay, how needless the dispute, which appears first; how impossible to know, and how unimportant if we did know! It is quite sufficient that we be assured, that they must all appear, must all appear early, must all

flourish together, and all reach their consummation in the kingdom of God.

3. The subject affords us an excellent *criterion of character*, by which, would we be honest, it would seem easy to decide whether we love God. If it may not be easy to decide that we have any particular grace, still it would seem not difficult, with a moderate share of wisdom, to decide, that we have, or have not, one in the whole catalogue of graces. And when the point is settled that we have one, it is certain that we have the whole. In the inquiry, then, whether we have faith, if we do not easily succeed, let us inquire whether we fear God, or whether we have a spirit of prayer, or whether we have meekness or humility. If, however, we have to go almost the whole round before we fix on any one Christian grace, the marks of which appear in our character, we shall have great occasion to fear that we have not the faith of the gospel. If we have that faith we shall have added all the graces which constitute the new man. We shall be humble because we are sinners, we shall be meek, because conscious that we often offend, we shall be thankful, and benevolent, we shall have, in more or less vigor, all the graces of the Spirit. There will be *all the parts* of the new man. Here, then, we have a rule, plain and simple, by which to try our characters. And if we would rigorously judge ourselves we should not be judged.

4. As a thought somewhat distinct from the last, I would suggest that if any one of the Christian graces is *wholly wanting* it is evidence conclusive that that person cannot possess the grace of God. If Christ be formed in us the hope of glory, his image on the heart must be perfect, no limb, no member wanting, and if all be right in the heart, the same will appear in the life.

Fix, then, your eye on the man, who in one point is always wrong, whatever is true on other points, and rest assured that no work of supererogation, as to other subjects, can make up the deficiency and awaken the hope that he is born of God. Can he never forgive? Will any offence committed against him, or conceived to be committed, awaken perpetual ill-will? Then a voice from heaven could not satisfy us that that man is born of God. Is he never benevolent? Can no occasion move him to be generous without the hope of reward? Then is it impossible that he should be a child of God? Does he uniformly dislike the humble, conscientious believer? Does he always select his associates and his confidants from the men of the world? Then is it certain that he does not love the brother whom he hath seen; and how can he love

God whom he hath not seen? There must be no particular in which the man of God does not obey his Lord, else being unfaithful in the least, he is unfaithful also in much. I do not say that at times the good man may not transgress any law, but I say, without the fear that the last day will pronounce me a liar, that at times the child of God obeys every law, and that he, who on one point is always wrong, is not born of God. Hereby do we know that we love him if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Now, to make this matter obvious, suppose a servant was obedient in every thing but one, but in that one would never obey, is he subject or is he not to the authority of his master? Will he not be pronounced a disobedient servant? Now it is just so in the things of God. There cannot be one law, suppose that law the least important, if you please, in the whole list of precepts, that the child of God never will obey. God has no such son or servant in his house. Judging by this rule, how many who profess godliness must come short of the kingdom of God. How many are there who were never humble for a single moment in all their life! How many were never seen to do a benevolent act! How many never once possessed a spirit of prayer! How many have always stood aloof from the disciples of the Lord Jesus! How many were never for an hour heavenly-minded! How many never knew how to forgive! How many have uniformly quarrelled with some doctrine of the Bible! How many have never for an hour ceased to love the world, and the things of the world, making it manifest that the love of the Father is not in them.

If there is no monstrous Christian, as has been attempted to be proved, but a perfect harmony among the Christian graces, I shall not need to make an apology for asserting that where any *one* of them is never *seen*, there *none* of them has ever *been*. Christ will receive none to heaven, who have a part only of his image. We are to follow him in the regeneration, else, when he comes in the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels, we shall be shut out of his kingdom. And we are to follow him wholly.

Brethren, I do not believe that I ever urged a truth more important than this. I wish to try my own character by it, and I wish you may all make the same use of it. Are we, at least sometimes, in the exercise of every Christian grace? Is there any point where it can be said, that we *never* obey? If there is, then

are we in the gall of bitterness and under the bonds of iniquity, sure as the truth of God will stand.

5. The subject should caution us not to offend in *one point*, lest the evil be felt in *all points*. I mean by this remark simply, that we should be afraid to cease for a moment, when the occasion requires, to exercise every Christian grace, lest all the graces immediately suffer. We are careful not to wound the smallest member of the body, though we could spare it without much damage, because it is materially connected with all the other parts of the body. It may cost one his life to bruise his smallest finger. Now let the simile apply. Would you esteem it a great calamity to be cold in your affections towards God, then be very cautious not to let your love cool towards his people, for no sooner will you feel cold towards them, than you will begin to cool in your affections towards God. Would you not lose a spirit of prayer, then be careful not to become worldly-minded, for when you cease to be heavenly-minded, you will cease to have often an errand to your closet. Do you prize highly your Christian hope, and would not part with it for a world, then be afraid to let any one grace cease to be exercised, for your hope will languish with it.

You cannot keep the *body* in a healthy state, and suffer one member to mortify, nor the *soul*, if you suffer one grace to languish. It would be a good question every night, Has any part of the new man been injured to-day? And if so, how can the wound be healed? Have I ceased to watch? Have I indulged pride, or envy, or anger? Have I ceased to be prayerful and heavenly-minded? Have I resisted evil, when I should have been meek? Have I rebelled, when I should have submitted? Have I been overcome of evil, when I should have overcome evil with good? Thus should this awful subject awaken our keenest anxieties, lest before we have realized the consequence, we hazard the health of the inner man, and pierce ourselves through with many sorrows.

6. The subject gives us a view of the whole matter of backsliding. We see how it begins: the Christian, in an hour of temptation, lets down his watch, and ceases to exercise one of the Christian graces. Say he is accused, and instead of being meek, returns evil for evil, wrath for wrath; the evening comes, and he has no spirit of prayer; the morning comes, and he loses sight of heaven, and becomes worldly-minded. He ceases to have a relish for the company and conversation of believers, becomes proud and covetous, and finally loses almost all his relish for divine things. The evil began at a point, but has widened in its course. It seemed a small

matter at the first, but is now a wide-spread and tremendous calamity. The man had better have suffered any calamity than have permitted his passions to rise. He did not realize, and *could not*, how dire was the plague, whose infection he inhaled. So we have seen the finger wounded by a thorn, and in a few hours the whole nervous system was in torture, and often death was the result. Ah! how rich is that grace that saves the backslider from final and fearful apostacy!

We have sometimes wondered to see how in every point the backslider is gone away from the path of life; you cannot name the case or the occasion where he acts out his former character. He is worldly and prayerless, does not love the people of God, is proud, and negligent, and passionate, and envious, and selfish—he is all wrong. Now if I have given a correct view of this subject, we are to expect it to be so. The Christian graces are all connected, must flourish or decay together. Hence he cannot go wide astray in one particular, and yet in other respects hold his former standing. One branch of the plant of righteousness was wounded, and the whole withered. And should it ever revive, the reform must begin as the decay did, at a point, and become general. The man must be converted again as at the first, by the same power, and by the same means by which he was then brought out of darkness into marvellous light. So Peter after his fall needed a new conversion, and would then be able to strengthen his brethren. Hence prays the believer, as he begins to recover, “restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.” “Tell me, oh thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon, for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions.”

7. The subject will teach us how to deal with believers in distress. We must lead them to inquire, where and when they began to offend, and of course to suffer. There the remedy must be applied. We should not undertake to cure the body of pain, to the neglect of some wounded member, where the whole evil began. We should at least attend to the part affected, that we might dry up the source of corruption, and thus lay the foundation for returning health.

So the distressed backslider must discover where he received his first injury. What sin did he commit, what lust did he indulge, what duty did he neglect, when the darkness and distress which he now suffers came upon him! Here he must repent and

do his first works. However difficult the duty, or great the self-denial, he must tread back his guilty steps, or may abandon the hope that his soul can be restored to health and vigor.

God does not cast his people into darkness *wantonly*, does not withdraw the Divine influences without occasion. If he hides his face it is because he sees some sin to rebuke. There is some point where there is a renewal of the old controversy, and God resolves that we shall walk in darkness, till we are reconciled to him. Would you then do good to the backsliding believer, urge him to inquiry and repentance relative to the first acts of his decline. What was it that first offended God? When did he first refuse to hear your prayers? When did he cloud your hopes? When had you first a cold and comfortless communion? And what sin was it that shut you out from your heavenly Father's presence? Where on the new man was the wound inflicted that has rankled till the disease has become general? On this spot keep the eye fixed, and here let every effort be made to restore health. Else expect not that God will uncover to you the beauties of his face.

8. If it should seem a calamity that the believer should be so extensively exposed, let it not be forgotten that he is just so extensively qualified to receive good. As he can be injured through the medium of any one Christian grace; so through the medium of any one he may receive quickening and joy. As in a wide and expanded relationship, we are greatly liable to be wounded and pained, so through the same medium we have multiplied advantages for joy and rejoicing.

The broader our sympathies, the broader our sufferings and consolations. So the senses, spread all over the human body, and thus expose a broad surface to the infliction of wounds and the endurance of pains, are also the broad inlets of pleasure. So in the new man there is kept up the same analogy of providence. It is not, however, in any of these cases to be viewed as a calamity. If the believer can be wounded at many points, so at many points can he receive nourishment and joy. Let him cultivate industriously any of the Christian graces, and the whole will thrive. For instance let him aim at maintaining constantly a spirit of prayer, and we have very little doubt that he will find all the Christian graces invigorated. Let him cultivate a spirit of benevolence, and he will give the new man an impulse in every limb and member. Let him fan the flame of Christian love, and it will kindle a fire that will quicken the whole pulsation of spiritual life. So if you

water a single root of the tree or plant, that is perishing with drought, you refresh every branch, and extend a benign influence to the smallest fibre. The Christian, then, who is sensible, I do not say of having grossly backslidden, but of not being in that state of spiritual health and growth that is desirable, may commence reform at any point he pleases. If he will begin this evening to nourish any one Christian grace, he will find himself revived throughout. Collect about you your Christian brethren, realize your relation to them, open your mind freely to them on the great subject of your spiritual brotherhood, on the place and the pleasures of your future rest, and draw more closely the bond of love, repeat the experiment every week, or if possible every day till you feel that you cannot live without them, and cannot be separated from them, that their God is your God, their Savior your Savior, their Comforter yours, and their everlasting home the place of your rest. By the time you have accomplished all this, if there is any such relationship as I have endeavored to establish among the Christian graces, you will find yourselves revived throughout. You will feel a more ardent love to God, you will have a spirit of prayer, you will be humbled for sin, you will exercise an expanded benevolence, and your mind will become heavenly and happy. Or if you please, cultivate a spirit of prayer, go many times a day to your closet, till you find yourself living near the throne, and all the good effects predicted in the other case will immediately follow. Before you call God will answer, and while they are yet speaking he will hear, open your mouth wide and he will fill it; make a large request, and unmeasured blessings will be granted you.

Think not, however, to neglect repentance; this must begin and keep pace with every reform; if you have grown negligent in any Christian duty, it is a great sin, and there must be deep repentance. The order of your restoration invariably must be, "*repent and do your first works.*" This is beginning where your decay commenced, and where God will infallibly meet with you and bless you. He has thus promised, and has a thousand and a thousand times fulfilled this promise. Break up the fallow ground, sow not among the thorns.

FINALLY. We see how we are to set about cultivating true and extensive peace. Men must be at peace with themselves by having all the Christian graces in exercise, else they can neither be at peace with God or man. Let every man have war within, and peace in society is impossible. With ungodly men there is al-

ways a war in their own bosoms: now let the few believers, who are associated with them, be in a state of coldness, or of backsliding, and then hope to bind the whole mass together by the bond of love, and you might as well hope to build another world. You may blame one, and another, and another, as the breakers of the peace, but peace will not be restored, till each one blames himself, and begins a reformation at home. Men may exercise their wisdom in attempts to make peace without purity. But the wisdom that is from above is *first pure and then peaceable*. The promise is "If ye walk in my statutes, I will give peace in your land." Said one whom God inspired, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

He then that would be a peace-maker in these times of rebuke and blasphemy, must aim to awaken religious feeling, and raise the standard of piety. Bring men together, who have forsaken God, who have neglected prayer, who have become supremely attached to the present world, and attempt to form between them some amiable compact, and you might as well yoke the lightning and the thunder to the summer breeze and bid them go forth in calmness and serenity.

## SERMON XII.

### INIQUITY FINISHED.

JAMES I. 15.

Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

WE dwell in a world where nothing reaches maturity in a moment. Things begin to be, they grow, and they ripen. The acorn becomes a wide-spread oak; the infant a man; and the little rivulet a majestic stream, that widens its bed, and deepens its channel, as it urges its way to the ocean. Hence there is nothing to which we are more accustomed than growth. There is the infancy, the middle age, and the maturity of all created things.

And it would seem that the same is true of things to which we cannot apply the term *created*. Holiness is begun, it progresses, and is perfected. Character has its embryo, its progress, and its completion. And in the text sin is spoken of as capable of being finished, and then its fruit is death. And yet sin, as the term is used in the text, is figurative. Every sin is a perfect whole, as soon as it has a being; a wrong that every enlightened conscience must disapprove, and which God condemns. But sinful habit or character, which no doubt the apostle intends by the term, may have its beginning, its growth, and its harvest. And the natural fruit is death. But character or habit, in order to come to this disastrous result, must attach themselves to moral intelligence.

Hence the text will lead us to speak of *men* who mature a wicked character and thus ensure the death spoken of, which can be no other but the future misery of the soul. "The wages of sin is death." Life is the result of obedience, death of disobedience. This is the unchangeable decree of God. If men will violate the commands of God and mature a character that he disapproves, he will shut them from his presence; and this is death. He may stop them before their iniquities are ripe, as the rock rolling from the mountain's top, may meet some mighty barrier that can resist its impulse, which else will plough its path to the glen, or imbed itself in the bosom of the stream. The growth of sin at first may be slow, but it ripens fast as it reaches towards the time of harvest.

When men have begun to disobey the law of God, and are casting off the terrors of his threatenings, and conscience becomes silenced, a desperate character, unless the grace of God prevent, can soon be matured. Many a lad in our streets has set out in the career of sin, and become a daring young man, but had yet no idea, where and how soon his career would terminate. At first, perhaps, his way seemed pleasant. He slid down the smooth declivity, without obstruction and without alarm. Had he dreamed of the ruin that yawned before him, he would have trembled in the outset. But he saw not the end of his course, till he felt the fall that crushed him to powder. Let me illustrate the subject

I. *The game of chance finds its maturity in the abandoned gambler.* No matter with what materials or in what circumstances the habit commences. The transition from the game less criminal, instituted for mere amusement, to that where oaths are uttered, and fraud practised, and wealth squandered, and character staked, is easy and convenient. The *practice* should be to a thinking mind frightful, were there no danger of the habit being fixed. The waste of time is an obvious evil. No man of sense will say, that the time spent at the game is *well* spent. Is the mind enlarged? Is the heart improved? Are the habits rectified? Is the man made holier or happier at the game? Do we see the gambler useful to his country, kind to his family, a man of science, industry, and virtue? Is he spoken of as the benefactor of his fellow-men, and his death lamented as a light put out, a blessing withdrawn? Then why assert his time *well* spent? While he neither blesses himself nor others, is he answering the end of his being? Is he living to any of those purposes for which God created him? Then his time is lost. And have we time to lose? An immortal being on his way to the grave, and much to do in preparation for eternity—has he time to lose? Has God assigned us a longer probation than was necessary? And if not, should any of its hours be lost? And if lost, will not some of our work remain undone when the Master comes?

But loss of time is not the whole evil of the game; the mind is dissipated. Who ever made the experiment and did not find himself, both at the time and afterward, less qualified for serious thought and reflection? Suppose there are neither oaths nor curses at the game, does the little, the trifling, and the silly conversation of the hour enlarge or discipline the mind? Do noble sentiments spring up, and does manly and dignified thought originate

with the cast of the die, or the shuffle of the card? Does the man rise with a purer intellect, or one less pure, from the gaming-table? Is serious business more welcome, or less so? Are the domestic duties better discharged afterwards, or worse? Is the man more or less fitted for manly occupations? On all these questions there can be but one opinion.

Nor can it be denied that the mind is enfeebled and contracted, as well as dissipated, by being employed at the game. Be it allowed, and even this may be disputed, that it comports with the levity and thoughtlessness of childhood, still very illy does it quadrate with the sedateness of the father and the husband. The man must feel, who lends a hand to the game, that he lays aside what is venerable in years and gray hairs, and puts on the child. He becomes a "*little being*," and should not be caught thus letting down his dignity.

Let any one approach unseen to the place of the game and take down the jumble of language and read it to the parties, and if they did not feel little before, they would feel little now. I know that men *may have* practised the game for mere amusement and escaped the ruin that impends, but multitudes have been less happy, and have gone this way to irrecoverable ruin.

It is a sin which strangely bewitches the mind, which gathers strength by indulgence, and which, when finished in the confirmed gambler, bringeth forth death.

His character is a compound of the basest selfishness, cool malignity, subtle impiety, fell desperation, and unrestrained appetite. And let it be finished, and the man is ready for fraud, robbery, murder, suicide, treason, or any other species of crime, and then the fruit is death. Else tell me when the confirmed gambler was reformed, and became either a Christian or a decent man. Should you be able to bring forward *one case*, I can place beside it a hundred where the result was tragical. The instance you adduce, does but prove that God is stronger than the strong man armed, and can tame the heart at any stage of its desperation. But the hope in such a case is a spider's web. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

II. *Indulgence in the cup is matured in the sot.* Few, when they began to look upon the cup, and tasted its inebriating contents, intended to yield themselves victims to the destroyer. They drank, *at first*, to be sociable, or, it may be, to promote health, or exonerate themselves from the charge of singularity. Not a world

would tempt them to excess, nor many worlds induce them to draw upon themselves the reputation of intemperance ; but ere they have thought of their danger, they are caught in the snare. But when once overtaken, still they intend to proceed no farther. They can and they will govern their appetite, and have only their occasional scenes of indulgence.

Meanwhile conscience has given the alarm, and is hushed and silenced. False sentiments are embraced, tending to lessen the sin, or hide its progress, or neutralize its consequences. By degrees the heart is hardened, the conscience seared, the habit confirmed, temptations multiplied, and the man is seen to yield up himself a confirmed inebriate. This character of him goes out, and he is seen to throw off the restraint of public sentiment, that last hold that society had upon him. His credit is gone, the peace of his home is destroyed, his family is desolate, his friends withdraw from him, he must shrink from what little shred of reputation remains, from what of respect is still shown him, from any office he fills, from the hopes that have buoyed up his spirits, and from the whole of that enchanting vision that opened before him.

Some infidel doctrine is suggested by the unsanctified heart to prop his sinking steps. The apprehensions of futurity are gone, and now the last ligature is sundered that bound him to comfort and character, and hope, and heaven ; and he cares not, at length, if he *is seen* reeling through the streets a confirmed drunkard ! Now his health withers, and he sees the grave yawning, and hell moving beneath. Now, did he intend at first that the habit of tipping should become thus matured ? Did he calculate on this total abandonment of comfort, of character, of credit, of confidence, of hope, of life, and of heaven ? But his sin is finished. He is snared in the work of his own hands, and, it may be, he ends his days as a suicide or a felon. Or, if otherwise, he comes to a loathsome and deserted death-bed, and sees his poor life going out, while there dawns on him no hope of heaven, nor comes to his help any arm that can snatch him from the jaws of death, or hold him back from the worm that shall never die, and the fire that shall never be quenched. His sin is finished ; “and sin,” as we have said, “when it is finished bringeth forth death.”

III. *Covetousness finds its maturity in the swindler, the thief, and the robber.* This, in its beginning, can scarcely be distinguished from a virtue. It has *on* the face of prudence and economy, and can be so impudent as to claim the Bible as its advocate. “If any

provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Thus supported, it claims the countenance of the wise and the good, and seems removed but a single hair's breadth from a virtue.

Still God denounces it as a vice. It is an undue desire of wealth, and becomes, with the slightest temptation, a wish to enjoy what belongs to another. This vice, in its early stages, may resort to means that are lawful—industry, and a close but not generally reputed dishonest manner of dealing. By degrees, however, there is adopted a loose but licensed swindling. The creditor is kept out of his due; the hireling of his wages; and the poor of their supply. The article vended has its price advanced; and what is purchased, proportionably depressed. Advantage is taken of the necessitous and the slack in trade. These oppressive measures, as the sin grows, gives place to others, which no law of God or man can be compelled to defend. A total mis-statement of facts accompanies every act of commerce, till there is an entire abandonment of that golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them." Now, unless the fear of detection hold him back, the man is prepared for any enterprise that can gratify a sordid mind, for theft or robbery. And it may be that, unperceived, these iniquities are practised. There may be many a thief, and many a robber, who has yet on the face of honesty, and the attire and the reputation of a gentleman. Not one of the whole fraternity ever intended to be discovered. But unless the grace of God prevents, the covetous man will, finally, mature the vice he nourishes, "and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The whole band of speculators are in imminent danger of maturing this vice.

The Scriptures furnish us with some striking instances of this sin finished. You will readily recur to the case of Achan. He was one of the three thousand sent of Joshua to subdue the city of Ai. The spoil was to be devoted to God. But the covetous Achan saw a rich Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold. What he saw he coveted, and what he coveted he took, and then must lie to hide the crime. Thus we see an instance where this sin came to maturity; and the result was, that he and all his house, his flocks, and all that he had, were stoned to death, and burned with fire. Thus "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

The case of Ahab is in point. He coveted Naboth's vineyard. But Naboth would not part with his patrimonial inheritance; and

for refusing he must die, and the dogs must feed upon his blood. You remember the history. The result was, that the dogs licked Ahab's blood, and that of his family, in the same place where they had feasted upon the blood of Naboth. Here, again, the sin of covetousness was finished, and it brought forth death.

And the case of Judas is written in lines of blood. He must have had once a reputable character, and when admitted to the apostolic office was unimpeachable. But he was covetous; and being made purse-bearer for the little family, accustomed himself to purloin its contents. This might have been his practice for years, hence his master denominated him a "thief." When opportunity was, at length, given him to betray the Lord Jesus, the temptation was too strong, and he pocketed the price of blood, and ended his career a suicide. Here again the sin was finished, and brought forth death. And I could tell you of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and a host of others, who have followed in the same train, and have earned and reaped the same destiny. Every mail's intelligence, and every court of police exhibit another and another victim perishing by the same iniquity.

IV. *Lasciviousness has its maturity in the pollutions and obscenities of the brothel.* I know that decency shrinks from the very terms we must use on this subject, and still the sin *must* be exposed. If the sight can be endured, go *once* to those wretched abodes, where are bound on the altar of impurity, her thousands of ill-fated victims, and ask them their individual history, and they will tell you how their sin became finished. They will relate to you how they fell in with some vile associate, while yet they had been uncontaminated, who polluted their imaginations, which led, in an evil hour, to impure desire and a lascivious look, and, finally, to the deed that made them the bond-slaves of hell forever. Their case is now considered hopeless. They are abhorred by themselves and by others, have already died a civil death, and must soon go down to the grave, and then suffer eternally the tortures of the worm that shall never die, and of the fire that shall never be quenched. Here is the text literally true, "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

V. *Profanity, too, has its maturity in those unrestrained blasphemies which have sometimes been uttered at the very juncture when life was going out.* The profane man does not mature this vice in an hour.

It may be that he was educated under the roof of piety, where he was taught to fear an oath. And his earliest departures from yea and nay were, at the first, but a single shade removed from purity of language. By slow and painful degrees, however, he learned to utter the curse, then the oath. Here he intended to stop, as he had intended at each preceding stage of his impious career. But he had now broken through parental restraint, and had well nigh conquered the obstinate correctness of his own conscience, and it became easy to proceed. It becomes his practice to utter his passions in an oath, and he can at length swear when not impassioned, and the practice soon grows into a habit.

It now becomes quite insipid to go in the old dull track, and he invents new oaths, till at length the names of God and all his sacred attributes, ring upon every change possible, and, aided by tone, and emphasis, and gesture, constitute more than half his impious vocabulary. Finally, he breaths pollution as soon as he opens his lips. And when he has for a time made man the butt of his blasphemies, he begins to abuse directly his Maker, and his Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Now his sin is finished, and in some surprising hour, may meet the sudden arrest of death, with a volley of blasphemy, and die with the execration half finished upon his lips. My readers may not have witnessed this case, and would to God they may not, but assuredly the fact has happened, furnishing us a lucid comment upon the text, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

VI. *So the Sabbath-breaker matures his sin by degrees.* He went early with his parents to the house of God, and grew up to manhood under the droppings of the sanctuary. But on some occasion he was tempted to spend a Sabbath in the fields, or in worldly business. Some wicked associate thus induced him to break in upon his early habits. And it gave him, at the first, pain of conscience. But a second temptation and a third soon prepared him to do, without distress, what was at the first an outrage upon his whole Christian education. Soon he deserted the house of God, and soon neglected the Bible, and soon threw off his whole religious department. He can now waste his Sabbaths over a newspaper, or on his bed, or in a place of rendezvous. And he entices others away with him to his guilty haunts, and is now quite content to have all his Sabbaths pass without acquiring any knowledge of God, of truth, or of duty. But in the mean time his probation glides away, and he will come to his death-bed, and his

Sabbaths be over, *all* over, and no preparation made to meet his God. He would then give a world for a Sabbath. His tortured conscience, unless disease or medicine should stupify him, will rehearse in his hearing the history of his mis-spent Sabbaths, and portray before his astonished eyes the iniquity of his heathenism, till his dying chamber will become a scene of horror like the midnight of Egypt. What he knows of truth, will but paint to him in the more gloomy colors, the sin of despising God's Sabbaths, which he might have improved in becoming acquainted with himself and with God. He is haunted with the conviction that no Sabbath awaits him in heaven. His sin is finished, and he must die, ignorant of that gospel through which God fits his people for his kingdom.

VII. *So the growth of infidelity, may be traced from its low beginnings to the same destructive maturity.* In his youth the man was a speculative believer, and was satisfied that the Bible was the truth of God. But some shrewd associate made sport of the Scriptures, and put into his hands at length the "*Age of Reason.*" But so correct had been his education that at first he dared not read it. It lay by him and he finally cast his eye upon it, and it suited the temper of his heart; he perused it, and it shook his faith. He yet intended not to become a disciple of that wretch whose principles did not sustain himself in his dying hours. But one scandalous volume referred him to another and one associate who had discarded the Bible, led him to another, till at length he was prepared to yield his better judgment.

He went on to prop the fabric of his unbelief, till consistency of character drove him to abandon the gospel and quit the sanctuary, and discontinue his prayers, as all inconsistent with his system of rationalism. He had now no means of learning his danger, and felt quite secure in his iniquities. He needs no Savior, and spurns with contempt the overtures of mercy. And his sentiments have misled his conscience, till he can sin with a high hand and feel little or no compunction. He bids fair to die an unbeliever, and although he may renounce his scheme in the hour of death, it will probably be too late to apply to his soul the consolations of that gospel which he has deliberately abandoned. True, the prelibations of his future destiny may, on his death-bed, force him, as they have many of the champions of his creed, into a speculative faith in Jesus Christ, yet is there little hope, that the slighted and abused Redeemer, will, at that late hour, become his helper, and

then he is lost for ever. His sin is finished and it bringeth forth death.

VIII. *So we might trace the sin of lying from the first instance of prevarication on to the fixed habit of dauntless and deliberate perjury.* When men at first depart from the simplicity of truth, they do not intend to confirm the habit, much less to lie under the solemnities of an oath. But one departure from veracity begets the necessity often of another, and another. And one fortunate escape from detection, holds out the promise of future impunity. Thus the man whose lips had been accustomed to truth, becomes habituated, before he sees his danger, to utter falsehood. And the case will soon happen that he must swear to what he has stated, and God is called in to witness to the truth of a lie. And he perceives that Heaven does not avenge the deed, and ventures on it again, and again, as party, or passion, or interest dictates. He now soon becomes prepared for deliberate perjury, and is, perhaps, detected and suffers the penalty of human law, or, if otherwise, goes on till the law of God takes effect, and he is turned with all liars into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Thus the sin is finished.

FINALLY. Let me sum the whole up in one case. *These sins sometimes all meet in the same man, and grow to maturity together.* The vices are all twin-sisters, and can flourish in the same soil, and under the same sunshine. The gambler becomes profane and false, and fraudulent, and intemperate, and lewd, breaks the Sabbath, and derides the truth of the Bible. Some of these vices seldom fail to be in the society of all the residue. When did you know a profane man who had any conscientious regard for the truth, or venerated the Bible? Or when an intemperate man, or lewd, who did not engraft these vices into the same stock where all the others grew? Adopt one sin and all the others plead for their own adoption. Will the infidel judge it out of character to be profane? Will the false scruple to baptize his lie with an oath? Will the inebriate be ashamed to be lewd? Will the Sabbath-breaker venerate the Bible? While one of these sins is coming to maturity, the others, like shoots by the side of a bramble, will spring up and grow, and when matured may any of them bring death.

The fact is, to mature any vice requires the abandonment of restraint and when this is lost, any iniquity can vegetate. The

man becomes to every good work reprobate. The understanding is distorted, the conscience seared, the heart rendered cold, and hard, and selfish, and the man becomes deaf to remonstrance, and is placed out of the reach of reform. Now, many sins are finished in the same man, and they inevitably bring forth death.

## REMARKS.

I. How may we know when sin has approached nigh to maturity ? No question can be to us all more practical or important. We may know by various signs :

1. Maturity in vice *stuns the sensibility of conscience*. When men can sin and not be filled with distress, it argues that they have silenced the monitor in their bosom. When the gambler feels *happy* after the game, and the drunkard *dreads not* the occasion that will tempt him to indulgence, and the profane *fearlessly* utters the oath, and the false can be as *happy*, when he has spoken a lie as the truth, and the fraudulent feeds *cheerfully*, on his ill-gotten wealth, and the Sabbath-breaker has no *twinges of conscience*, as the hours of holy rest pass by unimproved, and the unchaste can *sleep quietly* in the bed of guilt, and the infidel is sensible of no inward testimony to the truth—in every such case there is reason to fear that conscience is driven from her moorings, and the storm is high, and hard by is the reef of death, where she is to be finally and fatally shipwrecked.

2. Maturity in vice *progressively excludes shame*. When the profane will utter their coarse dialect within the hearing of the moral, and when the intemperate do not blush to be caught at their cups, and the liar is not put out of countenance by detection, and the Sabbath-breaker is *willing to be seen*, wasting the hours of holy rest, and the fraudulent *can boast* of the advantage they have taken, and the gambler is willing to be caught at the game, and the infidel *sneers* at the gospel, and the licentious are *proud* of their intrigues ; then shame is gone, and sin is finished—a great poet has justly said,—

“He that blushes is not quite a brute.”

And a greater, and a better man has inquired, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination ! nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush ; therefore they shall fall among them that fall ; in the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.” Here is the very case stated. When men have so far progressed in vice that they have ceased

to be ashamed, then the threatened judgments of God take effect, and sin, being "finished, bringeth forth death."

II. The subject addresses itself to parents. Our poor dying children are liable to be ensnared by these vices; if we love them, we shall carefully watch them.

1. We shall be careful not to *corrupt them ourselves*. We have known unhappy parents who taught their children to gamble, and be false, and profane, and fraudulent, and to desecrate the Sabbath, and to use the cup, and reject the Bible. All this, perhaps, they did not intend to do, and would have been alarmed, it may be, could they have seen the end from the beginning. And still the restraints they withheld, or the passions and appetites they indulged, or the principles they inculcated, or the example they set, or the doctrines they taught, led their children directly in the way of the destroyer, and *their whole character*, when sin is finished, will be chargeable to their unhappy parents.

2. If we love our children we shall be *careful* not to permit *others* to destroy them. Some parents suffer their offspring to be corrupted before their very eyes. Perhaps they receive some outcast into their family, and he becomes the tutor of their children ere they have suspected the danger. They wonder where and when their children learned to be profane, to use the cup, to be familiar with the language of impurity, to break the Sabbath, to deal fraudulently. Ah! they learned of those who were introduced as domestics in the family circle. Unless parents would bring down their own gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, let them be jealous over the moral character of their servants and of every other inmate of their house.

And we must be equally careful who are their associates abroad. It is inhuman to send them to the school of vice. There may be *youth near us* with whom they may not safely mingle. There may be *families* in their *very neighborhood*, with whom we should be afraid to have them associate. The seeds of vice may be sown, and the shoots not distinctly seen until we are dead, and still they may spring up, and ripen, and bear, by-and-bye, when we are in heaven, the fruits of death.

3. In view of this subject be warned not to let any sin ripen in your hearts. Think not to trifle with iniquity and come off without harm. If you begin a wrong practice, always remember that it may ripen into an obstinate and deadly habit. The rock which you roll from the summit of a mountain may move slow at the

first, and require great effort to start it, but it may acquire momentum before you are aware, and may plough itself a path to the valley through the mightiest barriers that a creating God has interposed in its course. The only safe doctrine is that inspired maxim, "*Touch not, taste not, handle not.*" Say not, I have learned the rules of the game, but intend not to be a gambler. Say not, I sometimes indulge myself in the cup, but I do not intend to be a drunkard. Say not, I know I am sometimes covetous, but do not intend to be a thief or a robber. Say not, I sometimes indulge my lewd affections, but shall never entrust myself in the house of infamy. Say not, I sometimes allow myself in profanity, but can never be tempted to blasphemy. Say not, I have sometimes profaned the Sabbath, but I shall proceed no farther, shall never quit the sanctuary, or cease to regard that day as holy. Say not, I sometimes ply the unbeliever's objections to the Bible, but shall never become an infidel. Say not, I have sometimes prevaricated, but shall never become perjured. Oh, say not, I mean to indulge my sins at present, but do not mean to become an abandoned transgressor. None can predict what you may not become, if you set out in any course of transgression. "The heart is deceitful above all things," and it may happen that you may feel quite safe at the very juncture when some darling iniquity has gained the ascendancy over you, and your steps are just about to slip. May a merciful God save you.

## SERMON XIII.

### OBEDIENCE THE PRACTICAL TEST OF AFFECTION.

MALACHI i. 6.

A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master : if then I be a Father, where is mine honor ? And if I be a Master, where is my fear ?

THIS address was made to the priests of the Lord, at a very corrupt age of the Jewish church ; and applies not only to them, but to the whole family of Israel. There was corruption not merely in the priesthood : the whole church was exceedingly polluted. Every precept of the law was violated, and every rite of the sanctuary perverted. Hence most of the addresses made to them apply, not to believers, but to impenitent men, and that in all ages, and in all countries. "Oh, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," would seem a strange address to true believers ; but is exactly suited to a community of hypocrites, whose profession of godliness embraced all the holiness they aimed to acquire.

It will then be no violation of the spirit of the text, if we apply it to an impenitent world, embracing those who have no show of godliness, as well as the whole family of false professors.

We find in the lips of many who make no pretensions to a change of heart, high professions of respect for the character and government of God. They claim him as their Father, and would have us believe that they respect and obey his laws. It will be my object in this discourse to inquire, WHETHER MEN OF THIS CHARACTER YIELD HIM THAT FILIAL ESTEEM, OR THAT DUTIFUL SUBJECTION, WHICH ARE DUE TO A FATHER AND A MASTER. That the subject, however, may impress our minds the more tenderly, let us,

1. *Contemplate the government of God, and see if we can discover him dealing with all his rational creatures as a Father and a Master.*

1. In the first place, as a Father and a Master *he protects them*. This the son and the servant expect. God keeps his eye upon all his intelligent creatures, and puts underneath them his arm of mercy. Not an hour would life be sustained, did not Jehovah keep in tune this wondrous frame ; did he not heave the lungs,

move the heart, and brace every member and every nerve. Dangers stand thick around us, wait at every corner do destroy us, but are warded off by that unseen Intelligence, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being." The unbeliever as well as the believer, holds his life, his reason, his health, and all his comforts as a loan of Heaven. While he neglects to pray, and while every mercy is forgotten in unthankfulness; while he even sets his mouth against the heavens, and defies the power that protects him; still, with paternal vigilance, God extends to him his protecting mercy. He lies down and sleeps, and wakes, because the Lord makes him to dwell safely.

2. As a Father and a Master *he provides for all his creatures* That bread which men feed upon, as the fruit of their own industry, and for which they thank themselves, and every garment that covers them, and the house that shelters them, are the gifts of God. No man could make his seed vegetate, or render his fields fertile, or ensure success in trade, independently of his Maker. The showers and the dews, the genial sun, and the soft breezes of heaven are entirely under divine control, and unite their influence to feed, and clothe, and warm, and give health and vigor to an apostate world. Thus, as a Father and a Master, he makes timely and kind provision for all his creatures.

3. As a Father and a Master *he makes us know his will.* We have some lessons of instruction from the broad sheet of nature; but in his word he has opened all his heart; has made every duty plain, and placed it in the power of every son and servant of his to do his pleasure. He has plainly revealed himself and his will concerning us. He has made us acquainted with his Son and his kingdom. If disposed to obedience, we have nothing to do but to obey. And that his family of intelligences might have no excuse from marching up promptly to their duty, he has caused his word to be proclaimed in a preached gospel. Thus we have line upon line, and precept upon precept. All this we expect from a father and a master.

4. I add, *he has made our duties light.* The service he requires is pleasant and easy. He demands what is to our own interest, and prohibits what would ruin us. His law, in all its rigor, is a most kind and benevolent institution, and has conferred upon his family the richest comforts and the greatest obligations. Next to the gospel, the law of God is the richest bequest of Heaven to our world; and they were both issued with the same design—to render intelligent beings happy in the enjoyment of their Maker.

Finally, if we obey him, he smiles upon us, and provides for our *future happiness* as does a father and a master. The law itself, which he had a *right* to issue *without a promise of reward*, implies that the dutiful shall be happy. He approves of every act of duty, and will notice it with his favor even if we give to the thirsty a cup of cold water from love to him. When we have sinned, and are desirous to return to duty, he accepts our repentance, forgives us, and loves us. Thus he acts the part of a kind Father and an indulgent Master toward all his intelligent creation. And many whose hearts have never been won to love and duty, are still sensible that God is kind, and deserves their warmest esteem and faithful service. But after all this we hear Him say, "If then I be a Father, *where is mine honor?*"

II. *Let us inquire how a kind and dutiful son or servant will treat a father or a master.*

I yoke the two together, because if faithful and dutiful, they will exhibit in these relationships very much the same deportment.

In the first place, the son *loves* his father, and the good servant his master. The attachment is very strong; and, perhaps, often as strong in the one case as in the other. You have seen servants who would die to protect their master; and the attachment of a good son to his father none will question. Let us then inquire whether that class of men who acknowledge that they have not been regenerated, but who wish to be considered very friendly to their Maker, do really feel any love to his character. While they are made the recipients of his bounty, they may feel *glad*, and may mistake *gladness* for *gratitude*. Or viewing his favors as an evidence of his love to them they may feel that *competency* in themselves which may seem like affection for him. Or making some essential mistake in their views of his character, they may love the image they have set up, and which they call Jehovah. Or being grossly ignorant of his character, they may never feel their hearts drawn out toward him, in any very strong affection or passion, and so may not know that they do not love him. Or these things may all combine to deceive and ruin them.

If we have any love to God we must love his whole character and must learn his character from the Bible. We must not only love the Being who waters our fields, and makes the earth fruitful, and the air salubrious; who supplies us with health and plenty; but the Being, (for he is the same,) who sends drought, and famine, and pestilence; who cuts off our comforts, and sends dis-

ease, and death, and darkness, and sorrow into our habitations. We must not only love him, who created us, who protects us, who feeds us, who enlightens us, and who offers us salvation; but him, who gave us his law, gave that law its sanctions, and annexes to a rejection of the gospel the sure pledge of endless misery. We must not only love the Being who has watched the world with paternal solicitude, and has given to the different nations their prosperity and their honors; but him, (for he is the same God,) who blotted out the old world, who burned the cities of the plain, who has plagued the kingdoms of men with revolutions, earthquakes, storms, and wars. We must not only love *him* who has built a heaven for redeemed sinners, but him who has digged a bottomless pit, and kindled a quenchless fire for the finally impenitent. We cannot love the Author of all good, and hate him as the Author of what we call evil. There is but one God, and he assures us that he makes light, and creates darkness. We must vest him with all his attributes, and love him as a whole Deity, or he will spurn our affection, and count us his enemies. He is as worthy of esteem in the exercise of holiness, justice, truth, and vengeance, as when he displays his infinite goodness and mercy. His threatenings do him as much honor as his promises. His plagues are as necessary as his blessings, his lightnings as his rains, his law as his gospel, his prison as his palace. His rod and his bread are both blessings to his children and his servants.

Now the question is, do that class of men who speak so highly of their Maker, and who would have us believe that they are so grateful for his benefits, and have pleasure in contemplating his character, but who have no pretensions to having passed the new birth—do they love the whole of the Divine character? Have they selected the attributes of their supreme Deity from the Bible, and do they disrobe him of no single perfection? Is the view the Bible gives of Jehovah pleasant to them in all its parts? Would they not alter one single trait if they might? Have they no exceptions to make when they think of him, and speak of him, and pray to him? And when they think of going to be in his presence for ever, is his character exactly such as they would love to contemplate and to dwell with?

I know that some of these questions, at times, are trying even to the believer; but he does hope, that he approves of every attribute in the character of Jehovah. But do not that class of men, to whom this sermon is principally addressed, manifest, that they are pleased with only *a part* of the Divine character? Hence how

frequently will they deny such of the doctrines as clash with their views of God. Total depravity is viewed as rendering themselves too deformed for him to love till they are radically changed. The necessity of such a change begets a doubt whether they are on the way to heaven. The deity of Christ argues, that men are in a state of fearful ruin from which none but an almighty Redeemer can rescue them. The necessity of a Divine influence to change the heart, cuts off the hope which they build on their own good works, as qualifying them for heaven. Any Divine purpose respecting the heirs of salvation, places their destiny in the hands of God; where they are afraid to trust it. His sovereignty in regenerating *whom he will*, leaves it doubtful whether their purposes of future repentance will be executed. Threatenings of everlasting misery to the finally impenitent, exhibit God as too inflexibly holy to be *their Jehovah*.

Do they not dread these doctrines because they undermine their high opinion of themselves, and in their view mar the character of God? If they loved him, they would have confidence in him; they would believe what he says, would dare to be in his hands, would have no fear of his decrees, nor be apprehensive of too great severity in his justice.

The child, when he is received into the arms of his father, asks from him no promise that he will not cast him into the fire or the flood. If he knows that his father has written his last testament, he has no fear that he is disinherited: and the faithful servant has the same confidence.

2. The good child loves the *society* of his father, and the faithful servant loves to be with his master. Every one has observed that love will thus operate. If then God be a Father, where is his honor? Do men in their native state love to be with God? The believer will know what I mean by being with God. There is a sense in which God is every where; but a special sense in which he is present with his people. Communion with him is as much a reality as communion with a friend. In a friend we do not *see* that spirit with which we hold fellowship. When it has fled, still all that we saw is present, but communion is at an end. God's people have endearing fellowship with him, and there is no blessing which they prize so highly. In the family, in the closet, in the sanctuary, and in the field, they mingle their souls with the Great Spirit, and are happy. The ordinances are appointed for this purpose. One day spent in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

But the men we have described—do they understand the na-

ture, and estimate the privilege of this fellowship? They think they love their Maker, and are displeased if we question their piety; but do they seek communion with him? Are they men of prayer, and accustomed to the work of praise? Do they love retirement and meditation? Do they pore much over the page of inspiration, and do they cultivate a spirit of devotion? All this is to be expected of one who loves to be with God. A few transient thoughts of him as a Benefactor are not a sufficient testimony of supreme attachment. God commands more than this, and if we are his children or his servants, we shall desire more. Else what is meant when we are commanded to "pray without ceasing?" And what does David mean when he says, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God?" Or Job, when he says, "O that I knew where I might find him; that I might come even to his seat?" Now a religion that produces none of all this—that never thirsts after God, nor grieves on account of his absence—is to be suspected as radically deficient. It may serve to deceive, but will never save.

3. A good son and a faithful servant will be *cheerfully obedient*. A dutiful temper is indispensable in either of these stations. The son who does not cheerfully receive and execute the wishes of his father is unworthy of the name, and deserves to be disinherited. And the servant who does not exhibit the same dutiful temper is a mere slave. Let us then apply this test to that class of men who are addressed in the text. Is it their joy to obey the Lord? They will then attend well to his commands. They will read and meditate upon his law, and will make his word the man of their counsel, and will study to obey. Is this the fact? Are they employed in studying ways and means to glorify God, and make mankind happy? Do they discharge with conscientious fidelity all the duties of their respective offices and relations? Are they among the first to feed the poor, instruct the ignorant, reform the vicious? What they would that others should do to them, do they make this the rule of their own conduct? And are they *uniform* in their regard to duty? Do they yield God the service he requires, and exhibit that respect to his name, his word, his worship, and his Son, which he enjoins? Or, to express the whole in a few words, have they a tender conscience, which fears to do wrong, fears to neglect a duty, fears to violate an obligation, dreads the least deviation from the most perfect rectitude? Such a conscience is, of all others, the most decisive test of a holy mind. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "By this shall all

men know that ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you." We may then safely rest the matter here; if men conscientiously regard all that God has spoken as immediately binding upon their consciences and their conduct,—believe them pious; but if they say but little, and care but little about duty, we must retain all our fears.

4. The son and the servant will each be attached to his father's or his master's *family*. If a child or a servant be unhappy at home, it is an omen of evil, an evidence of some unhappy alienation of affection. If we apply this test to the characters addressed in the text, what is the result? Do they attach themselves to the family of Christ? Do they love his disciples, choose them as their inmates, and hold sweet counsel with them, and wish their society for ever? And is their attachment stronger to those who are eminently holy than to others? If we love God, we shall love those most who wear most prominently the marks of his image. With them we shall wish to be identified in a compact, strong and eternal. Hence to hope that we love the Redeemer, while we stand aloof from his family, is absurd. "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Hence, generally, we shall find the people of God in a cluster. We may find a few strayed from the family, but we shall find them uneasy and unhappy till they come and take their place in his house.

5. The servant and the son are very *jealous of the honor* of their father or their master. They will not hear him reproached; they separate themselves from his enemies, and from the place where he is not honored. And all this God expects from those who acknowledge him as their Father or their Master. But do we discover this delicacy of feeling in that class of men who would be esteemed religious, but who have no pretensions to a change of heart? Are they grieved to hear the name, and attributes, and works of the Lord spoken lightly of? Do they retire from the sound of profaneness, and feel themselves abused, if men in their presence will not reverence Jehovah? It must be proper to bring every man's religion to this test. You would esteem no man your friend who could stay, and be content, where he heard you abused. Mere silence in him, while others abused you, would evince that his friendship was deceitful. Now God has assured us that "he is a jealous God?" Of course he will watch the smallest deviations from propriety in those who would be thought to love him. The man who would smile at an oath, or carry on conversation with one who is profane, and show no disapprobation, will find it difficult

to prove that he is grieved when God is dishonored, and will forfeit his claim to piety. One has not a keener sense of the touch of fire than of any contact with profaneness, after he has been sanctified by the grace of God.

FINALLY—The kind son and the dutiful servant will wish to have *others acquainted* with their father and their master. Their own attachment is so strong, that they conceive nothing more to be necessary, than that his character should be known, in order to his being loved and respected. Apply this test, if you please, to that class of men who have no pretensions to having been regenerated, but who still insist upon it that they love God and are friendly to his government and kingdom. Do they wish to extend the knowledge of God to others? Are they grieved that so small a portion of the human family have the sacred volume, and that those who have it know so little of its contents? Do we find them among the first to propagate the gospel? Are they deeply interested in the great work that is at present going on the Christian world? Do they rejoice at every new translation of the scriptures? And are they ready to contribute of their wealth to propagate the truth? All this must follow a strong attachment to God. And if things be otherwise with those who hope that they love him, there is somewhere a radical mistake. If men love the God of the Bible, they will wish others to have the Bible that they may know and love the same God. If they doubt the truth of the Scriptures, and are attached merely to some being whom they style the God of nature, then indeed they may feel indifferent whether men have any other than the book of nature. But this is deism precisely, and men would be ashamed, in the present day, to advocate a system that is becoming obsolete. In fact, there is no God of nature, but the God of the Bible. He who built the hills and built the sun, inspired the book of grace, and is the only God who can save in the hour of distress. Why should we deceive ourselves with a scheme which is rotten, or be content that others should trust their souls to some Jupiter or Moloch, that never had any existence but in the imagination of such as did not like to retain God in their knowledge?

My dear readers, we must come to the conclusion (and the sooner the better) that there is no religion without a change of heart. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." We must have that same religion which has brought others to their knees, and borne them to the place of prayer, and

and cut them off from the men of the world, and rendered them men of faith and of devotion, or we must die without *any*, and perish in our delusions. Religion cannot be shaped to please a carnal mind—cannot be brought down to the frigid taste of unsanctified men. It has remained the same in all ages, and will continue to demand a temper which unsanctified men do not feel, and a conduct which they do not exhibit.

We are the more anxious to do good to that class of men who have been brought into view, because we see many excellences in their character. They are neither intemperate, profane, nor false; they are civil, and decent, and kind, and hospitable; they are often public-spirited. Hence true religion would place them among the *first* on the list of useful men. We grieve to see them lack this one thing needful, because it prevents their usefulness, and mars their happiness.

But we are anxious for another reason, which must not be concealed. We think they are entirely mistaken in their hopes of future happiness. We fear their death-bed will be a scene of stupidity or of horror. We apprehend, (and if we are deceived still we are honest,) that they are in imminent danger of being lost for ever. Their religion has too little to do with a *Savior*: it nourishes too high an opinion of works; it is too *frigid*, too *thoughtless*, too *prayerless*; it is too much *afraid of the cross*; is not sufficiently *humble*, watchful, circumspect, heavenly-minded. We fear it is not the religion of the gospel, and will avail them nothing in the last day. We think it important that they examine their hopes, before it be too late; and if they find that they have not a religion which will stand the test of the last day, they should bow immediately to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why should men intrench themselves in a refuge of lies, to be demolished by the hail of the last day, and leave them unsheltered in the midst of that fearful storm.

If God be a Father, honor him. Devote your life to him, and yield him your richest, best affections. Be ashamed of no duty which he requires; shrink from no sacrifice he demands; and let the world know that you are not ashamed of your Father.

If he be a Master honor him. Make his law your study, and consider his service your freedom. Then you will at last hear him say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It will then be your privilege and your honor to serve him in some more elevated sphere of usefulness for ever.

## SERMON XIV.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S SHEET ANCHOR.

PSALM CXIX. 116.

Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope

FEW words in the English language are used more loosely than the word hope. If one feels desirous that God may hereafter renew him, he assures us that he is not without hope; if he expects to be saved *without* conversion, he hopes; and if he presumes *without any evidence* that he is now a child of God, he possesses a hope. None of these examples gives us the proper use of the word. Hope always fixes on a future good, and rests on present evidence. David anticipated future and eternal blessedness in the presence of his Lord, and he had present evidence for believing that he should enjoy this future good. But he was still a sinful man, for there is no man that liveth and sinneth not. His repeated transgressions interrupted his hope. If he should at last fail of the expected glory he knew it would expose him to shame and contempt in the view of all those who knew of his former expectations. He professed to love the Lord—had often expressed his confidence in his covenant faithfulness, and had been pronounced to be the man after God's own heart. And after all this, to fail of heaven, and find himself associated with God's enemies, would be dreadful beyond the power of description or conception.

Hence he prays, "Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live." He was confident that the true believer would persevere. God had given his word that he would uphold his people, and David prays that God would do as he had promised. He believed, too, that the spiritual life of the saint was in the hands of God. The expectation that I may live is founded on the calculation that God will uphold me according unto his word. That holy man had no confidence in his own strength. God must keep him, or he should at last be ashamed of his hope. Brethren, the same apprehensions, and the same prayer, will become us all.

To understand the *foundation*, the *nature*, and the *operations* of that hope of which we shall not at last be ashamed, is a high and valuable attainment. To designate such a hope will be my present object.

I. That we may not at last be ashamed of our hope, it must originate in a *change* of the *temper* of the *heart*. The hopes of many have a far different origin. Some presume that they are fair candidates for heaven, because they have been kept from the pollutions into which many others have plunged. Their parents were more watchful, and they were placed in different circumstances from other youth, and grew to manhood uncontaminated by the vices of the age. And they presume that their exemption from vice is the result of religion. Like the young man in the gospel they think themselves fair candidates for heaven, and very deserving of universal esteem, because they have been kept from the grosser transgressions of the divine law, ascribing to divine grace what is the effect of mere restraints.

Others have confidence in their good estate, because in some period of seriousness they had exercises resembling those of which others, now believers, were the subjects. They saw themselves to be in danger, had some compunctions of conscience, felt great distress and at length obtained relief. Immediately they presumed that they were new creatures, and were confirmed in the strong belief that they should see the kingdom of God; and upon this hope they have lived ever since.

Others have been at some period of their life the subjects of a partial reformation. They have broken off from some grosser crimes, are become more civil and decent, and although they can relate no exercises resembling the operations of grace, yet venture to hope that there has been a secret, silent operation upon their hearts. Of their religion little more can be said than that "the unclean spirit has gone out."

Some build their hope on an opinion which others have incautiously expressed with regard to them. Some one, perhaps a person not qualified to judge, has expressed the conviction that they were believers, they grasped at the opinion expressed, and believed it true, and rest their souls on this sandy foundation.

Others hope for salvation because they have been admitted to the communion. In an evil hour the doors of the church were thrown open so wide, that they, with all their impenitence and unbelief, found admittance. They are now treated as Christians, and

addressed as such, and having committed no overt act sufficient to expel them from the communion, the delusion becomes every day stronger and stronger. No one would suspect them of piety were they not seen at the Lord's table, and but for this fact they would entertain no hope of admittance into heaven. Forgetting that many will at last cry, and be rejected, "Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence," they fold their arms confident that heaven is theirs for ever.

Others have hoped because of some dream or vision in which Jesus opened his arms, or heaven its portals to their reception. A voice seemed to proclaim, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," or a text of Scripture providentially promised them salvation. Thus they rest their perishing souls upon a straw.

Brethren, none of these things are the origin of that hope of which we shall not be ashamed. It must begin in a change of temper. The carnal mind must be regenerated. The heart of stone must be taken away, and there must be given a heart of flesh. Old things must pass away and all things become new. There must begin in the soul a divine life. God must be loved and Christ received by faith. The man must be born of God, and there must appear the unquestioned features of a new man. Christ must be formed in us the hope of glory. Such must be the commencement of our religion, or the time will come when we shall be ashamed of our hope.

II. That we may not at last be ashamed of our hope, *it must render us holy.*

"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." And we are taught the same truth in this text—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." Now Christ can, in no other sense, be in the believer, than as his doctrines form our creed, his temper reigns in our hearts, his example guides our steps, and his love engrosses our affections. To hope for salvation through Christ, this hope must render us like Christ. The design of religion is, that through its influence, God may "purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." We read of a hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. Gospel hope is joined with faith and love, and will not be found alone. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity." He, then, whose hope does not make him a better man will know the pain of finding his hope perish when God taketh away his soul. It is a question placed beyond all controversy, that he, who is begot-

ten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, will rise with him to newness of life. The man, then, whose life and conversation is such that he can hardly support a profession, whose associates have no hope that he is a believer, and with whom the children of God can have no fellowship, may rest assured that his hope will one day render him ashamed. To support, in the view of men, a fair profession, is certainly a small part of the duties of a Christian: for, in addition to all this, we must "keep the heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." When the Christian has appeared with advantage, in the view of others, still he has a mighty warfare in his own bosom, and will have occasion to wonder at last if he finds himself in heaven. Holiness of life, then, is an indispensable associate of that hope that maketh not ashamed.

III. That we may not at last be ashamed of our hope, *it must bear examination.*

If we are afraid to examine our religion, lest it should be found *not* to be the religion of the gospel, there is evidence of conscious hypocrisy. We are to be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear, and if we are to be always ready to *give* a reason, we must always *have* one; and, if we have one, we shall not be afraid to examine the ground of our hope. Those who have a good hope through grace can have no fear as to the result of an examination.

Hope is spoken of as an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast—but an anchor is a useless appendage if there be no bottom in which it can be cast. Those who lose their hope as soon as they examine it, who are plunged into doubt and darkness whenever they inquire into their state, have a hope which assuredly will make them ashamed. Hence the exhortation, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith—prove your own selves."

IV. That we may not at last be ashamed of our hope it must *live without an effort.* We shall bend all our efforts to be holy and our hope will support itself.

He who finds it difficult to support the hope that he is a believer, and must be for ever grasping at every word and thought that may afford him confidence in his good estate is a very doubtful character. While the Christian agonizes to keep his feet in the path of life, he hangs very loosely by his hope; while he strives to enter in at the strait gate, he considers it far less important that he sup-

port constantly the unshaken belief that he *has entered in*; the hypocrite takes more pains to keep alive his hope, than to warm his heart. It is far easier to wrest from a Christian his hope, than to wrest it from a self-deceiver. Let a close and trying sermon be delivered, and it will be frequently found that God's people and no others have resigned their hopes. They *dare* examine the state of their religion, and they *will* examine, be the consequence what it may. If the result is an abandonment of their hope, this but humbles them, and they return to God, their hope revives, and they are made happy. But he, whose hope embodies all his religion, has to make a perpetual effort to keep that hope alive, and has through the whole of this effort many apprehensions that he shall at last prove a cast-away. He feels and he assures us that he would not give up his hope for a world; but it would be worth ten thousand worlds to him if he would. It is his mistaken hope that prevents him from being alarmed. He is on the very brink of death, but he dreams that all is well, and his dreams hold him profoundly asleep, and multiply the dangers that await him.

V. The hope that maketh not ashamed is always *interrupted by sin*, while the hypocrite retains his hope unimpaired in the midst of transgression. When the Christian commits sin he is conscious of acting out of character, and his hope trembles. He knows that piety from its very nature is at war with every corruption, and that nothing but perfect redemption can still the quarrel. It is, to pursue the figure, on both sides a war of extermination. Hence the least disposition to parley with sin mars the hope of heaven. But we have seen the profane, the drunkard, the false, the contentious, the prayerless, and every other species of transgressors hold fast to their hope while they were led captive by sin. Perhaps we can name no sign that is darker. To entertain a hope of salvation, that is unshaken by sin, argues a morbid conscience and an unbelieving heart. It evinces the absence of every soft, and tender, and holy affection, and settles the point that Christ has not there impressed his image. Oh, how many with a hope like this, have passed on unsanctified to the death-bed, and have at last found their hope perish when God taketh away the soul.

VI. That we may not be ashamed of our hope *others* must have a *higher opinion* of our piety than ourselves.

Unless there be something distressingly wrong in our lives, others will feel *more* favorably towards us than we do toward our-

selves. Suppose there is nothing in our life very immoral, still there may be coldness and indifference to religion, worldly-mindedness, covetousness, neglect of duty, lightness, and folly, which will render the hopes of others for us small, but if our own hopes continue undiminished our case will be dark. The Christian will give others better evidence of his piety than himself, because others can only survey the externals of the man, while he sees the sink of iniquity in his own heart and feels all its base and mischievous operations. The Christian would find it comparatively easy to obtain salvation if nothing more was necessary than to be pious in the esteem of others. And yet we know that the Christian finds it no easy matter to still the tongue of slander. Our Lord himself could not so live as to silence calumny and detraction. His apostles were vilified, and all who are faithful in Christ Jesus must suffer, and still it is comparatively easy so to live that men shall be able to say nothing against our Christian character and say the truth. God's people cannot make bad men love them while they follow Christ; but they may so live that all their slanders shall be false, and all their reproaches groundless,—may give their bitterest enemies unequivocal evidence that they love their Master, while yet they may judge very unfavorably relative to themselves. The fruits of their religion, better seen by others than themselves, will be fair and wholesome. Thus will operate that hope, which maketh not ashamed: it will give others, not its possessor, decisive evidence of its stability.

VI. That we may not, at last, be ashamed of our hope, it must put us upon *earnest endeavors* to reach *the object of our hope*. If heaven is the object of our hope, we shall endeavor to bring so much of heaven down to earth as possible. That good which we wait for with eager desire we perpetually anticipate, and thus taste beforehand. The amazing good in prospect will employ to reach it every power of the soul. It is known to the good man that barriers, numerous and formidable, block the way of life. The danger of final disappointment is great. The indolent will fall short of the prize. We are assured that "the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The apostle says, "I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The believer will labor and be anxious to know what is the hope of

his calling, and what the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints. Heaven will be viewed as worth all the pains that can be taken to reach that world. There will be great wrestling in prayer. The soul will put forth all its energies to break its way through the barriers of death to the fields of light. The true believer, counting the things unseen as infinitely surpassing the things seen and temporal, will labor earnestly for the meat which endureth to everlasting life. It will be seen that he is aiming at something great and invaluable. In the pursuit of this good, every minor object will lose, comparatively, its value; will sink from his view, and leave his mind absorbed, and his heart supremely set upon God and his kingdom. He will not count his own life dear to him, "not having on his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith" of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. In one word, the man who has chosen God as his portion, and heaven as his home, will be in earnest. A few dull prayers and a few listless efforts will not satisfy. He will feel that he has entered upon a race, and that a crown of glory is the prize. Hence, he will lay aside every weight, and run with patience. Then, on reaching the end of his race, his hope will not make him ashamed, nor will he be ashamed of his hope. I close with a few

## REMARKS.

1. The subject should urge us to examine ourselves, and render us willing to be examined.

The danger of being deceived is great; and the consequences of such deception irreparable. How unspeakably horrid to find on the death-bed, or, perhaps, at the very instant that we are dying, that our hope is a dream. It is too late to repair the mischief, or have it repaired. There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither we hasten. To know that the character is formed, and find it a bad character—the destiny is fixed, and fixed in perdition; no language can depict the despair and horror of such a discovery. Hence, if we can know the worst of our case, before we die, how desirable!

2. The subject should render us submissive and thoughtful in every scene of life, by which God tries our hope and proves our faith. Comparatively, it is of no importance what we suffer here, if we may, by these sufferings, be waked from our delusions and escape the wrath to come. If our enjoyments in the present

world should be in some measure diminished, it is a matter of small moment, if by this means we can be qualified for the rest and enjoyment of heaven. If we find that the fruits of our afflictions are to take away sin, we may rather rejoice that God will deal with us so kindly. The early Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. If our hope in heaven is unwavering, it must be about all that the good man needs—it is that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that must satisfy us, even if it be an inheritance in reserve.

3. If our hope is such that we expect not to be ashamed of it at the last, let us not be ashamed of it now.

Men are often seen to conduct as if they were mortified at the idea of being considered believers. They have been known to make an effort to conceal the fact that they had taken upon them the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are now ashamed of their hope, or rather, of the Savior who is professedly the object of their hope; and our apprehension is, that he will be ashamed of them when he shall appear in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels.

4. In that hope, of which we shall not at last be ashamed, we may now rejoice. "Which hope we have," says an apostle, "as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and entering into that within the veil." Thus our present hope has to do with the joys of heaven. It is the privilege of those who have a good hope through grace to rejoice and be happy. The child of God is not called to gloominess, and darkness, and sorrow, and apprehension. He is the only man that can be happy, whatever scenes may open around him. "Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet he will rejoice in the Lord, will joy in the God of his salvation." He has nothing to fear but sin; God will take care that nothing else hurt him, if he will be careful not to be destroyed by sin. "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life—nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers—nor things present, nor things to come—nor height nor depth—nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world; or life or death; or things present or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

5. To so live as to sustain a high hope of heaven is the way to die in peace, with anticipated prospects of future blessedness. This remark is founded on the conclusion that Christ will prove faithful to his dying people: his promise is, "I will never leave, I will never forsake thee." This promise, I have supposed, must imply that Christ will be present with the dying Christian.

If on this subject I am mistaken, then this remark goes for nothing. Oh! may it not deceive the people of God!

I have sometimes tried to believe that the matter was otherwise, and I have thus reasoned: If the people of God are, at any period of life, peculiarly unfaithful, or if they have sinned, to a miserably late hour, some darling lust, some right eye sin, from which the covenant of God secures their final emancipation, he may punish them for this on the bed of death, and then suffer them to be saved, "*though as by fire.*" And that passage which seems to intimate, that when flesh and heart fail us, God may be the strength of our heart and our portion. But after all that has been said, the hope that I may wake up in death, and put forth a repentance that shall reach back and cover the sins of a life-time; or shall reach many months back, and secure my pardon when flesh and heart is failing, and then save me the necessity of being holy in early life, is rather an attempt to hang the hope of heaven on a spider's web. And when I have thus provided a hope for some departed friend, and who died in horrid darkness, that I fear is lost, I hardly dare rest my own soul upon the fabric I have erected. May the God of mercy give you a good hope, through grace, that shall not perish when he taketh away the soul! May that hope brighten up in death, and be uttered like that of Simeon's, in a song that angels love to hear: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

6. To live with this high hope, is to speak when we are dead. It is said of one, that though dead he yet speaketh. Of Enoch it is said, "He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." His story will continue to be told as long as there is a single volume of the book of God still in use. And every believer who dies, giving high hopes of heaven, and maintains a life consistent with those hopes, leaves a savor of godliness behind him that will shine through scores of years, and be brighter and brighter when the sun has gone into total darkness.

There is an eternity attached to the moral actions of every believer that can no more become extinct than the rays of light from

the sun can melt away while the sun still shines. The Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's light, and will shine upon them for ever—and they by his light see light—and the light they see they reflect for ever. Hence every believer is a light that cannot go out—when removed from earth he will go to shine in a nobler sphere—a star of light for ever.

7. This subject should show the ungodly how unprepared they are to die. What would be a preparation to die, is a preparation to live.

## SERMON XV.

### HEAVENLY FELLOWSHIP.

I JOHN I. 3.

And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

THERE is an interchange of relationship and affection between the parts of God's holy kingdom, which it is delightful to contemplate. There is no doubt a sublime and holy fellowship between the different persons of the Godhead, laying a foundation for uninterrupted and never-ending enjoyment. There is a communion and a friendship, reciprocal and permanent, between God and angels, and between him and glorified spirits, and this fellowship is kindly extended to the members of the church militant. "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." What an enterprise of grace, to establish communion between a world of rebels and their Maker! And how surprising, brethren, that our repeated provocations should not have cut us off from this communion.

It will be my object to remark upon the nature and extent of this fellowship. It is acknowledged to be a subject on which one can obtain no distinctness of views without the aid of experience. If it should be a precious hour with you the next time you come to meet him at his table, and Christ should bring you into his banqueting house, and spread over you the banner of his love, you will learn more of the nature of this fellowship in that single hour, than would be taught you, by a gospel ministry, unassisted by that experience, in a century. We are told

I. That our *fellowship is with the Father*. This fellowship originates,

1. In the relation of *Creator* and *creature*. Here is opened the first intercourse between heaven and earth. Creatures drop from his hand, and immediately raise their eye to him as the Author of their being. On this relationship is founded a most endearing intercourse. God must take pleasure in viewing his creature, in seeing it precisely the being of his choice, and encouraging it to

lean upon his arm ; and the creature, till alienated by some ill-fated apostacy, must take pleasure in surveying the uncreated excellences of his Maker. This relationship extends to unholy beings as entirely as to those that are holy, but through the influence of depravity it generates in their case no fellowship. God abhors the vessel he has formed, and the potsherd strives with his Maker. It is only where the relationship has not been sundered by apostacy that it becomes the basis of a pleasant and permanent communion.

2. There exists between believers and their heavenly Father the relationship of *Benefactor* and *recipient*, constituting a medium of delightful fellowship. His hands daily dispense our blessings. What he gives us we gather. He opens his hand and we are abundantly supplied. Conscious of our dependence, we approach his throne by prayer, and spread our wants before him, and he is pleased with our confidence and encourages us to repeat our requests. Thus through the medium of a kind and watchful providence, there is kept open an intercourse between heaven and earth. The benefits being dispensed with benevolence, and received with ingenuous gratitude, lead to pure and holy fellowship between the dispenser and the beneficiary. God is also the benefactor of ungodly men, but his benefits are not received with thanksgiving, nor spent obediently, hence there is opened between God and them no delightful intercourse. They receive his mercies as the beast feeds in his pastures, and drinks at the brook, unmindful of his Benefactor.

3. The relation of *Lawgiver* and *subject* creates a tender and interesting fellowship. The moral Governor makes known his will, gives to law its sanctions, issues promises, and presents motives to obedience, and the dutiful subject becomes cheerfully the Lord's servant, and thus is generated an interesting communion. God is present by his Spirit to expound his law ; and his subjects waiting to know the will of their sovereign, take pleasure in obedience, and are loved by their Lord. Hence the infinite space between God and man is filled, and the heart of the Lawgiver and his subjects mingle their affections, in a grand and noble fellowship. There is the same relationship between God and his disobedient subjects. Devils are the subjects of God's moral government, and will be under obligation to obedience for ever, but depravity *mars*, and, when it is total, *destroys* communion.

4. That which crowns the whole, which blesses all the other relationships, and is finally the principal source of communion, is

the *mutual attachment* which subsists between God and his people. He has put his fear in their hearts, has brought them to delight in his statutes, and to walk in them, and they have chosen him as their Lord. They claim him as their Father, and they are owned by him as his dutiful children. They approve all his character and delight in his praise, and he takes pleasure in them, puts upon them his own beauties, makes them what he can love, and then loves them. Thus we have fellowship with the Father, and this fellowship will be increasingly sweet till we are prepared for his presence, and are joined to the full assembly of the Church of the first-born in heaven.

II. Not only have we fellowship with the Father, but *with his Son Jesus Christ*. With him we have fellowship,

1. As *Redeemer* and *redeemed*. When we had forfeited our life at the hand of justice, the Lord Jesus Christ took our place, and bore our sins. To him we owe our escape from hell, and that escape he purchased with his bloody sweat and dying groans. The price of our redemption could be no less than the life of the Redeemer. And now, from the throne of his glory, he dispenses the blessings which he died to purchase, to those who are made willing in the day of his power. These thankfully receive, and daily rejoice in the fruits of his redeeming love. Thus is opened between the Savior and his people an inexhaustible resource of pure and precious fellowship

2. We are in fellowship with the Redeemer as the *head* and the *members*. Says an apostle, "We are members of his body, of his flesh and his bones." He is to his people a source of spiritual life, and they in a sense, not to be fully told, constitute the body of Christ. Their life is hid in him, and from him circulates through all his members, as the natural head governs the vital principles of the body. Hence he views his people as parts, *precious parts*, of himself.

The figure is changed, but the same idea is retained, when he is called the *vine*, and his people the *branches*. We know that they live only by their union to the vine. Thus the Church daily derives its strength and its life from Christ. For their nourishment he has graciously provided on earth a gospel feast, and in heaven an endless banquet; and if any hungry, thirsty soul would see Christ, he will be there to sustain him with the bread of heaven. I hope many of my readers will feel the truth of the text. The avenues of this communion will be opened, and we shall know the

blessedness of having fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

When we view the Redeemer in his human nature, there are still other sources of fellowship.

We fellowship him in his *sufferings*. From him and from us God in his wisdom may hide his face. When he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he came so into our place that we can sympathize with him. The believer is sometimes deserted of the sensible presence of his Lord. In such a case, our trial is similar, but probably far less dreadful than his. Hence, under the frowns of Heaven he pitied us, and we have a very sensible fellowship with him.

Or if men rise upon us in malice, persecute us, cast out our names as evil, and account us the disturbers of the peace, or even nail us to a cross, Christ can fellowship us. He is at present raised above the malice of men, but he did bear their reproach. He has not forgotten the impious band that united to achieve his ruin. The scribes, pharisees, Sadducees, the high priest, Pilate, Judas, and the whole sanhedrim united their forces for his overthrow. Though in heaven, he still recollects the fraud, the falsehood, the treachery, and malice, which lined his path and set his temple with thorns. He can never forget the ingratitude of that generation whose diseases he healed, whose leprosy he cleansed, whose ears he unstopped, whose blind he enlightened, whose poor he fed, whose sins he pardoned, and whose dead he raised. In these matters we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Hence, between him and his people, when called to similar trials, there is a fellowship of sufferings. To have been fellow-sufferers in the same exile, the same prison, the same bondage, the same shipwreck, or the same wilderness, creates, you know, an endearing fellowship. And, brethren, it will endear Christ to us, and us to him, for ever, that we have passed the same desert, and were beset by the same race of un pitying beings. And the promise, you know, is, that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

And we have experienced together the malice of the same tempter. He knew the intrigues, felt the buffetings, and bore the malice of the adversary. He still remembers the forty days in the wilderness, and can furnish us with the same weapons with which he conquered. And we are not ignorant of his devices. Still he goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. But

in all our sufferings from his malice, our Redeemer is nigh to help us, and has fellowship with us in our trials.

And the same is true of the sufferings incident to human nature. He endured hunger, thirst, want, pain, and poverty. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." The best birth-place that could be furnished him was a manger, the best home a cottage, and the best offering, when his mother was purified, a pair of doves. And his life was oppressed throughout with the same poverty. He eat bread in the sweat of his face, and was glad to rest his bones on a bed of straw. Hence, if his people are poor, if they lack bread, or raiment, or home, or friend, or offering, he feels for them; and there is produced an endearing fellowship. If Christ will pass with us through the same vale of poverty, and through the same scenes of want, neglect, disease, and pain, we can utter no complaint.

Even in death the fellowship remains unbroken. He felt and suffered under the cold chills of death, and that the most painful. His tender nerves quivered on the ragged nails, his temples bled under the thorns, and his heart upon the point of the spear. Hence Christ can fellowship us when we die. We shall meet with him in the valley, and his rod, and his staff will comfort us. How sweet will it be to have fellowship with him there!

And we can have fellowship with him in his resurrection. He has passed through all the terrors of the grave, he has lighted that prison, has chased away the glooms of the vault, and has prepared for us a song against that hour, "Oh, death, where is thy sting?" He has secured to his followers a happy resurrection. Angels heard him exclaim, as he rose, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." He has styled himself the first fruits of the resurrection, and we shall all have fellowship with him in his escape from the damps of the sepulchre. As he is our head, if we love him, we shall rise with him to everlasting life. How sweet to have so finished a fellowship with our Redeemer.

But, after all this is said, the grand medium of fellowship is *holy love*. We must have complacency in his character, and he in ours, that our sympathies may be perfect. He must clothe us with his own beauties before he can fellowship us, and we must have a spiritual discernment of his excellences. Hence, how certain that impenitent men can hold no communion with him. And how undeniable that our fellowship with him in the coming world will be more perfect than in the present. We shall then see him

as he is, and our love to him will be perfect. Let us attend a little to this *future* and more perfect fellowship.

1. Our fellowship will hereafter be richer and sweeter, as we shall leave behind us all our fears and doubts. There remains so much iniquity in all our hearts, that the most holy have much occasion to fear that they shall never reach the kingdom of heaven. And in all our duties, and our songs, our feasts, these fears are present to alloy our pleasures. But when Christ shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. The redeemed shall be confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness. Our fears will be gone, the conflict ended, the foe defeated, the prize won, and the palms of victory awarded. Then what a sweet communion! On looking back we shall see the wilderness all trodden over, not another snare or pit in our path, not another serpent to bite, nor foe to assail. Jordan and the desert behind, our feet planted on the hills of promise, and our hearts at rest. We may desery other pilgrims, toiling, weary, tempted, trembling, "faint, yet pursuing," but our own case happily decided. And who can calculate what joy he shall feel when his fears are gone, how sweet that marriage supper where there will mingle no apprehensions of disappointment.

2. Our fellowship will be more enlightened. Here, at the best, we see but through a glass darkly. Every view we take of Christ and truth is limited and obscure, but in heaven we shall know even as we are known. *This* is a dark world, *that will be lighted* by the glory of God and the Lamb. And our communion with the Redeemer will increase its pleasure, in proportion to our increase of light.

3. The fellowship of heaven will not be disturbed with unbelief. Faith will have done its work and be changed to vision. The veil will be rent, every object of faith be a reality, and the things unseen be distinctly developed. If at present, though now we see him not, yet believing, we can often rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, how increased will be that joy, and how unsullied that glory when our eyes shall see him!

4. Our communion in heaven will be enhanced by the absence of every unbeliever. We shall have no apprehension that any traitor has taken his seat with us at the heavenly banquet. They that were ready will have gone into the marriage, and the door will be shut. The tares will have been gathered up. In the apostolic family there will be no Judas. We shall cheerfully extend the fellowship we feel to all who shall drink with us of the river of the water of life.

5. And what is a still richer thought, we shall be holy. No

body of sin and death will be there to mar the feast. Every corruption will be cured, every grace made perfect. The Redeemer will frown upon none of the holy family. Oh, can it be that I shall be there, and you brethren, so changed! No guilty conscience to spoil our fellowship. We shall feel that we have a right there, shall apprehend no wrong motive, shall fear no repulse, and be disturbed with no wrong affections. This busy world will not intrude its cares, to mar our pleasures and pollute our offerings. As we shall yield ourselves to the Redeemer in every song, there will be no reserve. He will be seen to deserve the whole heart, and the whole will be his. No other object will claim a share in our worship, or divert the current of our affections. Hence our communion with the Redeemer will be uninterrupted, and unalloyed. Every act of fellowship will raise us higher, and still higher in the scale of being, till at length we shall find our hearts glowing with an ardor akin to that which angels feel, and our song vying with theirs in the sweetness of its melody. Brethren, let it be our paramount concern to equip ourselves for this sublime and immortal fellowship.

6. There is something pleasant in the thought that we shall not carry to the heavenly banquet these weak and dying bodies. At these communions we are liable to be faint and weary. Sabbaths and ordinances lose at present much of their sweetness through the morbid influence of a diseased body. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. We tire amid the heavenly road. Hence many of our tears, hence many of our groans, and much of our gloom and despondency. But, when once we have breathed the air of heaven, we shall feel all the vigor of youth, we shall tire no more, we shall be dull no more. And how rich an ingredient will this be in our future fellowship!

FINALLY.—In the coming world our fellowship with Christ, and with his holy family will continue uninterrupted for ever. Much of our comfort in prayer, and in the ordinances, and in all our acts of devotion in the present life, is destroyed by the intruding thought that the season will terminate. If we had begun to taste the blessedness of heaven, and had almost forgotten that we were in the body, we were soon reminded of our mistake, and were constrained to descend and have our ardor cooled by a flood of worldly cares. These Sabbaths, and these communions have their periods. We shall find nothing permanent till we come to heaven, and there nothing will be transitory. Our song and our fellowship will be increasingly new for ever.

## SERMON XVI.

### THE WISE BUILDER.\*

PROVERBS XIV. 1.

Every wise woman buildeth her house.

It is remarkable that the Scriptures have adapted their instruction to every character and condition in human life. Here the father and the master, the son and the servant, learn their duties. Here the husband and the wife, the child, the youth, and the old man; the magistrate and the monarch are each instructed in his respective obligations. Hence every one should study that book, and form a character after the model it exhibits. The text will lead me, as you perceive, to address one great division of the human family. This division includes about half of our race. It will be my object to exhibit some thoughts calculated to aid in forming the female character. The text suggests a natural division, and will lead me to describe the wise woman, and show that such a woman will build up her house.

I. I am to describe the wise woman. It will be obvious that in this description I must not confine myself to any particular age or situation, but must follow her through all the various offices and relationships which she may be called to sustain. I observe, then in the

1st place—That *she must know how to manage with prudence and care the concerns of a family*. All other qualifications combined would never atone for deficiency here. Inspiration declares it the business of the woman “to guide the house.” Where the mother is a cipher in her family, it deranges every domestic concern, and is a certain prelude to poverty and misery. No other person can feel the interest, or endure the fatigue, requisite to the discharge of these duties. Hence the daughter, who for any reason whatever, is kept ignorant of domestic concerns, is rendered incapable of filling the station which the God of nature has assigned her. And to be willing to remain ignorant argues a depraved taste. It should be our aim to prepare ourselves to be useful in the place

\* Prepared and delivered at a donation party given by the ladies of his congregation during the author's residence at Amherst, Mass.

assigned us, and to fill that place with dignity and honor. Hence every daughter, and every wife, should cheerfully habituate herself to the burden of domestic care.

How many when they had thought themselves equipped for the direction of a family, have needed to learn the first principles of domestic economy. That taste which prepares a female to adjust the ornaments of her house, is not sufficient, nor that wealth which can *furnish* it with elegance; nor that ruggedness which can endure the drudgery of home; nor the whole combined. Health is an invaluable blessing, and a fine taste is a source of much comfort, and wealth has its value; but in connection with all these, there must be a nice and accurate knowledge of domestic economy, to render a wife a help-meet. The husband is ruined who does not find his house a respectable, social, neat, and happy home. If he can be more happy in any other house than his own, he is a lost man.

2. *A wise woman will improve her taste, and her manners.* By taste, in this connection, I mean a relish for the beauties of nature and of art; and by manners, a suitable expression of a good taste. Some taste is indispensable in the decent and respectable management of a family. The design of the domestic relations was the augmentation of social blessedness. Mere subsistence is not all we need, but all we can *acquire* without some improvement of taste: and no faculty is more improvable. Its improvement must add to our innocent enjoyment, and was given us for this purpose.

I am aware that many have been considered *proud* because they exhibited taste. But the probability is, that one can be as proud of his hovel and his rags, as another of his palace and his dress. I have seen beings in the *shape of men*, who were proud of their deformities, and have exhibited no shame when they had acted the ape, and played the mastiff. *They* are proud who treat with neglect or contempt their equals or inferiors; or exhibit scorn towards those who cannot make the same show as themselves of beauty, learning, or riches. But all this has no connection with taste, except to evince its absence.

Why should not the improvement of this faculty as well as others, render us happy? Why are the civilized more happy than the savage? Why is the landscape spread out before us unless an improved taste may derive pleasure from the view? One universal and dull monotony would have served every purpose of *utility*, aside from the pleasures of taste. The flower might have had but one hue, and the rainbow but one color, if taste is a useless

faculty. The varied sceneries of spring, harvest, and winter, are useless, as far as we can see, but to the eye of taste. Has the wise Creator, who in everything else had his purpose, painted nature in the richest variety of shade without design? *He* cannot be charmed *himself* with these created beauties, and the *brute* has no relish for variety and harmony. If done *for men*, and done in vain till the taste be cultivated, how incumbent on all who would be happy to prepare themselves to see a God employed in painting the beautiful landscape! The female especially, whose taste, when cultivated, is exquisitely delicate, who would answer the end of her being, and take pleasure in the variety and beauty of God's works, will not permit a talent so useful to be unimproved.

And with her taste there is no fear that she will not improve her manners. I acknowledge that this is a species of improvement which relates principally to the *present world*, but it has an important bearing upon religion. The Bible enjoins it upon us to be courteous; it qualifies us to make our religion useful; it repels prejudice, and gives us readier access to the heart. Ease of manners will procure us friends, extend our influence, and increase our usefulness. In a female, it creates a dignity which commands respect, an enchanting softness that ensures esteem. It is not religion, but it is her handmaid, and is not beneath the dignity of a *minister to teach* or a *Christian to learn*.

3. *A wise woman will aim to improve her mind.* This department of our nature, to which we ascribe perception, thought, reason, and judgment, is capable of vast enlargement. It is at first, like the body, small of stature; and its first operations, like the infant actions, are feeble. Like the body it grows to maturity by nutriment; or by neglect, may remain through life in its infant state. It is amazing how circumscribed are the limits of thought in some whose years indicate wisdom. When they should have explored much of the natural and moral world, their minds have scarcely left the threshold of their habitation. And ignorance is sure to foster base affections. Hence pride, envy, jealousy, censoriousness, suspicion, and calumny. The ignorant judge of every object by their own limited experience. Every action and every object is brought to the standard of their own contracted apprehensions; is hewn down, and shaped and moulded, to their own dwarfish conceptions. Hence one-half of the tumult and misery of our world. The ignorant have within themselves no source of happiness, and they are a barrier to the happiness of others. Like some dull do-

mestic animal, they never go abroad for food, but stay rather and starve about the place of their home.

The mind is enlarged by receiving ideas, and by using them as materials of thought and reasoning. And these materials may be collected, not merely from books, but from the volume of nature, and from every event of providence and of grace. To enlarge the mind is merely to learn to think wisely; and is the duty of all, to whom God has kindly given the power of thought.

To be willing to remain ignorant, is to feel indifferent whether God's great object in our creation be accomplished. We have at present only begun our existence; we are destined to a nobler state. If we prove obedient subjects to God's holy kingdom, he will continue, by his providence and his grace, to ennoble our natures for ever. The infant in its mother's arms, if not injured by her who should be its best friend, is yet to be an angel. All through eternity we may hope that it will be still rising to a nobler stature. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." And happily we live in an age when no man presumes to say, that the female mind possesses any natural imbecility, which must necessarily cramp its growth, or depress its manly stature.

Every wise woman, then, will enlarge her mind; will read, and think, and reason. She will be especially ambitious to grow in the knowledge of God; will become acquainted with her own being, and with being in general; that she may be the more happy, and the more useful. Sisters, mothers, there lies a world around you, and within your reach, which it is your duty to explore. It rests with you to determine whether you will carry with you to the grave a contracted mind, or a mind large as the regions of space. Men have been found base enough to libel your characters, and have pronounced the female sex made for servitude. The reproach is unmerited, and has been promptly repelled. It belongs to you to settle this question for ever, and show the slanderer that you are capable of an intellectual dignity, which can look him into deserved contempt. Endeavor in yourselves, and your daughters, to give noble examples of female magnanimity; to reach that growth of thought that shall make you and them blessings to unborn generations, and to the world.

4. *A wise woman will endeavor to enlighten and improve her conscience.* This is that faculty of the soul by which we weigh the morality of an action; than which no power of our nature is more susceptible of improvement. To improve the conscience we must give it light, and let it guide us. Every one has a conscience, and

will be guided more or less by its dictates, in the way of life or death; and, if that conscience be *uninformed*, or *misinformed*, it will lead us on the route to ruin. The papist is conscientious when he worships the mother of Christ, the Mahometan when he stabs his brother, the Hindoo when he immolates his offspring, and the Persian when he prays to the sun. Paul, while he persecuted the saints, thought he did God service. There is no calculating where conscience may lead us, if it be unenlightened by the Bible or the Spirit of God. *Well enlightened*, it guides us to happiness and heaven. But wrong will not become right because we are conscientious in the wrong. This has been supposed to be the meaning of that text, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he;" but this is a very gross perversion of a very plain passage. In a female a tender conscience is an indispensable ornament. To see her fly from wrong, as the tender nerve shrinks from the touch of fire, is her highest beauty. It casts about her a glory which no slanderer can tarnish; a beauty which neither time, nor care, nor age, nor trials can deface. She will have honor in any circle where her name is mentioned, and influence in whatever concern she enlists. These will attach an honor to her offspring, and there will rest a glory upon her grave that will long survive her ashes.

One of this description I knew, and I love to remember, and mention her. Her presence awed sin into shame, rendered the slanderer dumb, and the proud humble. All about her loved her, for she loved them. Unless she could speak well of her neighbor she was silent. Her piety was respected, because her conscience was enlightened. She gathered around her the pious and the wise, and made them happy till she was summoned to heaven. They wept at her funeral, and her mantle, I hope, fell on some who witnessed her ascension. Her children were respected by all who knew their mother, and some of them I hope will enjoy her society in heaven.

A female *without a conscience* is a frightful character. Her husband can have no confidence in her fidelity, and who can guarantee the character of her children? No prudent man will make her house his home. Her touch pollutes, and her embrace is death. To all about her she opens the avenues of infamy and hell. To the full extent of her influence she carries misery and tears. She destroys her children, poisons the streams of friendship, breaks the bonds of affection, and chills every stream of social and celestial life. And, finally, there settles upon her grave a dark, black cloud, a cloud in which there is no bow of promise, a horrid beacon to

unborn generations, warning them not to make shipwreck of conscience.

5. *A wise woman will be particularly careful to cultivate the heart* There may be improvements made in the temper and affections of the heart, aside from religion. The *instinctive affections* are capable of improvement by other means than grace. Selfish motives, or an improved taste, may lead us to become tender, affectionate, kind, and soft, in our social and domestic intercourse.

Still grace is the only effectual source of right affections. The heart is naturally too hard to be much softened by any other than a celestial influence. The baser passions must be eradicated, holy affections infused and cultivated, and the whole life made new, by the same creative power that formed us at first. The female character *when otherwise improved* is still essentially defective in the absence of piety. We delight to see them disciplined to domestic care, we admire an improved taste and an enlightened mind, still more a tender conscience, and, most of all, a pious heart.

Religion, in a female, secures *all* her interests. It graces her character, promotes her peace, endears her friendship, secures for her esteem, and adds a dignity and a worth indescribable to all her deeds. How sweet when the mistress of a family is the handmaid of the Lord; when the mother of children is an example of piety; when the wife of the bosom is espoused to the Redeemer, how desirable that the daughter be a chaste virgin to Christ; that the sister lean on *his* arm, who sticketh closer than a brother; that the songsters of the temple belong to the heavenly choir! How pleasant, when the absent husband can think of home, and reflect that angels watch the place, that they may guard the interest and the health of his heaven-born companion, and the children of the covenant! When about to leave her a widow, and commit to her *exclusive* care his helpless offspring, how consoling, if her character is such, that she can lean upon the widow's God, and put her children under the guardianship of Him who is a Father of the fatherless! Then he quits the world calm and happy, supported by the hope that he shall meet their mother and them all in heaven.

Religion has a peculiar sweetness when it mingles with the modest softness of the female character. So the dew-drop borrows beauty and fragrance from the rose.

Females need the comforts, the hopes, and the prospects of religion, more, if possible, than the other sex. Subjected peculiarly to the trials of disobedience, and the weakness of a feebler constitution, their state, when raised by improvement, and propped with

Christian consolations, is still a state of subjection and pain. Suppose one of your number yoked to a husband of acid temper, and the prey of disappointment and disease, where, but from heaven, does there dawn upon her one beam of light. But if she can look upward and descry a place of rest when the toils of life are finished; a home where she may be happy, a friend who will ever be kind, and a nature raised above fatigue, and pain, and death—then, while the pains of living are softened by the hope of dying, and earth blotted out by the glories of heaven, she can exercise patience and submission till the time appointed for her release. Thus religion fills the cup with pleasure that was full of gall, converts the veriest hovel into a palace, and adapting the spirit to its lodgment, makes it happy. Thus the hope of heaven, if that hope were a dream, smoothes her passage to the tomb, and renders religion essential to her happiness.

Thus I have enumerated some of the qualifications of a wise woman. To obtain them will require much pains and many sacrifices, but, when acquired, they are worth more than worlds. And if time may be spent, and pains endured, and ease, and health, and even life, sacrificed to acquire riches, which at the best are poor, uncertain, and unsatisfying; may not more pain be endured, and greater sacrifices be made in acquiring that wisdom that will render us happy in life, in death, and forever.

Were this our *only* state, intellectual improvement would lose more than half its value: but we are to live forever; and the present state is preparatory to a future. This is but the infancy of our being, and the mind is our better part, and is capable of indefinite enlargement. The more enlarged, the happier will be our state in heaven, and it may be our lot to grow in knowledge forever. Such are our ideas of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory promised believers in the coming world.

The base suggestion, that as the female is confined at home she needs no intellectual improvement, has long since been repelled. She *may* pass through life alone; shall she become the prey of the first villain that may wish to rob her of her rights? And if united to a husband, is it not most desirable that she be capable of being his help-meet? The laws of many of our states, have wisely directed that the daughter share equally with her brother in the estate of the father; and shall she not be capable of managing her own interest?

Mothers who have not had the advantages which their daughters now have for improvement, will join me in these remarks, and will

urge their daughters to husband well their opportunities, and take a high and dignified station in the grade of being. But I proceed

II. To show that a wise woman buildeth her house. The language is figurative, the house being expressive of the family. Hence, to build her house, is to promote the best good of her husband and her offspring. It would be very easy to show, in a variety of particulars, how the influence of a wise woman must subserve this object. We are not afraid to inquire, in the

1 Place—How such a woman will affect their *estate*. On this subject I remark she will not render them poor. Her refined feelings, and ardent piety, may expend something in charity. But this will not diminish their wealth, for “The liberal soul shall be made fat.” If she should perform less manual labor than some others, her prudence and economy will make amends, and more than amends for the loss sustained. Her *wisdom* will *save* more than her *hands* could *earn*. Not always does the woman who can perform the most labor increase most her husband’s estate. Some have labored for ever and yet have made their families poor because ignorant of domestic economy. Hard labor is sometimes associated with wasteful extravagance. A wise woman will not waste her husband’s estate in extravagant dress and ornaments. These are more generally the marks of a small mind, and a bad taste. Those who are *first* in the *fashion* are sometimes *last* at the *library*, and perhaps are never there.

But if her books and her charities should draw upon her husband’s estate, still such a sister, such a wife, such a mother, is an invaluable blessing. “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” Of what value are riches but to buy comforts. And why not spend some of our wealth to feed the mind?

But I have hinted, that it is not by mere dint of labor that the wife performs her part in the accumulation of estate. Possessed of an improved mind, there are a variety of ways in which she can advance the interests of her family. She can help her husband lay his plans, can teach his children, can draw him back from litigation, can guide his concerns in his absence, expend to advantage the fruits of his industry—and, in ways innumerable, increase their mutual interest, accommodation, and comfort.

2. She will render her family *respectable*. This is the meaning of that remark of the wise man, when, speaking of the virtuous woman, he says, “Her husband is known in the gates, when he

sitteth among the eiders of the land." He will imbibe from *her* good impressions of character, and may rise, through her unnoticed influence, to a commanding respectability. How often are children regarded with attention on account of their mother. This alone has often introduced them to the best of families. How it honored Timothy that his mother and grandmother could be so respectably mentioned! And how it reproaches Ahaziah when said, that "His mother was his counsellor to do wickedly." It is probably true that the mother does more to give her house its character than the father. And not unfrequently does the wise woman entail respectability to her children's children.

3. She will render her family *happy*. She will so manage as not to irritate their passions, she will concentrate their wishes, and identify their interest. Her frown will suppress every quarrel, or rather her wisdom will prevent the evil. Her example will breathe through the house a mild and soft atmosphere, that will soothe every passion. While her wisdom will enlighten them; her industry will make them love employ; her subordination to her husband, will subject them to her authority; her prudence will render them discreet, her sympathy will render them compassionate, and her active benevolence teach them charity. Her softness will sweeten their manners, her gentleness render them mild, her courtesy render them respectful, her ingenuousness render them honest, and her discretion teach them caution. Her modesty will make them unassuming, her uprightness render them just, her tenderness make them affectionate; and we cannot but hope that her religion will render them pious.

There is no resisting the combined influence of so many virtues. And what she cannot do by her precepts, and her examples, she effects by her prayers. She will often carry them in her arms to heaven, and commit them to *his* care who can sway the heart. 'This done, she will have a powerful hold upon their consciences. While they respect her and love her, they will be ashamed and afraid to offend her. She will train up their consciences to respect her laws, and her government will not be limited by her presence. I knew a case when the son was afraid to disobey the mother, even when she could never have known of the disobedience. By thus laying restraint upon the conscience a wise woman will extend her influence to unborn generations. She will generate consciences like her own, to operate when hers is released from its labors. Her mantle, as she ascends to heaven, will fall upon her children, who will live to prolong her memory and build her house.

And while the wise woman will thus bless her own family, she will extend a happy influence to others. And yet all the good she does from home will recoil upon her own head. There will be a reaction that will bless her own house. Her kindness, her hospitality, her sympathy, her alms, and her prayers, will return into her own bosom. While she scatters blessings, they will accumulate at home. While she prays for others, many prayers will be offered for her and her family. While she feeds the poor, poverty will desert her doors. While she sends the gospel to the heathen, her own children will begin to live: thus "she that tarries at home will divide the spoil." She generates a light to shine into distant lands, and the reflected beams illumine her own habitation. And when she is dead, generations unborn will read upon her tomb, "The memory of the just is blessed."

## REFLECTIONS.

1. Females see how they are to rise in the scale of being. Their state has always been a state of subordination, and, in some countries, incredibly servile. The gospel emancipates them. But even in gospel lands they have never risen so high as they may. And they must rise by increasing in wisdom. When the sun would break the bars of winter he does it by a mild and gentle influence. He does not summon all his fires, and storm the castle of winter with lightnings. He merely shines, and the habitations of ice and frost feel and are melted by his beams. So the female sex must soften the roughness and thaw the coldness of the other sex, by constant and lucid exhibitions of wisdom and goodness. Men cannot be scolded into compassion, nor can resist the melting influence of distinguished and gentle goodness.

2. You see the importance of supporting good schools. If your daughters are to become wise, and help you build your house, there must be a nursery provided where they may grow. They must have able teachers, and leisure for the acquisition of science. On this important subject the public pulse still beats too low. We cannot rear a wise generation without expense, care, and time.

3. We see the importance of the gospel. In its absence there would be nothing left that the wise and good could value. And females, although they have no vote in society, have always exerted a kind influence in its support. But for them, many a district in Zion had been laid waste. And they, in the mean time, promote their own mercies; for the moment the gospel abandons a people females lose, in a great degree, their influence, their re

spectability, and their comfort: while, under its benign influence, they are wise, respectable, and happy. Hence all heathen lands, and other countries in proportion to their ignorance of the gospel, are marked with the degradation of the female sex.

4. How important that females make the Scriptures their study. This is the book that must form their characters, and render them wise and good. This, friends, is your guide to honor, happiness, and heaven. Make it the man of your counsel, the constant companion of your solitude, the furniture of your nursery, the subject of your morning and evening study; and it will prove the nurse of your childhood, the monitor of your youth, the light of your feet, and the lamp of your way; till at length, matured in its doctrines, and habituated to its duties, it will be your stay in death, and your law in heaven.

5. But, in order to all this, you must be born again. No woman can be wise and not pious. If you die unsanctified, you will feel yourself to be a fool at the last, though possessed of every other native and acquired excellence.

*The wife* can be the means of rendering her husband happy or wretched, now and for ever. To make him *happy*, let the conjugal affection be strong and tender. Let your bosom friend discover in you a cheerful and unwearied attention to his wants, a charity that can hide his faults, a patience that can endure his roughness, a meekness that can soothe his passions, and a piety that can lament his sins. Let him know that you have neither interest nor character distinct from his; that your hopes are one, your joys one, your tears one, and your cares one. Then you touch every tender string of his heart; he becomes kind to you and attentive to the gospel. And you may be the means of bringing him to heaven. It is a rare case, when the husband is in no degree under the influence of his partner. Let that influence then be used in rendering him holy and happy. Then, when the conjugal tie is sundered, you may hope to rise together, and be kindred spirits for ever, and feel a warmer and still warmer attachment through all the years of heaven.

If you are passing through life alone; or, if death has severed the cords that bound a husband's heart to yours, and no beloved children engross your cares, then is there a miserable world that needs your blessing. You can be peculiarly useful in making a little verdant spot around you, by using the means of grace on all about you, and urging upon them the considerations of life and glory, and in spreading abroad the knowledge of God. You can

exert an influence which shall wake the energies of a sleeping generation. You can rouse to benevolent exertion, and concentrate the streams of charity, that flow to fertilize the wastes of a ruined world.

But the duty of mothers, is, if possible, still greater. Immortal beings are committed to your care, perhaps to be saved or lost by your influence. They already feel the effects of your example, and will probably feel them more and more for ever. From you, rather than the father, or any other being on earth, they will take their character. You can render them idle, ungovernable, selfish, and malevolent. You can teach them to be covetous, proud, envious, censorious, unkind, and inhospitable. You can form them to a character hated of men, and detested of angels and of God. Oh! none like you can qualify them for everlasting burnings. Or you can teach them industry, subordination, and benevolence; can make them generous, modest, prudent, kind, and hospitable: can, with the promised blessing, form them to a character approved of men, and lovely to angels and to God. Oh! none like you can qualify them to live in heaven. God has given you that influence, that authority, that affection and access, which places your offspring at your disposal. To whom will they listen, when they will not hear the voice of a mother? When her government is despised, who shall control them? Who shall love them sufficiently to teach them, when maternal affection cools? Who shall find access to their consciences and their hearts, when barred against the approach of a mother? Mother! the name is very sweet. In all the majesty of maternal love, she can sit down by the heart and conscience of her child, and shape, and mould, and temper it almost to her pleasure. The world can be excluded, and every passion hushed to calmness, by her maternal sweetness and authority; while in the midst of the calm, she can teach them divine wisdom, fire them with benevolent affections, and give their minds a high and heavenly aspect.

How pleasant, when the mother may teach *her own child*. If common benevolence can make it pleasant to teach *another's children*, how delightful the work, when there is joined to this benevolence the strong, instinctive, maternal affection. Who, if the mother will not, shall teach the child to pray, and lead it on in the way to heaven. May she depend on a stranger, who lacks the instinctive stimulus? We must not forget that our dear children are depraved, and will choose the way to death; are in a world full

of temptations, and must inevitably perish if permitted to pursue their own course.

Mothers, it may be, that your children are fatherless, and are committed to your exclusive care. To you it is left, to stamp the last impress of character, and, by your example and influence, fix the destiny of your husband's children. A voice, while I address you, issues from their graves, urging me to my duty, and you to yours. What would be their language, if your deceased husbands could appear in this assembly. Would they not with all the eloquence, which death, and the grave, and heaven, and hell can inspire, say to the mothers of their children, "Oh, teach my offspring the way to heaven! Keep them from the paths of the destroyer. My voice cannot reach them; you must do for them what I neglected. Farewell, we shall meet soon." What an overbearing eloquence would there be in an address like this!

And, while the *father lives*, it is especially the mother's province to form the character of her daughters. You must lead them on to character, to happiness, and heaven. They wait to have you offer them your hand, they prize your counsel, and tremble at the prospect of passing this friendless world without a mother's instruction. Let them mingle with you, and form their characters under your eye, that they may have profit from your advice, and may find you their guardian in the hour of temptation. If years have taught you any thing of truth and duty, let that knowledge, like your estates, accumulate in its descent. Then every generation would be wiser, the mother would live again in her children, and soon from one such parent, there would spring a whole church, whose holy principles and correct habits, would exhale a fragrance, that would sweeten all the surrounding moral atmosphere.

I know, that in order to all this the mother must be herself a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. She, who traverses the broad way, cannot conduct her offspring to heaven. She may put the Bible into their hands, but her example will teach them to doubt its doctrines, and hate its duties; and one may easily presume which they will believe. And yet some of your children may be saved, and you perish. The covenant of God may bind them to a pious ancestry, and he may remember his covenant, and save them, while a parent is lost.

But, as many of my hearers are youth, part of my address should be to them. Precious, beyond all computation, is the present period of your life. Your prospect is now joyful, but bye-and-bye the retrospect will place some gloomy shades in the picture. It is

but honest to acquaint you, that you have embarked upon a deceitful sea. The present is calm, but soon probably your course will lead you athwart the storm. There are trials between you and the grave, and I name them merely to turn your attention to another object. I would point you to a world where there are no trials; and, if you would ever be an inhabitant of that world, you must now direct your eye upward. There is a day of grace, and you now enjoy that day, but there follows it a moment, when God abandons the gospel abuser forever; and he does not always *destroy* as soon as he *abandons*. "They are joined to their idols, let them alone."

The most important period of the season of grace, is its vernal years. This period improved, you are saved; but, misimproved, your state is worse. And some of you are already crossing that line, beyond which your salvation, if yet unregenerate, will be less probable. How dreadful to go down into the vale of years without a Savior, a promise, or a hope of everlasting life. A dark cloud will then eclipse your sun, a cloud, in which there will be painted no arch of promise. Then stupidity will increase upon you, while every sermon, and every Sabbath will but mature your character for the judgment. Gray hairs will but testify to your revolving years, and perhaps neglect of means, to your increased stupidity; till finally, the tempter may assure you that your day of grace is over. Oh, reach not that gloomy period till an everlasting covenant unites you to a Redeemer.

If already you love the Lord Jesus Christ, there opens before you a vast field of usefulness. The dying and the dead are all around you. I will not suppose it possible, that you can be wanting in respect and attention to your aged parents. You will make it, I hope, a prime concern, to aid them on to heaven. If you see your associates verging on to ruin, you will warn them, and pray for them, and by your example and influence endeavor to bring them with you to heaven.

You are to exert a mighty influence upon the rising generation. The other sex will receive a bias from your example, and, aiming to be what you approve, will owe much of their character to your sentiments and influence. If you make it your own object to be holy, and to reach heaven, they will accompany you.

It will be your duty, and I hope your pleasure, to aid all the operations of benevolence, especially the propagation of gospel light. This is a work in which your sex have a special interest. You owe your freedom, your influence, and all your comforts to the

gospel. Advance a single furlong beyond its light, and you find the female sex in a state of perpetual servitude, treated like beasts of burden, and secluded from all the joys of civil and social life. Could *they* but know the blessings that fall to *your* lot, and the reason why *they* are so oppressed and miserable, they would raise a cry for the gospel *loud and eloquent as the shrieks of death*. They would not rest till they could place in the hands of their oppressors, that volume, which is the charter of *your* liberties. Then they, too, would be free, respected, and happy.

These facts have helped to wake the daughters of Zion to their duty, and I trust will keep them awake, till the light of revelation has shined into every dark place of the earth, and the principles it generates have rescued every daughter of the apostacy from her prison and her chains. I have no fears that you will not act your part in this humane and Christian enterprise.

Females have succeeded the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Savior himself testified to their kindness, and, as we all remember, found beloved friends in the sisters of Lazarus, and a very pleasant home in their house. And after him the apostles, and after them all who have proclaimed the gospel, have lived upon their charities, and been supported by their sympathies and their prayers. All this is said without design to flatter. I should be unworthy the office of a minister, if any such motives could move me. May that gospel, which you thus support in your kindness to its ministry, be the means of your salvation! May none of you abuse its blessings, and thus fail of the glory it reveals! And, when the Son of Man shall come the second time, without sin unto salvation, may you be among the first to shout, "This is the Lord, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him: we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

## SERMON XVII.

### THE CONTROVERSY SETTLED.

2 COR. V. 20.

Be ye reconciled to God.

To the whole human family it is an eternal disgrace that such a sentence should be found written in the book of God. A creature unreconciled to God! Living, too, upon his bounty, subject to his control, completely in his hands, and exposed to his wrath! Does there live a man who cannot be pleased with infinite beauty, with perfect rectitude; who is at variance with the God of heaven. How has it come to pass that a creature of God has made himself so base? Was he born thus depraved, or has he, since his birth, transformed his soul into the image of hell? Alas! my readers, we are constantly reminded of that sad hour when the tempter prevailed, and our first parents fell. That was a horridly guilty hour. Not only did they ruin themselves, but all their race. They were destined to the curse of begetting children in their own likeness, not guilty of their sins, but like them inclined to iniquity, exposed to temptation and ruin. There is now born a wretched race, who as soon as they breathe, rebel. Why? they can offer no reason. Infinite excellence is found in God, is seen in his law, and exhibited in his providence. And is there throughout our province a general revolt? Are there none who have *not* become rebels? As God is true, there are none. A precious few have become reconciled to him, and are now approximating toward a state of purity, and joy, and blessedness. But even yet we can cast our eye abroad, and see our world filled with rebels. What will be the issue, God knows, and he has told us. Those that are not reconciled to him must die; those that are, shall receive the smiles of God for ever. The infinite God has himself contrived a way to pardon the rebel, and yet secure his own honor.

In pursuing this subject, *I shall show that sinners are in a state of hostility with God, while he is kindly disposed toward them. I shall then inquire whether there be any just cause for these hostile feelings toward God. I shall then state the terms on which the sinner can be*

*reconciled, and offer some motives why the reconciliation should take place.*

I. I am to show that sinners are in that state of hostility with God, while he is kindly and graciously disposed toward them.

In proving these points I shall make my appeal to Scripture and fact. The hostile disposition of sinners toward God is one of the most conspicuous doctrines of the Bible. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Sinners rob God and fight against him, and say to him, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." "The rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, and exert themselves to break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from them." In the survey which God took of earth, he found that all had "gone out of the way, and had become filthy; there were none that did good, no, not one." All this looks like general and open revolt. It is impossible to give these texts, and much more of the same book, such an interpretation that they shall not teach us the doctrine that sinners are hostile to God.

Let us now make our appeal to facts. As men show how they feel toward each other by the manner in which they treat every person and thing that relates to the other, so impenitent men show how they feel toward God by the manner in which they treat those persons and things that relate to God.

Let our first inquiry then be, How have sinners treated the Son of God? He ventured to come down, and put himself in the power of man. And was ever another man so cruelly treated? The world united in praying him to depart out of their coasts. They rose against him, as if he had been an assassin or a robber. They glutted their revenge with his blood. They could not rest till they had nailed him to a tree. And yet their consciences pronounced him innocent.

If any suppose that Christ would not now be treated so, were he on earth, it is no doubt their unhappiness to make one of three grand mistakes. They either suppose that Christ is now better treated than he was in the days of his flesh, which is not true; or they suppose that human nature is not now so depraved as then, which is false; or they have brought themselves to believe that a more improved state of civilization has tamed the ferocity of the carnal mind.

Now, how can we account for it, that Christ should be treated so unkindly by men, except by admitting the principle that sinners

are in a state of hostility with God, and hence as Christ was the image of the invisible God, they made him the object of their scorn and hatred. In treating him thus, they showed how they felt toward God.

Let us now inquire, how sinners treat the people of God. Authentic history informs us that in every age since there was a Christian on earth, they have been subjected to ill-treatment. In apostolic days they began to be the song of the drunkard, and the jest and proverb of the world. Then, and ever since, when human law did not impose restraint, they were persecuted to death. Upon them have fallen the united curses of an ungodly world. When wicked men can meet in no other point they can be one in destroying the Christians. They consider them as the common enemy. Hence thousands of holy souls have gone to glory from wrecks and dungeons.

And what better are things in the present day? True, there is less blood spilt, but no less anger felt, and no less pains taken to cover them with infamy, and expose them to scorn when they "live godly in Christ Jesus." Does not every day bring us fresh testimony of the hatred of the wicked against the saints. If not, what do they mean by the common cry of *hypocrite*? Why do they take so much pains to try to prove that Christians are the worst men on earth. Why do they love to hear that they have fallen? Why pleased when they tarnish their character, and wound the cause of their Redeemer? Facts like these prove that sinners hate the Christians. And why is this, unless because they bear the image of God, and for his sake are hated. At any rate they do bear the divine image, and the world hates them, which unquestionably proves them to be in a state of hostility against God; for if they hate his image they hate him.

This hostility to God has often been clearly seen in a time of revival. Then God increases the number of his children, and enrages his foes. True, they are sometimes overawed, and when this is not the case, they storm with rage. They have exhibited evident signs of distress as the divine shower approached. All the means and instruments by which a revival was introduced or promoted felt their malice. Indeed the world has gone out in one united phalanx to make head against the work of God. They have dreaded and opposed a revival as they would a famine or a plague.

Now, why all this? Do they not hate a revival because it brings into view the God they hate, and reminds them of that hea-

ven in which they could not live. Again, then, do we see that they are in a state of hostility with God.

The same hostility is proved while sinners daily break the laws and oppose the government of God. Daily and hourly we witness their disregard of the law, while they refuse to shape their lives by its precepts, and yet dare name the justice of God as the foundation of their immortal hopes. And how constant are their complaints against the ways of Providence. Hear their midnight murmurs, and see their vexation and disappointment while any adverse event transpires, or any fond expectation is disappointed.

If sinners were not hostile to God, would they not love his word and his worship? Would they treat with cold neglect the book of God, the only guide to everlasting life? And would they, as often appears, be indifferent to the praises and the prayers of the temple. Would they utterly refuse, as they do, to elect God as their master, or enlist in his service. Undoubtedly they would not try to prevent others from serving him, were they not hostile to his glory.

The maxims which sinners adopt, prove the existence of a hostile temper. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." Said Christ, "Love your enemies." "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Said Christ, "Resist not evil." "Give me wealth first, and then religion." Said Christ, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." In every controversy let the offender ask for reconciliation, but in the controversy between God and sinners *they* are in fault, yet *God* prays them to be reconciled. It is more blessed to receive than to give, is practically the maxim of the world, but, said Christ, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Thus sinners are all wrong. In all their maxims they make evident opposition to what is the mind and will of God. Now, could there be found this long list of opposites, were not sinners in a state of hostility to God?

And yet God is kindly disposed toward them. This appears in all he says, and in all he does. It appears in his word. He there declares that he feels kindly toward sinners, and he there asks them, in the language of real compassion, "Why will ye die?" We learn the same while we see the forbearance of God toward sinners. Not until they have sinned many years is he so provoked with them as to put them in hell. He not only lets them live in his world, but offers them mercy, and repeats his invitations, and presses them to accept, assuring them that they shall have eternal life, if they will repent and believe. All this

makes it certain that God feels kindly toward sinners, while their feelings are so hostile. Let us then inquire,

II. Whether there be any just cause for these hostile feelings toward God. They seem to say that God has done something wrong. To the sinner, then, we must appeal, What has God done to offend?

His first interference with your concerns was in the act of your creation. Was it here that he offended? True, he did not consult you whether you would *be or not*, nor ask you *what kind of a creature* you would choose to be. It was his opinion that you had no right to be consulted in these matters. Do you complain that God made you capable of misery? Instead of this it should be your rejoicing that he made you capable of happiness: especially since he has put immortal blessedness within your reach, and so constituted things that misery will not be yours unless you choose death rather than life. Do you complain that you were not made angels? Instead of this, you ought to be thankful that you were not made serpents or worms. But, "shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus." "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor." In the act of *creating*, God has not injured you, and where no injury is done there can be no complaint.

Ever since that period he has *watched over you*, and provided for you: in all this has he erred? For parental tenderness which watched your infant and youthful days, you are indebted to God. He gave the instinct which originated a father's care and a mother's tear. He formed those powers, those limbs and eyes, by which you have defended yourself. Besides all this, there has perhaps been around you unobserved a guard of angels.

"What ills their heavenly care prevents,  
No earthly tongue can tell."—

In addition to all this, God has kept his own eye fixed upon you, and has protected you with his own arm. But for this care death awaited you every step of your way. Every particle of air which you have breathed, was pregnant with death till he made it pure. He had his eye on you in all your slumbers, and at his bidding the midnight pestilence fled, and the breeze brought life and health. Perhaps when tossed upon the ocean the waves knew his voice and were still

He gave you your birth in a goodly land ; furnished you kind friends to smooeth your rugged way through life, and gave you every other needed comfort. " He opened his hand, and your wants were all supplied. His goodness has been like a river by your side. He watered your fields and brought on your harvests. He kept off the frosts, and ripened your fruits, he kept off his storm and secured your merchandise. He sent the gale that wafted India's riches to your coast. In all this did God offend ?

He gave you the means of instruction, that you might be wise  
Was this unkind ?

He early put you under law : was this unkind ? True, the law has dreadful penalties, and must not once be broken. It curses " every one that continueth not in all the things written in the book of the law to do them." Whether it was kind or not in God to put you under such a law will depend on whether the law was good. This is its tenor, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." If God deserves supreme affection, and our neighbor's happiness is worth as much as our own, this is a good law. To give creatures such a law was simply telling them to be happy. It was not only right that God should demand supreme regard, but best for creatures that they should thus regard him. And in that strong mutual affection which the law demands, men have found rich ingredients of comfort. In demanding that the law should in no one instance be broken, God prepared the way to keep misery from his creation.

It is only by disobeying this law that men are rendered miserable. But for this we had never heard the groans of the dying, the sighs of the widow, or the plaints of the orphan. Then the mourning garb had never darkened our assemblies. Man had not learned to weep, unless it were tears of gratitude.

And we may say the same of other worlds. Heaven continues to obey the law of God and is happy. Hell has disobeyed and continues to disobey, and is consequently filled with groans of despair. And how many soever other worlds there may be, they too are happy or miserable according as they have obeyed or disobeyed the law of God. If, then, the law is good, and disobeying it has made us unhappy, what charge can we bring against God for giving us such a law ? The law was intended as a great bond that should bind intelligent creatures to God, and to one another. This bond, this silver cord sinners have broken, and so have stopped the communication of bliss to their souls.

But my readers, let this be the closing remark on this point

The law which God has given is the only one which he could have given. It is the copy of his heart. He must have been a different being, and his creatures must have sustained different relations to him and to one another before a different law could have been given. If, then, sinners have any charge to bring against God on account of the law, the charge is unreasonable ; they censure him for doing what it was impossible he should not do. Is there, then, any fault here ?

But God has made exertions to save sinners, is there here any cause for blame ? Has he not made the terms of salvation as easy as possible ? Is man, while he receives pardon, subjected to any unnecessary degradation or reproach ? Is any penance demanded very difficult to perform ? Does faith in Jesus Christ forbid the exercise of reason ? And is the love of God inconsistent with the exercise of the natural instincts and affections ? Or does religion so employ the powers of the man as to make him unhappy ? Is not salvation offered on conditions the best possible. Then, where is the offence ?

In pressing such a salvation upon the sinner, is not the Deity kind ? In varying and repeating the invitation, and calling upon sinners by the ministers of the gospel, by alarming events of providence, by the Holy Spirit, and by an awakened conscience, to turn and live,— while God thus stands, and pleads with a guilty world from year to year, and from age to age, what is there in all this but kindness ?

Would any be glad,—sinners, would it please you, could you be left undisturbed by these kind invitations of the God of mercy ? Would you wish to go on till your destiny was sealed before the gospel trump disturbs you ?

Do any find fault with God because he chastises them ? Do I hear one say, God has torn my partner from my bleeding bosom, and my children, just as they began to entwine my heart ? He sent the winds to sink my merchandise, and the incendiary to burn my dwelling. How can I love such a God ? Did you ever thank God for those blessings ? Did you ever pray for their continuance ? Did you teach that child to pray whom you lately covered with the clods ? God has, then, only reminded you of your sins in removing these comforts.

Moreover, they were at first his gift, or rather, his loan ; and he has now recalled them, no sooner than you had reason to expect. He never promised you that you should retain these comforts to any given period. Where, then, is there any ground of

charge against God ? He has done more than he promised ; he has been kinder than you had any reason to expect Where, then, is there cause of offence ?

But, says one, God has threatened sinners with everlasting ruin, and has built a hell for them : can I love such a God ? Hell he built for the devil and his angels, and he will send none of our race there who would be willing to live in heaven. All who possess such a temper as would convert heaven into a place of horror and despair, and who are more fit to be the companions of devils than of angels and blessed saints,—only these will be sent to hell. And in the sentence every holy being will join, and the sinner's own mouth will then be shut. Why, then, is there here any ground of charge against God ?

Thus, through all that God has *done* and *said*, do we search in vain for any plea that can support the sinner in his revolt. Perhaps in what he *is* a plea can be found. "There clusters in his name every attribute that can contribute to render him great and glorious. The clustering of these attributes is God." What attribute, then, can be spared from the cluster ? Let him cease to be holy, and what will follow ? Sin, that has made every tear, every sigh, and every groan, will be approved, and the prince of devils may walk arm in arm with Gabriel. An infuriate mob from hell will soon lay waste the mansions of the New Jerusalem.

Or let Jehovah cease to be *true*, then, says the sinner, he would not *execute* his threatenings. No ; nor his promises ! That blessed promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," on which many a trembling believer has hung his dying hope, fails. Every angel lays by his harp and looks out for ruin. The holy are no longer sure that they shall be happy. The foundation on which they stood has begun to sink, hell is astonished, and the universe is ruined.

Shall Jehovah be no longer just ? Where then is the sinner that will consent to be treated unjustly ? Devils would not consent to this.

The same may be said of every Divine attribute. Alter any one, and the universe is all in tears. No one dares to live or die. Is it not best then that God continue capable of government, and remain just what he is ? Thus do we find at every step we take that there is no fault in God. No possible plea can be found to support the sinner in his rebellion. God is right, has *spoken* and *done* right, but the sinner is wrong, has *spoken* wrong, and *done* wrong. I hope, then, the way is prepared for reconciliation. But,

III. I am now to state the terms on which God will receive the sinner to favor.

The sinner must disapprove of his own character and conduct. Till he does this, God will consider him in a state of hostility. The sinner must become vile in his own eyes and polluted in his own view. He must see and hate his own evil passions, and all their corrupt fruits, and must join with God in condemning himself as a rebel deserving eternal ruin.

When brought to feel thus he will be humble. He will take to himself the punishment of his sins, and ascribe righteousness to his Maker. In this condition God will begin to regard him. But this is not all that God will require.

The sinner must change his character and conduct. He must have a different set of affections, and must exhibit a course of conduct altogether diverse from that exhibited in his former life. This will be saying to the world, that he now approves of the law which he broke, considers it good, and the penalty just.

The only terms on which God will ever receive the sinner to favor must include the following :

1. He must *unsay* all the hard things he has said against God ; the reproaches he has cast upon his law, the unholy things he has said against his people, and against his government, and his kingdom. All the hard speeches that ungodly sinners have made against heaven, and all their trifling about hell, and the judgment, and the quenchless fire, and the never-dying worm, and the bottomless pit, and the bridgeless gulf. All the contradictions of his truth, and all the gainsayings of the infidel heart—all this must be unsaid, must be taken back. This is an indispensable preliminary in the first effort at peace. Else there can be no reconciliation. This is a law among men. If *men* are at variance they always begin conciliation with concession, and it must be thus when we deal with God.

2. When we have *unsaid*, we must *undo* the unhallowed things that we have done against the kingdom of God, and restore that which we have taken away. If any are not aware of having done any thing which they would undo, there is reason to believe that they have not made the first essay at a genuine repentance. Soon as the heart relents we can easily find that there are a great many things that we have done that must be undone. There are immortal beings, bound to the judgment, and whose eternity of bliss or of wo unutterable depends on their character, and that character we have given, first or last, a polluting touch. These pollutions

we must endeavor to wipe off. And there are others that we have injured—these injuries we must repair. We shall find, on a little reflection, that we have, in a thousand ways, set in operation many engines of death, which, with a little timely care, we can stop, and we must stop them. All this is necessary to the first beginnings of the exercise of a genuine repentance.

3. And when we have unsaid and undone all that we can remember to have said and done against God and his kingdom, we shall find that we have entered a field of mischief where we had been so many years putting things wrong, and the mischief has become so wide-spread and desolating, that it will require a whole lifetime to put them right again. What was said of the apostles *falsely*, that they turned the world upside down, the penitent finds true in his own case. He has been scattering fire-brands, arrows, and death, while he pretended to be only in sport.

4. Wherein the mischief cannot be undone it can all be ingenuously confessed. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Thus we come upon the subject of a gratuitous pardon, our only hope of our acceptance with a gracious and merciful God. Here begins *peace*, and *hope*, and *joy*, through a pardoning and gracious Redeemer. Through his kind and timely intercessions the sinner's whole debt is freely forgiven, and God is reconciled.

In addition, this humiliation and its correspondent fruits, the sinner, in order to pardon, must be willing to receive *mercy*. A sinner does not *deserve* pardon: the supposition is absurd. He must be willing to be pardoned for the sake of Christ, and, after being pardoned, must be willing to be an everlasting monument of a Savior's love. He must entirely commit his cause to Christ, as his advocate, depending on him for every good which he hopes for from a justly offended God.

These are the terms. I am happy to have it in my power to add that Christ is ready to be the sinner's friend. He even beseeches you to allow him to plead your cause, and ensure your acceptance with his Father.

Let this now be the question. Will sinners quit their rebellion and turn to God that they may live? Will they do it now? When God offers a sinner pardon there must be immediate acceptance, or he takes the offer back. The impenitent cannot leave the place where they are, before it will be reported in heaven that they have accepted or rejected the message. Thus God deals with us, and

thus must we deal with him. He will not allow sinners to despise his mercy with impunity.

Perhaps some are thinking about a reconciliation, but wish to know the terms. We have no new terms to propose. You will find the terms in all your Bibles, and be assured God will never alter them; no, never. He will sooner abandon his throne, and consign sun, moon, and stars to ruin. No; the terms are the easiest, they are the best that a holy God could propose.

Do any plead that their sins are so numerous and so aggravated that God will not accept them? This plea need not be made. There is an infinite Savior, and there is infinite compassion in the heart of God. And there is one promise which throws the light of day on this subject. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."

IV. Let us notice some of the motives to a speedy reconciliation.

1. Sinners should become reconciled to God because he is the only being who can be the sinner's *permanent* friend. None but he can comfort you in adversity, raise your hopes in the day of gloom, or soften your dying bed. None but he can cheer your disembodied spirit, and inspire it with a relish for the angelic song. Indeed, be it a calamity or not, so it is that God has *made* no object fit to be your portion. He must himself fill the soul or you are for ever poor.

2. Though God has not given the offence he makes the first overtures of reconciliation. This is wonderful condescension in God. He has no need of you, he can make his kingdom happy without you, and there is no obligation on his part why he should thus meet you with the offers of mercy. It is a matter of the truest surprise that God will thus stand and plead with his creatures, is it not, then, a reason why they should be reconciled?

3. Consider farther, that God has removed the obstacles that were in the way of your salvation: this should press your conscience. He gave his own dear Son to die that you might be saved, and yet he be just. And you can now be completely restored to the Divine favor. From being a wretched outcast you may become a son and an heir. What consideration can be more persuasive than this? A condemned criminal is offered all the joys of heaven on becoming reconciled to his justly-offended God.

4. If sinners do not become reconciled to God they must lie under the weight of the curse of a broken law for ever. And eter-

nity only can fully tell how heavy this curse will be. You are entreated, then, to be reconciled to God, by all that is terrible in his anger ; by all that is dreadful in the thought of being the object of his wrath for ever ; by all the misery that an immortal soul can suffer, or an almighty arm can inflict. If God *can* make sinners wretched, and if sin, unrepented of, be of such a horrid nature that infinite goodness must be willing to punish the incorrigible for ever, then, by all that is dreadful in this thought, sinners are entreated to repent.

5. I urge, as the last motive why sinners should *immediately* become reconciled to God, that it will soon be too late. There will come a day when the door of mercy will be closed for ever upon some unhappy souls. Perhaps in that day some of my readers will stand without and raise their distressing cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." But the door can never be unbarred. He that shutteth and no man openeth will reply, "I know you not." You will see Abraham and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves be rejected. A father, mother, or sister enters into life, and you are lost. The very partner of your bosom takes her seat at the marriage supper, while you are not permitted to taste. Methinks there will be scenes exhibited in that day at which the very angels will weep. Will sinners, then, attend to these things, while mercy is possible ? Sinners are every day perishing unawares. They are every Sabbath hearing their last sermon. It may be that some one is now reading this who has misimproved many a sermon, and is now uttering the closing sentences of the last one that will ever disturb his quiet. He has, perhaps, so nearly filled up his measure of iniquity, that only a few drops are wanting. The opposition which he may feel to this sermon, and the resistance he may make to the strivings of the Spirit may run his measure over, and bring the curse of his Maker upon him. It is impossible to say when God will shut up his bowels of compassion with regard to any sinner. Though he bear long he will not bear with them always. He is holy and true as well as good. The day must come when his threatenings will be fulfilled as well as his promises. And to sinners who refuse to desert the standard of revolt, that will be a tremendous day. But, since they will not be persuaded, they must go on and provoke Divine goodness till the curse lights upon their heads. I add no more : I hope I am free from the blood of my hearers to-day. It will be found in their own skirts

## SERMON XVIII.

### THE BURNING BUSH.

EXODUS III. 3.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.

MOSES was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law in Midian; and having occasion to drive them to the desert, to the borders of mount Horeb, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush. He perceived, that though the bush burned with fire it was not consumed. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." He expected, no doubt, to see the bush consumed; but while he looked upon it, and perceived that every branch and every leaf remained entire amid the flames, it naturally awakened his amazement, and led him to turn aside and view the wonder with attention. As he approached the bush, a voice issued from the midst of the flames, which bid him pull his shoes from his feet, as the ground on which he trod was holy. God now assured him that he was the God of his fathers, and gave him his commission to go and redeem his brethren from bondage. The burning bush, with God in the midst of it, uninjured by the flames, represented the Church, living undiminished in the midst of afflictions and persecutions. Probably Moses had suspected that the rigors of the Egyptian persecution would ultimately annihilate the Church. To remove this gloomy apprehension, and encourage him to accept a commission for their emancipation, he was favored with this vision. In using this scrap of history for our present edification, it is my purpose to make several distinct observations.

I. The Church of Christ has always been exposed to afflictions and persecutions, has often seemed in imminent danger, but has lived unhurt through every period of its long and bloody conflict. There has been a Church ever since the conversion of Abel. During the period from the fall to the deluge it was very feeble, and very small, and often persecuted. In the death of Abel was fulfilled the prediction, "It shall bruise thy heel." Mention is made but of two or three eminent saints during this period, of which Enoch was

one of the most distinguished. God so loved him that he took him to heaven without seeing death. He was a prophet, and plainly predicted the terrors of the deluge and of the last judgment. There seems to have been, during this period, several times of revival, but during the whole the Church must have been comparatively small. Finally it was confined to the family of Noah, and seemed about to become extinct. It was now surrounded by a host of enemies, and must have perished, without some extraordinary divine interposition of its chief Shepherd. Jehovah granted his people the help they needed, and swept the whole of that ungodly world to perdition. The wondrous means by which he rescued his people from the general ruin, must have taught, it would seem, all future generations, that destruction awaits the enemies of the Church. We are amazed that Noah could live and be a preacher of righteousness one hundred and twenty years, when the Church was so small, and when the earth was filled with violence, and the Spirit of God striving with them during all that period in vain. But the covenant promise of God preserved his people unhurt, like the bush which was embosomed in the flame but not consumed. In the family of Noah God continued to have a seed to serve him. But the Church was soon brought very low, and at the time of the calling of Abraham was almost extinct. We see, during this period, the strong features of depravity; and although the history of the Church is scanty and general, there can be no doubt but that it had to struggle with afflictions and persecutions. To promote the prosperity of the Church God resolved to confine it principally to one family. Accordingly, Abraham must leave his country, and become a stranger in a strange land, that his descendants might be preserved from idolatry, and true religion live in his family till the coming of Christ. During much of this period we find them an afflicted and persecuted people, and are often led to wonder at their preservation. How wonderful was the escape of Lot! first from captivity, and afterwards from the tempest of fire that consumed the cities of the plain. How often, and how narrowly, did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with their respective families, escape being swallowed up by idolatry, or destroyed by their enemies. But they were a holy seed, from whom, according to the flesh, Christ should come, and among whom, till then, God would preserve his Church. Their history is a constant scene of miracles, and their very existence, like the bush that burned but was not consumed, is a living monument of God's covenant faithfulness. When the patriarchal family had settled themselves in

Egypt, and Joseph was dead, and they had become Pharaoh's bondmen, their ruin seemed inevitable: especially when the Egyptians, jealous of their increase, and fearful of their resentment, made a decree to destroy them, we look upon them with awful apprehensions. But this very decree, contrary to its design, saved the Church. It became the means of raising up Moses, and of furnishing him a princely education, that he might become the lawgiver and the prince of that injured family. From his birth till he had the vision of God in Horeb, the Jewish family were indeed like the bush that burned with fire but was not consumed. It is matter of the truest amazement that the Egyptians did not utterly destroy them, when they were so completely enslaved, and entirely within the power of their masters. But God had otherwise decreed. Their enemies dealt violently, but their violent dealing came down upon their own pate. Their infamous conduct awaked the wrath of heaven, and issued in their own ruin. Still their struggle was long and desperate. Many a time there seemed but a step between the Church and destruction. On the banks of the Red Sea nothing but a miracle could save the children of the covenant. But the miracle was wrought, the sea divided, Israel escaped, and their enemies were all overthrown. When we read the history of their passage through the desert, the dangers they encountered, the sins they committed, the judgments they felt, and the enemies that lined their path, we wonder that they ever reached the promised land. But God was in the midst of them. Time could not wear out their garments, the rock watered them, and the clouds fed them, and the very fowls of heaven flew to their camp to become their meat. And when they entered Canaan we are amazed that a single month did not furnish them all a grave. That land was thickly peopled, the people at home, and prepared for war. That Israel should be able to march through that land and tread down its mighty population and ultimately possess it all, was a most surprising exploit.

The history of that people, from the time of Moses to Christ, fills the reader with constant surprise. At one time they were tributary to one kingdom, then to another, and then to a third, but all the time multiplied. When they went into captivity it seemed impossible but that the Church must become extinct. But they outlived all their oppressors, and celebrated the funeral of every kingdom that ever lifted a hand to vex them. Their foes perished by a perpetual consumption, but the Church continued unhurt in the very centre of the contagion. True, the Church finally ran

low at the time of its transfer from the family of Abraham to the Gentiles, but it never became extinct. Under the ministration of the Son of God and his apostles, the Church received again a vast and glorious accession. But it was still a bush in the midst of the flames, burning but not consumed. Christ was crucified for daring to be her friend, and the apostles, most of them, spilt their blood at her altar. As religion spread under the new dispensation, it awakened the wrath of the enemy as it never had before. A countless army took the field for the destruction of the rising Church. Every province where there was a follower of the Lamb, cursed its soil with their blood, till finally the enemy was weary of destroying them. The fact was seen and felt, that every execution augmented the number of believers. They could slay individuals, but the *Church* itself was immortal.

Pursuing her history, from the apostolic age to the reformation, we often see her on the very margin of destruction. Under Constantine she seemed for a moment to prosper, and yet his very touch was death. He nursed her body, but he starved her spirit, and the Church had almost perished with him. But he died, and the Church outlived the boasted immortality of his sepulchre. Under the Roman pontiffs the Church almost disappeared. They polluted her charter, put out the fire on her altars, sealed the lips of prayer, and finally seemed to dig her grave. But the Church had retired from Rome, and was living in the mountains of Piedmont. There she breathed, and bled, and prayed, till the eventful period of the reformation. Then the Lord graciously lengthened her cords, and strengthened her stakes. But for many years her sons paid for the privilege of discipleship with their blood. Fires were kindled in every province of Christendom to consume the bush. Even England, now one of the fairest provinces of Christendom, fattened her soil with the heart's blood of the saints.

And when the reformation was at length established, the Church did not cease to live in the flames. Errors in doctrine and in practice, threatening the extinction of piety, have at different times overspread almost every province of Christendom. But the Church has lived, and to the present day is a standing monument of the power and the truth of God.

This leads me to remark,

II. It is wonderful that there should have been a Church till now, and its continuance is a living miracle. This will appear if we consider,

1. How small her number, and how feeble her strength compared with the hosts of her enemies. The Church of Christ is still a little flock. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." If the world should unite for the destruction of Zion, how small would she be in their hands. If our civil governments should become the enemy of the Church, how easy would it seem to destroy her. If the impenitent should wage war against her interests, how easily might they achieve her destruction unless God prevented. The Church has numerous, vigilant, and persevering enemies. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are leagued for her destruction. She can turn her eye in no direction but she sees an enemy. There is not a moment passes when there is not laid some plot for her destruction. And although God has constantly thwarted the designs of her enemies, and saved the Church, when a host encamped against her, yet are we led to wonder at the vigilant and decisive movements of that unseen agent, who ever saves the Church.

2. We wonder at the existence of the church, because there is not one of her number but carries her worst enemy in his own bosom. That the church should be safe, while every individual of her number daily offends the Lord, so as to deserve destruction, is that which excites surprise. The principles of apostacy and revolt are in every Christian bosom, and will be while there is a church on earth. The perseverance of the saints is a living miracle. Viewed in himself there is nothing impossible or improbable in his final apostacy. It is rather wonderful that he should *ever persevere* than that he *always* should. If religion had no other foe than the remaining corruption in the hearts of God's people, we should wonder that ever one of them reached heaven.

3. We wonder that the church lives because of the numerous hypocrites which she carries in her own bosom. Not only does the church live in a world of enemies, but the church visible is partly composed of men that hate the Lord, and hate his kingdom. This, it is perceived, must greatly reduce her apparent strength. Might we count every professor as the friend of God, Zion would be a host compared with its real strength. But she is at present a citadel with many enemies in her own bosom. That every hypocrite weakens the strength of the Church, there can be no question. It is their ungodly conduct that awakens reproach against religion, and arms the enemy with rage for her destruction; and they at the same time discourage the hearts of God's people, and prevent the Church from moving forward as a band against the enemy.

4. The continuance of a Christian church is matter of surprise when we consider that if God's people act in character their sentiments and conduct constantly enrage the world. God's people believe, and must constantly advocate, those doctrines which wicked men disrelish and oppose, and must practice those duties which administer constant reproof to men of ungodly lives. Hence our Lord declared, that he came not to send peace on earth but a sword. For, said he, "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." And we have often seen this dreadful prediction exemplified. Hatred to the religion of Christ, has been seen to extinguish the strongest instinctive affections, and to create war, where before there was some degree of harmony. Christ assured his followers, "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." And every page of the Church history testifies, that the religion of the gospel is at war with the wicked passions of men. Hence how wonderful that religion has not long since been extinguished, and the world been left without any salt to save it from moral putrefaction.

5. Another reason why we wonder that the Church has not long since become extinct is that she has always depended more or less on the world, for the support of those ordinances and institutions on which depends her own existence. No age of the Church can be named when wicked men did not contribute to feed the fires of her altars, and support her ministry. In Israel the wicked as well as the righteous helped erect the temple, and build the altar, and furnish the daily sacrifice, and support the family of Levi. They contributed largely to furnish those costly offerings which adorned the temple of Jerusalem. And through all the periods of the Jewish dispensation, wicked men were occasionally among the most active in promoting the external interests of the Church. And since the introduction of the gospel dispensation the case has not altered. There was found at least one unconverted man at the very commencement of the Christian Church, who sold his possessions, and brought a part of the price, and laid it down at the apostles' feet. And in every country where there has been a Christian Church, men have helped support her ministry, and build her sanctuaries, and supply her charities, who did not hope to share in her redemption.

But, strange as it may seem, the Church has lived in these cir-

cumstances ever since its first establishment, and will live till the last of the elect are gathered in. And it seems the fires are to continue to burn till the close of the period of grace. Even the millennium, which will seem to have put out the fires that flame through the branches of the bush, will not raise the Church above opposition, for at the close of that period we read that Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the globe, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went out on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about and around the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. I think we gather from this passage that when the millenium, or Sabbath of the Church is past, she will still have enemies in every part of the world who will unite their strength for her destruction. Thus the bush will still burn, but it will not be consumed, for God shall rain fire from heaven which will destroy her enemies.

## REMARKS.

1 If the Church, as a whole, is thus safe, so are all her members. The idea that the whole of a thing can be safe, and yet all its parts in danger is absurd, like that of supposing a general, without a particular providence. The bush that Moses saw remained entire in the midst of the flames. Not a branch nor leaf perished. If there is no security for the perseverance of individual saints there may be no Church on earth before the return of another Sabbath. And yet let it not be supposed that the text affords any security to hypocrites; for although they may be enrolled with God's people, he may still save his people and destroy them. Were the visible Church entirely composed of false professors, there would be doubt whether it would not become extinct, but there are mingled with the ungodly professors enough to ensure the continuance of a visible Church. But I suppose the security prefigured in the text to belong only to those who are real believers, and whom God knows will finally be admitted to the joys of his kingdom.

2. How vain have been the efforts of the ungodly to destroy the Church. She has lived, and can live amid all the fires they can kindle. She has often flourished most when persecution has raged with the greatest vehemence. Hence was derived that saying,

“*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*” And it is as well for the world at large as for the Church, that their efforts are unavailing: for the saints are the salt of the earth—hence, were the Church destroyed, the world would perish too; of course, their only safety is in their defeat. If they achieve their purpose, they undo themselves.

You have known men to attempt their own execution, and been prevented. Their failure was their safety. You have known youths arrested by the arm of paternal authority, when setting out in a career of ruin. Their defeat saved them. The same will be the case with the enemies of God’s kingdom. To whatever extent they injure the Church, they will hurt themselves. If they could destroy the Church, they would ruin the world. Every thrust they make will recoil upon their own heads.

3. How useless and ungrateful are the fears of God’s people. They are useless, for they achieve nothing. They are ungrateful, for God has already done enough for his Church to deserve her confidence. If he had ever seen her desolations with indifference, if one promise of his had ever failed, if the Church had ever found him her enemy in the hour of distress, there would then be ground of fear. But no such thing is true; no season of her distress has failed to move his pity; he has never turned a deaf ear to her prayers; no one of his numerous promises has ever failed; nor did her enemies ever find God their friend in a season of his Church’s conflicts.

4. What abundant cause have God’s people to rejoice in his covenant faithfulness. There is nothing but God that Christians love so much as the Church; and while the Church is safe, it must make them happy. In her safety every thing dear to us is safe, in her ultimate triumph we shall find our own salvation. The subject, then, is calculated to make Christians lift up their heads. To not be happy when there is such abundant cause for joy, will argue disaffection to the interest we have professed to espouse, and will cast upon us the suspicion of treachery. This is a case I wish to provide against, lest in my dying behavior I dishonor him who laid down his life for me. If I am not happy when dying, impute it to *derangement*, unless it will the less dishonor my divine Master to conclude that I have always been in the gall of bitterness, and under the bonds of iniquity, and am now deserted of him to prove that “I am about to go to my own place.” The Church has always been so safe, and with it every interest of mine,

unless I have interests that are distinct from Christ's interests, and then I am an unbeliever, and have no part nor lot in the matter. There can have been no failure of the everlasting covenant. God will do as he has said. And, in doing so, if he does not glorious things for me, I have only to lie down and die with shame; and the one hundred and forty and four thousand who are about the throne of the Lamb, will say forever, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And the whole multitude will utter their loud and long amen.

## SERMON XIX.

THE TRUE GOD A SURE DEFENCE.—No. 1.

2 KINGS XVII. 33.

They feared the Lord and served their own gods.

WHEN the king of Assyria had carried captive the ten tribes of Israel, and placed them in different parts of his empire, he brought back other men with which to people the cities of Samaria. But as these strangers had no fear of the God of Israel, while they occupied the consecrated territory, he sent lions among them, that committed such ravages that complaint was made to the king of Assyria. He immediately gave directions to send thither one of the priests that they had brought captive from that land, that he might teach them the manner of the God of the land, and thus induce him to be propitious to its new population. He came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught the people how they should fear the Lord. He was no doubt an idolatrous priest who had been accustomed to officiate in the idolatrous worship of the golden calf. Howbeit, every nation made gods of their own, and finally, being unable to see any wide distinction between the calf and their own favorite idol, paid very little regard to the established worship. They made priests of the lowest of the people, and offered sacrifices in their high places. Then follows the apparently paradoxical remark of the text: "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods."

By their fearing the Lord we are not to understand that they had that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, else they would not have served their own gods. The sense appears to be, that they paid some attention to the established worship of the calf, but devoted their principal zeal to the idol worship, to the worship they had imported with them into their new territory. And this is declared to have been the manner of the Israelites whom they had carried captive. They pretended, in their national religion, to pay some kind of homage to the true God, but still practised the worship of Baal. But that all this show of homage to Jehovah was offensive to him, there needs no argument to prove,

other than to state the fact that it was an idol worship which he could not accept.

But the question urges itself upon us, Have we any thing in these gospel times that savors of such a spirit. We boast of our superior light, but are we not conversant with the same indifference, and the same lightness that was practised by the Samaritans two thousand five hundred years ago? Let us trace the resemblance between some of the features of *that age* and *this*

I. There was evidently great indifference felt as to what God was worshiped—Jehovah or any other god. Where the true God was pretended to be worshiped, under the image of a beast that had horns and hoofs, it was to be expected that he would claim nothing more of his worshipers than might be claimed by any other idol. There might be some sacredness of names, or ascription of attributes or works to the Israelitish gods that they had not been accustomed to give their idols, but the untutored Assyrian, and Mede, and Persian would not discern the difference, and would be more impressed by the form of the image, than by any ascription of abstract qualities that might be supposed in the one that was not in the other. And is there not the same indifference felt now, by very many, what God is worshiped, or what is the very same question, what attributes are ascribed to the God we adore. How numerous is the multitude that care very little whether the God they worship is so holy that he would suffer heaven and earth to pass away sooner than permit one jot or tittle of his law to fail; or so indifferent to sin that he will save all men even without repentance;—whether he is so wise as to know the end from the beginning, and will work all things after the counsel of his own will, or is so unfixed in his purpose as to never have determined whether he will save one, or ten in the whole of the human family;—whether God is a sovereign, and will do his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, or is so weak and inefficient that he will suffer a worm to defeat his counsels, and a fly to frustrate his purpose;—whether he shall have decision enough to fix unalterably the rewards of a Savior's sufferings, or leave it a chance whether he shall not have squandered away his blood;—whether he shall have a pure and holy family about him in heaven, or shall martial a band of miscreants;—whether he shall have a Church on earth that breathes the temper of the skies, or the fœtid and blasphemous fumes of the pit;—whether his word shall be all truth, or none of it truth, or a *part* of it;

and his people have a *sure* word of prophecy to rest upon, or their feet stand or sink in the quagmires that skirt the bottomless pit ;—whether he exercises over the world a government so particular as to notice the falling of a sparrow, and number the hairs of our head, or exercises so general a providence as that empires only shall deserve his notice, and our little selves, at least our few little sins, escape his inspection. How few in a whole congregation of worshipers care whether he be a God that will require the hearts of his people, or will be satisfied with the soulless, spiritless, external ceremonies ; whether he have any record kept of the sins of his creatures, and any day appointed when he will judge them, or he shall hear and bear without rebuking, the oaths and curses of a whole apostate world ? That whole cursing and damning community, that breathe moral pestilence upon every wind that blows, do you not suppose that they would prefer a God that should neither see, nor hear, nor know when insult is offered him and blasphemy uttered ? Would he not corrupt the public faith, were it possible, till he had excluded from it a judgment, and a hell ? So the Samaritans cared not if supreme worship be offered to Succoth-benoth, or the golden calf.

II. We witness in many men, who profess to be decent attendants upon the worship of Jehovah, a total disregard, *what is the temper and conduct he will require in his worshippers* ; whether they shall be heavenly-minded, and lay up their treasures there where God is, or may be sordid, and grovelling in their views, and in their habits, and be the veriest ungodly, churlish souls in all the creation of God ;—whether they shall be kind, and courteous, and benevolent, or act out all the coarseness, and savageness of unsubdued nature ;—whether they shall be meek, and patient, and forgiving, or may pour forth all the wrath, and malice, and hurry, and impatience of one just broken out from the enclosures of crime, and chains, and infamy ;—whether to show mercy to the men who are sacrificing themselves upon the altars of devils, and hold them back, is kind and Christian, or whether one may live upon the gains of iniquity, and thrive and fatten upon the damnation of souls ;—whether to bless the men of the world is a duty at all, or whether we may, with the same divine approbation, pamper their lusts and passions, and prematurely plunge them into everlasting fire ;—there is resting extensively a doubt whether the spirit of the gospel is peaceful or contentious, is proud and overbearing, or stubborn and refractory, or yielding, and kind, and amia

ble ;—whether men may not drink of the cup of the Lord and of the cup of devils ; may not love the world more than believers, and still live harmlessly within the enclosures of God's covenant ; may not please and satisfy the world more than the Church, and the enemy of souls more than God, and still maintain unbroken, and unimpaired their high claim to a seat at the supper, and a mansion in the skies. So the Samaritans cared not whether their gods demanded virtue in their worshippers, or were equally contented with lust, and crime, and blood. “They feared the Lord, and served their own gods.”

III. There is the same indifference felt as to what doctrines constitute the essence of the gospel.

Men presume that they are hearing the gospel when the doctrines of the divine decrees, of election, and of divine sovereignty are reprobated, and scowled upon as the doctrines of perdition, while these doctrines are plainly found, in one shape and another, on almost every page of the Bible. They consider it the gospel if they hear vilified and abused the doctrine of the permanency of God's everlasting covenant with his people, or the divinity of Jesus Christ, or the eternity of future torments, or they hear advocated the supremacy of some light within that shines above the brightness of the inspired page. In one word, the mass of ungodly men do not discriminate what truth is, nor what the gospel is, and of course, do not very much care whether they hear the true gospel or another. There is, in fact nothing that men care so little about as God, and what relates to his truth, and kingdom and glory. That gospel, which they profess to believe, they will not take the trouble to hear often. They will not keep Sabbath, nor care to be in the sanctuary, nor care to have others keep the Sabbaths, and attend upon God's worship. To speak the whole truth, religion and God are the things by which they hold the most loosely possible, and for which they will make smaller sacrifice than for anything in the whole circle of human interests. They would not give as much annually to sustain the worship of God as they would bestow in one evening on the theatre, or expend at one sitting in the grog-shop, or gamble with a single game, or squander in one excursion of pleasure. They would barter away all the interests they have in God, and truth, and heaven, for a dinner of herbs, for a mess of pottage.

We shall naturally be led now to inquire, of what avail can a religion be that takes so loose a hold of the heart ? What did it do

for the strangers of Samaria? Did it secure the Divine presence and blessing? Did it establish between them and God any permanent covenant? Did it bring down the rains and dews upon their territory? Did it even keep the lions off? And it may be asked, that multitude that now hold loosely by everything religious what their professed regard for God will do for them?

1. Will it secure them a religious character?

Even this may be doubted. If religion is worth nothing the world will say it *is* nothing. If we hold so loosely by it that we would barter away all its interests for a shilling, the world will believe that we esteem it a worthless religion. If to gratify a passion, or secure an interest, or secure a friend, we would change our religion, or be without its ordinances, and place our posterity upon the crumbling verge of infidelity, may we not well doubt whether we shall be able to save our sinking reputation as the friends of Christianity. The world will believe us religious exactly to the extent of the price at which we would sell our religious interests. Hence it would seem that the great mass of ungodly men cannot escape the charge of hypocrisy in any profession they make of esteem for God's character, and kingdom, and glory.

2. Will their indefiniteness of views and feelings on religious subjects tend to their peace of conscience? If there is much in the mind it will not. Men who have really given the gospel a serious and frequent hearing have seldom failed to discover that their sins are unpardoned, and their souls unsanctified, and they in the gall of bitterness, and under the bonds of iniquity. They take so little pains to please God, and get to heaven, that they lose all the pains they do take, and go on unhappy all the way to the grave, and to perdition.

3. Does the little regard that ungodly men pay to divine things increase their advantages of obtaining salvation? I fear sometimes that the *opposite* may be the effect; that the careless manner in which they attend upon divine truth may harden their hearts against its sanctifying influence, that the few shillings they may pay for the support of the gospel—less than they would expend upon the most worthless concern of life—will induce the habit of feeling that the gospel is of no value.

4. Will this loose and indefinite regard to religious things save the soul? No; if it will not secure peace of conscience, nor increase the means of salvation, nor even secure a religious character, it surely will not save the soul. No! men will go down to

hell, wearing all the different shades of disregard to God, and his kingdom.

5. Will it lay the passions, and still the appetites ?

No! the soul that is not filled with God must be ever on the reach to find something else to fill it that is not God, and must fly from vanity to vanity,

“And find no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

Each object, as it seizes it, will say, happiness is not in me.

6. Will it soothe the bed of death? No; that will be a time of decision, and to have not been honest with God will, in the retrospective glances of that hour, be the most horrid and tormenting glance. Men's duplicity in the things of religion, will be the ghost that will haunt them on the dying bed.

7. Let the subject, then, teach us the value of decision in the things of religion. If men have any regard to God, let them have enough to save the soul. If they hear his word, let them *pray* and *repent*, and do works meet for repentance, and then they live for ever, and God will keep the lions off while they live, and keep off the roaring lion when they die, and bring them to his kingdom at last, where they may bask in the beams of his face for ever

## SERMON XX.

### THE TRUE GOD A SURE DEFENCE.—No 2.

#### 2. KINGS XVII. 33.

They feared the Lord, and served their own gods.

WHEN Israel went into captivity under Shalmanezar, king of Assyria, supposed by the ancient Hebrew writers to be the same with Sennacherib, God condescended to give the reasons why he thus dealt with those who had been long his covenant people. “They had sinned against the Lord their God,” [read from 7th to 17th verse,] “therefore the Lord was angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight.” How amazing is the condescension of God, that he would thus stoop to give a reason of his conduct to the very men who had awakened his indignation and his wrath.

Doubtless it may answer some important purpose in his moral government—that his very enemies be convinced of the righteousness of his dispensations. By this very means every mouth will be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. He will thus keep up the fear of him and the dread of him among the nations, and he will hold in restraint the very enemies of his throne and of his kingdom. It is added as an item of guilt on the part of Israel that their conduct had affected Judah, and had induced Judah to walk in their statutes, for which the Lord had rejected all the seed of Israel. This evil effect of their example induced the Lord to reject them, and afflict them, and deliver them into the hand of the spoilers, until they had cast them out of his sight. There is nothing that men are more accountable for than their influence: the bearing that the conduct of men shall have upon their neighbors, may constitute the most prominent item of their guilt—God may destroy the wicked sooner than he would, because he will protect from their contaminating example the men who are exposed to be injured by their vices. This was manifestly the fate of Israel. They had stayed longer in their land, and the foe had been held in check had not the kingdom of Judah been in danger from the example and influence of their idolatries.

The divine penman now goes back to rehearse the matter from the beginning, and speaks of God as having rent Israel from the

house of Judah. This would seem like shifting off the blame of their apostacy upon the Creator. But we remember that nothing is more common in Scripture, than the ascription of the same deed both to God and man. God is said to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and still he charges upon Pharaoh the crime of hardening his own heart. He is said to have moved David to number Israel, and yet we find him punishing David for this very act. It is said of the enemies of Israel that God turned their heart to hate his people, and still he punishes them for hating his people. These texts, though there are many others like them, are sufficient to show that the Scriptures are familiar with the ascription of the same act, both to the Creator and the creature.

Should we now recur to the history of that transaction, we may perhaps discover reasons why there should be this ascription of the same event to two distinct agencies. When Rehoboam was about to take the kingdom, the people of Israel, headed by Jeroboam, complained to him that his father had made his yoke heavy, and prayed that he would lighten it. He took counsel of his princes, and answered the people roughly, and the result was, that the ten tribes revolted from the house of David. They made Jeroboam their king, and he led them into idolatry, and the result was that the wrath of God was kindled against them, and he sent them into captivity from which we are unable to say that they, to any very great extent, ever returned. Now, what are the facts in this case, that would go to show that the transaction was of Divine appointment, and by the Divine agency? In the

1. Place, we see some some reasons that God had to be offended with the house of David, and why he should sever from his family part of the kingdom. In the latter part of Solomon's reign he had gone into a state of dark and guilty backsliding; had multiplied his wives and given up his heart to pleasure. He had become the richest and most powerful prince on the face of the earth. The spirit that led David to number the people, had led Solomon to feel proud in the extent of his riches and his power. Hence Rehoboam was led to answer roughly and proudly the prayer of his people, when they asked to have their yoke lightened. This pride of royalty God would check and would punish. He had so threatened David for his sin in the case of Uriah. And we see in his successors, sufficient reason why he should now punish the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. Hence we shall not be surprised to find the Divine agency employed in severing the kingdom.

2. We find that when Rehoboam had gathered together his one hundred and eighty thousand warriors to reduce the rebellion of Israel, that God forbade him to go up to fight with his brethren, but bid every man to return to his house, and offered, as the reason of this requisition, "This thing is done of me." Thus are we led to see the evidence complete, that the division of the house of David into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, was in consonance with the Divine plan and through the Divine agency.

3. We find, moreover, that God had, even in the time of Solomon, directed Ahijah, the prophet, to show Jeroboam that he should be king over ten of the tribes of the children of Israel. We have a record of the facts in the eleventh chapter of the first book of Kings, (from the 26th to the 40th verse.) Now that which God would direct his own prophet to foretell, must be an event that his mind has purposed, and his providence is pledged to accomplish. And he condescends even to offer a reason of this resolve of the Divine mind. Because they have forsaken me and worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon. Thus a father's sins may create mischief in his house ages afterwards.

Let us now inquire what there is to show that it was all a human transaction, and that though it led to the apostacy and ruin of Israel, they still deserved the punishment that came upon them.

1. There appears something suspicious in these complaints—as no good reason can be found why they should complain of the yoke they had to wear under the reign of Solomon. He enriched and advanced the kingdom, and did all that could be done to make his subjects easy and happy. There was peace during all his reign. They suffered not by invasion during his time, and never had to jeopardize their lives in the high places of the field. They abounded in provisions, and money, and merchandise, and had, it would seem, all that heart could wish. Now a people who, at the close of a reign like this, would embody their complaints and petition for a redress of grievances, would exhibit *prima facie* evidence that they had very depraved hearts, and that probably something else, and not the matter mentioned, was the ground of their grievance.

2. The Israelites achieved their own separation and ruin, by adhering to the counsel of an impious and unprincipled Jeroboam. He, doubtless, instigated them to prefer their complaints, that he might have a pretence for seizing the sceptre of the ten tribes, before Providence gave the signal. They ought to have seen and

been aware of their wickedness. It does not excuse men's sins that they have presented to them insidious and powerful temptations. We may not give up our minds to be under the control of any other mind, till we know that the mind that guides ours is infallible. Else we must be responsible for all the results as if we had guided our own steps.

3. There was precipitancy in Israel's determining to be a kingdom by itself, till they had asked counsel of the Lord, whatever confidence they might have in the integrity and ability of their leader. True he had been marked out as a king by the Lord's prophet, but the transaction was private, and could be known to Israel, only as Jeroboam in the pride of his heart, had without authority divulged it. And his known character ought to have made them doubt whether their interests would be safe in his hands. Men may not resign their own judgment and presume on the Divine protection and guidance, unless they look well, and wisely, and providently to their own interests.

4. The people of Israel, and Jeroboam with them, took upon themselves the whole responsibility of their separation and their undoing, by forsaking the worship of the true God. "It shall be," said the Lord, "if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house as I built for David, and will give Jerusalem unto thee." Thus would the promise of God have secured Israel's prosperity, if they had walked in the counsels of the Lord. While, then, the purpose and providence of God made Israel a distinct people, and they, as it would seem, laid the train for their own undoing; we see in the story every feature of a mere human transaction, laying the foundation for guilt and for desert of punishment, for everlasting reproach and self-destruction; *God* rent Israel from the house of David, and yet Israel *rent itself* from the house of David, and chose its own king and him a wicked king, who drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam.

It is evident, then, a man may do infinite mischief—mischief that shall not be finished in his own age or generation, the stain and the shame of which shall adhere to his blood, and pollute his memory. Jeroboam is held up as an example of wickedness, in all the generations after him, till the time when no one could tell where the tribes dwelt. And even to this day, when not a trace

of that people can, with any great assurance, be found, that man who was their leader in this revolt from the house of David, and from the worship of the true and living God, is held up as on a gibbet to warn all the generations not to copy his wickedness, lest they partake of his plagues.

The sequel is awfully admonitory. Israel departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, until the Lord removed them out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants, the prophets. "So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day."

## REMARKS.

1. This subject should lead us to reflect on the immutability of all our own moral actions. It was not very far from a thousand years before Christ, when Jeroboam instigated Israel to revolt. And now, almost three thousand years afterwards, the curse is still resting on the house of Israel. If that portion of the seed of Abraham has not become extinct, as the promise would seem to tell, how incalculable is the weight of that man's iniquities—and whoever else might sin with him, and all Israel sinned, still how immeasurable in their moral turpitude are his crimes, who began the whole train of mischief.

2. How inflexible is the holiness and righteousness of God—unpardoned sin he never can forget to hate. Sin not purged away in a Savior's blood, will never lose its odious aspect, though under a process of punishment many thousand years. And how can we, with such facts before us, doubt but that, towards the incorrigibly wicked, God may keep his anger for ever.

3 The subject leads us to adore the wonders of God's moral government.

An event may be so his own that he appointed it, and would not let another defeat, and was the mighty power that kept all the agents in life, and sustained and strengthened them while in the service, and there may be great sin and unpardonable in the transaction, and still God do only right, and the crime and guilt all be long to the agent that is governed and controlled.

4. The subject will lead us to reflect upon that text, "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself."

There is not a transaction of life, if wicked, done in the seeing or the hearing of our fellow-men, but may go to involve *them* in guilt, and operate upon their character, and history, and destiny, when they may have perished a thousand years since. Hence we must ask those *around us*, and they *us*, what *we* and *they* shall be

when these heavens are dissolved. The character of man is so pliable that it may be easily changed for the worse at any period of its formation, and no touch of moral influence fails to change it hence every man lives where he is giving character to a world And when, at last, we shall read the history of these moral results we shall feel it to have been a terrible thing to have lived in such a world, where souls are spread out around us on every side, whose destiny will depend on their character—and that character connected with our conduct.

## SERMON XXI.

### THE MYSTERIES OF PROVIDENCE.

PSALM XCVII. 2.

Clouds and darkness are round about him.

WHEN our Lord had assembled his disciples to eat with him the last paschal supper, it was a moment of amazing interest. The devil had put it into the heart of Judas to betray his Master, and the machinations of darkness were in rapid and successful operation. A few hours would pay the price of blood, seal the doom of the traitor, and scatter the little flock. There would be great weeping in the church, and equal joy without. Our Lord could have averted that storm, but his purposes of mercy must then have failed; hence he let his power sleep, and gave the hosts of hell the opportunity of a triumph. He had yet one lesson to teach his disciples, and would instruct them practically. He rose from supper, laid aside his upper garment, took a towel and girded himself, poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel. He came to Simon Peter. Said the astonished Peter, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" The Lord answered, "What I do thou knowest not *now*." What could be more surprising to him than that his Lord and Master should offer to perform for him so mean an office? But the astonished Peter would live to see the mystery solved; "thou shalt know hereafter." He would learn a lesson of humility, and be prepared to teach it to all nations.

But the text is not of private interpretation, and may teach us, that *many things transpire under the present ministration of Divine providence, which to men are very mysterious.*

It will be my object to bring into view some of these mysterious events, and afterwards inquire into the source of the mystery.

I. I am to notice some of the events of Divine providence that are mysterious. It cannot be expected that I give a very enlarged catalogue of these events. It will be sufficient if the few that I may notice suggest others that are obvious to every reflecting mind. I name,

1 *The limited spread, and small success of the gospel.*

It was published in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, and the injunction was that it be preached to all nations. Our Lord had power to cause this command to be obeyed. He could have raised up the proper instruments, and could have given the truth access to the conscience and the heart to whatever extent he had pleased. A very few of his disciples, in all ages, have been desirous to execute this last will of their ascended Lord, and have done some part of their duty. But the number has been small, and their efforts so insulated, that very little has been done. Three quarters of the globe are yet unacquainted with the book of life, have never heard of a Savior's death, or been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Of the eight or nine hundred millions who inhabit the globe, six or seven hundred millions are, up to this day, the worshippers of idols, attributing to a block of wood, or a bar of iron, the perfections of Jehovah, and offering them the homage he demands. Almost the whole population of Asia, computed at five hundred millions, are perfectly ignorant of God and the Savior, as the beasts that roam the deserts. The fifty millions of Africa are in a condition no less deplorable. Among the two hundred millions of Europe can be found millions in a group who are involved in almost total moral darkness. Of the fifty millions in the two Americas, something like four-fifths remain to be taught what be the first principles of the oracles of God. And the islands of the sea are, with a few exceptions, so many moral deserts. Thus the gospel of salvation, the forlorn hope of a perishing world, the invaluable bequest of a dying Savior, the only guide of the living, or hope of the dying, the celestial charter of a blessed immortality, at the end of sixty generations, circulates only through a little corner of this revolted world. A few millions enjoy its noonday beams, and others its twilight, while more numerous millions are immersed in the shadow of death.

From some regions where the gospel has been, it seems to have taken its everlasting flight. Scarcely an inch of that territory where prophets taught, and where apostles bled, can be considered within the limits of the church of God. Jerusalem, and Antioch, and Ephesus, and Rome, and Carthage, where truth once had a lodgment, are but so many provinces reconquered by the prince of darkness. And where the gospel tarries still its success is small. Compare the number of professors with those who are without the pale of the Church, and they are lost in the superior numbers that turn their back upon the communion. And what numbers of

those who feed at the table, will not at last sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, we dare not calculate. Beyond a doubt all are not Israel that are of Israel. We know that many in the last day will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence?" to whom Christ will respond, "I never knew you."

Many ministers of Jesus Christ, at the end of a long life, have exclaimed, in the language of the prophet, "who hath believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? The British missionaries labored twenty years, in the islands of the South Sea, ere they could tell us of their success. Some very able men of God, have been heard to say on their death-bed, that they were doubtful whether they had been the means of saving a single soul. They have feared that God had merely employed them to bring the fate of Chorazin and Bethsaida upon an abandoned multitude. Now in all this there is something very mysterious. If Christ issue a gospel, why suffer it to travel round the world so slow? Why fertilize here and there a little spot, and leave the residue of the world a desert? If he design to bless our race, why not render his gospel, wherever it is proclaimed, the wisdom of God, and the power of God? In an enterprise so dear to the heart of God as that of rendering men holy, one would think that he would embark all his attributes. "Clouds and darkness are round about him."

2. There has been something mysterious in *the success that has attended the propagation of error*. Why will the blessed God give his enemies opportunity to fill the world with lies? The more firm our faith in the promise, that all nations shall, one day, come to his light, the more of mystery is there in his suffering the enemies of truth to have *any* success. Just when the gospel had commenced its course, Mahomet was permitted to impose his delusions upon a hundred millions of souls. And as the darkness of paganism began to be dispersed, popery riveted its chains upon another hundred millions. Many districts of our world, which were once blessed with a pure gospel, have since become the prey of error. How many sectaries have arisen, and grown in numbers and in influence, whose delusions were too bare-faced to deceive any but a fool. No error seems too gross to forbid its circulation. The Swedenborgian and the Shaker, who could have collected their creeds no where but from the reveries of Bedlam, have not failed to gather about them a community of madmen. And we could name other sects, whose fundamental doctrines have no founda-

tion either in Scripture or in common sense, and still they find adherents. An *impostor* will gain a host of proselytes, while he who proclaims the *truth* has scarcely made a convert. I know that error finds, in the depraved heart, a soil that is congenial, while, for the reception of truth, its fallow ground must be broken up. Hence no surprise is felt at the fact that wicked men should love error; but God is the Governor of the world, and can check its progress at his pleasure, and that he does not is our surprise.

I know the truth will finally triumph. The witnesses, whose souls cry from under the altar, will yet see every opposer at their feet. But why the *temporary triumph* that God allows to the enemies of his gospel? Why must good men so often encounter chilling opposition in every effort they make, and so frequently seem vanquished? So Israel encountered many a defeat in contest with the very people whom God had devoted to destruction. I do not say that faith has no answer to these queries, but that it must look often through a dark cloud. Even in the present day, when the finger of God writes *success* on every banner of his hosts, still he continues to allow the enemies of his gospel to hope. Every pious effort awakens new opposition, and passions that had lain dormant are enlisted against his kingdom. One of the once holiest cities of our land, was lately enlisted, with its wealth, its eloquence, and its influence, against the immaculate glories of the Lamb. Now, why will God throw influence into the hands of his enemies, and block up the way of his people? God could fill the world with truth in an hour, and say to Zion, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is arisen upon thee." While "the hearts of men are in his hand, and he turneth them as the rivers of water are turned," why will he allow the world to be overrun with error? He has promised it to his Son, who is, one day, to "reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Now why will he keep his Son out of the promised inheritance so long, when he could so easily put down error, and give success to his truth, and bring every knee to bow to him? "Clouds and darkness are round about him."

3. *The gifts bestowed upon bad men, who abuse them, while many men of piety have smaller talents, is mysterious.*

Said our Lord, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." "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 things which are mighty." The fact is unquestionable that men of the finest talents have often been the avowed enemies of the truth. They have managed wisely, and pleaded eloquently, the cause of the adversary, and have spent their influence, and their lives to prop the pillars of his sinking empire. Hume and others of the family of infidels, who own him as their father, lavished upon a bad cause the energies of a mighty intellect. They wanted nothing but the aid of truth to give immortality to every page they wrote. Their destiny to forgetfulness is because they served a bad cause, and a bad master. Every age of the Church has had employed against her many of the noblest geniuses; and her foes can never plead that they were foiled because they lacked the ablest of advocates. And yet many who have been eminent for piety have been comparatively wanting in powers of mind. They met the approbation of their master, having employed in his service all the talents that he had given them. If they failed in eloquence or influence, still by their example and their prayers, they pleaded nobly the cause of truth, and will stand high at last in the estimate of heaven. Their names will be remembered when every argument and every orator employed in the cause of the adversary shall have sunk into everlasting contempt.

We are not prepared, however, to say, that irreligion can boast of a balance of strong argument or good sense on its side. Argument has always been weak, however specious, when at war with truth, and good sense has been misnamed when associated with infidelity. Good argument must be founded in truth, and truth is the image of being and of fact, and will not lend its aid against its own honors. Now the mystery is that God should ever arm his enemies with talents to thwart apparently his purposes of mercy, to contradict his truth, to libel his character, and abuse his people.

Will his providence make provision for strong and bitter opposition to the very salvation he proclaims? Will God undertake to subdue a rebel world to allegiance, and raise up in that same world men ably qualified to neutralize the whole spirit and import of the very overtures he proclaims?

Why does he not blast the intellect and paralyze the tongue that lend their influence to pervert the right ways of the Lord? Why not wither the arm employed in efforts to dam up the flow of his mercy? Why not touch the lips of his people as with a live coal from his altar, and render every child of his an eloquent advocate

of the doctrines and duties of his salvation. "Clouds and darkness are round about him."

4. *The afflictions of the good men, while the wicked are so extensively prosperous, appear mysterious.*

Understand me not to say that *ungodliness* hath the promise of the life that now is. And still the fact cannot be controverted, that many who have set their mouth against the heavens, seems to thrive well under the present ministrations of Divine providence. There attend them uninterrupted health, long life, fulness of bread, and success in all their schemes, till they are emboldened at length to deny that God made them, or that there is any omniscient eye to see them. And because sentence against their evil works is not executed speedily, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil; while contemporary with them are seen good men, who become habituated to disappointment, poverty, and pain. Now, why will God suffer this in *one case*? Whom would a kind father smile upon, and bless, and prosper, rather than his own children? When was the world blessed with worthier men than the prophets and apostles? And what class of men have ever suffered more? "They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

The summary detail that Paul gives us of his own toils and sufferings, cannot be read without strong and painful emotions. He speaks of himself as having been compared with others; "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 waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine 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." And the long list of martyrs since Paul could each rehearse a tale that would torture a tender heart. Ages have rolled by, when the dungeon, the rack, the cross, and fire, and fagots, and every other instrument of torture, that ingenuity could invent, have done their utmost to rid the world of its best

benefactors. And the providence of God, as if the hand of malice were too slow, has hewn down the best of men in the morning of life. The ministers of religion, the missionaries of the cross, the pillars both of Church and state, have received a mandate to quit the world, at the moment of their most extended influence, and greatest usefulness. They reached an eminence that qualified them to address a world, and rendered their services, as men would judge, indispensable to the prosperity of the Church, and were then swept into the grave. So fell Dwight and Worcester, and Mills, and Hall, Everts, Cornelius, and Wisner, and Payson, and the Churches adopted in their fall that mournful dirge, "Clouds and darkness are round about him."

Or they sometimes live but to suffer, and groan, and weep. God does not allow his people in this world a downy bed, or the conveniences of a palace, doubtless because he sees that such would not be the safest route to heaven. Their religion often procures them trials, and plants upon their brow a crown of thorns. Whether they have any more trials than *they need* is not now the question. No doubt God could sanctify them by his Spirit, and take them to heaven through a less stormy passage. Nor can their trials be such as to render it doubtful whether God loves them. And still it is sometimes a mystery, that God's dearest people may not have more refreshments in the wilderness, and fewer pains on their way to his palace in the skies.

In the meantime the wicked prosper. Health attends their persons, and success their enterprises, and there is poured into their lap a profusion of wealth and pleasures, and honors. And they live, it may be, to scourge the Church, to scare the timid, and vex the faithful, and stop the tardy, and wring from aching bosoms, midnight complaints, and agonized prayers. Thus they flourish like the green bay tree, and by a hardy constitution and a daring mind, rise superior to all the plagues and pains incident to holy men. The basest of human beings have sometimes measured out a hundred years, have attended the funeral of every pious contemporary, and have even blown the trumpet of revolt in three centuries.

And it would be infidel not to confess that God had their life in his hand, and could have rid the world, at a word, of their contaminating influence. The very men who are famous, and weary themselves to commit iniquity, and would keep a thanksgiving if they could see the Church exterminated; whose only prayer is that God would hate and curse his people; these very men live by

Divine appointment, and feed daily on the charities of Heaven. All this transpires under *his* government who holds his people dear to him as the apple of his eye, and has engraven the walls of their sacred city on the palms of his hands. How can we wonder that the weak in faith are sometimes put to a stand by events like these, and are led to say, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency." "Thy way is in the sea, thy footsteps are not known?"

5. *The poverty of the liberal, while the churl is opulent, is another mystery.*

Ours is a *miserable* world, and might be meliorated in its fall, if the *generous* were uniformly *wealthy*. We meet with cases of distress that mere sympathy, if we have no oil nor wine, cannot cure, misery that cannot be washed away with tears. And if we can add a few crumbs of charity, they may only aggravate the misery attempted to be relieved, by creating a taste that cannot be gratified, or men may lack these sympathies, but have the means of their gratification. Many know not where to bestow their fruits, and their goods, while the poor may beg unpitied the crumbs that fall from their table. But with this misery they give themselves no concern. The wounded may be in the streets, but they can pass by on the other side. The widow's fires are gone out, and her little ones are hungry, but it brings no tear into their eye. Some Macedonian prayer is heard from the wilderness; immortal beings are going on to the judgment without a Bible, and are finishing their probation without a hope of immortality. But why disturb them with these foreign and frivolous complaints? They but shut their ears, and grasp their purse the harder, for every outcry of want that may assail them.

We can see them glory in the means they *have*, but will not *use* in curing the miseries that lie spread around them. One man could furnish his town with the gospel, but lets it lie a waste place; another could build them a sanctuary, but suffers the place where God's honor dwells to crumble into dust; another could support a domestic missionary, and repair the desolations of many generations; another could charter a vessel with Bibles for India; another could educate an evangelist, and another support him in some outpost of Zion; and yet the whole of them combined will not unite to buy themselves the gospel, but squander away the Sabbath as the beast does.

Now were all this wealth in the hands of the benevolent, it would seem wise and good in him that governs the world. The

poor would be supplied, the heathen evangelized, the gospel supported, and the blessed God honored. It seems impossible that this should not, then, be a happier world. The ruins of the apostacy would, then, be more than half repaired, and there would be seen approaching the millennial year of the world.

Now the mystery is, that God should, in so many cases, give the wealth to one, and the benevolent sympathies to another; should place the talents where they cannot be used, and the kindness where it has no medium of display. The wealth rusts for want of use, while benevolence bleeds over misery which it has not the ability to relieve. When occasionally the two things meet they are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. I could mention characters that will go down to posterity with honor; in which were identified opulence and charity. With these to be *useful* was to *live*, and, though dead, they yet live in the streams of charity they created, and which will continue to flow till they have fertilized the wastes of many generations. But I could name others who had hearts to feel, but had not the means of relieving the wretchedness over which it was their painful luxury to weep. The immortal Howard, having devoted his patrimony in the cure of distress, poured out his tears over other miseries which the smallness of his resources, and the shortness of human life, disenabled him to relieve. To adopt the sentiment of his eminent eulogist, "he visited all Europe, not to indulge in its luxuries, but to dive into the depths of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan was original, was full of genius and humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity." Such were the efforts of one who felt for the miserable beyond his ability to administer relief. He did honor to the finest feelings of our nature, and erected to himself an imperishable monument in the memory of the miserable.

And it would be easy to name men of the opposite character, who have the means of making the wretched happy, but on whom no child of sorrow can ever fix a look of gratitude. But we are happy to say the world is now undergoing a change, by which men of this description must become as contemptible as they are wealthy. God is saying now to the world, that the silver and the gold are his, and many, at his bidding, are casting their wealth

into his treasury, and the father, who will not now aid the cause of charity, will make his heirs ashamed. A suffering world has raised its cry to heaven, and God has heard, and will have its miseries relieved. But how strange that for so many thousand years, he should have permitted wealth and charity to be so extensively dissociated, when their union would have so mitigated the miseries of the apostacy.

6. I mention but one other fact under the government of God that would seem a mystery, *the small degrees of sanctification in his people*. Knowing that they would never arrive at heaven without his interference, God has undertaken to sanctify them by his Spirit; and has even promised that when he begins a good work he will see it consummated.

There is, then, a pledge given that God will make all his people like him. Hence we are confident that he has never abandoned one that he has begun to sanctify. And still how little of the image of God is seen in his people. And I have no reference now to false professors, but to those who give the best evidence that they love the Lord Jesus. The pious kings and patriarchs of Israel all polluted their memory, and marred their enjoyment by sin. The best men whose history is recorded in the volume of inspiration, are seen to have come greatly short of what God would have them to be. And the Christians of the present day, are, at the best, poor polluted creatures. How liable to become worldly, to pollute their consciences with crime, and dishonor the sacred name into which they have been baptized. In every prayer they make, one who is a stranger to his own heart is liable to infer that they have polluted their hands with capital offences against the laws both of God and man. Now, why will God permit his family to be so corrupt? Would he not love them more if they were like him? And their songs how much sweeter, and their sacrifices how much more acceptable, and how much more abundant their comforts, and more exalted the glory that would redound to their Redeemer, if they were more holy. And they are God's own family, whom he will have near to him in his kingdom, and who are to reflect his glory for ever. He intends to go on operating in their hearts till he makes them like himself, and yet he permits them to carry about with them, till they die, a body of sin and death. It is wonderful that an everlasting covenant should bind such polluted creatures to their holy Redeemer; that their sins do not forfeit them the endeared relationship, and cut them off from hope, and happiness, and heaven. And equally strange, on the

other side, that since God could, by a single word, render them perfectly holy, he should still permit them to progress so slowly in their way to perfection. Why not say to the whole family of believers, "I will, be ye clean," and thus, in one moment solve the mystery, and render millions of hearts happy? "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

## REMARKS.

1. *The subject should render us humble.* Our view of every subject is so limited and so obscure, that no very great degree of confidence can become us. It may give us joy that *God knows* how every thing will terminate, and that in the end *we shall know* that God has done all things well. But while we know so little, and with regard to many things hardly venture to have any opinion, the deepest humility becomes us, and the greatest modesty, when we think or converse on the ways of God. A *proud* man, in such a world as this, is a monster, and not to be tolerated till he is smitten with a deep sense of his own insignificance. To be learning all we can is our duty, and still it is our duty to feel till we die that we have only read a single page of the book of Providence, and have read that page by the dimmest twilight. We may have as enlarged hopes of the discoveries of futurity as we please to cherish, may calculate one day to know even as we are known; but to have at present any confidence that God has made a full disclosure on any subject, is to lose sight of our own noviciate, and prepare ourselves for sad and everlasting disappointment.

2. While the present state of things is calculated to destroy all self-confidence, it prepares the way for the most enlarged faith. The less we *know*, the greater occasion is there *to believe*, the less we are permitted to discover of our path with our own eyes, the more absolute the necessity that we lean upon the hand of God. If we walk in darkness, and have no light, the command is that we trust in the Lord, and stay ourselves upon our God. If we can but walk *safely*, though it be by starlight, we may rest assured that, by-and-bye, when the sun has risen, we shall see that God has led us in the right way, that we might go to a city of habitation. Surely our confidence in him may rise to the highest pitch of assurance. If it be important that we learn, before we reach heaven, to rely with the most entire confidence on the truth and faithfulness of God, then are we placed in the very world where we can learn this lesson to the happiest advantage. One could not learn

to *believe* in heaven, learn to trust where no danger is, learn to wait when every good is present, or be diffident when the whole mystery is developed. And we cannot tell now how much good it may do us in heaven to have been bred for that world in the very twilight that now surrounds us. It may render heaven a far happier world than it would otherwise have been. This world may hereafter be seen to have been the nursery where *only* we could have learned some of those first lessons that lay a broad foundation for progress and joy in the acquisition of heavenly science. And we may a thousand times bless the Lord in our future songs, that no farther light was granted us when we passed this desert. Let faith be strong and we can hear songs in the night. Job sung sweetly while his night was the darkest. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." His song was the dictate of faith which darted through the cloud, and perched him upon the summit of Tabor, where lay smiling in his eye the fields of promise. There he sung, and Moses after him, and there if we can but climb, we shall see a wider, and fairer, and more fertile Canaan than gladdened believers under the darker dispensation. Come ye disciples of the Lord Jesus. "Try, try your wings,"—let your faith put forth its mightiest efforts, and soon you rise above this twilight, and ten thousand intricacies of providence disclose their mystery, and you see a wise, and great, and good Jehovah managing, with unerring skill, the darkest operations of this beclouded world

## SERMON XXII.

### THE WAYS OF GOD UNFOLDED.

JOHN XIII. 7.

What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.

THE operations of Divine providence afford the believer a subject of contemplation, the most delightful. Little as he can know in his present state, and darkened as must be all the views of a finite mind, when employed in tracing the footsteps of an incomprehensible God, still the research is pleasant. When vision fails, faith operates. The solution of one mystery, leads us to anticipate the moment when others, darker still, shall be solved. The light that has dawned shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. It is the God *we love*, who is seen to operate. Not only can he do no wrong, but he will yet permit us to see that he has done right. A child passing a wilderness in a dark night, in company with his father, would not feel alarmed, if for a moment, he could not see the hand that led him. Parental love secures the child, and filial confidence renders him content and happy. The wilderness has its limits, and the darkness its period. Creatures, from their very structure, can *never* know but little, and at present, comparatively nothing. It is enough for us, that he who *operates*, knows; he who *moves* the machinery, has decreed that the result shall be wise and happy. And yet it is our duty to obtain all the light we can. We should be far less ignorant of God and his works, if we were more industrious in our researches. Half the mystery of which we complain, we create by our inattention and our depravity.

I. We can at present know *but little* of the ways of God.

1. We often *mistake the Divine purpose*. In many cases the effect, which God designed to accomplish by a particular train of operations, is already produced, while yet we are looking out for other effects. Deceived as to what was God's main purpose, we imagine the event distant, which has already transpired. God will give us at present no other account of his purpose, than that con-

tained in his word, and this relates merely to our duty, and the consequences of obedience. It may be the design of God to accomplish many things, which we should have supposed, would never have entered into his plan. He may permit men to act basely, merely to illustrate the depravity of their hearts, and thus corroborate the testimony of his word; or that his justice may shine the more conspicuously in their condemnation; or that they, in their overthrow, may become a beacon to warn others; or that his people may be rendered the more grateful, for the benefits of restraining and sanctifying grace. We are altogether too ignorant to determine what is a *desirable* event. We may lament as an *incurable evil*, what God may esteem an *invaluable good*. Hence we may labor to defeat an event, to accomplish which all the attributes of omnipotence are embarked. Our prayers and energies may be excited to agony in warding off a storm, which, it is his purpose shall come down upon us in all its fury. We watch at the couch of a languishing child; our life is bound up in his; if it die, it seems to us that God must design to undo us; and yet, perhaps, that child was given us that it might die in our arms, and be the means of our sanctification. We dread some apprehended revolution, as calculated to sap the foundations of our civil liberties, and yet God may see that it will enhance our blessedness. Hence it will often happen, that God and his people will seem to be at strife. They aim at his glory, and suppose that he would be honored by an event which, should it transpire, would injure them, and cover his throne with a deeper darkness. But in a case like this, God will approve our motives, but will thwart our purpose; and when the series of events is finished, we shall see and confess that we were mistaken, and that God was wise.

2. The *remoteness* of the *cause* from the effect, renders inexplicable many of the events of Divine providence. When we see the wondrous machine in motion, we look for results too soon. Forgetful that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, we expect him to finish his work in an hour. The wheel we now see in motion will move another, and that another, and another, and another, till at length the *hundredth generation* will see accomplished, an enterprise which *we see begun*. Voltaire about a century since sowed the seeds of the French revolution, and thus commenced a train of events, that probably will continue in operation till the last day. Jeroboam instituted an idolatrous worship, which resulted twenty centuries afterward in the ruin of Israel. Mohamed more than one thousand years ago,

compiled a system of falsehood, which now chains in the dungeons of death, perhaps one hundred millions of souls. But we must be infidels too, to deny that these are all events of Providence, by which ultimately, God will cover himself with glory.

And the subject will apply itself to things nearer home. A careless father admits into his family to-day a worthless laborer, whose pernicious principles and example debauch and ruin his descendants to the fifth, and perhaps the tenth generation, and, it may be, ultimately render his family extinct. A mother, to cover the villany of her son, denies a fact, or asserts a falsehood in his presence, and thus teaches her child to prevaricate, and entails crime and infamy upon her remotest posterity. A father breaks the Sabbath, and deserts the sanctuary, and thus places his offspring, for many generations, in the seat of the scorner. There is really no calculating how extensively may flow the streams of corruption; how remote from its source may be the outlet of those waters, that carry wretchedness and death in their course.

Or if we look at the brighter side of the picture, the prospect will be more pleasant. David, and Moses, and Asaph, three thousand years ago, penned those divine songs, which *to-day* produce joy and gladness in every part of Christendom, and will continue to multiply the happiness of believers, till the second coming of the Redeemer. Many a pious mother a thousand years ago, taught her children those principles, which, to-day secure to her a pious posterity, and to the world a host of benefactors. Our forefathers founded those institutions which are now the pillars of our land, and taught those principles which are now the stay of our churches, and the prolific sources of our revivals. And when the great drama shall be finished, we shall, doubtless, see many causes and their effects separated from each other, to the distance of a hundred generations. In these circumstances, how can we hope that in the passing events there will not be many things inscrutably dark and mysterious. If a force were seen in operation in this country, which was to produce its effects in the north of Europe, or in some isle of the Pacific, who could hope to remain at home, and comprehend fully the structure of that machine? And the case is the same when *time*, as when *space* separates the cause from the effect. Standing by the little rivulet that issues from a mountain spring, how can we hope to measure and explore the effects of that stream, when it has traversed a continent, and is pouring out its waters into the bosom of the ocean. Could we follow the eye of God down through the unmeasured tracts of time and see

every plan finished, all mystery would vanish. Thus, perhaps, the angels, born to noble enterprise, and raised by their immortality above fatigue, feast their expanded minds, on the interesting novelties of a wonder-working God.

3. We are often involved in mystery, because we do not see the connection between the powers operating and their results, *even when not very remote*. Hence many causes appear never to have produced their legitimate effects, and many effects appear to have transpired without a cause. There *was* a cause which produced the effect, but one or the other was hid from our view. The human mind was, perhaps, incapable of looking upon both at the same glance. A child surveys a complicated machine, but is able to see no connection between the motion of a water-wheel, and the effect produced. We see a stream of liquid fire pouring from the bosom of a cloud; in a moment we see an oak, which had withstood the storms of a century, rived from its summit to its roots, but how this effect is produced, we are unable to say with any good degree of assurance, after the researches of six thousand years. There is a philosophy that can neutralize the liquid fire; there is an eye that can trace the forked lightnings; there is a hand that can bind together, by intermediate links, the most remote extremes. To one thus endowed, and to him only, there can be no mystery. The cause and effect may be *near*, and the connection *natural* and *visible*, and yet that connection hid from us. Peter could see no relationship between the humiliating act of the Redeemer in washing his feet and the lesson of condescending kindness which that act was intended to teach. Paul, with all his faith, wondered that he must be tortured with that thorn in the flesh. And many a Christian, since then, has quarrelled with his circumstances, as calculated to retard his spiritual growth, and has endeavored to thrust himself from a situation, where he was learning the best lessons that heavenly wisdom could teach.

4. Many things are to us mysterious, because we see but in part. But one scene of the grand drama falls under the view of any one generation. We see the commencement of a process, which will not be finished till the judgment; or we see a result, whose remote cause lies hid among the ages that have elapsed. When the last day, which will see every scheme accomplished, shall throw back its light upon the long train of causes, which shall then be seen yoked with their specific results, the darkness of which we now complain will all have vanished. A parent educates his son, without any design whatever, except to procure him

the means of being wealthy and happy. Knowing the worth of an education, he, in his turn, educates *his* son, till at length there rises up in that family, perhaps not till the tenth generation, a Brainerd, a Schwartz, or a Vanderkemp, by whose pious labors the very desert is made to blossom, and vast tracts of its wastes are redeemed from endless desolation. But this grand result can never be known till the morning of the judgment. *Then* we learn why that first youth was educated. A man is wealthy, but covetous to a proverb, and has an only son. All the wealth he can grasp he hoards up for that son, but *he*, in the mean time, becomes dissipated, and dies a vagabond, and the father, destitute of an heir, is constrained to put his overgrown estate into circulation, and it finally drops into the treasury of the Lord, and is expended in sending the bread of life to the perishing heathen. But this happy result can never be fully appreciated till the period of the judgment. Then we shall know why the father was permitted to become penurious, and the son dissipated. And the same is the case with regard to almost every movement of the wheels of providence. There is nothing *finished* in the present world but character, or, if finished, the result is not declared. We can see the whole of nothing. Our station is at some point on the winding banks of a stream, whose source, and whose outlet hide themselves in the darkness of an unmeasured distance. One great object of the judgment will be to show that God was wise and good in all he did, and this can only be seen when every event is finished. Then the widow will know why she was so early bereaved. The mother will know why death tore her infant from her bosom. The aged minister will see why he wept away his life over a hard-hearted people. Then the believer will no longer see through a glass darkly. The night that now hovers about him will be dispersed, and the full blaze of a noon-day sun shine upon every unfinished scene through which he is now passing.

5. Another source of mystery arises from the contrariety between the means employed and the end achieved. The very course is pursued often which we should have judged would have defeated the object. Pharaoh must feed the family of Jacob during the years of famine, and to compass the object Joseph must go into Egypt a slave. Who can wonder that the patriarch exclaimed, "All these things are against me." The captive Jews must enjoy the patronage of the king of Babylon, and to compass this design Daniel must be cast into a den of hungry lions. On that dreary night what believing captive dared to hope that God was dealing

kindly with his people. And they must be in esteem with the court of Persia, but to effect this a gallows must be erected for Mordecai. When the gospel was to be disseminated, there must be upon the Roman throne a cruel, ambitious Cæsar, who should not shrink at the sight of blood till the world was subdued at his feet. The idea of communicating instruction by means of tracts originated in the mind of Voltaire, was first used in the propagation of infidelity, and is now among the best means employed by the Redeemer in subduing the world to himself. It was the Divine purpose to cure the world of infidelity; to accomplish this, God directed that the experiment should first be made, whether a nation could be happy without the Bible; this experiment must be made in the very centre of Christendom, and France must be the scene of its operation. The Scriptures were committed to the flames, and so complete was the conflagration, that, at the close of the scene, a search was instituted and continued in Paris for four days by several enterprising men, without being able to discover a single copy of the Bible. The dreary result you know. Infidelity has the heart of a tiger: blood is its proper nourishment, and it can feed upon its own bowels. The leaders in that enterprise invented the guillotine, and dyed its beams with their own blood. The Jehovah whose word they had proscribed, swept them all, as with the besom of destruction, into one untimely grave. The tale cannot be told without emotion. It was the song of death, and the work went on till the very grave said, "It is enough." The plague spread throughout the empire, till almost every mother in the realm grieved that it had not been her destiny to live and die childless.

Thus we saw the legitimate fruits of infidelity, and this experiment, strange as it may seem, has stabbed the vitals of that monster. No nation will again make the experiment of becoming happy by the aid of infidelity. All are receiving the Bible, and it will soon be read in every language under heaven. Thus means are employed apparently the most contrary to the design which is accomplished.

6. Another source of mystery is the amazing *disparity* between the cause and the effect. An arrow shot at a venture, entered between the joints of the harness and slew the despot of Israel. A shepherd's boy, with a sling and a stone, gained Israel a victory over the army of Philistia. When Voltaire was a school-boy, who could see any connection between him and the plague of infidelity that desolated the French empire. When Alexander and Wellings-

ton were in their cradles, who could predict that they were to wade in triumph through the carnage of Waterloo. The British government laid a duty upon one article of export to the American colonies, and it resulted in our independence. A little captive maid directed Naaman to Elisha, and convinced the court of Syria that there was a God in Israel. So the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, will yet become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. How is it possible that we should not seem surrounded with mystery, while we inhabit a world where the greatest events are thus constantly resulting from causes which are too small to claim any relationship to those events. Inattentive to what is passing, the *event* breaks in upon us while yet the *cause* lies hid in the profoundest obscurity.

7. The *complication* of causes and effects casts a mystery around the movements of providence. The same train of causes produces more than one effect. That which we term an *event* is often the means of some other event. In the case of Joseph, God intended to afflict and sanctify his aged father, to develop the depravity of his brethren, to cast a little light into the court of Pharaoh, to bless Joseph, to save alive his father's house, to drown the Egyptian host, and finally, and *principally* to get to himself a great name. And thus is connected with every operation of providence a great variety of events. At times we find it impossible to come at the main design, and perhaps in most cases the main design cannot be known till the assize of the last day.

8. The perpetual *variety* which God observes in the movements of his providence covers his designs with mystery.

We cannot calculate that the same causes will, with any uniformity, produce the same effects, even when all the circumstances are apparently similar. The same disease will not operate on one constitution as on another, nor on the *same* constitution at *one time* as at another. The same exposure which yesterday caused death, to-day is innocent; and the medicine which in one case checked the rage of a disease, in another has been thought to aid its operations. The same remark, which yesterday was harmless, to-day kindles a fire not to be extinguished in half a century. Hence we can predict nothing. God seems designedly to cover himself with impenetrable darkness. His way is in the deep waters, and his footsteps unknown. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

9. We perpetually misjudge, as to events, *which are happy* and *which unhappy*. Hence the mystery of the crucifixion. How

could the disciples, who hoped in a Savior that would redeem Israel from civil oppression, see any wisdom in the arrest and the murder of their master? And yet his death redeemed myriads from spiritual bondage, and from the endless miseries of the *second* death. A mother is employed during a score of months, in rearing to intelligence a lovely babe; but at the juncture when it begins to reciprocate her smiles, when it had entirely entwined her heart, had become an essential ingredient in her cup of blessings, she wakes and finds herself embracing a lump of lifeless clay. All distress and darkness, she inquires, Why did it not perish in the birth? Why could it not have died when I loved it less? Why must it live till a mother cannot survive its death? And yet, perhaps this very event is the means of snatching the mother from perdition.

In one word, our *ignorance* is the principal reason why the passing events of providence are so dark. We are inadequate to judge how it becomes God to treat his people, and how his enemies. And our duty is to wait patiently till the light of a brighter dispensation dissipate the darkness of the present.

III. One word on the promise, "Thou shalt know hereafter." This refers us to the light of the last day. Then Christ will come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. *Then* all the events of Divine providence will be finished. We shall then know what was the Divine purpose in every dispensation. The *cause* and the *effect* will approximate, will develop their connection, will lose their *contrariety*, will *display* their *parity*, and unfold their *intricacy*. We shall look no longer upon one distinct part of a dispensation, but shall see the whole. What was to us an infinite variety, will appear, perhaps, to have been the most perfect uniformity. Judging *then*, as God *now* does, we shall see that every event was happy. The whole series of events will be finished, and the holy universe will have nothing else to do but to wonder and adore.

#### REMARKS.

1. The subject is calculated to render us modest and humble. In a world managed so entirely without us, where we can know so *little*, and can predict *nothing*, we have very little cause to feel ourselves of much importance, and have constant occasion to see and feel our own worthlessness.

2. And yet we are admonished by this subject to be very *cir-*

*cumspect* in our conduct. Insignificant as we may appear in our own eyes, or in the esteem of others, we may do incalculable mischief. There is a kind of immortality attached to all we do. Our imprudent language and misdeeds may commence a train of mischievous operations, ending in the ruin of our children and our neighbors; and we may never know the extent of the mischief till we hear them sentenced to perdition, and perhaps perish with them.

3. Let the subject encourage us to attempt the achievement of *great good*. Causes are often small and weak, and yet the effects incalculably grand and glorious. A little one, under the Divine management, may become a great nation. If Mordecai had been afraid to attempt great things, the captive Jews had been extirpated, and the very palace-chamber stained with their blood. If we shrink from the labor of being useful, we may die in our insignificance, and God will give to others the honor of building up his kingdom.

4. How *capacious* beyond conception must be the mind of God. Of that system of providence which we contemplate by parts, *he* takes one comprehensive view, and manages with an uncontrollable sovereignty. With him time and space are nothing; no darkness can obscure his view, no cloud intercept his vision. Very obscure are our best views of him, very low our thoughts, and very poor our noblest affections. In heaven they behold his glory, and offer him better praise.

5. The subject must be full of *comfort to God's people*. The present darkness is but temporary, and the God whom they love manages the affairs of providence. They need have no fear that God will not provide for their safety and comfort. He reigns to make them happy. Their interests are identified with his own. He will guide them by his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory. There they may be delightfully employed for ever in contemplating scenes, which now, perhaps, fill them with alarm. The danger will then be over, the wilderness and the sea behind, while in *prospect* there will be spread out a boundless and a blissful Palestine. But this consolation belongs only to the true believer. The hypocrite will not arrive at heaven. To him the present darkness will continue, and become more and more dense for ever.

Finally, this subject offers no comfort to the enemies of God. At present he may prosper them, but they can have no hope that he loves them. They are forming a character for the judgment, and when that character is fully formed they will go to their own place. The mischief they have done will all be remembered, and

they will receive the due reward of their deeds. They can hope for no brighter day than the present. The promise in the text does not reach their case, till by repentance they change their character. It reads in the page of inspiration, and is a dreadful line, "Darkness shall pursue his enemies." The same cloud that lighted the tents of Jacob, cast impenetrable darkness into the camp of the enemy. While God's people are destined to emerge from the present darkness, it will thicken about the enemies till they shall find themselves involved in the blackness of darkness for ever.

## SERMON XXIII.

### THE LOITERER AT THE VINEYARD.

MATT. XX. 6.

Why stand ye here all the day idle.

THE text is from the story of the vineyard, where laborers were hired at the different hours of the day, and where some were found idle even at the eleventh, and were set to work in the vineyard. Thus is illustrated the great work which we all have to do, and the importance that we be about it early. The object of introducing this parable was to induce men to think. When men will begin to think, a very important object is gained; this thought, however, must result in *feeling*, or nothing radically important is effected. And when men feel they must *act*, or nothing is done to any lasting or important purpose. And even then the grand design of the gospel is not answered unless men act from right motives. If men suppose that God thus pushes his demands too far, they have only to be told that every human parent demands all this of his child.

But many fatally mistake the grand design of the gospel and of life, and suppose that some external morality is all that God requires. What then is the chief end of man? This is not a mere child's question; but should be put to the youth, to the middle aged, and the man of gray hairs. We should put it to ourselves in the morning and in the evening, and seven times a day. It should be written over the posts of our doors, and worn as a signet upon the breast. It is a question of the mightiest import. We learned the answer when children, have we to this day understood is import? In the sacred volume the question is ably and eloquently answered. "God has made all things for himself." He is an infinite ocean of excellence, of wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness, and truth. He was eternally inclined to communicate his happiness to creatures. If, therefore, he act according to his nature, he will make creatures happy. Intending thus to act, he created angels with great capacities to contain the overflowings of his goodness. He made man, also, to share in the same bliss

and join the angels in a general song of praise. Having made these immortal beings, he began to make himself known to them, that they might begin their joy. He opened before them the treasures of his grace, and invited them to partake and be happy. To us, he has revealed himself in the volume of nature. The whole creation glows with the beams of his love. In the still richer volume of his hand, we have his character in fairer lines. There are delineated the features of immaculate beauty.

This, then, is the great business of life, to know and love our Creator, and Benefactor, and Preserver. If we already know something of his excellent glory, and in some measure love him, our present business is to know him better and love him more.

Another part of our work is to promote the knowledge and love of him in others. Is *any immortal mind* benighted, it is our work to find access to it, and through some opening, introduce the light of heavenly truth. Is *any heart* hardened by sin, it is our work to place it beneath the droppings of the cross, and let it there dissolve. It is our work to spread out before it the character of God, and give it opportunity, by our transforming view, to be changed to love. Believing God to be an infinite fountain of good, which constantly overflows, our business is to open channels of communication, that it may flow out and bless the world. In one word, this is our business, we are to use our time, our influence, our wealth, our *every talent* in the grand business of causing God to be known and loved. *This is the chief end of man.*

This is the work which every man must do, or God will accuse him of standing idle. It is not the business of ministers only. None in heaven, earth, or hell, are exempt. God has not made one creature, that can be spared from his work. Could he have spared the instrumentality of a single creature which he has made, that creature would not have been made. He would not have moulded that body, he would not have infused that immortal spirit to be a mere cumbrance to creation.

No one can be excused. Not an angel can be spared, not a man must be unemployed, not a devil but must advance his praise. God must be known and loved. Are there not some of my dear readers who have not yet began this work? It is to no purpose, that you have been industrious; it is to no purpose that you have spent anxious days and restless nights; it is to no purpose that you have heard many sermons, and attempted many prayers, it is to no purpose that you have fed the poor, and clothed the naked, and led moral lives; if you have neglected the Divine glory,

you have done nothing in the account of God.—Will conscience now do its office, do any of you feel willing to acknowledge, that as yet you have done nothing?—To you, then, I propose one short question,—“*Why stand ye here all the day idle?*”

I. Is it because *you know not what you have to do!* Not one of you can make this plea, you have had the Bible in your hands from your infancy. If you have neglected to read it, or if you have willingly misunderstood its meaning, it is nevertheless true, that God has given you a revelation of his will, in his word. The parts of that sacred book which your memory retains, bears daily testimony against you.

You have listened to a preached Gospel. The ambassadors of Christ have often pressed upon you, your duty. They have searched the Scriptures, and told you the will of God. One after another has been sent, till by their united efforts, unless you have absented yourself from the house of God, they have explained your whole duty. From Sabbath to Sabbath, they have taken their stand in the sacred desk, and have published in your ears their heavenly message. Not only on the Sabbath, but on other days have you been invited. Scarcely, since you left your cradle, has the Gospel trump ceased to vibrate upon your ear, and God will have kept the whole account.

Many of you have enjoyed the instructions of pious parents; parents who have labored from year to year, with many discouragements, and many tears, to impress your minds with a conviction of truth and duty. They have spoken of these things to you, “when they sat in the house, and when they walked by the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up:” with all the tenderness of anxious love, have they pressed upon you, your obligations to your God, and your dying Savior.

Some of you had other friends, who have been faithful to your souls. Perhaps the wife of your bosom has awakened you in the midnight hour, to tell you, that you was sleeping on the margin of the pit. Perhaps a brother or a sister has wept over you, and plead with you to be reconciled to God.

Had you enjoyed *none* of these means, you still might have known your duty. You might have learned much of God from the works of nature! For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. The very heathen are without excuse. Even the knowledge of God

which they may acquire, would render them capable of serving him. What excuse, then, will there be for *you*! Indeed, the African and Hindoo can tell you, that your ignorance will furnish you no excuse.

You know that there is one only living and true God, who is your Creator, and whom you ought to love and serve; assured that you are giving up your plea of ignorance as untenable, I again ask, "*Why stand ye here all the day idle?*"

H. *Is it because it is not an important work, to which you are called!* You suppose it, then, of small importance whether God be honored, or whether you or your fellow-creatures be happy. So it seems, then, of no importance, that, what was God's object in creating you, should be accomplished! Should he think it of sufficient importance to induce him to create you, and will you think it too trifling an object to engage your attention! Can you possibly think it of no importance, that God be known and loved by his creatures? God himself is happy in being known and loved. Herein he acts out his nature, and continues his own immortal blessedness. Where, then, can be an object half so grand!

The creatures of God can never be happy, except by knowing and loving him. In no other way, did ever men or angels enjoy true bliss. And it seems you are regardless, whether they are happy or not. Are you, then, willing that heaven should cease to be a place of joy and songs! Are you willing, in wanton cruelty, to tear away the angels' harps! Are you regardless whether any of your fellow-creatures ever again feel the transports of holy love! If so, pray tell me where is your benevolence.

In saying that the work is not important to which you are invited to attend, you implicitly say, that your own salvation is not important. Is it then, unimportant that you have God for your friend! In times of affliction, when you will be sinking under the pressure of grief, will it be of no importance to you, whether you have a God to support you! In the hour when you die, can you grapple with the monster alone! Can you pass undismayed through the shadow of death, without any Divine conductor! Is it a matter of indifference to you, whether you die under the curse of the law, or under the smiles of a pardoning God! When with your dying breath you cry, "*Lord, Lord, open unto me!*" are you willing to hear him say, "*Depart, I never knew you!*" In the morning of the resurrection, would it not give you joy, to have the Savior meet you at the grave, and bear you home to your Father's presence!

In the day of judgment, would you not be glad to have Christ for your advocate! Would you not wish to hear the transporting sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my father, enter into the joy prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Would you not wish to be on the right hand of the judge! And when slow eternity is rolling away its ages, would you not rejoice to sit among the redeemed, and help them sing the song of Moses and the Lamb! Is it not, then, an important work to which God invites you! I hear you say, *it is*. "*Then why stand ye here all the day idle!*"

III. *Is it because it is an unreasonable work?* What then was ever *reasonable*? You are required to attend to the business for which you were, the business for which God designed you, for which he has prepared you. He made you for himself, and now only requires that you serve him. He gave you the faculties you possess, and now only requires you to use them as he directs. He constantly feeds and clothes you; and now only asks you to devote that life, which he makes his care, to his service. How could you possibly be better employed, than in serving and loving God? Where is there an employment so grand, so worthy an immortal creature? The angels are thus employed, and esteem it an honor. They think it reasonable, that their noble powers should be engaged in the service of God. And yet is it possible that *you* should think it *unreasonable*?

Is it unreasonable that you should make exertions for the salvation of your *fellow-creatures*? Their happiness is worth as much as yours. In heaven they would rejoice as loud as you; in everlasting burnings they would be as miserable as that immortal spirit of yours. They, as well as you, are destined to live for ever in joy or misery. You would think it reasonable that they should make exertions to promote your happiness, then why not you to promote theirs? Can one, possessed of real compassion, look upon a world ignorant of God, under the curse of his law, going down to people the regions of eternal despair, and feel no distress, and make no exertions to save them!

But there is another thought which I hope will come home to your hearts. You are called to make exertions for your own salvation. Is it not reasonable that you attend to this matter? Who will attend to it, if you neglect it? This is your seed-time, and if you misimprove it, must you not expect to "beg in harvest, and have nothing?" Is it not a shame that you should make no exertion for yourself, when heaven, and earth, and hell, are anxious

for you? God contrived a way for your salvation, Christ died to redeem you, angels flew to bear the tidings of mercy and to minister to the heirs of salvation, the saints in glory wait for the news of your conversion, and saints on earth are praying for you, and pleading with you, devils are anxious to keep you out of heaven. All this anxiety, and you none for yourselves! Tell me anything *under God's heavens* more unreasonable, than this want of concern about your own salvation.

Is there any unreasonable sacrifice that religion would require of you? You are required to renounce your sins, to take up your cross, and follow Christ. And now, in all this, what do you sacrifice? For everything you relinquish, you shall receive a hundred fold in this life. For your hatred you will have love, for your pride, humility, for your stupidity a lively sense of divine things, for your selfishness, a warm regard for the welfare of others, for Egyptian darkness, you will have the light of life, for your sinful companions, you shall have the warm friendship of saints and angels, for the regions of death, you shall have the fields of light. Where, then, is the unreasonable sacrifice? Is there none? then "WHY STAND YE HERE ALL THE DAY IDLE!"

IV. Do you reply, *there is time enough yet!* This excuse is the most fatal ever offered; while others have slain their thousands, this has slain its tens of thousands. He that resolves to neglect religion today, will be likely to neglect it tomorrow, and again the next day, and so on for ever. But let me fairly understand the excuse. Do you mean that you have not sinned long enough? that it will be *better* or *easier* to begin the work tomorrow? that it would be painful to be a Christian *too soon!* That you have more time than you need to prepare for heaven! that God will excuse you from beginning this work today, or that he will not cut you off, should you yet continue in your sins! *One* of these must have been the ground of this excuse; let us look at each of them in order.

Do you think that you have not yet continued in your sins long enough! And how long is it since you began to rebel against God? With some of you it is ten years; is not this a long time? *Ten years* in the ranks of rebellion, is a distressing length of time. All that time God has been dishonored, his work neglected, and your soul impoverished. All that time you have had no God, and have been miserable. You have been all that time separated from the saints, an enemy to truth, and under the curse of God; now may not ten years of such misery suffice? Alas! I fear there are

some of my readers who have been *twenty*, and *thirty*, and *forty*, and *sixty years*, in all this misery, and is not *this* enough!!

*Do you think the work will be easier to begin tomorrow?* This is a mistake, your heart will then be harder. It will have resisted the influence of one more sermon. You will have more sin to repent of. God will be more angry with you. The grand enemy will have you more completely within his power, and you will be nearer the margin of the pit. Every moment makes the work harder. Every moment increases the probability that you may never be a child of God.

*Why will it be better to begin your work tomorrow?* You will then be one day back for ever. You can never be so happy as though you had begun today. If the soul be capable of eternal progression in happiness, then one day lost, puts it that much behind in its heavenly career. You will then have less time to do good in the world. In that case your death-bed will be more gloomy. You will have less time to give evidence of your piety. You will have less time to conquer your sins. There never will be a day so favorable for beginning your work as today.

*Do you think it would be painful to be a Christian any longer than is absolutely necessary?* And do you, then, suppose the Christian miserable? Is it painful to be the friend of God! To be a joint-heir with Christ! To have free access to a throne of grace! To have your name enrolled in the book of life! To have your sins forgiven! To have a Savior's smiles! Did Enoch, or Elijah, or Samuel, or David, find it unpleasant to walk with God! My Christian friends, do you find it unpleasant! I am certain that every Christian in Europe, and Asia, and Africa, and America, would unite their testimony in saying, that they never felt joy till they became the friends of God.

Do any of you suppose *that you have more time than you need*, in order to prepare for heaven? This will appear not to be the fact if you realize what must be done. Old habits are to be uprooted, and new habits formed; the unruly passions subdued; a knowledge of truth acquired, and all the Christian graces implanted. We are naturally very ignorant of heavenly things, and are chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. "Sanctify them through thy truth." Now all who calculate to reach heaven, will need time to do all this. The oldest believer will tell you, that he shall hardly be ready when his Master comes. The youngest child, then, should not put off the work of repentance a moment.

*Will God excuse you from beginning the work today?* He will not

He is angry with the youngest sinner for having hated him so long. His uniform language is "today if you will hear his voice," "Now is the accepted time." His demand of your heart is founded on his right to you, and the glories that are in himself to charm you. He will not excuse any creature from loving infinite beauty and glory. He will not excuse you an hour, for this would be to license sin for that hour, and giving up his rights for that hour. He views himself as deserving not merely the service you can render him after tomorrow, but the additional glory you can do him to-day.

And if any hope that God will not destroy them if they put off his service till tomorrow, that hope has not the truth of God for its foundation. There is no promise of God that secures life to the sinner for an hour. And if he lives, he cannot be sure then of an offer of mercy. This very day God may give you over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind, the man who is intending to be his servant tomorrow. Many a sinner has dropped into the grave in the very act of postponing the concerns of his soul. Oh! say not, there is yet time sufficient.

While there is the spirit of postponement there is no advance made even in conviction, or if there should be some conviction, this spirit would destroy it all in an hour. To say the least, the mind is not deeply impressed while any future day can be set to turn to the Lord, or even a future hour. The heart in this case is still wedded to its idols. He that would follow Christ when he had bid farewell to those that were at home, and he that would first bury his father, were both in the gall of bitterness. We must be brought up to that tone of feeling that spurns postponement, else it is certain that there is no very deep impression of any sacred truth. We exhibit awful proof, if this is the state of our minds, that we are in the gall of bitterness, and under the bonds of iniquity.

#### REMARKS.

1. The sinner who has long been accustomed to hear and repel these sacred truths of God, and who is still unmoved and unawakened, has reason to fear that *God may be about to take the offer back*. I cannot have a doubt but he does thus treat hardened sinners. And in all this he does just as men do when occasion requires. For example, one merchant makes an offer to another, which he leaves with him an hour; in that time the article that he proposed to sell or buy falls or rises in the market, and the offer is imme-

diately withdrawn. At any moment till the proposal is accepted, it may be withdrawn. So God, at any moment till the instant of the sinner's acceptance of his mercy, may quit making the offer, and then the sinner's doom is sealed for ever. Then is fulfilled that awful text, "He flattereth himself in his own eyes till his iniquities are found to be hateful." Oh! it would be a thousand times better for him now, if he could die a heathen, and lay his bones in some dark, idolatrous land, than to go down to hell from a Christian territory, where he had the word of the Lord, line upon line, and precept upon precept.

2. How horrid will be those regrets with which the sinner will review all this on the bed of death, and onward through a tardy and thinking eternity. He cannot but remember how often he was invited to enter and labor in the vineyard of the Lord, and how tender, and how tearful, and pressing were many of these invitings. I have supposed that the sinner must be for ever thinking all this over, and recounting every new moon, and every Sabbath day, the years and the ages of misery that still remain till he has paid the debt.

And not merely will he regret that he lost so *much time*, but that he has lost the *best time*. He has lost the morning of life. How promptly might his great work have been done, and all done, and time to spare, if he had gone into the vineyard at the rising of the sun. He might have been now a tall and shining spirit in the fields of light, and might have vied with angels in every song they sing, and in every excursion of love with which they fill up the lustrums of their blissful eternity. Their youth will be *renewed* in heaven, but not so in the dark world; their age will grow older, and their very youth be haggard. Oh, could you see a spirit that has writhed one thousand years under the regrets of the pit, and sighed, and wept, and groaned, under the withering blasts that have been spending their fury upon his soul, you would see the most blighted and pitiable wretch in all the creation of God.

This *sight* may you never see,  
This *wretch* may you never be.

Even should you hereafter see the kingdom of God, you must be the subject of deep chagrin that you did not enter earlier. Then you might have had more time to labor, and your Master might have reaped through you a larger revenue of praise. One would regret, if regrets may be in heaven, that he should have been called home before he had time to shine bright, and rise high

in the school of Christ below. If in such circumstances one might reach heaven, he would wish an opportunity to weep before he begun his everlasting song.

3. The invitation is not one to *pain*, or *danger*, or *misery*. One would think that the invitation to labor in the vineyard must be an invitation to *misery*, in one shape or another, and not to *blessedness*; but the fact is, that the work is that which blesses the soul beyond any other. If you find one with nothing to do, just set him at the service of the Lord, in his vineyard, and you make him happy. Let him do whatsoever his hands find to do with his might, and you remove whatever was the cause of his miseries. In the work of God the body is kept in health, and the mind is put into its healthiest and happiest condition. It is a work in which life would be prolonged beyond any other condition under the heavens. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." "Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

But there are a thousand reasons, a thousand times told, why men should not permit the invitation of the text to fall but once upon their ear. Their dutiful reply should be, forthwith, "I go, sir." May the Spirit of the living God set home all this upon the conscience and the heart of all my readers, and thus conduct us all safely on to the time when the Master shall come, and the reapers shall be reckoned with, and shall receive, through grace, their penny a day.

God does not call you to a painful and laborious work. Even in the work of repentance, that must begin the service, there is nothing painful. God does not require you to unsay any thing that you have said that was right, any thing that you can think on with pleasure in the slow-moving ages of your eternity. Nor does he ask you to undo anything but that which you never should have done. You had but one Master to serve, but one grand service to do, to bless your Maker, and honor your kind and generous Benefactor, and wait to know his will, and do whatsoever he requires. And when you had been a little time thus faithful, he would have taken you to himself, and made you happy in the enjoyment of himself for ever, in his high and holy kingdom. There was nothing that we can see in the long vista of your eternity that would have revolved around a painful hour, or brought over your bright and glorious prospect a cloud as large as a man's hand, as long as God shall live. Thus there would have opened before you a field of

day, and a scene of pleasure broad as the whole period of your being. Then how sweet your immortal song would have been while you vied with angels in your ascriptions of honor, and glory, and power to him that loved you, and washed you from your sins in his blood.

5. And there had been no *dangers* lurking about your path. God would have given you one promise that would have spread over you a safe and broad pavilion that would have covered the whole field of the vineyard. "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee." Then you might have labored on, and won as many souls to Christ as Brainerd did, and Schwartz did, and Pau. did, and then might have gone in with them, and sat down with them at the banquet of your Master. There had not been a serpent in all the field to bite, nor a storm had gathered to beat you off from your work, and you would have sung many a song to while away the hours of toil, and finally sung the *harvest home* in accents sweet as angels use, and the hundred and forty and four thousand would have gladly joined you in shouting a loud and long amen.

6. And there is no need that I say, the labor to which you are called by the Master of the vineyard is not a service that would tire you as in the natural harvest. I do not mean to say that the body may not tire and need rest. The spirit may be willing while the flesh is weak. But the work is not of that servile character that wears out the soul. And there is a timely rest provided. And in the very field there are put the needed and the timely refreshments. "He shall drink of the brook in the way, so shall he lift up his head." Those who have labored long in the vineyard, and have encountered many a tedious storm, many a scorching sun, and many a withering blast, will come home at the last all fresh for the rest of heaven, and will sit down and drink the wine new with their Lord at his upper table in the skies.

There all the laborers will meet and bask in everlasting sunshine by the ranges of the trees of life; and their song will be, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen."

## SERMON XXIV.

### CHRIST MUST HAVE HIS OWN PLACE IN HIS GOSPEL.

LUKE IX. 20.

Whom say ye that I am ?

ADMITTING the fact, that men may speculate correctly, while their hearts are unsanctified ; or to some extent *incorrectly*, after they are born of God ; still it is a general truth, that men will be, in their moral, and in their religious character, corrupt or correct, in the same proportion with their creed. If on any important subject they believe a lie, their false faith will present to their hearts wrong motives of action, and lead to those affections, and that course of conduct, that is in opposition to the law of God, and the precepts of the gospel. But if men believe the truth, though it be not with the heart unto righteousness, still that truth may exert, at some future day, a sanctifying effect upon them, and the creed adopted, through the Spirit's influence, mould them into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if there is one subject, rather than any other, on which a serious man would guard the correctness of his faith, it must be relative to the character of the Savior he trusts in for eternal life. It must be essential, that we put our trust in the very Redeemer that God has revealed ; else how can we hope that he will acknowledge us, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

Can it be otherwise, than a very important thing, to the human family, to understand distinctly, *his* nature and character, in whom they are invited to take sanctuary from the wrath to come ? Hence, to know that the gospel proclaimed to us, presents the very Lord Jesus, through whose stripes we must be healed, will be a question of minor importance to none, who calculate first or last, to turn their eye toward heaven.

In Christ's little family, this subject was early and earnestly agitated. Our Lord would not suffer his disciples to be ignorant on this point. "He asked them saying, Whom say the people that I am ? They answering, said, John the Baptis ; but some say,

Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again." He then brought the question home to their own bosom, "Whom say ye that I am?" Said the prompt and affectionate Peter, "The Christ of God."

This subject is of high and increasing importance, at a period, when it is becoming so fashionable, to consider it of no consequence what we think of Christ. It will not be so much my object to exhibit proofs of his divinity, as to show, that whatever his character may be, it is important that we have correct views of him. I shall arrange my thoughts under three general remarks: The Lord Jesus Christ has a fixed and definite character: This character is plainly revealed: If we trust in a Savior, having any *other* character than that revealed in the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus Christ will not consider this trust as reposed in him, and we shall be in danger of perishing in unbelief.

1. *The Lord Jesus Christ has a fixed and definite character.* It would hardly seem necessary to state a proposition like this, much less to attempt to establish it by argument, as it contains in itself its own confirmation. The scriptures have given this name to the promised Messiah, who, in the very nature of things, must have a character so definite, that he can be known by his name. But if the name may apply, with equal propriety, to one who is divine, angelic, or human, here it seems to me is the end of all knowledge on this subject. Place other subjects of revelation on the same footing, and we can only *guess* at any thing.

The very idea of a *revelation* implies, that there are truths revealed, but nothing is revealed, if revealed so indefinitely that we cannot arrive at knowledge on the subject. As well might the Bible have merely named the Savior, if after all it has said of him, we can know *only* his name; especially if it be an equal chance, whether we shall conceive of him as one of the Three that bear record in heaven, or a worm of the dust like ourselves. If God has told me only the *name* of the Redeemer, and this is all the definite knowledge I can have of him, I may be so infatuated as to apply this name to a comet or a star, and affirm that God intended I should trust in *this* for salvation. If he has left it to my discretion to adorn the name with attributes such as I would choose my Savior should possess, then it is manifest that no two might trust in the same Redeemer.

But there is an absurdity in the very supposition. Every thing that has being, has properties that are essential to its being, of which, if you disrobe it, you take away its very essence. Thus it

must be with the Lord Jesus Christ. You may call by that name a being, so divested of the attributes that belong to the Savior, that he shall cease to be the Savior God has revealed, and be as entirely another as if he had had another name. The identity of being is not in the *name* but in the *nature* or *attributes* that belong to it. I remark,

II. *The character of the Lord Jesus Christ is plainly revealed in the word of God.* We might infer from this fact, that the Bible is a revelation from God; and that the principal subject of development in that Book is the Savior. The Bible was given to us to make Christ known, that we might take sanctuary in him from the wrath to come. Hence, to suppose that his character is left so indefinitely developed that we can know nothing with certainty respecting him, is to suppose God to trifle. There is an impudence and a daring in the very supposition that causes the mind to shrink from naming it.

Moreover on opening the Bible I do see the character of the Savior, as definitely developed as any others of the subjects of revelation. I see distinctly his humanity, in that he had a body and a soul as men have. He hungered, thirsted, slept, was weary; could suffer, could rejoice; he spoke, and walked, and rode, and bled, and died. And I see as distinctly his divinity. He created all things, could make the bread and the wine that sustained him, could know the hearts of men, could heal the sick, and raise the dead, and give sight to the blind, and still the waves of the sea. And I will name one text, among many, in which he is predicted with all these characteristics: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Here the same personage, who was a child and a son, is also the Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

But on this point I will only stop to say, that on no particular is the Bible more full and plain than on this. On none of the doctrines or duties of religion have we instruction more definite. I may as well doubt what repentance is, and what faith is, and what love is, and what prayer is, as *who* Christ is. I can explain away the truth on any point as readily as relative to the character of the Savior. And moreover on every point the truth *has* been doubted, and mistakes as essential made, as on this point. Men who are

not willing that the Bible should govern their faith, have missed the mark infinitely on every doctrine of revelation.

III. *If we trust in a Savior having any other character than that given in the Bible to the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not accept this trust, as reposed in himself; and we shall be in danger of perishing.* If Christ has a definite character, and he must have, or he can neither be known or trusted in; and if his character is revealed plainly, and this must be, or it is no harm not to know him, or to have erroneous views of him; then it must be essential that we trust in the *very Christ revealed*. If in these circumstances we believe him to be possessed of a character that he has not, if we invest him with attributes that he will not own, or detract from him the essential and eternal properties of his nature; will he pity our weakness, and own, as confidence in him, the trust we place in a Savior created by our imaginations? This, it seems to me, is the fatal error which multitudes in the present day are persuaded to adopt. It has in its favor the plea of catholicism. We can thus fellowship the whole mass of nominal Christianity; and on the same principles can even go farther, and place the image of the Savior in the temples of the gods, and embrace in one universal brotherhood, the whole multitude of idolaters that have ever bowed the knee at the shrine of devils.

On the same principle, that no harm comes to our piety from erroneous views of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can prove that God has been pleased with, and has accepted, every act of worship that has ever been paid to an idol. What is an idol, but the Supreme so degraded that he ceases to be Divine? and still not more degraded than is the character of the Savior in many a modern creed. What was Jupiter, but Jehovah disrobed of his essential attributes. His worshippers did not reduce him down to a mere man. They gave him supremacy over the whole family of gods—allowed him to wield the thunders of heaven, and decree the destiny of nations. True, they did not give him a very pure moral character, but the best they knew how to give him. They invested him with some of the very worst of the human passions, and made him commit the foulest deeds of wrong and of outrage. But still, who can say, on the principle that it matters not what we think of Christ, that the worshippers of Jupiter were not accepted of the Lord as his own worshippers. If they called their great spirit by *names* that God has never appropriated to himself, this it will be acknowledged is a verbal mistake, a small matter, that God will not regard, in

those who had not the means of knowing the names, by which he could choose to be invoked. But shall we go on and say, that as they gave their supreme deity the highest character they knew how to give him, although they did not invest him with the attributes essential to the true God, and made him finally a creature, in moral character base and deformed:—Shall we still say, that Jehovah was pleased with the spirit of their worship, approved their rites, and accepted their homage? I see not why, on 'the principles of modern catholicism, this reasoning is not correct, and why the whole herd of idolaters, in all ages, have not been accepted of the Lord, as having intended to pay their supreme homage to him.

If what an apostle says of the Lord Jesus Christ be true, and “By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist:”—if all this be true, I see not but those who give him a derived and dependant existence, alter the character as essentially, from that which the apostle gives him, as was the character of Jupiter distinct from that of Jehovah. What two things can be more unlike, than a Savior who had no beginning of days, is self-existent, and almighty, could create men and build worlds; and one who himself began to be, is dependant, and has none but borrowed attributes. I do not see that the heathen Jove, and the God of heaven, differ any more.

If then the Lord Jesus Christ possesses one of these characters, and we trust in a Savior who possesses the other, and the Bible has plainly revealed *him* in whom we are to trust, it hardly admits of a question whether we do not trust in another than the Christ of the gospel. It is not merely in the *name* of the Savior that we trust, but in his attributes, in his qualifications to atone for us, in his power to sanctify us, in the credit he has in heaven to intercede for us, in his ability to subdue our enemies, and cover us with his righteousness in the day of retribution; but if he be not *God* as well as man, he has no such qualifications to atone, no such power to sanctify, no such influence to intercede, no such ability to defend, or righteousness to cover us; hence there is no such Savior as him in whom we trust.

Agreed, if you please, that the error will be equally fatal on either side. Be it it so that the Lord Jesus Christ is a mere attribute, an emanation, an angel, or a man; then do those who give him a *divine nature* make a mistake as great, as is made by

their opponents, if he be as the prophet asserts, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. If *he* be a mere creature, in whom God has directed us to put our trust for everlasting life; and that creature has power delegated to him, to pay the price of our redemption, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and we resolve to trust in a Savior, who possesses divine attributes; we then rely upon one who is not revealed as the Savior, and may have no more hope of acceptance, than those have if the opposite creed be true, who in their faith depress his character, as much as in this case we elevate it.

If the Lord Jesus has a fixed and definite character, has properties or attributes, of which if we disrobe him, we alter essentially his nature, and make him another Savior; then the question is, whether those who trust in him, under these essentially altered characters, may all be said to trust in the same Redeemer? May a mistake like this be considered venial? If, too, God has given us in his word a plain and intelligible record of his will, and may not, as it seems to me, be considered as having described the character of the Savior so indefinitely, as to render it about an equal chance, whether we shall conceive of him as human or divine; then must it admit of a serious doubt, whether any radical mistake can be made, without placing the soul at hazard.

God must have intended that we should have definite views of Christ; and if he has given us opportunity to be correct, it argues positive wickedness, not to receive the truth of God in all its naked simplicity. If he has revealed a *divine* Savior, we perish if we trust in one that is a *creature*; or if, *contrary to the light*, we believe him *divine*, then do we rely on some other, than that only name given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved. No trust can possibly avail us, but that which is placed in the very Savior whom God has revealed. Let me place the two Saviors in opposite columns, and see if an honest mind can make them one.

The one Savior, was before all things, and all things were created by him and for him. He has the titles, possesses the attributes, does the works, and accepts the worship, that belong only to the true God. He invites sinners to him, as having in his own arm the power to save them, and promises them blessings, as having them of his own to give. "He that believeth in me shall never die." He "bare our sins in his own body on the

The other savior, had a beginning of days, and either emanated from God or was created by him. He has divine titles only as men have, who are called gods; has only borrowed attributes, and a delegated power, and is worshipped only as kings and emperors are. We may not pray to him, lest we be guilty of idolatry; he promises nothing but as the Lord's prophet, and has no blessings of his own to give. We are not required to

tree." "With his stripes we are healed." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The redeemed in heaven will for ever ascribe to him, under the appellation of the Lamb, kingdom, and power, and glory. The dying believers may with Stephen commend to him their departing spirit. In the last day he will come in the clouds of heaven, with his holy angels, and will judge the world, and fix the destinies of all men; and be for ever afterward adored, by the myriads of the redeemed, as the Lamb that was slain.

believe in him, but as we believe in Moses and John. He makes no atonement, but merely teaches truth, and is a pattern of virtue. He dies, not that we might live, and meets us again in the last day, not to judge the world, unless as a subaltern, but to *be* judged. He will wear no crown, and fill no throne in heaven, other than such as are promised the apostles; and will receive no worship but the respect due to an eminent servant of God. And if the dying commend their spirit to him they assuredly perish.

Now the mighty question is, are these two the same? Are they so the same that the trust reposed in the one, will be accepted and answered to, if needs be, by the other. If but one of these Saviors is revealed, and but one exists, and we have put our trust in that other, are we still safe? Say we have cast our souls upon a created Savior, shall we find at last, that we have an interest in that self-existent Redeemer, who comes traveling in the greatness of his strength, and is, independently on any extraneous help, mighty to save? If of the one it may be said, this is the only name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, will this be equally true of the other? I repeat the question, for it is to me a mighty one, Can it be of no consequence, to which of the two I look, and in which I trust for eternal life? Will the blood of *either* cleanse me from all sin? If the Savior appointed me and distinctly revealed in the Bible, has life in himself, and the power of conferring eternal life on as many as the Father has given him; and I have trusted in man, and made flesh my arm, I fear it will not answer me the same purpose in the day of retribution, as if I had made application to the true, the appointed, the eternal Redeemer.

It is agreed, that if there be no Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and the Savior proffered is a mere creature, and we refuse to lean upon the appointed arm of flesh, and obstinately insist on having an almighty Savior or none, our condition is deplorable. We shall then be without a hiding place in the day of our distress. If the Savior be *God*, those perish who esteem him a *creature*; and if a *creature*, those perish who believe him *God*. One of the parties in this controversy is to lie down in everlasting sorrow, one only will be in heaven. Else two beings, the one *finite*, and the other *infinite*, are the same, and Jupiter and Moloch, and Baal, and

Jehovah are the same, and the worshippers of idols, in every dark place of the earth, may claim at last a seat in heaven, with Abraham, and Moses, and the prophets and apostles.

Can this be true? I see no radical error in the reasoning that has brought me to this result, and am led to ask, with all the seriousness with which a question ever dropped from my lips, am I safe in either case? Has the gracious Jehovah given me a revelation, in which he has so indefinitely described my Redeemer, that with all my anxiety to know, I cannot, whether he built the worlds, or was himself a part of the creation? whether the government is upon his shoulder, or he himself subjected to the authority of his superior? whether he can bestow eternal life, or need to have his own life sustained by the power that breathed it? whether he will judge the world, or will stand to be judged, by a greater than himself, who shall then fill the throne? I shall be anxious for my soul till I know the truth.

O, will the blessed God give to a world like ours, already desperately ruined, a revelation of his will, and mock our helplessness, by asserting it to be so plain, that the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err, and still when I labor to know the truth with all my soul, I cannot find it!! But I must either take this ground, or believe *myself* lost, or believe *those* lost, who I perceive trust in quite another savior, than him on whom I rely. There is one thought that gives me relief, "Let God be true, though every man a liar." The Bible *is* a plain and intelligible volume; the Savior's character is there definitely revealed; and we can learn *who* he is, and *what* he is, unless we choose to be deceived. May the exalted Jesus smile on this weak attempt to vindicate his character, and may he sanctify the men who would tear the crown from his head, and worlds from his rule; and make his way known upon the earth, and his saving health among all nations. May a great multitude, that no man can number, be redeemed to God by his blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.

If asked the reasons why I consider the subject so important? and press it so vehemently? I answer,

1. *With the views I have of the Lord Jesus Christ, I consider him shamefully traduced by the error I have meant to expose.* It cannot seem to me a light thing, if the safety of souls were not affected, what men think of Christ; whether they give him the honor he had with the Father before the world was, or make him a weak and dependant mortal; whether they esteem him such that he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, or the mere wandering Gal-

lilean, who gathered his honors from the success he had in teaching truth and in making disciples. If we have given him our hearts, we shall not be willing to see him degraded. We shall wish him to retain all the titles that belong to him, and be owned in all the high and holy offices he fills, and wear in the view of men, all the glories that cluster round him in the view of angels. We shall feel ourselves so honored, in being permitted to call him Lord, as to be greatly grieved when the tongue of slander, or the pen, dipped in the gall of depravity, shall attempt to degrade his nature or mar his honors. A Christian needs offer no other reason for vindicating his Lord, but that he loves him. But,

2. I offer another: *I consider souls endangered by a denial of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.* I cannot believe that when the Savior has become a *man* or an *angel*, he will attract sinners to him, as when he has the glories on, that I suppose the angels see about him. Let him have the same character that he has in heaven, and he will attract *men* to him, as there he attracts *angels* to him. If he be God, they will hope that he can save them; if he built the worlds, they will be the more willing to believe, that he built some happy world for them; and if he is at last to be their judge, they will feel it to be the more important, that they be washed from sin in his blood. I should not hope to win a single soul to him in a century, in the low, and mean, and dependant attitude, in which some professed ministers of the gospel, in consistence with their faith, must present him. I should expect them to sneer at the Nazarene, more than did Voltaire, or Hume, or Bolingbroke. And I do not believe, that under such a ministry, Christ is often embraced, or loved, or believed in. He may have some place in their creed, and may become a topic of speculation, and controversy, but in their religion, and in their hearts, I fear they learn to do without him: surely he is not formed in them the hope of glory.

3. *I would take a dying hold of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, because on the same principles by which the faith of so many have been unsettled on this point, every truth of God's word can be cast away.* Only suffer the enemy to have the ground, and hold in peace, which he would take to drive you from this doctrine, and he will leave you nothing to credit, in the whole of divine revelation. He will tear you from the very horns of the altar, and sacrifice you, along with your Redeemer, on the threshold of the sanctuary of God.

When I must believe nothing that is above my reason, and that

I cannot fully comprehend, I may not believe the simplest testimony of revelation. When, from the urgency of this principle, I can know nothing definite respecting the Lord Jesus Christ, I despair of gaining from the Book of God any definite knowledge on *any subject*. Not the being of a God, or his government over the world, or the fact of a future judgment, or an eternal state of retribution, is revealed with any more definiteness, than the underived Deity of Jesus Christ. I could reason them all away, and every doctrine and precept along with them, by the same sophistry, by which men would forbid me to offer my prayers to the risen and exalted Redeemer. I would then hold to the doctrine, because if I give it up, I must give *all* up, and throw my whole creed afloat, and myself afloat, to be drifted, I know not where, and shipwrecked, I know not upon what inhospitable shore, where await me, *death*, or *life*, I know not.

4. If you still ask me, Why my zeal in defence of the higher nature of the Lord Jesus Christ? I answer yet again, "*If it be possible,*" and "*the very elect*" should be cajoled into a doubt on this subject, it would do them incalculable injury.

That doubt would *mar their creed*; for they must yield *other* doctrines, when their Redeemer has become a creature. That atonement which he only could make; that ruin of our nature, which he only can repair; that ever-enduring hell from which he only can rescue us; that Sabbath which his rising made; that Comforter, which he kindly sent; and that plenary inspiration of the scriptures, which establishes his divinity; must be all plucked from their creed, and it would stand then, like a pine, lightning-smitten, scorched in its every leaf, and rived to its deepest roots, to be the haunt of the owl, and the curse of the forest. When you shall blast my creed like this, you may have, for a farthing, the residue of my poor mutilated Bible, and I will sit down and weep life away, over this benighted world, to which is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

It would *diminish their comforts*; for the same truth that has sanctified them, has made them happy; and not truth more than the high character of their Redeemer. Take away this foundation, and what will the righteous do? Their hopes have been high, and their joy elevated, and their songs heard in the night, because they had, or thought they had, a mighty Redeemer. From this fact, they calculated to live out the assaults of temptation, and conquer their lusts, and hold on by some pin of the covenant, till they should plant their feet on the golden pavement of the New

Jerusalem. Tell the Church, that she has no such *almighty Redeemer* as she has dreamed of, and there will be tears in all her tabernacles, and I fear if there will be silence through half the choir of heaven, and the angels of God be afraid any longer to worship him.

It would *hurt their usefulness*. They have had high hopes, because they had a mighty Redeemer, and were active in duty, because they had elevated hopes. Sap these hopes, and you sunder the very sinew of action. Will they care to be sanctified, when they shall have learned that their Lord was peccable! Will they press on, to see him as he is, and be like him, when they shall doubt whether he will be known in heaven but by the nail-prints? will they care to invite others to him, when he is robbed of all the charms that attracted them in the days of their espousals? Will they pray with the fervency they have done, that the heathen may be given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, when they shall know that he is to rule by delegation, and does not come into the government but by heirship? Will they spend their perishable wealth to honor him, when they shall feel assured, that he has no incorruptible treasures with which to repay them?

How is it with those who have made the experiment, and have delivered over their creed to be blotted and interlined, till the Deity of their master is gone, and every other truth that hung on it. Are they active for God? do they bless the heathen with the gospel? do they disseminate the Bible? do they press the consciences of sinners, in their daily walk, and in their evening visits, and give an ungodly world no rest, till they love their eclipsed, and darkened, and degraded Redeemer?

Oh, hide then this error from God's elect, and let them have the Savior they are disposed to serve, till he take them up, and show himself to them in all the glory that he had with the Father before the world was.

It naturally close with the question, "What think ye of Christ?" This question, faithfully answered by the minister of the gospel, will give you very much the character of his ministry; as it will define the Savior he proclaims, and of course the success he has; and answered by the private Christian will give the character of his religion. I do not now mean to say that orthodoxy is piety, but simply, that the heart that has been sanctified through the truth, will apprehend and love the truth. In other words, faith will credit the Divine testimony. Does the Lord Jesus hold

in our ministry, and our creed, the high place that God has given him in the gospel? If we make him merely a teacher and a pattern, so was Moses and Paul. And if we feel that we need no higher Savior, then is it doubtful, whether we have discovered more than half our ruin. If we have sunk no lower than that a finite arm can reach us, we have yet, I fear, to learn that we are sinking still, and that the pit is bottomless. A gospel that is the contrivance of men, will suit only those who have never felt the plague of their own hearts. When we shall have felt the full pressure of the curse that rests upon us, we shall feel the need of one to save, strong as him that created us. The horrors of our condition will scare from us every deliverer, but him who can quench with his own blood, the fires that have been kindled to consume us. When we have looked once upon the incensed throne, we shall hail one as our high priest, who can go in and sprinkle the mercy seat; who can neutralize that consuming ire which issues from the countenance of a provoked Jehovah; one who has that influence in the court of heaven, that he can procure our acquittal, and can place himself in the van of the redeemed multitude, and conduct us up to heaven, and there plead his own merits as the ground of our acceptance, and the foundation of our everlasting blessedness. "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

## SERMON XXV.

### THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL CONJOINTLY SUSTAINED.

MATTHEW V. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

It is *then* only that the gospel appears in all its glory ; when it infringes not upon the sacred rights of the law. One of God's institutions must not eclipse the glory of another. God did not make provision for the salvation of men, because he had become convinced that he had issued a bad law, and would thwart its design. The law stood in his eye as glorious, after men had drawn its curse upon them, as when it dropt fresh from his lips, amid the smoke of Sinai. When he instituted the law, he knew that men would break it ; and he affixed his sanctions, sure that all our race would *incur* them, and many *endure* them. It was not an experiment, made without a knowledge of the result, but with the result provided for.

Hence the legal and the gospel dispensations, are but different parts of the same benevolent system ; by which a good Jehovah would bind to himself, and when the bond should be broken, would recover and restore to his love and favor, beings he had eternally designed should be happy. And hence our Lord thus early announced it as his design, not to abrogate, but to establish the law. Fixed and stable as were the ordinances of the heavenly bodies, and firm the earth he had come to plant his feet upon, these should all pass away, while not a jot or tittle of the law should fail.

Accordingly, as the Lord Jesus gathered disciples, and freed them, of course, from the curse of the law, he still subjected them to it, as a rule of duty. He transferred, from the Jewish Church to his own family, the very commandments which Moses wrote on the tables of stone. Not an item did he repeal, not a precept alter, not a sanction soften. And the whole gospel is a broad and lucid exposition of the law. Hence it is now as much the fact as ever, that "Cursed is every one that continueth not in the things written in the book of the law, to do them." I shall state, in a

few words, the error I would oppose, and which, as it seems to me, is in direct opposition to sound reason, and the whole Bible; and then proceed to illustrate the doctrine of the text, that *The gospel was not intended to supplant, but does sustain the law.*

I. *State the error.* The scheme is, that men by the fall, if not disabled, have become so averse to the law, that a *perfect* obedience is impossible; and that God will now accept of an obedience that is sincere. If men will obey the law, as well as they are able with their carnal mind, the temper which, without their fault, they inherited from their first parents, God will accept them; and wherein their obedience fails, the merits of Christ will be substituted. By this scheme, the death of Christ removes the curse of the law, from all men, soon as it lights upon them: for all *do render* to the law, the best obedience they are *disposed* to, and of course are safe, if they should live and die without repentance. It must be seen in a moment, that, if to whatever extent men are *unwilling* to obey, they are *unable*, then all obedience, but that which is rendered, is dispensed with. And *none* is rendered; for a kind of sincerity, consistent with the most confirmed hatred of God, and his law, and which, for aught I see, devils may have as well as men, becomes a substitute for right affections, and has all the merit of a perfect obedience. The whole amounts to this; God relinquishes his right to any farther obedience than men, totally depraved, are disposed to pay him. In this scheme an atonement is made necessary, in order to finish out and render accepted the obedience of the sinner.

This scheme, as altered to accommodate it to modern taste, relinquishes the atonement, and substitutes repentance. At whatever time in this life, (and why not in the life to come!) the sinner shall be sorry that he has broken the law, and shall practise some reform, God will promptly forgive him, without any reference at all to the scenes of Calvary. He has in his heart so much compassion, and cares so little,—it amounts to this,—whether the law is respected or reprobated, that the very first tear of the offender washes away all his sins.

These schemes are substantially the same, and are alike subversive of the law of God. They agree in casting off this poor world from all allegiance to its Maker, and virtually render him a God, not worthy either of the fear of devils, or the esteem and confidence of angels.

I have thus stated the error, and have meant to do it candidly,

which seems to me to pour its contaminating influence through all the false systems of theology which are at present employed to injure the Church of Christ, and destroy the souls of men. I proceed,

II. *To illustrate the doctrine of the text.* I shall arrange my thoughts under six general remarks: The *first* great commandment of the law, from its very nature, cannot be repealed; Nor can the *second*; The spirit of the law and the gospel is the same; The gospel is a useless device, but on the supposition that the law is good, and must be supported; The gospel, that shall set aside the law, will defeat its own design; The gospel is most glorious when the law is fully sustained.

1. *The first great commandment of the law cannot be repealed.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The very nature of this law decides, that a gospel which would neutralize it, would be a curse and not a blessing. The Creator must require his creatures to consider him the object of their supreme regard; he can ask no less of devils. This precept is founded on the Divine excellence, and must abide in force while God shall continue to be good. And as God is unchangeably good, this precept must abide for ever. He would sanction injustice, if he should repeal a law which requires that men render unto God the things that are God's. An act like this would create alarm in heaven, and send a premonition of ruin into every world that has continued loyal.

Moreover, an act that should release intelligent creatures from loving supremely their Creator, would ruin the very beings thus released. Hence sang the Christian Poet:

"From *thee* departing, they are lost, and rove  
At random, without honor, hope, or peace."

This has ever been, and must continue to be, the law of hell, of earth, of heaven, and of all other worlds. Nothing that God has made has sufficient greatness and grandeur, to become our supreme object of regard

"Give what thou canst, without *thee* we are poor;  
And *with thee* rich, take what thou wilt away."

The capacity that God has given us, must be gratified, or we are miserable; and if it be gratified, God is loved according to the commandment.

Now a gospel that should set aside a law like this. would prove

a miserable expedient for a revolted world, as it would rob God of his deserved honors, and man of his highest happiness. How impossible that God should have given us such a gospel! He never has, and never will, unless he could wish to see us all miserable. To be restored, from inordinate attachment to the creature, to supreme love to God, is salvation itself; and how can this be effected by annulling the precept that enjoins this very change? And we assert,

2. *That the second great commandment of the law cannot be repealed.* "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This, like the other, carries on the very face of it its claim to perpetuity. The first commandment was intended to bind the creation to its Maker, the second to bind creatures to each other. Neither of these ligatures can be sundered, and creatures be happy. To love our fellow men, is to make them subservient to our enjoyment: for to love is usually a delightful exercise. If God had commanded us to hate our neighbor, he had subjected us to the necessity of disobeying him, or of being lastingly unhappy. In proof of this position, I have only to refer you to facts. Ask the man of passion, who daily goes home enraged at some one of his fellow men, there to study revenge, whether *to hate* makes him happy. Or let my readers call to mind some of those seasons, when they were enlisted in some obstinate quarrel, and when for whole days, and perhaps for weeks, passion rested in their bosom, and tell me if you were not unhappy? Then, in commanding men to love one another, God has simply forbidden them to be *unhappy*—has given them leave to be happy.

And the *measure* of our love, as here given, what could be more equitable. My neighbor is a sensitive being like myself; is capable of equal happiness; and that happiness worth as much to him, as mine to me. Hence God must value his blessedness, as much as mine: and it is my duty to feel as God does. Hence, if God should repeal this law, it would be consenting that men should do wrong, have feelings at variance with his, and love happiness simply because it is theirs.

To repeal this law would be to license selfishness; the very passion which has filled this unhappy world, and kept it full of misery. If men are not obligated to love each other *as themselves*, then is there no standard by which their affection can be measured, and they are at liberty to hate and devour one another. If the gospel has set aside this law, then all the outrages which men have committed, one upon another, have been licensed depredations: for

God has disapproved only of what was a violation of his law. If he has annulled the precept that required men to love, he has virtually given them liberty to hate, and has sanctioned a total disregard of the second great commandment of the law. But nothing like this is true. The law still makes on fallen creatures a demand as large as upon the first pair in their innocence, and continues to press its obligations after they are lost. The miseries of hell would be mitigated, if this law could cease to be binding. The lost might then hate and torment each other, without increasing their guilt.

3. *The spirit of the law and the gospel is the same.* The spirit of the law, as we have seen, is love; and the same is true of the gospel. In the inventory given us of the fruits of the Spirit, the first named is love. This is the bond of union in heaven, and all who are verging toward heaven, cultivate love, as the fundamental principle of their piety. When we read, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," we have in other language, the whole spirit of the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And when we read, " whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:" do we not also read, "For this is the law and the prophets." Here the Lord Jesus Christ himself identifies the two, as if to settle the point for ever, that he came to expound and enforce the very precepts of the law of Sinai. And the man must be grossly ignorant of the New Testament, who does not recognize it, as the very law of the ten commandments, broken down to the relationships, and the exigencies of human life. In both Testaments we have the same divine character, the same code of doctrines, the same Christian graces, the same social duties, and the same pure and holy religion.

When the gospel offers a pardon, to those who have violated the law, care is taken that the law be fulfilled and honored. The law is not censured, nor the sinner violently wrested from its curse. A substitute is furnished, on which the curse may light; a substitute who had himself perfectly obeyed the law, who loved it, held it in high and holy respect, and died because he would not see it dishonored. Had it been a bad law, hastily conceived, and imprudently promulgated, Christ would not have borne its curse. If too severe, he would have recalled its edicts, and would have mitigated its sanctions, if cruel. It was his *first* concern to secure the honors of the Godhead, and to do this he must sustain the law; his *second* to redeem the wretch who had broken it, and was condemned.

The Savior had no more compassion than the Father; loved justice, truth, and holiness no less; hated sin as much, and hated the sinner as much, and was as unwilling as the Father, that a jot or a tittle of the law should fail. He did not engross in himself all the benevolence of the Godhead; and was not a partisan with the sinner against the law. He did not come to make war with the Law-giver, but with sin; not to vindicate the rights of the condemned, and wrest them from the punishment to which some ancient and cruel decree had exposed them; but to cover them with his body and his life, from the miseries they deserved to endure. Thus the law and the gospel have both the same spirit, and press the same design; to honor God, and make his creatures happy.

4. *The gospel was a useless device, but on the supposition that the law is good, and must be supported.* Nothing can be more absurd than a gospel designed to free men from the curse of the law, while that law is already repealed, and has ceased to be binding. Hence the Lord Jesus Christ, lest men should make a mistake on this subject, declared very early in his ministry, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Indeed the very hypothesis on which the gospel is built, is, that the law is good, its precepts right, and its penalties binding. If otherwise, the law should have been repealed *without* a Savior. As soon as it was discovered that the law was not adapted to our circumstances, was too strict or too severe, instead of subjecting Christ to the pains of the cross, to relieve the culprit, he should have been pardoned without an atonement. Probably those who deny an atonement, are brought to this erroneous result, by some indefinite conception, that the law is repealed, to provide the way for man's recovery.

Our reason tells us that there should have been no substitution, for those who had broken a bad law, or a law which for any reasons whatever it was not wise to sustain. If not wise to execute it, in the last extremity, upon the offender himself, then assuredly, not merely unwise, but monstrous, to punish the substitute. There should have been proclaimed immediately a free and full pardon. There was the greatest possible cruelty in the transactions of the cross, but on the supposition that the law is too good to be set aside, even if the population of a world must perish to do it honor.

5. *A gospel that shall set aside the law will defeat its own design.* Tell the sinner, in the same message in which you offer him a Savior, that the law he has broken, is repealed; or has come into disrepute, and its curse less to be feared than formerly, and he will

answer, Then I have no need of a Savior. If my Sovereign is convinced, as I long have been, that the law is too rigid, he will not punish its violations; if its penalties are unjust, he will not execute them. I reject your offered Redeemer, and approach boldly to the throne, to demand my acquittal. It is mocking me to talk of an atonement, while I have done only right, in opposing a cruel and oppressive legislation.

Thus the advocates of a gospel, built on the ruins of the law soon as they make the secret known, that the law has perished, furnish the sinner a motive for rejecting the gospel they offer. Thus they labor in vain and spend their strength for naught. They may urge the overtures of their gospel, till they have become gray in the service, and their hearers will remain unchanged and unreformed. The only consistent course is, to justify wholly the law, or offer no Redeemer. We must make man the diseased, and suffering, and dying creature, that the Book of God describes him to be, or we need offer him no physician; must make him blind, or offer him no eye-salve; make him guilty and condemned, or offer him no pardon; make him polluted, or offer him no cleansing; make him an exile, a captive, and a slave, or offer him no redemption. The estimation in which we hold the *law*, will decide, whether we have any success in offering sinners the *gospel*.

6. *The gospel is most glorious when the law is fully sustained.* The glory and the grace of the gospel, must, in the very nature of the case, be exactly commensurate, to the claims and the curses of the law. The one must contain a wo as broad as the blessedness implied in the other; must present a ruin as wide and desperate, as the cure presented in the other; must frown as implacably, as the other smiles complacently. When we can thus honor the law, and justify the Law-giver, and defend, without misgiving, the most punctilious execution of every threatening that has issued from the lips of the Eternal; then it is that we can equally elevate the glorious gospel of the blessed God: which else becomes as worthless as the Shaster or the Koran. The deeper and the darker the pit into which I had sunk, the mightier that arm that could lift me out. The full glories of Calvary, have never been seen, but by the same eye, that has descried ineffable beauty in the divine legislation. The gospel will be shorn of its last beam, when it shall be made to eclipse the splendor of the law. It is only the dead in sin that need the offer of life, the condemned that need a pardon. Christ is the Repairer of the breach; make the breach wide, and you make the Repairer illustrious. Carry not the fertilizing influence

of the gospel, but into the very territory ; where the curse of a good law violated has spread a boundless desolation. There its healing waters will be welcome, an Eden will blossom under your feet, and the harvest of many years, repay your toil and make glad your heart. May the blessed God put honor upon his own institutions.

In bringing my remarks to a close, let me say, that the law *cannot* go into disuse. It expresses exactly the mind of God, and must be the rule of duty to his obedient subjects for ever. And when broken, as it has been in this unhappy world, its curse must fall, and remain upon the head of the transgressor, till he flies for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel. Till then he lies condemned, just as if a Savior had not died ; with this difference, that his condemnation if he perish will be aggravated by his having been offered redemption. He might have had life but would not, unless on such condition, that his transgressions might be justified. I close with

## REMARKS.

1. How tremendous the ruin of sinners, who after all this, shall fall under the condemning sentence of the divine law. God we see will not set his law aside. He would give his own well-beloved Son, to expire on the ragged nails, to save those who had broken the law, and incurred its penalty, rather than give his foes occasion to say, that he had repealed it. "If these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If God appeared so inflexibly holy, on Calvary, where he drew his sword upon the sinner's substitute, how terrible the indignation that he will display in hell. O, is there a man, so hardened and so daring, that he would venture to pass through life, and go on to the judgment, with the curse of the violated law resting on him! When he shall see that Redeemer, who saved others, but in whose blood he would not take sanctuary, coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, will he not regret, that he had not been interested in his atonement? And when his destiny shall issue from that Savior's lips, and he goes to make his bed in hell, will he not learn, what now he is so unwilling to know, that "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good?"

The torments of the lost, will be an abiding testimony of God's regard to his law. And those who shall have escaped to heaven, when they shall "look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed," will be feeling more and more strongly for ever,

how great are their obligations to the Savior, for redeeming them from the curse of a law, so fearfully holy. And who, that places any value upon his soul, and believes that God will thus jealously guard the honor of his law, and has not already made him incorrigibly angry, will delay an hour in securing an interest in that Savior, who bore the curse for us. O, my friend, haste your escape, as you would at midnight from your burning house, as you would from the jaws of a ravening lion, as you would from the terrors of a volcanic eruption, as you would from the fire that can never be quenched, and the worm that shall not die.

2. The subject will, I hope, prepare us to contemplate with horror, the condition of those congregations, who have selected for themselves a ministry, that builds its instructions on the ruins of the divine law. Would to God that I were mistaken, in supposing such a case to exist. But when I hear, from lips that profess to have been touched with a coal from off the altar, that man is quite an upright being, has committed a few errors only, and these all venial, not sufficient to condemn him; that he needs no atonement, nor Savior but to teach him, and be his pattern, and this Savior *not* divine:—When I hear of sentiments like these from the pulpit, I fear there is a controversy with the law of God, and that it is meant to be understood, that he has relinquished his demand upon the sinner, of a stricter obedience, than he is disposed to yield.

Thus by putting aside the law, as we suppose is done in the outset, and hewing down the whole system to accommodate it to this fatal error, the whole, though somewhat consistent with itself, is rotten and deceptive. Thus the sinner is lulled, and soothed, and when asleep, is kept slumbering till he is lost. He never has any proper sense of his sins, nor respect for the violated law, nor regard for the holiness, and justice, and truth of God. He never becomes humble, nor fears God, nor embraces the Savior, nor quits his sins. The gospel he hears is like the Siren's song, that lures but to destroy. It keeps men stupid till it is too late to be anxious to any profit.

O, ye lost and ruined congregations! if my voice might reach you, I would tell you to look well to the ministry you attend. While it pretends to offer you life, it may destroy you. If you find it aiming to lessen the number, and diminish the aggravations of your sins, you ought to suspect it. You never will betake yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, as your precious and only Savior, till the commandment come home to your bosom, high and imperious in its claims; holy, and just, and good, in all it requires, and in all

it threatens. In the sense of the apostle, sin must revive and we die, else there can be no hope that we shall be made alive in Christ Jesus. The multitudes who have gone to heaven, and the whole army of believers who are bound thither, know the period when they felt themselves justly exposed to eternal death. The gospel that pretends to find you quite whole and happy, needing only a little instruction, and perhaps some reformation, and aims not to alarm and distress you, you may rest assured is a lie, and not the truth ; it comes from hell, and not from heaven ; and if embraced, will conduct you back with it to the recesses of perdition.

## SERMON XXVI.

### IMPENITENT MEN DESTITUTE OF HOLINESS.

ROMANS III. 18.

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

THE text gives us man's native character. Such he is till the Spirit of God has sanctified him. The criticism that would apply this whole passage to the people only who lived before the flood, or to a very few of the baser sort of sinners, is a contrivance of infidelity, and is extensively employed, in the present day, to betray and ruin souls. The man who is willing to shape his creed by the Divine record, is entirely satisfied, when he reads the passages in the Old Testament which are here quoted; but when he finds them referred to by an inspired apostle, and by him applied to the whole human family, Jews and Gentiles, no shadow of doubt remains. He is now content to lie down under the humiliating charge they bring, and is ashamed and confounded before the great Searcher of hearts. He who has become a new creature will consent that "God be true, though every man a liar."

The fear of the Lord is a gracious affection, belonging not to the slave but to the son, and is the genuine fruit of a new heart, the beginning of wisdom. Hence where *this* affection is not, there are no *gracious* affections. And if this be true, and the text applies to all men in their unsanctified state, then it plainly teaches us, that *in unregenerate men there is no moral excellence.*

My object at this time will be, not so much to prove the doctrine, as to account for its having been controverted, and offer some reasons for esteeming it a highly important doctrine.

I. Many have mistaken the native character of man, from *having seen him capable of affections and deeds that are praiseworthy.* It is not man's prerogative to judge the heart; hence, if the tendency of an action is to that which is good, it is imputed to the very motive that ought to have produced it. If the deed has a fair *exterior*, it is considered ungenerous not to impute it to correct principle. Men judge, however, on the maxim, that what is highly

esteemed among men, cannot be abomination in the sight of God. Hence they dress up human nature in garbs of innocence; and conceive it impossible that there should be, under so much that is fair and good in conduct, an evil heart of unbelief.

They find men capable of kind, and generous, and honorable sentiments. They can be *true*, and *trusty*, and *faithful*, and *affectionate*; and they triumphantly ask, How can all this be, when there is no love of God in the heart! They see discharged, and sometimes quite honorably, the offices of parent, husband, brother and child, and all the other domestic and social relations, and impute it all, though to be accounted for on other principles, to native moral excellence. Hence they are precipitated into a controversy with that plain and humbling testimony of heaven, that "The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to his law, nor indeed can be."

Why will not men believe, what the scriptures so plainly teach, that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and from this truth infer, that very different motives may lead to the same deeds? We often see that an amiable disposition, a tameness and mildness, such as distinguish the lamb from the wolf, and the vulture from the dove—and that results in the exercise of many an amiable affection, and the doing of many a kind action—may consist with the practice of sin, the habit of a daily violation of the divine law, a prompt rejection of all the overtures of the gospel, and an inveterate disgust for the duties of a cordial and secret piety. We have recognized, where there was all the instinctive amiableness that is ever claimed, the existence of a polished and fashionable infidelity; have marked offence taken, at the distinguishing doctrines of revelation, at the scruples of a well disciplined conscience, at the frequency and fervency of devotional exercises, and the elevated views and affections of the revived and happy believers. Still there were high pretensions to kindness, rectitude, generosity, and *even piety*. There was not a consciousness of the deep-rooted enmity of the heart to whatever is holy and heavenly. Men have wept under the sound of the gospel, and seemed the veriest converts to the truths under discussion, the affections enforced, and the duties urged, and ere they have passed the threshold of the sanctuary, have vented their spleen against the man, who reached their sensibilities, and drew from them, in an unguarded hour, their reluctant testimony to the gospel he announced.

We do not deny, that there has been seen in men not sanctified,

much that it would be disgraceful not to admire, and *envious* not to *praise*, and evil not to *imitate*; and still we may have had indubitable evidence, that in the very same bosom there beat a heart hostile to God, and holiness, and heaven. Not certainly will God, who compares the temper of the heart with his law, approve always the very deeds that men have praised, or the men who may have stood immeasurably high in human estimation.

On this point the truth must not be concealed. We cannot say to sinners, that if they please *man*, *God* will assuredly be pleased; that if they speak kindly to man, and do deeds of mercy to him, the Eternal will say, "Ye have done it unto me." There is no such assurance given in the record. And the time, or rather the *eternity*, will be here so soon, when their whole character must be known, when they must stand before the omniscient God, and all their heart be opened, and their whole life be read; that to deceive them, and cry peace, peace, when there is no peace, would be as cruel as death.

There is neither the *necessity* nor the *wish* to deny, that unsanctified men have exhibited many natural excellences of character. On this point I know not that there will be at last any controversy between *God* and them. Our Savior looked at the young man in the gospel, and loved him, while yet he was unquestionably in the gall of bitterness and under the bonds of iniquity. We yield to men traits of character that are amiable, and useful, and endearing, and wish most sincerely that there need be no reserve in our praise. But while they have been kind, and neighborly, and pitiful, and even generous to their fellows, they have robbed God. They have wept at the tale of distress, and hastened to succor the perishing, and bled in sympathy over the diseased and the dying, but have never shed a tear at the cross. They have believed man, and confided in him, and spoken truth to him, and have well earned his confidence and affection, but they have practically made God a liar. They have never fully credited either his threatenings or his promises, nor thought it necessary to take sanctuary in his Son. There has not been a moment in their whole life, take the time when their conscience was the most tender, and their sensibilities the most awakened, and their deportment the most religious, and their hopes of heaven the most profound; when some other object beside God, had not the high and distinct ascendancy in their affections. While they could treat men mildly, and be rebuked without wrath, and even endure Divine judgments without the appearance of rebellion; they could still

brow-beat all the anathemas of the law, and parry every thrust of the gospel, and live on, without reflection, and without prayer, and without repentance, and without God in the world. They still cared not for all the melting entreaties of divine mercy. God was not in all their thoughts, nor his religion in their lips, nor his throne in their hearts, nor his will controlled them; while, as the friends of the poor, the patrons of moral virtue, and the benefactors of the world, they were illustrious, and were promised in human eulogy a luminous and happy immortality.

Thus has the human character, all deformity as God views it, been exhibited as sound and good. Distinctions have not always been made, between what is *nature*, and what is *grace*; what is mere *instinct*, and what is *holiness*. The multitudes of the ungodly have been blessed and dismissed, doubting whether their character was at all deficient, or they needed to be born again; and high in the hope that a slight reform, and a little care, would soon prepare them to stand accepted of God. Even men who have worn noted marks of the apostacy, the covetous, the proud, the vain, and the worldly, have retired with a smile, to enjoy their good opinion of themselves and feed quietly, and sleep sweetly, while the wrath of God abode upon them. They have gone to their farms and their merchandize, to love and pursue supremely the cares of the life that now is, or bury themselves in scenes of dissipation and folly, not suspecting but that all was well, and all safe, till either the Spirit of God awakened them, or they sunk to a hopeless perdition: or they live still, and are filling up the measure of their iniquity, and are preparing for a deeper despair, than if they had perished far sooner. And they must thus perish, it seems, because they are amiable, while publicans and harlots, who have no such virtues to screen them from conviction, believe in the Savior, and live for ever!

II. Men have been led to controvert this doctrine *because they are not conscious of the wrong motives by which they are actuated*. Through the workings of a deceitful heart, ignorance of the scriptures, and sometimes by the aid of a heterodox ministry, men have totally mistaken their whole moral character. They are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. What the prophet says of the idol-maker, is more or less true of all unregenerate men in all ages, "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there

not a lie in my right hand?" Hazael could not believe that he deserved the character which the prophet gave him, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" And Jehu, when he cut off the house of Ahab, and destroyed the worshippers of Baal, would have felt himself abused, to be told that he was actuated by the love of praise. When the rulers of the Jews were charged with murdering the Lord of life and glory, though they had done this very deed, thought Peter a slanderer, in his attempt to bring this blood upon them. So Saul of Tarsus supposed he was doing God service, while persecuting to death the disciples of the Lord Jesus. Thus may men act from the very worst of motives, and yet suppose them the very best. They do not consider it important to know what their designs are, and have not that familiarity with their hearts that would render it easy to discover. And thus they are led to controvert the truth, and quarrel with God, his word, and his ministers, who all give them the very character they have.

III. The doctrine of the text is often converted *to support schemes with which this sentiment would not compare*. The sinner's entire depravity, is a fundamental doctrine, on which there can be built only one, and that the gospel system. Make this doctrine true, and it sweeps away, as with the besom of destruction, every creed but one from the face of the world. It settles the question, that God may righteously execute his law upon all unregenerate men; that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;" that the doings of unregenerate men are unholy; that even repentance will not take away the curse that has lit, and must rest, upon the man who has not continued in all the things written in the book of the law to do them; that an atonement, such as God has provided, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, is the only medium through which we can purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. It farther decides the question, that men will not seek after God; that he must be found of them that sought him not, must give repentance unto life, must take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh; that in the regenerate he must work, to will and to do of his own good pleasure; and finally, that *he* must be an Almighty Savior, who could redeem beings so lost, and put them back again into the favor of a justly offended God.

Thus it is only one scheme of truths that this doctrine will support; the faith once delivered to the saints. If men depart from

the truth, as we are told they shall in these last days, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, they must thus come into close and comfortless contact with a doctrine, which, if true, gives the lie to all their false and delusive schemes. Hence we wonder not that "the foe of God and man, issuing from his dark den," has here displayed, in every age of Zion's conflict, his mightiest chieftainship. Here must be the edge of battle, in every conflict between the gospel and the systems invented by men; between the friends and the foes of truth. This is the fortress that has been taken and retaken ten thousand times, where has been tried the prowess of God's people, and his enemies; where has been displayed the power of God, and been put to the test the endurance of his elect, in all the ages that have gone by.

IV. This doctrine has been controverted *through the pride of the human heart*. Depravity is a most degrading doctrine, and *entire depravity* intolerable, till the heart has been humbled by the grace of God. There is in apostate men great pride of character. We would all be considered friendly to what is good and great, and such is God, even in the profession of the most depraved; such is his law, and such his government. With the promptness with which we fly the touch of fire, does pride resist imputation. Hence inquires the unregenerate man, Would you deny me the credit of loving my Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor? Do I never obey his law, or do a deed from motives that please him? And is there, among my noblest actions of kindness to men, nothing that amounts to love? In my gladness for the good things that God bestows, is there not a shred of gratitude? in my admiration of his perfections and his works, no love? in my belief of his word, no faith! in my expectation of heaven, no hope? in my sorrow for sin, no repentance! in my endurance of adverse events, no submission! and in my gentleness and condescension, no humility? are my prayers sin and my sacrifices abomination? do I thus, on all occasions, break the *first* and *great* commandment of the law? and on all occasions the *second* also? in all my noble generosity, is there no benevolence? in my soft deportment, no meekness! and in my tears for the miserable, no pious sympathy? must *every* deed I do have the same moral deformity? and God hate me, and his law condemn me, when I follow the kindest dictates of that nature he has given me?

Thus men feel, that if this doctrine be true, it goes to defame and ruin their character. It makes them go astray soon as they

are born, speaking lies. It makes their righteousness as filthy rags. When they have washed themselves in snow-water, and made their hands never so clean, this doctrine, with ruthless hand, plunges them into the ditch, and their own clothes abhor them. When they industriously provide for their household, they are accused of loving the world, while the love of the Father is not in them. When they would go to the sanctuary, and pay their vows, there they hear from heaven, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?"

Thus, at every point, this doctrine comes to mar their reputation, and make them hypocrites, and cover them with shame and blushing. Hence the Jehovah, who will give men this character, may reign in other hearts; and the Bible, that will teach this doctrine, may lie neglected; and the ministry that will publish it, may starve: and the cringing multitude, who will believe it, may herd together, and together sink into the contempt they covet. Thus God is treated, and thus his word, and thus his ministers, and thus his people, because they maintain a doctrine, the sinner's disgust at which, establishes beyond the possibility of doubt, or the danger of mistake. It so degrades the character of men, that they will not believe it, if they perish contradicting it.

I could offer other reasons, why this doctrine has been so frequently assailed, but shall proceed *to offer some reasons for esteeming it a very important doctrine.*

1. The fact, that *it is plainly revealed*, testifies to its importance. God would not have cumbered his word with a doctrine of no value. If we find it there who will venture to deny its importance? and if *not there*, how does it happen, that those are its warmest advocates, who are most familiar with the Bible, and most ready to regard its dictates? The context contains a very dark review of man's native character: and it would be infidelity to suppose it *too highly colored*. "There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet *are* swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we fearlessly assert, that this is given as the native character

of Jews and Gentiles, by one whom the Holy Ghost inspired, and who could not mistake the truth. Believe the last clause only, and tell me if in men, who have "no fear of God before their eyes," there is any holiness? "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Here again Christian honesty will read the same doctrine. And the same in this text, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." And in this, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And that none may escape, it reads; "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man:" And thus the uniform testimony of Scripture. There would be no end in quoting the Scriptures on this important point, till I had referred you to almost the whole Bible. And a doctrine about which God will say so much, must be, in his estimation, and should be in ours, of high importance.

2. The doctrine of the text is esteemed important, *as it is one of the first truths, used by the Spirit of God, in awakening and sanctifying sinners.* Till men see their depravity, they will not approve of the law that condemns them. They will be wondering, if, indeed, they think at all, why God threatens them, and be blaming the law as too rigid in its requirements, and cruel in its penalties. Now there is no hope of a sinner, while he stands in this posture; and nothing will move him from it, but a conviction of his lost and ruined state. Hide from him the character of his heart, and you seal him up to everlasting stupidity. You can arouse him to no apprehensions of danger, for under the government of a good God none are in danger but *sinners*. And there will of course be no repentance. A thoughtless sinner sees nothing to repent of, nor any reason why he should repent, and the man who knows nothing of his heart will not be thoughtful. The commandment never comes home to his conscience. If he has hopes of heaven, it will be on the ground of his own self-righteousness. Thus the Savior will be to him as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, and the work of grace can never be begun. Thus is the sinner, who is kept ignorant of his heart, sealed up to the judgment, and goes on as the ox to the slaughter, and the fool to the correction of the stocks. The Spirit of God will sanctify only through the truth, and the entire depravity of the heart is a first truth, without a knowledge of which no sinner was ever yet fitted for the kingdom of God.

A gospel, then, if we must so call it, that hides from men the deformity of their moral character, betrays and ruins them. It says

to the wicked, that it shall be well with them, and thus cradles their fears to sleep, till their period of mercy is past; and proves, ultimately, the greatest calamity that can befall them. It closes upon them the portals of eternal life, and keeps them dreaming, and fearless, till they open their eyes in hell. But when they at last make the discovery, perhaps on the bed of death, or it may be not till life has gone out, how will they execrate the recollection of such a gospel. It will come up to the mind as does the tempest, that wrecked all their hopes upon the relentless reef; or the fire that forced them to make a midnight retreat from the place that had been long their safe and happy home.

The ministers of Christ would love to preach a smoother gospel, if men could only be safe under it. It would be pleasant to have to do only with the *invitations*, and the *promises*, and the *hopes* of the gospel. They had far rather remind the believer of the joys to come, than admonish the unbeliever of the judgment, the outer darkness, and the gnawing worm. They could have far more pleasure in describing the graces of the Spirit, than in portraying the deformities of the unsanctified heart.

But the grand object of the gospel ministry is to save souls, and this object is not gained, unless men are taught, as the very first lesson of that ministry, that they are lost. Hence to suppress this truth, would be to neutralize at once the whole effect of this ministry. Whatever we may wish, we can be the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ to a ruined world, but on this one condition, that the alienation of our world from God hold the place of a *first truth* in every effort of our ministry. The gospel has absolutely *no meaning*, and can be of *no use*, but to the *lost* and the *condemned*.

3. The doctrine of the text is esteemed important, *as it lies at the foundation of the whole gospel scheme*. The Lord Jesus Christ came into our world, to seek and to save them that are *lost*, and the whole plan of salvation is so interwoven with this fact, as to be unintelligible without it. What means the covenant of redemption, but in connection with the fact that we are captives and slaves, and need to be redeemed? what is there intelligible in the atonement, but that we owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay? why urged to repent, but that we are in love with sin, and must otherwise perish? why believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but that we need a better righteousness than our own to shelter us from the wrath to come? why make to ourselves a new heart, but that we have by nature evil hearts of unbelief inclining us to depart from the living God?

And let me ask, why all the threatenings of the gospel, but that it was written for the use of a disobedient and gainsaying people? why on every page does there meet us some anathema, but that it was intended for those who love not our Lord Jesus Christ? why has death passed upon all men, but that all have sinned? why a judgment and a place of torment, but that those who have carried their entire depravity with them into the coming world, may be distinguished, and may go to their own place.

FINALLY—It is matter of doubt whether an honest man, acquainted with the Bible, and willing to collect his creed from it, will find it possible to exclude the doctrine of the text from a fundamental place in its structure. What doctrine can he preach, if he denies it? what precept enforce? what threatening announce? what promise apply? We need no gospel if this doctrine is not true, and we *have none*. “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

Will the great God defend his own truth, and bless every effort for its vindication, and sanctify his people through its influence, and speedily let it cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Will he bring the multitudes of the ungodly to know, that they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity, and persuade them to fly for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before them in the gospel

## SERMON XXVII

### ONLY ONE TRUE GOD.

JOHN XVII 3.

This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God

In the report of that gospel, which shall deal honestly with dying men, it is of the first importance that there be exhibited the true character of God. As men are to be sanctified through the truth, it will be confessed, that no truth can be of higher importance, than that which relates to the being and attributes of Jehovah. Unless on this point there is made a full and clear exposure of the truth, our religion may be so defective, as to neither profit us in this life, nor save us in the life to come. Under the very names that belong to the true God, we may worship an idol, and thus give our depravity the shape of the grossest insult.

We have sometimes listened to a loud and earnest address on the subject of religion, and it professed itself the gospel, in which the character of the true God was industriously concealed. Men may speak of God, and with much engagedness; his adorable names may swell every clause, and round every period, and the whole be uttered with a decent and well-bred softness; and one may suppose himself religiously employed, in hearing the true gospel, and be charmed with the changes rung upon the names he has been accustomed to adore; and still the God proclaimed may not be the blessed Jehovah. There may be a view exhibited that does not belong to the Creator, but to some imaginary god created for the occasion.

The text would furnish *several* topics of remark, but I intend to confine myself to *one*, To expose some of the false views of God, which are not unfrequently presented to us under the appellation of the gospel; and thus illustrate the character of that *only true God* whom to know is eternal life

I. There is sometimes an extolling of all the more *clement* attributes of God, as some have presumptuously distinguished, while the *severer* attributes are unnoticed. The design of these declaimers seems to be that our attention be fixed exclusively upon what,

in their estimation, is *soft* and *mild* and *lovely* in God, while his *holiness*, his *justice* and his *truth* ;—all in him that can go to make a sinner afraid, or beget conviction and repentance, is industriously concealed. God's compassion for our lost and miserable world, his patience, his endurance, his long-suffering, his promptness to pardon, and total aversion to destroy ;—all those features of the Divine mind, that can soothe alarm, are early and industriously developed, as if embracing the whole of God that he himself loves, or man is required to worship and adore ; while the other parts of the divine image are obscured, as one would hide the scars and excrescences that have fortuitously covered more than half his visage. Thus the great luminary of the moral world must be cast into a deep and dark eclipse, that the naked eye of sense may gaze upon his few remaining glories. It is feared, we presume, that were the whole character of God exhibited, sinners would be filled with disgust, and be driven from the bosom of their Sovereign. He must not adhere to the principles of that law he has promulgated, nor care to vindicate himself from the aspersions that sinners have cast upon his character and his government. He must not resolve that mercy and truth meet together ; and that righteousness and peace kiss each other. He must cast a smile upon the prodigal, ere he shall turn his face or his feet toward his father's house. Thus must the holy and righteous God, before whom devils tremble, melt down into the weak and pitiful parent, or not one of his apostate family shall come back to his bosom and his service. So men would judge.

But God seems to have had other views, and has revealed his whole character, fearless of the predicted consequences. If there was any danger from a full exposure of his character, why did he not hold himself concealed, or throw into the shade, as men would do for him, those parts of his character that must give offence ? If that be good policy which I am venturing to expose, God could have directed that neither the works of creation, nor the Bible, should have told us the whole truth respecting himself. He might have suppressed the history of that revolt in heaven, and its results, and told us nothing of hell and the judgment, nor named in his Book those attributes that throw around him such an atmosphere of darkness and terror. He need not have given us, if he had so pleased, the stories of the deluge, and of Sodom, and of Korah and his company. But God has exposed the whole truth, and that in the very Book which he has directed should be our daily companion.

If the scheme I oppose be true, I know not how to account for such a Bible as God has put into our hands, just calculated to betray a secret that should not have been divulged for worlds. If there belong to God any attributes that were not intended to be made known to sinners till they are reconciled to him; if they cannot safely be told that he is angry with the wicked every day, has appointed a time and place of judgment, and prepared a deep and dark perdition for the condemned; if they are to be urged to come to him, expecting to find him all mercy; then by what alarming oversight have we resolved to put the Bible into the hands of sinners? Must the parental character of God so dazzle and fill the eye, as to eclipse the Sovereign, and the Judge, the Abettor of truth, and the Avenger of wrong and of outrage? And must we never know the whole character of God, till we have to deal with him in the judgment? Can we be sure that the prodigal, after he has been thus decoyed home to his father's house, will be pleased with his father? Had he not better know, while away in his land of exile, exactly, the father he must meet, and the father he must love, and stay there till his character is approved?

I know not where in the whole Bible we are authorized to elevate one attribute of God above another, and term the one *mild* and the other *severe*. I know not where men have learned, that there are principles in the Divine nature and government, that to be fully known would subvert the benevolent design of the gospel. If God has thus instructed any of his ministers, and they act by his authority in deciding what *may* and what *may not* be developed to the world of the ungodly, I have only to say, "To their own master they stand or fall."

II. There is perhaps some occasion to fear, that some have gone into the opposite extreme, and have presented exclusively the more *forbidding* attributes of God, while his *grace* and *mercy* have been in this case too much concealed. When Jehovah is exhibited as constituted of entire sovereignty; as doing his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, without the least regard to the happiness and the salvation of his creatures; as casting after the wayward and the lost, no look of compassionate tenderness;—can this be a faithful exhibition of the character of God? Should it be said, That God is willing to show his wrath, and that he has created intelligent beings on purpose that they might be the vessels of his wrath; and has communicated positive hardness to their hearts, because they did not render

themselves depraved enough for his purpose; and pushed them on to a character, that would be sufficiently desperate for some deed of darkness, which he had resolved they should perpetrate;—would one gather from all this the true character of God? I know that I have now presented an extreme case, and sincerely hope that not often, perhaps never, is sovereignty presented quite so bare and forbidding, and the truth pushed to an extremity so cold and cheerless. The objection to such presentations is, that they do not exhibit the whole character of God. He is willing to show his wrath, only where his mercy in Jesus Christ has been long and obstinately rejected. He created intelligent beings for his own glory, and will honor himself in their perdition, if by rejecting the Savior, they count themselves unworthy of eternal life. He has hardened their hearts by the very dispensations that should have won them to duty and to God; has sent them strong delusions that they might believe a lie and be damned, when they did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. We must pour into these strong exhibitions of truth, in order to render them the gospel, and make them useful, the *whole* character of God.

How can you hope to persuade rebels to submit themselves to this bare and appalling sovereignty? Why must they become reconciled to their Creator, before they may even know that he is a God of mercy, or has it in his heart to bestow pardons? An apostle has said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I am not without my fears, that on this side of the line of orthodoxy there has sometimes been presented a character of God, as imperfect, not to say as unsafe, as when only his *clemency* is seen. And who can say that God would not be as unwilling that one set of his attributes should be exclusively presented, as another? Under neither have we a full and honest portrait of the only true God, whom to know is eternal life. While the one error will lead unregenerate men to presume that they love their Maker, so under the other it is feared, that many true believers may be kept all their life-time subject to bondage through fear of perdition. The one will make a multitude of happy hypocrites, while the other will conduct to heaven whole churches of trembling, doubting believers. The one will widen the fold, till the sheep and the goats can herd together; the other will contract it till many of the lambs must lie without, and be exposed to storms and beasts of prey; and finally neither presents correctly the character of God.

III. We have sometimes presented us a picture of *warring* attributes. Mercy triumphs over justice, and grace is made victorious over truth and righteousness. Under this system, God disapproves the properties of his own nature, and the principles of his own government; and contrives to defeat and nullify his own decrees. He issued his law, and pronounced it good, and made in it no provision for pardon; none he could make; and when the sinner broke that law, he passed sentence, and threatened its execution. But he is now made to repent of the sternness, and integrity, and purity, that dictated that law, and uttered that sentence, and threatened its execution: and is *re-resolved*, that, come what will of reproach upon his name, and injury to his government and kingdom, the sinner shall not suffer. He built a place of torment, and separated it from heaven by a bottomless gulf, and made it a dark, and dreary, and desolate abode; but he has since had better and milder views; has decreed that ultimately the gulf shall become passable, the fires shall go out, and the worm shall die.

And all this is contrived to save the Divine honor. To let God be what he is, and do what he has said, and carry into execution his own purpose, would, it is believed, so hurt his reputation with the population of the apostacy, that any thing, that can be, must be done to save it. There must rather be suspicion cast over the whole record that would exhibit God as so inflexibly holy, and reproach poured in upon the bigoted multitude that would so rigidly explain the word. The Book of God, plain as it is, may rather mean nothing, and John record falsely, and Paul reason inconclusively, than to blot so foully and fatally the Divine reputation.

To complete the picture, the Son of God is despatched from heaven to take the part of sinners, and shield them from the sword of a devouring justice. He saw, it seems, that the execution of the law would ruin the credit of the court of heaven, which gave sentence, and hasted down to counteract the decree. What was stern, and unbending, and cruel in the Father, has been softened down in the Son. He covers the rebel with his hand, smiles on him, wipes away his tears, and prays him to forgive a father's unjust severity. His errand was to stay the rod of justice. He makes no atonement—none is necessary—asks no change of heart in the culprit, but a mere reform, as the condition of pardon and life.

Thus has the character of God been so exhibited, as to involve heaven in a quarrel, and place the persons of the Godhead at issue, on the question, whether the honors of the broken law deserve to

be repaired, or its Author shall sink into universal disrespect? What in the mean time shall happen to the divine government in heaven, and in all the worlds that have continued loyal, and have had hitherto the utmost confidence in the unchangeably wise and holy God? O, I feel that the ground on which I stand is holy! Will God forgive me, if in attempting to vindicate his honor I have drawn near to him without being duly sanctified?

I know that men who have resolved to go on in sin, who have long been offended at the purity and extent of the law, and would not care if all the rights of the Godhead were trampled upon, find it very convenient to have the character of God thus brought down to their taste and their temper. They will support and will love a gospel that will thus make God altogether such an one as themselves. Give them a gospel like this, and in half a century there will not be an avowed infidel on the whole face of the earth. Gladly would they be rid of the reproach of infidelity, could they have a gospel that would promise them a salvation equally cheap and convenient.

If God will give out his word, and then break it; will make a law and when men have fallen under its curse, repeal it; will join the rebel in hating his own attributes; will issue an edict, and then a counter edict by which the first is neutralized; this is all exactly as they would have it. God is invested with all the human weaknesses. So Ahasuerus would make a decree, assigning to death all his Jewish subjects, and then enact another, directing them to arm themselves for their own defence, and thus his decree comes to the ground. But how will God be affected by these inroads made upon his name and his glory? Will he suffer his character to be tampered with, and finally to be thus frittered down to the taste and the convenience of a polished, and proud, and worldly, and time-serving generation? Will it still be eternal life to know *him*, altered thus, till not an angel in heaven would know him! altered till all that devils disapproved, and that believers loved, is gone?

Let me now ask the advocates of all these schemes, what they gain? Why not be willing, that the blessed God be exhibited to the minds of men, in the very character that he gives himself. Let him be what he declared himself to be, on that occasion when it was his special object to make himself known: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear

the guilty ! visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generations." Here we have, (if I may still use the terms which it grieves me to use,) the *milder* and the *severer* attributes of God. In this very character we must deal with him at last, the same that he was when he spoke to Moses from the cloud. Let there be a perfect balance among his attributes. Let him be neither too merciful to be just, nor too "just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" not too compassionate to be holy, nor too holy to smile again upon the rebel, who has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel; and too gracious to be true, nor so the friend of truth as not to reverse the sentence of death, when the condemned have repented and believed. God can have no darling attribute that shall eclipse the other portions of his character; can issue no clashing edicts; and did not send his Son to soothe, and flatter, and defend the rebel, whom his justice condemned, leaving him still in all his stubbornness and his pride.

Why this zeal to create confusion in the counsels of the God-head, and sunder the attributes that cluster in Jehovah? Simply to gratify men who cannot be pleased with God as he is. But would they be pleased with God were his character altered? They could not love an unjust God, unless indeed he would pledge himself never to treat them unjustly. And on ceasing to be a God of truth, he could not give that pledge. The sinner will reason, When God shall cease to be offended with *me* for wronging *my neighbor*, he will not be offended with *my neighbor* for injuring *me*. If *I* may hurt another, and escape with impunity, *my oppressor* escapes also. If *I* may prey upon the contents of *his purse*, and trample upon *his rights*, and sport with *his enjoyments*; then is there a world let loose, to trifle with *my interest*, and make inroads upon *my rights*, and blast *my comforts*.

Thus is there spread a ruin as wide as the whole creation of God. Angels lose their confidence in him, and all heaven is made unhappy, while the despair of the pit is changed for the hope of impunity. We assert then, that not the grossest infidelity, nor even atheism, holds out a prospect more dreary than a gospel, that thus libels the character of Jehovah, and, by one grand mistake, sunders the whole of this alienated world for ever, from the authority, and the rule, and the inspection, of an intrusive and disgusting divinity.

And when the error is on the opposite extreme and the mercy

of God is obscured, though a different motive may have led to this exhibition, and a different result may follow, still is that motive a mistaken one, and that result unhappy. God has not directed his ministers to keep the minds of his people filled with one or two selected attributes of his nature, but would have his whole character developed. Some may be deterred from embracing religion, from the impression that they must love a God whose character is cold, calculating, severe, and vindictive. And if sanctified under such a gospel, it is doubtful whether their religion will not be either gloomy and desponding, or coldly doctrinal and polemic.

The character of God will not be found at last to have shaped itself to our mistaken views of him; but will be, when we come to deal with him in the judgment, what it always was. The attributes and the glories that may now be obscured, eclipsed or neutralized, will all be there to cluster and harmonize in the burning glories of the Godhead, on the day of retribution. A God will then meet us as holy, and just, and true, as the law, and the lightnings of Sinai would make him; and still as merciful and gracious, and long-suffering, as Pisgah, and Tabor, and Calvary have declared him. He will confess himself in that day the Author of all the anathemas and all the promises of inspiration. Time will not have altered his character, nor the exigencies of betrayed and ruined souls moved him from a single purpose. There will gather in his brow all the majesty that makes devils afraid, and all the sweetness that makes angels glad; the one will look the lost into despair, and the combined glories of the whole look the saved into ecstasy. Then will be felt the full import of the text; the only true God will be known, and to know him will be eternal life.

## REMARKS

I have three reasons to offer for thinking this subject of great importance.

1. *Men will have a moral character according with their views of God.* As the truth sanctifies, just so surely does error contaminate, and no truths or errors so assuredly as those that relate to God. They invariably pour their influence through our whole creed, and touch every spring of action. Hence if men think rightly of God, I cannot but hope that the truth will one day sanctify them; but if otherwise I have fearful apprehensions of their ruin. The basest of men act from principle, though from bad principle. They are profane, and false, and lewd, and dishonest, because some false views of God have begotten in them the hope of impunity. From

a loose ministry, or vicious parentage, or vile associate, they have imbibed the principles that go to mould their deeds and their habits into the image of death. You may pass down, if you please, through all the ranks of immorality, from the young man in the gospel, who loved the world more than Christ, to the abandoned outlaw, and you will find as many different shades in their faith, as in the turpitude of their deeds. And every unregenerate man stands prepared to have his faith corrupted. He loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. He is on the watch to hear something said of God, that may assist him in loosening the bonds of moral obligation. Hence many a youth has issued from the house of prayer, modest, civil, and decent, fearing an oath, respecting the Sabbath, doing homage to religion, and giving high promise of future worth and usefulness; but some wretch corrupted his views of God, and immediately he cast off restraint, and went out to scatter through society firebrands, arrows and death. Hence, if we regard the eternal life of our children, and the youth in our streets, we shall furnish them a gospel, and a library, and give them that instruction which will lead them to a correct knowledge of God.

2. *Believers will have a religious character according with their views of God.* Nothing has been more obvious in the history of man, than the conformity of his religious character to that of the God he believed in and worshipped. Pass through the territories of paganism, and, such as you find their gods, such are their worshippers. Are they fierce, and jealous, and lewd, and bloody, or mild and placable, such invariably are their devotees. And as you come up through the lower grades of nominal Christians, ask them their views of God, and their answer will give you substantially the purity of their religious character. God is our highest object of respect and of imitation, and to be like him, the highest object of holy aspiration. Hence, if in our esteem his character is more or less pure and lovely, such we shall wish our own to be. He who sees in God no attribute but mercy, and never thinks of him but as a *father*, will be less likely to hate sin, and less careful to be holy, than the man who thinks of God as a *sovereign* and a *judge*, as well as a *father*.

And the case will be similar as to *enjoyment*. No false views of God will render us as happy as correct views. If we see only the mild and merciful traits of the divine character, we may have joy, but it will not be solid and lasting. And if we look at God merely in the attitude of sovereignty, and may never call him our Father,

or see his mercy commingled with his terrors, we shall be for ever in bondage. There are no doubt many on their way to heaven, who are so injured by their creed, as seldom to pray any other but the prayer of the condemned and the lost. They are serious and watchful Christians, but never hopeful, and never happy: joint heirs with Christ, yet never venturing to say, Abba Father!

Nor will Christians who have partial views of God be *useful*. It is when he appears in all his glories, attracting sinners to himself by the full view of his attributes, and, mingling mercy with judgment, reigns to make his creatures happy, that we feel our souls inspired to be workers together with him in extending his dominions. It is then that it seems to us a grief and a pity, that there should be any heart alienated from him, any hands that do not labor in his service, or tongue that does not speak his praise. Not the *sovereignty* of God alone, nor his *mercy* alone, can make the most useful man. The one holds back the inspiring influence of joy and hope, the other begets a religion that will all evaporate in songs and hosannas. Angels are inspired, by seeing the whole of God; and men will be more or less like angels, as "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, shall give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of himself." Then it is that we feel it to be a reasonable service, that we present our bodies and our souls to him, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable.

3. *Society at large will shape its moral aspect from the prevailing views of God.* As fraud, and falsehood, and blood, invariably follow the track of idolatry, and the dark places of the earth are thus filled with the habitations of cruelty; so in the different parts of Christendom, you may gather the prevailing notions of God from the morals of the community. Survey the darker territories of the Catholic communion, and tell me if in rapine and murder, their population is removed more than a single shade from the dreariness and desolations of paganism. Where in Christendom is life and property least secure; where are daily assassinations, where the whole population prepared for any deed of darkness and cruelty, but where there is least prevalent a correct knowledge of God. And let any one of the better territories of Christendom become apostate in their views of God, and how soon will vice spring up, the public morals be changed, the Sabbath be lost, the theatre thronged, and dress and vanity fill the place of sobriety and prayer! How soon will the true followers of Christ be persecuted, and fa-

mily devotion, and Christian watchfulness, and all the retiring virtues of holier times disappear!

Thus you have my reasons for thinking this subject important. For these, and others that could be offered, I would watch the public creed relative to the character of God, more tenaciously than at any other point. It is the fortress I would starve in defending, the strong-hold into which I would fly with my children, and feel myself, and teach them to feel, that it is the only safe place to die.

Will the blessed God make me far better acquainted with his character, and never subject me to the awful temptation, of thinking it a light thing to either overlook, or give paramount importance, to any one of the glorious attributes of his nature! Will he cause his name to be known in all lands, and make his praise glorious, wherever there are beings capable of doing him honor!

## SERMON XXVIII

### THE INDEX SURE.

GEN. XLIX. 10.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

JACOB was now very near to the close of life, and had strong apprehensions that his end might be at hand. But he had yet to deliver to his children his dying benediction. He accordingly called them about him, and rehearsed to them the future history of their respective families, for ages to come. Of Judah he predicted, that he should stand high in the esteem and respect of his brethren, should overthrow his enemies, and should bear rule over his father's children. He should come upon his enemies with all the strength and the daring with which a lion comes down from the mountains, seizes and bears up his prey, while no one dares to interrupt his course, or rouse him when he has betaken himself to rest. His land should be so abundant in vines, that he might fasten his beast to their branches, and wash his vestments in the blood of the grape. He should have a dominion so permanent, that nothing should interrupt it till the advent of Messiah, who should gather the nations about him, and hold the sceptre for ever.

That part of this famous prediction, on which I purpose to enlarge, has attracted the attention and confirmed the faith of believers in every age since. We see here selected a single family, who for ages should constitute his Church, to the exclusion of all others; with whom he would deposit his law, and all that was divulged of his purpose. One branch of this family should be honored above the others, should give birth to the Messiah, and hold the authority till he come. Thus the world shall expect their Redeemer, shall know where and when to look for him, and if prepared to receive him, shall be in no danger of imposition. The text is one of those scriptures that marked out the time when the Messiah should appear.

By the word sceptre we are no doubt to understand the ensign or badge of authority. The word signifies a rod or staff and

hence came to mean a sceptre ; as kings, when they sat upon their thrones, used to hold in their hand a rod as a token of their authority. Hence, when Esther presented herself to the king, he reached out to her the golden sceptre.

The text gives us no intimation when Judah should rise to dominion, but when he should take the sceptre into his hand it should not depart till the coming of Shiloh. We know that for a long time after the delivery of this inspired benediction, the government of Israel was not in the tribe of Judah. Moses, their first ruler, was of the tribe of Levi. The judges were of several different tribes. Saul, the first king, was of the tribe of Benjamin. But David, his successor, was of the tribe of Judah ; and in him, six hundred years after the prediction, the authority commenced which is noticed in the text, and which continued till the coming of the promised Shiloh.

The Jews, to evade the force of this prophecy, would have the word translated sceptre, to mean the rod of correction, which, they say, shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come and liberate them. But this exposition is contrary, in the first place, to the whole tenor of the context, which assigns to Judah power, glory, and victory. It would be very singular if one clause of the benediction would give him the pride, the strength, and the independence of a lion, and another clause make him the subject of perpetual oppression. In the second place, this exposition would be contrary to matters of historical fact, which the Jews themselves would not have the folly to contradict. Judah was at no one period signalized as a sufferer. The rod of oppression came earlier, and fell heavier, and continued longer on the other tribes than on Judah. And as Judah is the only tribe that returned entire after the captivity, it would seem the only one from which the rod of oppression did depart. But it is only hatred to the light, that has led that unbelieving people to this interpretation. The ancient Jews, and all who have understood the language of the Old Testament in its original, and have had no particular inducement to pervert the text, have rendered the word sceptre.

And the next clause still farther explains this, "Nor a law-giver from between his feet." It is natural that a sceptre be in the hands of a law-giver. But some have chosen to render the word *scribe* instead of *law-giver*, and would have us understand by it one who is employed in writing laws, either civil or ecclesiastical. If this rendering could be justified, it would not much vary the sense. But it is believed that this rendering cannot be justified, as the

Hebrews use for scribe another word. Hence the passage means, that there shall be in Judah, till the coming of Shiloh, a law-giver as well as the ensign of authority. The kind of government is not specified, nor is it important, as the truth of the prophecy will be evident, if it shall appear that there was in the tribe of Judah any species of authority down to the advent of the Redeemer.

That by Shiloh we are to understand the Messiah there will be little doubt. The word thus rendered is used only in this place, yet is allowed by all classes of commentators to refer to the Redeemer. Some interpret it a peace-maker, a Savior; others a preserver, a deliverer; and others still, with greater probability, the sent, or one to be sent. This idea exactly comports with the attitude in which the Savior is presented to us in the Old Testament, as the angel of the covenant, the angel Jehovah. Hence, in the New Testament, he is spoken of as him that was to come. The woman of Samaria said to our Lord, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak to thee am he." The Jewish expositors are generally agreed that the text has reference to the Savior.

Their quibble about the word which we render *until*, but discovers their weakness and their obstinacy. It is compounded of two particles; one they render *for ever*, and the other *because*, and read the text thus: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet for ever, because Shiloh shall come." But beside that this construction is forced, it would not comport with facts, which they must all acknowledge. For while they generally deny that the Messiah has come, they will not deny that now the sceptre has departed from Judah. Some of them have been so cramped on this subject as to adopt the absurdity that the Messiah has come, but keeps himself hidden because of their wickedness. Thus men will make the word of God to mean any thing rather than not support their favorite scheme; and when the text proves too obstinate to be resisted, will adopt the most improbable conjectures to prop the fabric of falsehood. But error is for ever thus changeable and uncertain. Like the fabled isle of Delos, it for ever fluctuates, nor can men or devils give it permanent location. If one would be entirely certain that modern Unitarianism has no foundation in truth, he has only to compare the shifts of its advocates, with the endlessly varying conjectures of the Jews since the death of Christ, to rid themselves of the conviction that he has already come and set up his kingdom. In

either community they hold you in suspense for ever. When they should inform what the text does mean, they only bewilder you with illusions, and brow-beat you with assertions of what it cannot mean, and must not mean, and finally, if they would be honest, what it shall not mean. Nothing but truth is plain and consistent: error is inconsistent, not only with truth, but with itself.

I. Is it then a fact that there continued to be a sceptre and a law-giver in the tribe of Judah down to the time of the Savior? On this point a little inquiry will give, it is presumed, entire satisfaction. Down to the captivity there will be no doubt. And if during that period there should seem to have been a suspension of Judah's authority, still it is a fact that there was no transfer of authority to any other tribe. And if for that short space we could see no remains of authority, it should not be considered as nullifying the prediction. Seventy years, in a period so long as that which intervened between the delivery of this prediction and the coming of Christ, would be too insignificant to be excepted in a general prophecy. But the fact seems to be, that the tribe of Judah did hold its ascendancy even during the period of their dispersion. We are assured that the king of Babylon took from prison, and treated with marked kindness, Jehoiachin, king of Judah, thirty-seven years after his captivity; and it is said that he set his throne above the throne of the kings that were in Babylon: and Jehoiachin we know was of the tribe of Judah. Thus the sceptre did not depart, even when that tribe had its residence in a strange land. Daniel too, we know, was of the tribe of Judah, and was made governor over the whole province of Babylon, and of course over the children of the captivity. And we have no reason to doubt but that the Jewish writers assert the truth when they assure us that the successive governors of the exiled Jews, continued to be selected from the tribe of Judah and the house of David. So Zorobabel and Nehemiah are both said to have been of the tribe of Judah.

And when afterward the civil power was vested principally in the Sanhedrim, still the sceptre must doubtless be considered as remaining in the tribe of Judah. That the Sanhedrim had very great power there will be no question. That council was instituted by the Lord himself, an account of which we have in the eleventh chapter of Numbers. And they were not dispersed nor wholly disrobed of power up to the time when they sat in judgment on the Son of God. From the close of the captivity to the destruc-

tion of the temple, this body continued to be the great council of the nation. At first they were to be chosen from all the tribes, but after their return from Babylon, they were principally of the house of Judah, though occasionally of Levi and of Benjamin. But these two tribes were amalgamated with, and as it were, lost in the tribes of Judah, and whatever they might do was done by virtue of authority derived from the tribe with which they had become incorporated. Hence the sceptre did not depart.

Even when the Romans appointed them a king, still the Sanhedrim had large powers. Even Herod the Great was tried for his life before that court. If it should be said that their authority was in a great measure neutralized, when Judea became a Roman province, and an Idumæan was constituted their Sovereign, still it was not wholly destroyed. They long contended with Herod about the supreme authority, nor could they be prevailed upon to take the oath of loyalty till after the birth of the Savior. At the time of his arrest we find them still embodied, and sitting to hear evidence and pass judgment upon him who had come to be their king. True, they had lost the power, as we term it, of life and death, and might not proceed to the crucifixion till they had obtained the assent of Pilate. But although their power was evidently languishing it did not expire till Titus demolished the sanctuary.

II. Our next inquiry is, whether from that period all authority did cease from the tribe of Judah. If this shall appear, then are we certain that the promised Shiloh has come. And whether in that case he be the Messiah, or some other personage, there can be but little doubt. That the tribe of Judah did actually lose all authority at that time, and has never recovered it, there cannot be a question. That tribe has never had since then any distinct existence. No descendant of Abraham will now pretend to tell you to which tribe he belongs. He may assure you that when the Messiah comes he will restore them to their respective tribes, but till then they remain by their own confession an undistinguished mass of Israelites. And there is no sceptre or law-giver among them. This will be acknowledged by every man who has any common acquaintance with history.

Their condition is exactly the opposite of all that can be termed rule or authority. They are scattered among the nations of the earth; have scarcely any of them a fixed habitation, and none of them the least shade of authority. There is hardly a kingdom in

the world, where they have not been excluded, not merely from any share in the national government, but even from the common rights of citizenship.

The woes that Moses predicted, have fallen upon them, and they are cursed in the city and cursed in the field; cursed in their basket and in their store; cursed in their children and in the fruit of their land; cursed when they go out and when they come in; and in all that they set their hand unto for to do.

They have planted vineyards, and another has gathered the grapes. They have become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword. They have served their enemies in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and have worn upon their neck a yoke of iron. They have sodden and subsisted upon their own children. Their plagues and their sicknesses have been sore and wonderful. The Lord has seemed to rejoice over them to destroy them, and bring them to naught, and scatter them among all nations. They have found no rest to the sole of their foot; have had a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and sorrow of mind. They have been in fear day and night, and have been sold to their enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, till none would buy them. Precisely this has been their condition more than two thousand years. If Moses had written their history yesterday, instead of two-and-thirty hundred years ago, it had hardly been possible to pen it more correctly. Hence we need offer no arguments to prove that the law-giver and the sceptre departed from Judah at the time predicted.

Whatever pretence that wretched people may make, that some where, no one knows where, there is yet in that tribe the badge of power, and the right of legislation; no man of common understanding, and not blinded to the last degree, will listen for a moment to such desperate arguments in support of their obstinacy and their unbelief.

III. It remains that we inquire whether he who came, at the time when the Jews expected their Shiloh, has exhibited the sign given of him in the text: "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." By some this clause is made to mean, him shall the people obey, or to him shall the people hearken, and again, to him shall all the kingdoms of the earth be subject. Hence Christ is styled in Haggai, the desire of all nations. Now you remember that in the original promise made to Abraham, it was said, that in his seed, by which is meant the Redeemer, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Hence the Shiloh men-

tioned in the text, is he whom the Gentiles shall seek, whose instruction they shall receive, whose precepts they shall obey, to whom they shall be subject, in whom they shall be blessed, and to whom they shall be gathered. All this must appear in him who shall answer the description given in the text of Shiloh.

We remember that very early in the gospel history, while yet salvation was scarcely offered to any but the Jews, the Gentiles seemed more ready than they to become his disciples. It is true that a few Churches were very early gathered among the Jews, but the principal success of the gospel was among the Gentiles. The dispersion that took place on the death of Stephen, seconded by the conversion of Cornelius, soon showed the world that the Jews had ceased to be God's people; and that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. Soon Churches were established in many places among the Gentiles, and from that day to this the gospel has been making its way through the nations, and the people have been gathered to the Lord Jesus.

Now here lies the proof of his Messiahship, that the religion he taught, and the means he used to propagate it, should gather him disciples so rapidly and so extensively. And had there been no other proof that he was the predicted Shiloh, this one should have been sufficient long since to convince the Jews that he whom they still expect, has come. On the supposition that the Lord Jesus Christ was not the promised Messiah, and of course that no Divine power gives efficacy to his gospel, nothing can be more surprising than the promptness with which he gathers disciples. And this was the very sign given, "to him shall the gathering of the people be." Now if any Jews or Gentiles are not prepared to receive him in the character of their Redeemer, they must account for the success of his gospel. It was never propagated with the sword; it asks no support from human power and human law, but has made its silent way in direct opposition to the powers of earth and hell.

The very nature of the religion of Christ renders its propagation a proof of his Messiahship. It can adopt no system of compromise with any other religion. It must be either rejected, or adopted as the only one that can bring men to happiness and God. The Savior is not to be worshipped in conjunction with Jupiter, and Moloch, and Diana. He must have the supreme regard, and every idol must be abandoned. Hence his religion, when it began its course, was at war with every other, in every town or city

where it was attempted to be propagated, and the smallest success in these circumstances must have been a demonstration that its author was Divine

And what is more, the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ found the bitterest enmity in every heart it attempted to subdue. It demanded on its first presentation at the door of him it would redeem, that he be radically changed, that he love what he hated and hate what he loved. Hence our Lord would not deceive his disciples, but told them that he came not to send peace but a sword. Still with just such a religion as this, the Lord Jesus gathered disciples, and continues to gather them, while every native passion of the soul is at war with the Savior, and the doctrines it is invited to embrace.

The character of the Savior, when presented to the people that were to be gathered to him, was awfully forbidding. Aside from the consideration that he was the enemy of all sin and they totally depraved; his humble ingress, the meanness of his parentage and his birth, and the ignominy of his crucifixion, all tended to render it wholly improbable that he should ever gain adherents, and still men of the most towering views became his disciples, even some of the members of the Sanhedrim.

And what seemed an insurmountable barrier, he chose as the instruments who should propagate his gospel, men from the lowest walks of life, fishermen and tent-makers. These were to go and plead his name before kings and emperors. Still under all these embarrassments the people were gathered to him, and his religion spread throughout the civilized world. How then could the Jews, or how can the unbelievers in the present day, doubt that Jesus was the promised Shiloh, and that his own almighty power gave efficacy to his gospel?

And when we consider again the state of the world, how exactly the opposite of that religion, unbelief is put to still deeper confusion. We can hardly read without a blush, the account that Paul gives us of the state of morals anterior to the gospel, among the very men to whom it was published. I will read you a part of that description. He says, "Men were filled with all unrighteousness." (Rom. i. 29-32.) Now it was among just such beings as these that the gospel had to make its way. Such were the people that the Lord Jesus would gather to him, or if he failed, did not claim to be owned as the promised Shiloh. We are all ready to say that the Jews had no excuse for rejecting their Messiah. But let us not forget that the light which thus poured upon

the page of prophecy, and pointed out to the Jews their Shiloh so distinctly that we wonder at their unbelief, is still increasing. The council that condemned him, and the man who betrayed him, and the multitude who exulted in his agonies, had less evidence that he was the Son of God than we have, and had a better excuse for their unbelief than we. They had sufficient light to condemn them, but we have still more. They saw his gospel have some success, and were under obligation to believe; we see it operating on almost all nations, and are under still increased obligation to embrace and love him. We all join to condemn the Jews for their unbelief, but it would not be wonderful if we perish under a more aggravated condemnation.

## SERMON XXIX.

### THE INDEX SURE.—No. II.

#### GENESIS XLIX. 10.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

WE can conceive of few things in the creation in which there is more of the sublime, than in a prediction like this, given several thousand years since, and recorded for the successive generations to read, while they witness its fulfillment. There is seen in such an object, concentrated all that wisdom and power that built the universe. He who can predict what shall be, must know, as is said of God, "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not." And to foretell with certainty he must have power to bring to pass. It involves, too, a Divine purpose, by which all the events that are future are made certain. Under a government where things were left to the control of chance, or accident, there could be no such certainty, even if we suppose the existence of a mind that can foresee the most distant tracts of time. Hence, to contemplate a subject like this, gives to the mind a sublimity of elevation, and tends to fill it with adoring thoughts of the Creator. And still it feels its own littleness; for where there is so much of God, all beside is insignificant and worthless. And there are no contemplations more calculated to soothe and comfort the believing mind. He who can know and predict all the events that will happen, can provide for his people in all the emergencies into which they may be brought.

In illustrating the text, in the former discourse, it was my design, first, to explain the terms; secondly, to show that there did continue a sceptre and a law-giver in the tribe of Judah down to the advent of the Redeemer; thirdly, to show that from and after that time there did cease all authority and power in that branch of the house of Israel; and, finally, that to the Lord Jesus the people have been gathered, as it was predicted they should be, to the promised Shiloh. What remains now is, that we make some practical use of the whole. I would then

## REMARK,

1. The subject will lead us to *admire* the *Divine conduct*. Where he requires faith, there he accumulates evidence in such profusion, that every mind not decidedly hostile to truth, must yield its assent. He had promised the world that he would send them a Redeemer; hence, when that Redeemer should come, he would require all to receive him, and that their faith might not want for evidence, he poured in upon the man Christ Jesus, the concentrated light of a thousand ages. And it ought to cover the unbeliever with shame to know that such was the precision with which he was designated, that even devils know him. The first promise was, that he should be the seed of the woman. And at that time it would have been of no use to have made the promise more definite. At the time of the deluge it was rendered certain, without any specific promise, that the Savior must be of the family of Noah. But his family soon became so numerous, that the believer could not know where to look for the promised seed. He might be born near the spot where the ark rested, or in some far-distant isle of the ocean. Hence, God made choice of Abraham, and gave him the promise that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and directed him to go to that land, where he would still farther limit the line of descent, and where the Savior should himself be born. When Ishmael was born, Abraham doubtless supposed that he was the promised heir, and he and the world might have looked for the Savior in his family, had not God given him another son, and promised that in Isaac should his seed be called. In his family again the promise was confirmed to Jacob, and in his to Judah, and in his to David. This was the last limitation as to the line of descent, and the time of the promise was now so nigh that no farther designation was necessary. Here, then, we see pointed out very distinctly the *family* in which the Messiah should be born.

As to the time, it was to be, according to the prediction recorded in Daniel, four hundred and ninety years from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. It was to be while yet there was a sceptre and a law-giver in Judah \*

\* The time of his coming was still farther designated by the appearance of John the Baptist: "Behold," said the last but one of the prophets, in the very last words he uttered, "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." And God himself assures us that this

As to the land of his nativity, this was marked out and consecrated to the Lord ages beforehand, in the communications made to Abraham. But lest the extent of Canaan should still cast a cloud upon the promise, the very town was named in which he should be born: "Thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto us that is to rule in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

That still there might be no room for mistake, the angels came from heaven to tell the shepherds that he was born, and to guide them to his humble lodgement. To the wise men of the east there appeared a star that moved before them, and came and stood over the place where the young child lay. Even the Roman emperor must be induced at that juncture to make a decree that all the world should be taxed, that that decree might operate to bring the blessed Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, previously to the birth of the Savior. Thus wonderfully minute were the pointings of Heaven to the infant Redeemer.

And those who had not opportunity to visit his manger, might open the pages of prophecy and read there his character and his history, and rest assured that he who was reported to have been born in Bethlehem was indeed the promised Shiloh. He was to be peculiarly a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: despised and rejected of men. He was to bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows; was to be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. When oppressed and afflicted he was not to open his mouth. Men were to cast lots for his vesture. He was to hang on a tree, but not a bone of him was to be broken. He was to make his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death. It was even predicted, that men should buy the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver, the price at which he was valued. After all this minuteness of prediction, how impossible does it seem that any one should doubt whether he was the promised Messiah. And how must we admire the Divine conduct and goodness in thus giving us *many* signs, when, if he had given us but *one*, he might have condemned us if we had not believed. It would seem that it must have been the purpose of God, that no

promise of Elias met its fulfilment in John." Thus, lest the precise time should not be recollected, one was sent before him, crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." From the multitudes that came to hear him, it becomes certain that John must have given a very extended notice that the Messiah was at hand.

nation or individual then or since, should be able to resist the flood of light that then poured in upon the Savior of the world, in every inch of his way from the manger to the tomb. Had his name been written the instant he appeared, on the disk of every star; had the finger of a man's hand appeared instantly in every quarter of the heavens, pointing to the immortalized manger; or had a voice said in every ear all that was told the watchful shepherds, the evidence of the ingress of the son of God would hardly have been more complete.

It must not be forgotten that all these intimations respecting the coming Redeemer, had been written in a book, and lodged in the temple of God, and read in the synagogues throughout all the holy land, every Sabbath day for many hundred years; and we can hardly believe that the report had not penetrated into every section of the globe, where there was a sinner to need an interest in the Redeemer's blood.

2. How provoking must it be to God, when, after all this, men reject his Son. To all who lived in Palestine, all will agree that the sin of unbelief was enormous. They were in the very spot where all this light concentrated. They had read the prophecies—had seen the signs—had beheld the events of Providence shaping themselves to his approach, and probably found it impossible not to know that the set time was come. Hence on them we should expect that there would fall a peculiar condemnation. And on them it did fall, and has rested on their children's children down to this very hour. The land itself has been given to desolation, and has withered under the curse ever since. It has become a hissing, a by-word, and a proverb. Its hills have lost their fertility, its fountains have been polluted, and its vines have withered.

But if we suppose that none are guilty for rejecting the Savior but the Jews, we are as blind as they. There did shine, it is true, upon that generation who rejected him, a peculiar light, but the present generation of that people have far less light than the impenitent of this age, and are less guilty. When they contemptuously spit upon the ground at the mention of the name of Jesus, they despise an unknown Redeemer, in imitation of the impiety of their ancestors. They are virtually heathen, and many of them have no more idea of God, or a futurity, than the idolators of interior India. But the Bible and a preached gospel have poured upon every Christian land all the light that shone upon Judea, and more still. We have more convincing light than Herod had, that the Savior was born in Bethlehem during his reign; and more than

Judas had that he whom Judas betrayed was the Son of God ; and more than Pilate had, that he whom Pilate condemned will one day be Pilate's judge. In addition to the light they had, we have seen the gospel conquering the world in his name. We have seen the sturdiest ruffians bowed and tamed at his feet. We have seen accomplished many a prediction that he uttered, many a wo that he issued, many a curse that he threatened, and many a promise that dropped from his lips. Luminous as was the light that gathered about the Babe of Bethlehem, there have been pouring in ten thousand other streams ever since. Hence let no sinner conceive, that although it be nineteen centuries since the Savior died, there can be for him any escape from death unless he be washed in a Savior's blood. If he who drove the nails was cursed if he did not believe, he who now crucifies him afresh, and puts him to open shame, will meet a curse no lighter. No, it remains still a crime black as perdition to bar the avenues of the heart against the faith of the Lord Jesus. There is not a man to-day in Christendom, nor a lad, nor a child, that has learned who the Redeemer is, if he reject him to-day, who will not carry home with him guilt enough, if he dies unpardoned, to make him gnash his teeth for ever. Had no Savior been offered, you would only have had to answer for a broken law, but as many of you as are unsanctified have upon you the guilt and the curse of having slighted ten thousand overtures of forgiveness. And if you dare to die in this condition, you can make the sad experiment, but your grave will prove an avenue to the bottomless pit.

3. In view of this subject it seems no light matter to deny the Deity of the Son of God. How fearfully were the Jews destroyed because they would not recognize him as the promised Shiloh. When once the edict had gone out, "Let all the angels of God worship him," and God will not give his glory to another, the being that will not obey must perish. He is either God or a creature. But have we credulity enough to believe that there would have been all this display of prophecy and miracle, pointing to the birth of a worm? Must he be promised and proclaimed many thousand years; must there be a record made of his character while yet he has none? Must he make his ingress in the centre of the world, and in the most luminous spot among the nations? Must a long train of prophets vie with each other in doing honor to the mysterious personage; and when he is born, be but the being of a day? We have heard of

"Ocean into tempest wrought,  
To waft a feather—or to drown a fly,"

but there are few who will impute to God such folly. But how like this must appear, to him who believes the Messiah was a mere creature—all that train of prophecies, that hyperbole of language, and that pomp of figure that centred in the Babe of Bethlehem? Judas, it seems, had he been appointed to the work, would have been as good and as glorious a Redeemer as Jesus; and still his advent must be predicted it seems four thousand years before his birth, and heaven must tell all the generations between that he is coming, and they must think of him in their loftiest thoughts, and speak of him as heaven does in their sublimest language; must calculate to owe to him their whole redemption, and still he has not power when he has laid down his life to take it up again. *He* indebted to another for his own existence, but *we* must trust in *him* for eternal life; he our shield, and still he has no power of his own to protect; he our guide, but another must enlighten and guide him; he our intercessor, and still he cannot know when we pray; he our king, and still he himself the subject of a higher and a mightier power; he pledged to be with his people always, even unto the ends of the world, while yet he could not know that he should be permitted to see them when they suffer, or be present to save.

If there is a scheme, which, rather than any other, charges God foolishly, makes the plainest truth a mystery, and the whole Bible a bundle of absurdities, and proudly conducts all its votaries to death, it is that which thus quenches the light of Israel. Must I choose between it and open infidelity, I would be an infidel. By the same dash with which I blot the name of the Redeemer, I would obliterate the Father, and believe the grave the end of me. I would not waste my time and strength, and torture my conscience, to mutilate the Book of God, but would believe the whole a lie, and warm myself in its blaze, and wish I were a brute. Then I would calmly expect one day to be a supper for the worms, free from the dread of the worm that shall never die. Men must be desperately the foes of truth, and inveterately hostile to the Lord Jesus, before they can thus rudely confront the plainest truths of God; and the crime, where there is not gross ignorance, must come very near to that which cannot be forgiven. To avoid one mystery which they cannot comprehend, they would throw afloat the faith of the gospel, make us doubt whether any part of it has come to us uncorrupted, and finally must adopt mysteries greater than the one they discard, must believe that God has indited us a revelation which it is almost impossible to understand, and that he

has suffered almost his whole Church to live in the belief of a lie these eighteen hundred years.

4. This subject should lead us to pray earnestly for the unhappy descendants of Abraham. We are indebted to them, under God, for the privileges we enjoy, but which they have forfeited. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature, belonged to that family. The apostles, through whom we have the Scriptures, and the knowledge of eternal life, were Jewish converts. But how distressing to us, that that whole community should still reject their promised Shiloh, and be seen writhing these two thousand years under the lashes of a vindictive Providence! It should excite our pity to know that they are a standing testimony of the truth of prophecy. They are placed as a beacon on the shore of death to warn us not to approach the strand where they were so awfully shipwrecked. Their unbelief has confirmed us in the faith, and it should be our grief that they should perish. When the time has come, and it seems now at hand, when they shall own him that has come, their conversion shall be as life from the dead to the Gentiles.

Hence gratitude for the blessings we have received through their hands, and love to the kingdom of Christ, which will be greatly advanced by their in-gathering, and pity for the suffering posterity of him who was the father of the faithful, should all join their influence to induce us to pray for a people so interesting and so undone. Every endearing view we have of Christ should lead us to pray for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh; and whenever we see by faith the scenes of Calvary, there should go up some petition for the descendants of those who were active in the crucifixion, and coveted that the blood of the Savior should be on them and their children. On that propitiatory sacrifice we hang our hopes of heaven, and should rejoice can we be the means of bringing down upon the descendants of his betrayers and murderers, any heavenly blessings, or of removing the curse under which they have so long pined and perished.

And if their case should demand something more than prayers—should require sacrifices—can we better expend the talents that God has loaned us than in the purchase of their redemption? It is high time that we placed in their hands the Hebrew Testament, that they may know the character of the Savior they have rejected, and may see and lament the cause of their long-continued dispersion. Gratitude for the gift of a Savior through the line of Abraham, and for the Holy Scriptures through Jewish Apostles, should urge us to make exertions for their rescue from the thral-

dom of unbelief. They would join us in adoring the Savior, and rejoice with us in the covenants of promise, and we could feel pleasure for ever, in having contributed to rescue them from the dominions of death.

Happily the time has come, when they begin to doubt whether they may not look for their Shiloh till their eyes consume away in their holes, unless they build their hopes of eternal life on him who has come. Numbers of them have made their escape from death, and others are inquiring with a candor and a docility, as new as it is interesting, "Where is the angel of the covenant?"

FINALLY, may we not fear, that if we reject the Savior, there may be found in our families a race of unbelievers, that may go, generation after generation, down to the blackness of darkness for ever? How can we know that some families that we can name, in whom we see not a believer from age to age, have inherited from some ungodly ancestor, a ruin like that which fell upon the family of Israel? Poverty, and crime, and degradation, are the prominent features of their condition. Ah, let us beware, lest our children's children shall be telling the world, some hundred years hence, the tale of our unbelief and impenitence.

## SERMON XXX.

### THE WISE MAN WISE FOR FUTURITY.

DEUTERONOMY, XXXII. 29.

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.

MOSES had been speaking of the kindness of God to his people. He found them in a desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness. He led them about, he instructed them, he kept them as the apple of his eye. By a spirit of prophecy he looked forward, and saw them enter in triumph the land of promise, there to eat of the increase of the field, to suck honey out of the rock, and drink the pure blood of the grape. And here he would gladly have limited his prophetic view, and would have died believing that the people he loved, would remain the heirs of that goodly land till the consummation of all things, and be to the latest ages the chosen inheritance of heaven. But the same prophetic Spirit which had made him acquainted with one future page of their history, penetrated the tracts of time, that stretched still beyond, and unfolded to his inspired vision a page still beyond, darkened and dismal with crimes and punishments. Here he paused to lament, that they would so sin against their own souls, that they would not feel in time that they had to deal with a jealous God, who would not give his glory to another, and in the language of the text pours out the honest and tender feelings of his heart, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." This would avert the doom I foresee, and secure them a perpetual title to the fields of promise.

But the text will bear a more extended application. It is as true of us all as it was of Israel, that we contemplate too little the scenes of futurity, and fasten the eye too exclusively on the life that now is. This world is *too much our home*; its cares occupy too exclusively our attention; and its treasures claim too high a place among the instruments of our joy. We are pilgrims at the best, who have here no abiding city, but seek one to come, whose builder and maker is God. That man is a beggar and a wretch, who extends not his views to another life, and has no

prospects of enjoyment in a better world. The concerns of this life are too small to engross the energies of an immortal mind. When I feel myself allured by its charms, and when I see so many of my poor dying neighbors engrossed exclusively in these sublunary scenes, I feel that we have a mean and poor employment. And I have chosen this text, rather than many a one, which, on some accounts, would have been more appropriate, because I wish to warn myself, and the neighborhood in which I live, and the people to whom I minister, and every stranger who may be present, that this world is not our home, nor our rest; that there awaits us a dying bed, and a lonely grave, and perhaps a sudden transit into the presence of the holy and heart-searching God. We are forming a character for another state, and have forgotten our only errand into life, if any other cares crowd us so closely, or engross us so exclusively, as the one care of adorning the soul for its speedy appearance at the banquet of the Lamb. This is *the* concern that should direct our dreams, wake our slumbers, bring us early to our knees, and go with us and keep its hold upon our thoughts, our affections, and our lips, through all the hours of light, through the social converse of our evenings, and the sacred worship of our Sabbaths. Why can we not move about among the cares of this life, and still keep firmly our hold upon a better?

If we think often of death we shall die no sooner, and if we often talk of the life to come, we shall be called none the sooner to part with the life that now is. If we mingle the cares of another world with those of the present, we need not neglect to make all necessary provision for the body. Nor need these thoughts and cares embitter our present enjoyments. Who has heaven's permission to be happy but the believer, the man whose heavenly mind can see a substance, and taste a sweetness in the things unseen, who can even here inhale a fragrance from the flowers of paradise, and realize a treasure deposited where moth and rust cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal! Tell me not of men being happy whose all is in the present life, and who are tormented if they chance to think of death; it is all false. They may be stupid, and so is a worm, but who ever dreamed that a thoughtless man was happy? He may be free from sensible misery, and so is the ox; but one who claims that he is a man, and glories in being capable of thought, is not happy when he does not think. Cast forward the eye of faith and read the future pages of your history, and if you cannot read them and still be happy, then I would bid joy adieu for ever. Think of a

death-bed, of the shroud you shall wear, the coffin that shall house you, the grave you shall occupy, the procession that shall escort you to the bleak and cheerless cemetery, the vacuum that shall be seen in your dwelling, the widow that shall weep for you, and the children that shall bury their best hopes in your sepulchre, and return to weep over their untimely orphanage:—think, too, where you shall then be, in what world, in what society, how employed—and if you cannot think it all over and be happy, your condition is most pitiable. What! do you boast of having the powers of thought, and dare not think! Glad that you are not a thoughtless beast, and yet must become thoughtless as a beast, or be miserable! Then your fancied distinctions are all a dream, and can do you no honor. My intention is to turn your minds upon the scene of death, and by this means to try your religion, and my own. If we can converse with the scenes of death and be happy, it will be one small evidence in our favor. True wisdom will lead us to consider our latter end. *I shall notice some circumstances of our latter end which it becomes us to consider, and then show that to consider these things is to act wisely.*

I am to notice some circumstances of our latter end, which it becomes us to consider:

I. Death will part asunder the body and the soul. They are dear and affectionate companions, and are to each other a source of pleasure and of pain. There is between them an indescribable power of endearing sympathy. But in death they part. The body, cold and inanimate, is thrown upon the care of men, while the spirit returns to God who gave it. What remains with us is the merest clay, while that which we loved and caressed is gone. That lifeless body is not the son, the husband, the father, the neighbor, and the friend, we loved. But it is all that we could ever see or touch, while that essential and immortal part which has fled, was intangible and invisible. This change you and I must soon pass. This body must moulder, and this spirit be summoned away, to appear in the presence of its judge.

To properly consider this matter is to see to it that the body and the soul, while they continue associates, be mutual helpmates to each other. The indulgence of the appetites and passions must not be permitted to ruin the soul, nor the mind be employed to destroy the body. They are to be reunited in the resurrection, and must be for ever happy or wretched together. Hence let the soul, while the present union continues, be purified by the blood

of sprinkling, and the body rendered a meet temple for the Holy Ghost, that thus the kindred parts may exert upon each other a mutually kind and purifying influence. Then after the sleep of the grave, there may be a union more happy than the first, more indissoluble and eternal.

2. Death will dissolve all our earthly ties. The various and endearing relationships of life are all temporary. The husband and the wife, whose union is the most endearing of all others, are obligated to love and cherish each other only till death. Then the tie is broken, and the obligation discharged. The lifeless corpse is no longer a husband, a father, a neighbor, a friend. That essential part, on whose account the relationship was formed, has fled. And "in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are" in this respect, "as the angels of God in heaven."

To give this subject its proper consideration, requires that we so discharge the various obligations that result from these relationships, as to meet their grand and heavenly design. The husband and the wife should endeavor to promote each other's sanctification, should exert all the influence that the endearing relationship generates, to produce in each other an entire conformity to God, and thus prepare each other to be happy in the circle of the blessed. The few days that we can do each other good, urges to the utmost despatch in every benevolent design. Parents should admonish and pray for their poor dying children, from whom, in a few days, they must be torn for ever, and children be a blessing to their parents while they are within reach of their kindness. The brother and sister sustain that relationship but for a few days, and must do each other all the good they ever do, very soon. The course, then, that genuine love will pursue is very plain. While my friends are within my reach, I should be their enemy did I not endeavor to promote their salvation, and thus do them everlasting good.

Alas, how many pursue a course precisely the opposite, and are doing all in their power to carry their friends with them down to perdition! How many husbands exert their influence to prevent the piety, and hinder the prayers, and retard the spiritual improvement of their bosom friend! And how many wives, with the same treacherous kindness, allure their husbands to the ways of death! Many a parent, a son, a brother, deaf themselves to the voice of mercy, are staining their hands and their garments in the blood of their kindred. And beyond a doubt the great day will hear many

a curse proceed from the lips of the lost, upon their now nearest, dearest kindred!—On this dreadful subject I can only say, do good, and avoid doing evil, to those who are now related to you, as all their kindred ties will soon be dissolved, and these opportunities pass away for ever. We shall doubtless witness against each other in the great day, and it must grieve us, if we feel tenderly, to apprehend that our own lips may bear against beloved friends that testimony on which their condemnation may be founded.

3. Death will strip us of all our titles, and of that office, power, and influence which they imply. The magistrate, the judge, the general, and the juror, will yield his office with his life, and with it his power and his influence. The minister of the gospel, and every officer in the Christian Church, or teacher in our seats of science, or the Sabbath school, must yield his place to some successor.

To properly consider this matter is to fill the office we sustain with purity and activity. If it gives us influence, there is nothing for which we are more accountable; no talent which we can use now to better advantage. If there is a soul brought by such means within our reach, and we can bless that soul, our duty is plain; and our fearful responsibility incalculable. When by any means the providence of God enlarges our sphere of action, widens the field of our labor, or strengthens the arms of our hands, his creatures are to receive the benefit, and his name is to have the praise.

What a fearful account will many have to give, when they shall be put out of their stewardship! How have they filled offices, that they might create misery, and exerted an influence in widening and vexing the horrors of the apostacy! You might almost track them by the blood they spilt, or, to drop the figure, by the vices to which they gave an impulse, by the characters they polluted, by the poverty and the tears they generated, and by a long train of untold miseries that still line their track. "Who then is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint

him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Thus the office we fill may be suddenly vacated, and the account rendered cover us with everlasting shame.

4. Death will level all distinctions. The king and the peasant will sleep together in the grave, the master and the servant, the man of science and distinction with the untaught and the vulgar. The family who can hardly speak with patience of their unpolished neighbors, and look with contempt upon their rude and illiterate servants, must become a supper for the worm, and must scent as odiously, and rot as rapidly, and perhaps be forgotten about as soon as the innocent objects of their affected disgust. There may be a more splendid funeral. We may hear at the mouth of the tomb a more labored and lying panegyric; and there may be erected a more splendid, and perhaps a more lasting monument. But a few years will dissolve that monument, will deface its pompous inscription, and the bones it covers will appear as unsightly as any skeleton within the enclosures of the cemetery.

To properly consider this fact, is to remember that it was God who elevated us, and that views us as none the more worthy because of the distinction he has assigned us. It is our wisdom to be humble and mindful of death. Let us show the world that in our own eyes we are small; that we can enter the cottage of the peasant familiarly; can join him, if occasion require, in his coarse and homely meal; can cheerfully bow with him at the throne of grace; mingle our counsels and our tears, insensible of any distinction for which we deserve respect, that we are not willing to bestow. We are forbidden to be wise in our own conceits, and are exhorted to condescend to men of low estate. One distinction only will outlive the ravages of death—that distinction is holiness. In the sight of God all others are temporary and worthless; and if not counteracted by the humility of the gospel, will cover us with a deeper contempt, and subject us to a more degraded infamy in the bottomless pit.

5. Death will strip us of our earthly possessions. The lifeless corpse is not the owner of a farm, or the proprietor of a bond. He cannot even defend from the attack of the ruffian the little spot of earth that contains his ashes and his bones. The hour that strips him of life renders him as poor as at the hour of his birth, and as dependent for the shroud, as, originally, for the swathing band.

To properly consider this matter, is to use our wealth for the honor of God, and in lessening the miseries of the apostacy. We

may employ it to support and spread his gospel, to disseminate his word, to feed his poor. Some object of benevolent regard is for ever at our door, some good devised that we may execute, some cause laboring that we may lend our aid. We may have high ideas of our own rights, but we are all the Lord's stewards. He has commanded us to occupy till he come. We must very soon go out of office, and must then give an account of our stewardship, and happy for us if we have made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive us into everlasting habitations. But how many, when they shall be called to yield their interest, will find that their gold and silver is corrupted, and their garments moth eaten. If they have done any good with their wealth, it was by the merest accident: they meant not so, neither did their hearts think so, and they are seen to repent of all the good they have done, and of nothing else. They have fixed a dying hold upon their farms and their merchandizes, and the day that breaks that hold will be of all other days the most wretched. They have forgotten their latter end, and can be waked from the charm only by that stroke that sunders them from life.

6. As a distinct thought, I would suggest that death must bring all our schemes to a close. There is in some men a proneness to cast their thoughts ahead, and so interweave their projects, that it would seem they can never find leisure to lie down and sleep in the grave. They never calculate upon closing their concerns. There is scarce a moment, from the beginning of the year till it ends, that finds them sufficiently at leisure to worship God without distraction. Some scheme is in its embryo, and some other unfinished. And, finally, many a one is but partially executed, when death throws in its arbitrary and fearful arrest. Then there must be a pause: the jaded spirit must rest, and the body retires with it. Cheerful or reluctant the world must quit its hold, and the stream of thought chill in its channel.

And this event expected should teach us to limit our views, and to moderate our hopes and wishes. It would be wise to calculate that somewhere not very distant from us, there is opened a grave athwart our track, where we must stop and rest, and beyond which, if we extend our schemes, they but die on our hands, or remain for others to finish. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither we hasten." And perhaps nothing would so tend to make us lower our hopes, and limit our worldly calculation, as to place the solemnities of our own funeral at but a few months remove from us. If we place it too near no

evil could follow ; while, if too remotely, a train of disappointments and miseries follow, the weight of which it will take a whole eternity to calculate.

7. Death will finish our period of *usefulness*. "It is that night when no man can work." All the good we ever do must be soon done, or is left undone for ever. All the good counsel we ever give, all the prayers we ever make, all the miseries we ever relieve, all the progress we shall ever make in the pursuit of truth, and all the honor we shall ever do to God, must be done soon. And it seems to me that no thought is so calculated to wake us to industry. "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with thy might," is the very inference to be drawn from the shortness of time. If any man is a knave, it is he who is willing to die before he has been useful, who is willing to feed upon the bounties of heaven, to gather about him the fruits of the earth, and to lavish them upon his own indolence, and leave God to publish his own praise by other instruments. Our obligation to do good is as unalienable as the authority of God is binding, or the fear of misery appalling, or the hope of glory inviting. Have we then done all the good we have purposed to do ? Have we no dying friends to whom we would communicate instruction or comfort before they leave us ? Is there no object of charity to which conscience may have given some pledge not yet redeemed ? By the sure and speedy approach of death, we are admonished to haste and finish our work, lest we should leave it for others to neglect as we have.

8. Death will finish our *character*, and close our accounts for the judgment. We are probationers for another state, and our character here will decide our condition there. It is believed that life will furnish the materials on which the judgment will proceed, the varied tests of our character, and the reasons of our acquittal or our condemnation. The thoughts and volitions of the dying bed will constitute the closing items of that fearful account which we must render to the judge of all.

To give this thought its due importance, we should often examine our state, and inquire if we are ready to be judged. Is the Lord Jesus Christ formed in us the hope of glory ? Shall we appear, if we quit the world this evening, clothed in his righteousness ? Else no works of ours will avail to procure our acceptance, and ruin is as certain as the judgment.

Haste, then, if you would be esteemed wise, and set your house in order, against the hour of your dissolution. Mortify the deeds of the body, wake the mind to industry, and rouse the heart and

the conscience to energy of feeling and action in the work of grace. Collect your friends about you, and make one more effort to do them good before every tie that binds them to you is sundered. Fill the office assigned you with fidelity, and use your influence to promote the honor of your Redeemer. Cultivate a meek and lowly mind; be familiar with your own worthlessness; use your wealth for the honor of God, and in doing good to a miserable world. Limit your prospects by the grave; have your work done; your character formed for heaven; your sins forgiven; and your pollution covered with a Savior's blood. Then death will not surprise you, and the grave will become your refuge and your friend.

II. To properly consider the circumstances of our latter end is to act wisely. If while we proceed, worldly men, whose every interest is in this world, should draw the inference that they are acting unwisely, and playing the fool with their own best good; this is precisely the effect we always wish to produce, and shall rejoice to find that they can reason so well on a subject of such amazing importance. Under every sermon men ought to be convinced that they are acting a mad and desperate part, while they neglect all the hopes of the life to come, and deposit all their treasures on the surface of this perishing world. The man who should place all his fortune in a burning building, or embark with his whole interest in a sinking ship, would not act more unwisely. I remark,

1. That God has pronounced it wise to consider our latter end, and act with constant and careful reference to the life to come. This is precisely the sentiment of the text, and of many other scriptures which pour their light upon the same truth. "If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness." Said the Lord to Israel, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." How often is it said of the wicked, that although they were warned they would not be wise. "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek

me early, but they shall not find me : For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord : they would none of my counsel ; they despised all my reproof : therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil."

I know that we are forbidden to be anxious for the things of to-morrow, but this text, instead of teaching the contrary, teaches the same doctrine. We are not to be anxious for the things of this life, which we may need for our support tomorrow. We are to be "anxious, not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life." We are so to use the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we are put out of our stewardship, we may have a friend who will receive us into everlasting habitations.

Thus God himself, who cannot be mistaken, has declared it wise to look well to our future prospects, and "lay up in store against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life."

2. The wisdom of such a course is inferred from the fact, that in all other things we consider it indispensable. If we have in view any worldly enterprise, we, as far as possible, anticipate the concern in all its bearings, and weigh, before we meet them, every embarrassment and every obstacle, that may be at war with our purpose. We bring before us the darker side of the picture, as well as the brighter, contemplate every passion, and every interest with which we may come in contact, and press the eye of the mind forward to meet every feature of the probable result. Is one about to leave the place of his nativity, he does not move, if he is wise, till he has carefully surveyed the country toward which he bends his wishes and his hopes, counts the cost of his intended enterprise, weighs the probable advantages of the removal, and is prepared to meet, without surprise, every failure that can lie within the reach of probability. Thus worldly men constantly manage the concerns of this life, and the Scriptures assure us, that they are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Would we pursue the same measures relative to the life to come, God would approve. It would be a source of conduct becoming a wise and thinking man. We should then look forward and survey all the circumstances of our departure from this world, the state of our hearts, the probability of our composure, and our acceptance in the hour of death, the ties that must then be broken, the titles that must then be lost, the office that must be resigned, the distinc-

tions that must then be levelled, the possessions that must be relinquished, the exertions that must terminate, and the pause that must ensue to all our schemes. We should live with the whole scene before us, and often summon the mind to bear, with all its native energies, upon that most interesting epoch of our history. I knew a man, who, for years, kept his coffin in his chamber, often placed himself in the narrow house, and often contemplated the scenes of his interment, and thus kept himself familiar with the hour of his dissolution. Now should we not, without resorting to such means, practice the same forethought, and thus, if possible, have the terror of death broken, before we are called to the last and desperate contest? What argument can be offered why this concern should not be the subject of meditation, rather, far rather, than the erection of a dwelling, or a removal to some distant country. The wise, who go out to meet the bridegroom, will be careful, not only that their lamps are burning, but that there is oil in their vessels with their lamps.

3. To make death a matter of previous calculation, is necessary to the promotion of our temporal interest, and that of our heirs. If one may die before his plans are executed, and is strongly impressed with this truth, he will conceive none but such as another can carry into operation. This would be the dictate of wisdom. He will hold his concerns in such a state of order and arrangement, that he can, at a moment's warning, hand over his records and his wealth, to be managed and enjoyed with the smallest possible embarrassment. And such a state of things has always been considered favorable to present interest. And can any thought be so calculated to further this arrangement as the strong impression of a speedy and sudden departure. Let a man keep his concerns in such a state that if death arrest his course, nothing is deranged, nothing obscure, nothing neglected, and he will be the man whom no minor event can distract or destroy. If, then, we would make our calculations merely for the present life, to often contemplate the scenes of death, would further, unspeakably, this one interest. But some may feel that this is an engagement too sordid to have weight on a point so momentous.

I observe, then,

4. That to well consider our latter end will tend to forward our preparation for the scenes of death. We all, in a sense, know that we must die; but this truth makes so little impression, ordinarily, that we may be said to doubt it. Young says, "All men think all men mortal but themselves." Should a stranger from

some world where they never die, glance his eye upon this, he would not have the most distant conception, that we had any fear of such a change. He would see us so managing our concerns, as if we calculated to be the perpetual proprietors of the soil we cultivate, the merchandize we handle, and the dwellings we occupy.

In this state of things the thoughts of death are excluded, and consequently all preparation for that hour is deferred. We have too many cares to give death, and hell, and heaven, and the judgment, any permanent lodgement in the mind, and too many sublunary affections to leave room in the heart for more sublime attachments. The course, then, that wisdom would dictate, is plain. Let the mind be emptied of its cares, and let the heart dismiss some of its beloved objects; that they may be better employed in pondering the scenes, and fixing a grasp upon the objects of a better life. Thus we should be drawn nearer to the scenes of eternity, should feel that its interests demanded our care, and should be led to speed our preparation for a dying hour. We are thus urged to the subject, by all that heaven is worth, by all that is shocking in a hopeless death-bed, and by all that is black, and dark, and dreadful, in the untold horrors of the second death. If we hold an unbroken grasp upon the present life, and the present world, till we have come to the precincts of another, it must not surprise us if our dying lips are heard to utter this melancholy outcry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." We may have our heaven here if we can stumble on such a wretched choice, but then, all beyond is hell; or we may deposit our treasure in heaven, and in that case gather many of its comforts on our way thither.

Wise men have always thought much on the subject of death. Read the history of the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and how often do we see them, as it were, wandering amid the scenes of the tomb. They contemplated the event of death, as worthy to occupy a prominent place in every scheme of life, prepared themselves a sepulchre, and gave commandment concerning their bones, with the same calmness as when they thought of other events. Solomon and David seemed to feel themselves nobly employed in describing the scenes of the dying hour. Locke and Newton, men of the noblest genius, esteemed the present world as but their temporary residence. And if the frequent contemplation of a great subject is evidence of a great mind, men may not hope to evince their wisdom by dismissing the subject of death,

and the grave. Compared with these, all other subjects are small and mean. Am I to drop this body, and enter an unknown world, and find a far different state and different employ; these are great and grand ideas that deserve all the strength of the mind, and all the energy of the heart in their slow and prayerful contemplation. Does death finish my character, and fix my destiny, and place me unalterably in paradise or perdition; I have not a care so worthy to occupy my intellect, nor a scene in contemplation on which I so much hang my hopes, and about which cluster affections so worthy the dignity of my immortal nature. "O that they were wise." You have known cases, when men, occupying the same prison, were under the same sentence of death. You entered their apartment on the morning of their execution. One was sporting in his chains, as indifferent to the scene before him as if no crime had been committed, and no judgment had been given. You were ready to presume, that he did not know that his last day had come, and, when undeceived on this point, did you not instinctively, pronounce him a fool? His fellow sat solitary in the corner of his cell, casting his eye along the page of inspiration, and when he saw you he fixed upon you a look of wishfulness and of agony, and exclaimed, "This is my last day!" Did he not then exhibit a dignity that commanded your tearful respect? The one intended to postpone the cares of death till he perished, the other pondered the scene as it approached, and when the last day had come, could think of nothing else. From the one you turned with disgust, the other you honored. Yes, and we have the same impression, when we meet with men of these opposite characters in the streets, that you had when you entered the precincts of that dungeon. The one will not speak nor permit us to speak of any world but this; the other gladly accompanies us to the death-bed and the judgment. The one we honor, and the other we pity. We know that both are condemned by the law of God, and that both must die, and be judged, and have their state unalterably fixed, and live in glory for ever, or lie down in "shame and everlasting contempt." We feel that it would be wise in them to lay these things to heart, and speak of them as amazing realities, and they sink in our estimation if we see them reluctant to cast a look beyond the sepulchre.

## REMARKS.

1 Men are sometimes afraid to think of death, presuming that such thoughts are a prelude to its approach. I believe it is often

impressed upon their minds, that to converse with the scene would absolutely urge on their dissolution. But we shall die none the sooner, if we often contemplate the solemnities of our departure. Nor will death stay his progress if we push from us all thoughts of his advance. In the counsels of heaven there is an appointed time when we shall receive our arrest, and the places that know us shall know us no more. Why then be afraid to meet the thoughts of futurity, and to converse with the grave. We have a preparation to make. If nothing is yet done, *then* no other subject should engross the mind till something is. Will a wise man cultivate his fields, till he has made some effort to have his heart fruitful in the affections of the gospel? Will he be careful for an estate, till he has laid up his treasure in heaven? Will he adjust his accounts with men, and feel no concern to settle the quarrel, and have the debt cancelled, that stands against him on the records of his Maker? Will he regard the esteem of men, and make no effort to wipe from his character the almost indelible stigma which sin has stamped upon his moral reputation? There is no other concern worth your care if God is your enemy. Be this the first, and be this the only care, till that tremendous controversy is happily adjusted.

2. Sometimes men are afraid to think of death, because they know that they are not prepared. They are scared at their own condition. I recollect to have seen it stated, that much of the city of Paris is undermined by a quarry, now improved as a cemetery, where moulder the ashes and the bones of its former gay and thoughtless population. Fears have been entertained that it might one day sink into that deep and fearful sepulchre. A slight shock of an earthquake might be sufficient to break the deceitful incrustation *upon* which they revel, and *under* which they are destined to rot. Lest any should take alarm at their frightful situation, I am told, there is a law of the city forbidding its inhabitants to explore the vault that yawns beneath them. Thus sinners covet the calm that arises from ignorance of their true condition. But blinded as they may keep themselves to their real danger, their condition remains the same, and the pit which they may industriously cover still waits to receive them. One would think it more wise to endeavor to know the worst of their case, and if on an impartial survey it shall appear desperate, aim to secure, while it is possible, their future safety and blessedness. But be the danger of delay more or less imminent, they still covet a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep. If

the result of their delay is perdition, all this danger they intend to risk.

3. Others, perhaps, refuse to consider their latter end because *conscience would then urge them to fly from the wrath to come, and render them unhappy*, if they still urged their way to death. Having by some means or other come to the monstrous conclusion, that religion would render them miserable, they have barred their minds and their hearts against all its claims. Hence every argument, and every thought that may suggest an argument, and every object that may awaken such a thought, are barred from every possible approach to the mind. In this condition no meditations are so painful, as those by which the mind approaches the unseen world, and gently lifts the curtain that hides futurity. If men should act so madly in their worldly concerns, they would merit a cage, a chain, or a guardian. They fly from their best friends, abandon their highest interests, and linger on the shores of death from the impression that to live for ever would render them wretched.

4. To all but those who reject a Savior, the meditations of death and the grave are pleasant. Here is a period to all their pains, their toils, their fears, and their doubts. In death they drop this dying body, and leave in the grave the last relics of corruption. All beyond is life, and joy, and immortality. There, for the first time, the good man will have that view of Christ which he has always longed to enjoy, and be himself what he has always wished to be. Hence the good man often finds the pulse of his joy quickened by conversing with the grave. To him it appears closely connected with the life and the joys to come. Where the sinner finds nothing but corruption and misery, he gathers hope, and joy, and life. To him, to live is Christ, but to die is gain. How delightful when we can thus think of death, divested of its sting, and of the grave as a kind covert from the storm, a shelter and a home for the way-worn pilgrim.

#### APPLICATION.

I have called your attention, my dear friends, to this subject, because I know not how soon you or I may yield this transitory life. A few past weeks have made, in many of your families, deep and fearful ravages. God is speaking to us by these events, and the text is the very language they utter. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." If God is heard when he speaks, it is well; and if not, he

will speak again and again. Have we resolved to turn our feet to his testimonies? Will professors of piety closely examine their hearts and their lives, and inquire whether they have been born of God, and are bringing forth fruit meet for repentance? May we see prayer in all their families, and piety in their daily conversations? Will those who have no hope that their state has been altered relax a little their care of the life that now is, and give themselves leisure to attend to the things that belong to their peace, before it be hidden from their eyes? Will parents determine to go home, and set their house in order, and prepare to leave their families and their estates for ever? May we hope that the close contemplation of the grave, to which we are invited, may urge us all to cleanse our consciences from guilt, to application to God for pardon, and make confession and restitution wherein we have wronged or abused our fellow-men. It will be dreadful to come to the death-bed with a conscience burdened with sin, and feel in that painful hour the miseries of self-condemnation. We all have a conscience, and never is it so likely to gnaw and devour as when some sudden attack of disease shuts us out from all intercourse with the world. Then, if our miseries do not forbid, the busy mind will retrace our past life, and perhaps bring upon that hour the compunction which it should now be our wish to feel, and the anguish which then we shall not know how to endure.

Is our peace made with God? Are we making that use of the gospel which was heaven's design in its publishment? Are we becoming sanctified through the truth? Or is the gospel more likely to be a savor of death unto death to us, than of life unto life? Are there any of our youth who are beginning to inquire after a Savior and a pardon? May we hope that believers are feeling as they should do relative to those who are perishing around them? Are they staying the hands of their pastor, and pouring into the ears of their Redeemer that effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous, which availeth much. I have hoped, and so have others, that God was about to pour us out a blessing. True, there stand some frightful apprehensions in the way of such a blessing. But God, if he ever returns and leaves a blessing behind him, must receive us before we are worthy. There never will be that moment when he will not see enough in us to provoke him rather to destroy us than to save us. Hence our only hope is that he will have mercy upon us, according to his loving kindness, and according unto the multitude of his tender mercies.

## SERMON XXXI.

### THE DESPERATE EFFORT.

MATTHEW, XI. 12.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

I REMEMBER to have been very much affected with a scrap of civil story which I met with in the history of the Greeks' escape from the iron bondage of their Turkish oppressors. After being robbed and plundered some hundreds of years, they at length attempted to escape. The enemy had, for some months, closely besieged Missolonghi, and the Grecian band had concluded to surrender; but as there was nothing for them but servitude, or death, they finally concluded not to be *taken*, but to rush into the fort at the desperate moment, and blow themselves up. Their purpose fixed, and the light of Greece about to be extinguished for ever, there was one young man who, with his sister, concluded to watch the favored moment, and rush out of the fort, and sell their lives as dear as possible, and make their attack where the ranks of the foe were the thinnest. They did so; and the sister being mounted upon a mule, fought side by side with her brother, and both were so inspired by their desperation that they hewed themselves a passage, and made their escape, and lived to tell the story. Their settled purpose was to die, sword in hand, or spill all the Turkish blood they might, and live.

Thus men must determine to put forth, in the effort to reach heaven, all the energy they can muster, and if they do this, they shall live. I suppose this to be the very spirit of the text, which reads in the original, "Agonize to enter in at the strait gate."

I was similarly affected by a narrative of the escape of a postman, who, for a very large reward, attempted to carry a letter across one of the deep glens of Scotland, through an overwhelming northeast storm. He had been, if I remember right, a shepherd, and fearlessly set out on the enterprise, while many were filled with apprehension for his life, if the storm did not subside. The weather was excessively cold, and the violence of the storm rendered it impossible to see any track of man or beast, through

the whole glen. The only chance of a safe arrival consisted of some knowledge he had of the ground, where he had many a time driven his flocks in summer. But, as he afterward assured us, one may have a very accurate knowledge of the way in summer, while, in a winter storm of snow, at night, the whole way seems like a trackless ocean. It is said that some of those glens in Scotland are so full of snow in winter as not to thaw out in midsummer.

His courage, as the storm thickened, and the cold increased, would have failed, but at length it became as doubtful whether he could find the way back, as whether he should succeed in crossing the mountain ridge in safety. As he had to cross many a small stream, now filled with snow, he not unfrequently sunk, and wet his feet in the stream, and on bringing them up again to the cold air, they froze, and at length became so disabled that he could rise on his feet no more, and he had to press forward on his knees as well as he could. From some indications, he concluded that he had well nigh crossed the glen, and might, by lifting up his voice, be heard. He cried aloud for help—*a lost traveler!*—but cried in vain. At length he became frozen to his knees, and he could only worm himself onward with his hands, for he knew that when he should cease all exertion, he must immediately die, and there was a possibility that his cry might be heard, and he should live. Hence he raised again and again his cry, *a lost traveler!* But at length, a little opening of the storm showed a shepherd's cot at hand. He had not missed his way to the cottage of a shepherd which he sought, and easily wormed himself to his very door, and gave the signal that saved his life. His friend opened to him and built a fire, and warmed him into recollection and recovery.

But if that man had not persevered after he had frozen his feet, and even after he could no longer travel on his lower limbs, but had to worm his way on his elbows, he must have died. Although he was near the shepherd's cot, yet as he did not know his position, if his resolution had failed for a moment, and exertion had ceased, he must have died. He agonized to live, and his agonizing saved him. And if we will only thus agonize to live *for ever*, we *shall live for ever*.

There is not an enterprise we undertake that requires so much exertion as to reach heaven. Those who conclude that they know enough of the subject already, and that heaven will come as a thing of course, and fold their arms and slumber on, will die in their sins, and never see the King in his beauty. The few years of their probation will slip by before they are aware, and they will

just begin to feel the importance of doing something, when they shall find themselves upon a dying bed, the harvest past, the summer ended, and they unsanctified. The Divine direction is, "*Strive to enter in at the strait gate,*" *agonize to enter in.* There is here no tameness, nor waiting, nor listlessness, nor indifference. We are to put on the whole armor of God, and force our way to heaven, as men cut themselves a path by dint of prowess, through the ranks of the enemy, and make their escape, when there seems nothing before them but death. Who can you expect to be concerned for your salvation, if you care not for it yourself? Who will agonize for your cleansing, and your pardon, and your acceptance, if *you* care for none of these things? If *God* ever interpose in your behalf, the first thing he will do will be to awaken you to the concerns of your own soul. If you are not now awakened, it is certain you are still in the broad way to destruction. Let me offer a few *reasons why you should try to be saved.*

1. *You cannot expect to be saved without trying.* "The kingdom of heaven," says Christ, "suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force:" implying, as all agree, that if we would be saved, we must make great exertion.

If we would get to heaven there is a great deal of *truth* that we must know and believe. We must be acquainted with the character of God that we may love him; with the character, offices, and work of Jesus Christ, that we may trust in him; with the nature and operations of the Holy Ghost, that we may feel his sanctifying influence. We must be acquainted with our hearts, or we shall never see the need of their being purified; and with all the great doctrines of the gospel, or there will be no medium of our cleansing. "Sanctify them through thy truth." We must know the Scripture account of heaven, or we cannot wish to be there; and to learn all this truth will require great exertion.

We have a great many *sins* to subdue, and must calculate to wrestle hard for the mastery. Neither pride, nor envy, nor anger, nor vanity, nor ambition, nor lust, nor selfishness, can enter heaven. We must put off all these: "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of our mouth." These vile affections must all have been subdued when we reach heaven. The warfare is no mean one. And more yet: "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We must fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

Nor can we enter *heaven* unless we have all the features of the Divine image: we must "add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity." We must be familiar with the exercises of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." We must "forget those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Now, all this implies great exertion, which, if we do not make, we cannot reach the kingdom of God.

2. Striving to be saved, you have *the most kind assurance of success*. The obstructions to your salvation are all removed, on God's part, by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God can now be "just, and the justifier of him that believeth." "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace embrace each other." If you seek wisdom "as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure," you shall "understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." "He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And hence the kind invitation, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon."

Sinner, as God is true, who has given all these assurances and promises, it will be your own fault if you are not saved; and you will have, to torment you in the future world, the consciousness that you chose darkness rather than light, because your deeds were evil. You might have lived in heaven, had you not despised the mercy offered you, and counted yourself unworthy of everlasting life. When was it ever known that a sinner made any suitable exertions to be saved, and still was lost? Among all their unreasonable complaints of perdition, none ever had occasion to say, "I went to the Savior, at his invitation, and believed the promises, and had assurances of pardon, and hope of heaven, and yet am lost!" No! not one of the spirits in prison can have any such alleviation of his torment as the thought that he perished through the failure of a Savior's promise. Why then will you not be saved? God will glorify himself by you, either in your destruction or salvation, and he commands you to choose life. But you must choose now—"now is the accepted time, now is the day of salva-

tion." If you will not believe, the sin and the ruin will be your own.

3. You should try to be saved, because, with a heavenly temper, *you can be more useful in life*. How much can you do to induce men to respect the name of God, and obey his law, and honor his government, and keep his Sabbaths, and revere his sanctuary, and obey his gospel. You can set an example to men of all the duties of piety, and induce others, by your godly conversation, to glorify your Father in heaven, and thus become a light of the world. You can help to strengthen Christian affection, and bind into a still closer and lovelier union the members of the body of Christ. You can aid their joy, and promote their sanctification and their usefulness. You can set an example of the moral virtues, and by your conduct and precepts, elevate public sentiment, till a great amount of the misery that falls to the lot of sinners around you shall be cured or alleviated. And when saved yourself, you can, by God's blessing, induce other sinners to fly for refuge, and lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. But none of this can it be hoped you will do, till you are saved yourself.

4. You should try to be saved, *because you could be so useful in heaven*. God has given you a mind, and if not now the most brilliant, it might perhaps be such in heaven. The rough block of marble may embosom the most beautiful specimens of polished and useful workmanship. Your mind, could it once be placed in the school of Christ, and afterward in heaven, might claim, for aught you know, a blessed elevation among its ransomed choirs. Unclasp it, and none can say but it may yet vie with angelic powers. And God might then employ it, we know not how, in the loftiest enterprise. We do not believe that heaven will be a place of idleness. Some new anthem may perpetually elicit more delight through all the heavenly courts. Some new means of doing good to that world, or this, or some other, may from time to time arrest the attention of angels, and secure the co-operation of all the holy assembly. Such, we may suppose, was the visit of Gabriel to Daniel; and such the song of angels, heard by the watchful shepherds, at the birth of Christ. None can say that the Redeemer may not employ, in administering the government of this world, the very beings he has redeemed from it with his blood. O sinner! we regret that you should be lost, for we know not how *useful* you might be in heaven.

5. You should try to be saved also, because you could be *so happy in heaven*. Even in this poor world there is enjoyment.

How much greater will be our bliss in heaven, where all obstructions to our happiness will be removed. There will be no unhalloved passions to be excited. No pain will there arise from anger, wrath, malice, envy, ambition, covetousness, pride, vanity, lust, jealousy, or revenge. There will be no natural body to hunger, thirst, faint, and tire; to suffer pain from frost, or heat, or famine, or pestilence, or wound, or bruise, or mutilation, or death. There will be no foe to hurt your character, your interest, your feelings, or your person; no rival to hate, or inferior to despise. There will be in heaven no sun to scorch, or storm to destroy, or moon or sun to be eclipsed, or sky to be clouded. Suppose all this, and how much of life's misery is gone.

Add now to the removal of these obstructions every positive good that an Almighty God can bestow; a mind fully illuminated, a heart the seat of every kind and holy affection, a conscience exonerated from guilt, an imagination unlimited in its power of conception, a judgment that can never err. Let there be presented to the admiring view all that is lovely, all that can be included in the golden city, the rivers, and the tree of life, the banquet of the Lamb, "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," the everlasting song, the uninterrupted rest, and the society for ever of holy men and holy angels. All this would render you so happy, that we cannot endure the thought of your being lost. Try then to be saved, that you may be happy in heaven.

6. *What others have done for your salvation* should induce you to try to be saved. The plan for your redemption was laid in heaven. To accomplish it, the Son of God became incarnate, lived a life of sorrow, and died on the cross, and now ever lives to make intercession for you. How much he must have cared for your soul! In the achievement of the same plan of mercy, the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven to awaken and sanctify you. He has often strove with you, has produced alarm in your conscience, and perhaps deep conviction; has given the truth sometimes a fixed lodgment by the side of your heart. Thus has he evinced his readiness to save you. And his ministers, too, have long and earnestly pleaded with you. In many a sermon, unless you have absented yourself from the house of God, they have pleaded with you to "flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on everlasting life." And they have sometimes felt an agony for your soul, that, it would seem, could not be denied. They have prayed for you many a time in the midnight hour, and then have come from their closets and wept over you—and all, it seems, to no purpose.

It may be that a pious parent has long cared for your soul. Through the fear that you would be lost, that faithful friend may have wished many a time that you had never been born. O! could you have known the anxiety and the agony of that parent, while watching over the slumbers of your cradle, then you would try to be saved.

And it may be that a pious brother, or sister, or wife, is at this moment pleading at the throne of grace for your salvation. And will you not then care for yourself, and try to be saved? All this care for you—and you none for yourself!

7. You should try to be saved, because you must be *infinitely degraded in hell*. You are to remember, that you were made a little lower than the angels; that you have a nature capable of being elevated to a close companionship with them, and of pouring forth a praise as noble, and glowing with a love as ardent as theirs. And now to think of sinking with such a nature down to hell, of being the companion of devils, and of employing your lips in unceasing blasphemy,—how gloomy the conception! There will be, in your case, the shame of being convicted, and that before assembled worlds, and of being banished into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. And your fall from the hope of heaven must be known. You must be for ever congregated with the meanest of your race, the thief, the robber, the murderer, the swindler, the liar, the drunkard, and the whole mass of convicts. And your employment will be suited to the temper of your heart, and all restraint removed. Hence despair, and blasphemy, and malice, and revenge, will be the habitual and the degraded exercise of the damned.

Hell will be the grand prison of the universe, where will be collected the incorrigibly wicked, the smoke of whose torment will ascend up for ever and ever, marking out the place as the most accursed spot in all the dominion of God. The *ignominy* of such an imprisonment, and such a damnation, if there were no positive punishment inflicted, no quenchless fire, nor never-dying worm, would be more than can be endured. “Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?”

8. You should try to be saved, because *the most bitter reflections await you if you are not saved*. You will reflect how much was done to save you; how much the Savior did, how much the Father did; how much the Spirit did; how much your Christian friends did—all to no purpose. You will reflect how many sermons, and prayers, and tears, and entreaties, and Sabbaths, and

sacraments, and admonitions of conscience, and revival seasons, and alarming events of Providence, have spent their force upon you to no purpose, hardening you, when perhaps they might have saved you.

You will reflect how easy were the terms of salvation ; that you were offered life if you would only believe ; that no truth was required to be believed but that of which you had evidence, and no duty to be done but that which would have been pleasant ; that your life, if you had believed, would have been more happy, your death tranquil, and your eternity glorious. You will reflect how nigh you came to the kingdom of God, and was lost. Born in a Christian land, of Christian parents, the Bible early in your hand, and you as early taught to read it, given up to God from your birth, instructed carefully in the truth, and furnished with the Sabbath, and all its holy appendages—it will seem to you, for ever that you sunk down to perdition from the very threshold of heaven.

You will reflect how many, with no more, and perhaps fewer advantages than you, have escaped to heaven. Your brother or sister, it may be, was saved, while you were lost. Some, perhaps, your immediate friends, of wicked families, and having nothing like the advantages that you had, have reached heaven, while you have been lost. Shall these bitter reflections prey upon you like a famine, or a pestilence, for ever ? Will you not try to be saved ? “ Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

9. You should attempt now to be saved, *because the longer you postpone, the less is the probability that the attempt will ever be made.* Whatever are the reasons of the postponement, they are reasons furnished by depravity, and will, of course, increase with the growth of sin. If it be enmity to the kind and lovely Savior, it will multiply with your years, and ripen with your age. If his eternal excellences have never yet won your heart—if the glories that have attracted the gaze, and waked the song of angels, and been echoed in notes of victory through the caverns of death, have produced no thrill of joy in your soul, how can you hope that, as his glories shall become brilliant, and the notes of his conquest shall wax louder and louder, your spirit will become subdued ? Will it not rise in its wrath, and envenomed at length like the serpent that has plunged its fangs into its own life-stream, seal its own damnation, and lie down in fire ? Wait not till heaven has raised another shout of victory ; stay not till Christ has conquered the gods of China, or quelled the demons of Ham’s dark empire, ‘est his glories should pierce your soul through with the poisoned

arrows of everlasting chagrin. O wait not to have the Hero of Calvary put forth any hidden glory of his name! Devils will taunt the sinner that waits for this, and is damned. His laurels wave already over their dark empire, and their king quails at His power, and dies anew, whenever another, and still another victory is sung.

10. Or do you postpone embracing the Savior, because you have not yet *had your fill of sin*? Surely it has made you miserable enough. Your satiety, after a scene of pleasure, has sometimes been almost insupportable. When it threatened your *health*, or your *character*, or your *business*, to continue any longer in sin, how indescribable have been your sensations of regret! You wished you had never loved sin, or learned to sin; you wished that your parents had early restrained you; you regretted that you had ever formed an acquaintance with that man who tempted you to sin; that you had ever been in that circle whose bewitching snares have caught you and held you; that ever you visited that scene of dissipation, or went to that house of death. How horrid, to be filling up life with these regrets, and to pore unavailingly over what should be at once repented of and abandoned! How groveling, to be howling upon your bed, when, if you would only be ingenuous enough to repent, you might be lifting up your voice in praise, and be singing on your way to the grave, songs sweet as angels use. The meanness of sin will render it impossible that the lost should have any respect for themselves, or for each other in the world of death! How utterly vain the expectation, that there shall be in that world anything worthy to be called *society*, or *kindness*, or *friendship*! O, it will be all a mass of *despair*, and *chagrin*, and *hatred*, and *shame*; when, if men would only be wise now, and accept the offered Savior, all this might be exchanged for heaven, where kindred spirits might bask in everlasting sunshine through all the years of the existence of the unchanging God.

## REMARKS.

1. But why does God make it so difficult to get to heaven? Does he delight to put poor human nature upon such a painful effort with no specific design? We suppose that God has a wise and good design, and that his design may be obvious. To make such a mighty effort to reach heaven will greatly enhance the joy of being saved. O, when the effort is made, is over, and the object won, with how much joy may believers look back on all the way that God led them to his kingdom. When they shall see the wilderness all trodden over, every sin and every foe subdued and every snare escaped, and look upon the heavenly route

from the heights of Zion, they will sing the more joyfully to the honor of him who led them by a *right way*, that they might go to a city of habitation. How joyfully would that Grecian pair raise among their countrymen, the long and loud *Te Deum* to the God of armies! when there had so few escaped and yet *they* had escaped, and when they had found themselves the only two who had sold their lives at any price, and they had brought life away with them in all its vigor and in all its youth, life to them would seem more lovely.

2. If we have taken joyfully the spoiling of our goods; knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, and through much tribulation have come where that treasure is, and find it ample and abiding, heaven will always seem worth more for the cost of it. We always value most what cost us most; and if heaven cost us more than everything beside, we shall proportionally esteem it. When the whole family of the redeemed shall have vied with each other through ten thousand ages, in the effort to see which can set the highest price upon the exceeding weight of glory that shall have been poured in upon their glorified spirits, they will not have reached the price or told the value. Its price is far above rubies. One will value that world highly, because, in competitorship with a million of his generation he out-did them all in the effort to keep fanned up the flame of holy love in his heart, which held him ready for a renewed conflict on the bed of death with that enemy who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Another and another will throw into their song of victory the joy of an exemplary youth, made so by the constant application of the Holy Ghost, which raised them above the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.

One lovely mother will sing of a reviving season, in the evening-time of life, which threw by, and passed over, the storms that had gathered about the place of her setting sun, and gave her joy in death. Thus one, and another, and another, when they shall have fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept the faith, and have found laid up for them in heaven, a crown of life, will unite to say in one eternal chorus, *God is the King!* The one hundred and forty and four thousand that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, will grace the marriage supper, and utter in a long and loud response, "This is the Lord, we have waited for him and he will save us; this is our God! we have waited for him and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

## SERMON XXXII

### CONCIO AD CLERUM.

2 TIMOTHY I. 8.

Be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

MOST other parts of Paul's instructions to Timothy, have been, at times, the foundation of address to God's ministers ; *but this, to my knowledge, never.* The opinion is, that Paul wrote this epistle some twelve or fifteen years after the date of the first, near the close of life, and while a prisoner at Rome. It contains his dying advice, given in view of the assurance that his departure was at hand. Timothy was his own son in the gospel, and he expresses for him a peculiar affection, and deals out paternal advice, in a dress the most kind and amiable.

The exhortation in the text is somewhat singular. Did Timothy need to be exhorted to become a partaker in the afflictions of the gospel ? Did it depend on his choice, whether he would, or would not, be a partaker in those afflictions ? Was it desirable that he stand ready and willing to suffer ? Was it *honorable* or *necessary* to be afflicted in the discharge of his duty, if he might escape ? To all these questions the text implies an answer in the affirmative.

It is more than possible that he saw Timothy tempted to deny his father in Christ, now that he was in bonds. The enemy would tauntingly say, This is the proselyte, and the pupil of that Paul who has gone to Rome in bonds. Hence Timothy, as Peter on a former occasion, would be in danger of saying I know not the man. He might thus hope to escape the cross, and might fear that otherwise chains might be fastened on himself, as a man equally dangerous with his master. Hence he exhorts him as in the text.

But the exhortation is not of private interpretation, and will apply to the people of God, and especially his ministers, in this age, as readily as in any one that has gone by. In what follows I shall notice some of the afflictions of the gospel, explain the import of the exhortation, and urge upon the ministers of Jesus Christ the duty of becoming voluntary partakers in these afflictions.

I. I am to notice some of the *afflictions of the gospel*. In doing this, however, I shall rather dwell on the *causes* of these afflictions.

1. The ministers of Jesus Christ must *form* and *defend* an *unpopular character*. I am aware that efforts have been made to show that the ministers of the gospel, and the people of God generally, need have nothing about them peculiar, and I am aware, too, that many, professing godliness, have made the experiment of being, in their whole deportment, what the world are. And it cannot be denied, that they have been, in that case, greatly caressed by the world. "If ye were of the world the world would love his own." Can we but flatter as adroitly, and dress as gaily, and joke as familiarly, and laugh as loudly, as the most thoughtless of the multitude, they will cease their complaints. With the minister of the gospel who can shine in the party, and advocate the dance, and make the game innocent, and the theatre chaste, and every other vain amusement harmless, the world will have no quarrel. Not the most profane, or proud, or gay, or voluptuous, will have any fault to find with *him*, when he ceases to reproach *them*. Let him in company keep back the subject that would give offence, and suppress the dissent that would be unwelcome, and bless whom the world blesses, and rebuke whom they abominate, and the world will pronounce him a fine, a charming fellow. Let him associate with the gluttonous man, and the wine-bibber, and not carry to their house and their table, the hard doctrine, and the pointed rebuke, and the distinct condemnation, and the zeal for his heavenly Father's honor, which characterized the sociality of Jesus Christ, and they will agree to love him.

And I have not my eye now fixed on the ministry in its grossest aspect; a ministry whose whole piety is a kind of charity that was not born in heaven, and has neither creed nor conscience. I do not associate such men with the ministers of Jesus Christ. But in that better school, where truth is held in high estimation, and charity is not sightless, and fellowship has gospel boundaries, it is feared that men may be found who are at great pains to avoid the afflictions of the gospel. If they speak of hell, it is with an apology; if they describe a bad heart, they "hope better things of their audience;" and if they are driven to rebuke a vice, they do it so tamely as to make no impression. Hence the world love them, and feed them, and rally round them, and admire their prayers, and their oratory, and enter into close leagues of friendship with them. But whether such was the character of *his* min-

istry, who came from heaven to publish salvation, demands a doubt.

The ministers of Jesus Christ must form an unpopular character. They must be more serious, more holy, more circumspect, more watchful, and prayerful, and heavenly-minded, than the world would choose to have them. They must adhere more tenaciously to the truth, to sound maxims and correct principles, than other men; must be emphatically "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." The traits of character which the world are prepared to eulogize, they are obligated to lash, and equally obligated to have on the very traits that give the world offence. They must be in character and conduct like their Master, having a conscience that will not bend to the exigencies of the moment; a sternness of virtue that cannot allow iniquity a smile, a fixedness of sentiment that looks every unhallowed maxim into shame, a regard to the Divine glory that can sometimes wield the surge of rebuke, and drive iniquity from its presence. They must have on a holiness of character that can move on through the ranks of sin with unbending course; and command, by its self-respect, the reverence of the very men who would exterminate so stern an integrity.

And the character they cultivate in themselves they must sustain in others. The members of their churches must know that living as Christ would have them, they shall receive no reproach from their pastors, for not becoming, in the perverted meaning of the apostle, all things to all men.

They may still put on all the amiableness of the gospel, and show out the benevolence, the meekness, the kindness, the hospitality, and the ardency of friendship, that piety requires; and, finally, leave nothing to give offence, but the sternness of virtue. But in conjunction with these, there must be, in the ministers of Jesus Christ, traits of character, that the men of the world will not admire. Hence none of the prophets, nor apostles, nor Jesus Christ himself, could show kindness enough to atone to the world for their holy singularity. They partook largely in the afflictions of piety, and went most of them to heaven from the cross, the sword, or the flames.

2. The ministers of Jesus Christ must *teach unpopular doctrines*. They must show the very men who feel themselves to be whole, and in no need of a physician, that they are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. They must exhibit the atonement of Christ to the very men who would perish rather than trust

in him, as the only foundation of their everlasting hopes. The men who are prepared to say, What lack I yet ? must be pressed with the necessity of being born again. The very men who can see little or nothing wrong in their whole life, must be assured, that except they repent they must all likewise perish. And the decrees, and the sovereignty of God, that so exalt Jehovah, and so debase the rebel, must be urged upon the very men who have so little confidence in their Creator, that they would not place the smallest temporal interest at his disposal. And how can such doctrines be popular with such men ?

I know you will refer me to facts, and inquire, Why are there so many congregations who have an orthodox ministry, and still all has been harmony for half a century, while yet there have been few or no conversions ? In this case I have an answer that perfectly satisfies me. The truth has never reached the conscience. It has been so tamely exhibited, that men have slept under it. Now it is the duty of Christ's ministers to cure this insensibility, and in doing it, just as sure as God is true, there must be given a new heart, or the unwelcome intruder will be made a partaker in the afflictions of the gospel ? Compel a stupid man to feel the force of his own *creed*, and he will be as much offended as when you press upon his conscience *doctrines* which he has long hated, and long since discarded.

I know there is a ministry which I dare not term heretical, but which gives no offence by its doctrines. The fact is, that the doctrines, though not denied, are never distinctly exhibited. Men care not what they *hear*, nor what *believe*, if they may be permitted not to *feel* nor *act*. Only suffer them to sleep on, and you may lecture from the Shaster, the Koran, or the Bible. Let it suffice that they be quiet and orthodox, and they care not if it be the quiet of death, or the cold orthodoxy of the grave. But let the truth drop from the lips of an honest ministry, and be pressed home with energy, upon "consciences that have not been sprinkled from dead works to serve the living God," and that ministry will soon become conversant with the afflictions of the gospel.

3. The minister of Jesus Christ must *urge* upon the world *unpopular duties*. It is a great mistake that men are any less displeased with the *duties* than with the *doctrines* of the gospel. Let duty be fully explained, and pressed home upon the conscience with energy, till men shall see no retreat from its obligations, and no press of doctrine, the most offensive, can give any keener pain, or be more sure, where God does not seal the word by his Spirit,

to awaken the keenest displeasure. Make the man who never prays see the impiety of his neglect, and repeat to him that note of alarm, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name;" and you will soon discover that he feels himself as uncomfortably urged, whenever this duty is named, as when a doctrine which he does not believe, or does not love, is pressed upon his faith. Urge upon the covetous man the duty of giving liberally, no matter what the object, and he will writhe more under the press of this duty, than when urged to believe the most odious *doctrine*. Urge home upon the conscience, no matter what duty, that men are unwilling to perform, and you offend them equally, as when you teach a *doctrine* they are reluctant to believe, and in either case draw upon yourself the afflictions of the gospel.

But the duty, as well as the doctrine, may be so tamely and so *prudently* named, as to produce no sensations. If men are asleep, and you do not so lift up your voice as to wake them, they care not whether the babbler utters a *duty* or a *doctrine*. But this would not have satisfied Paul. If he might have preached in Athens the true gospel, unmolested, but must have seen that people continue their idolatries, he would have felt that he was doing nothing. It is doubted whether *doctrine* or *duty* was ever urged home with gospel energy, but the result was, the believing of the doctrines, and the doing of the duty, or the great offence of the man upon whose irritated conscience they had been urged with unwelcome vehemency. Hence, again, the afflictions of the gospel.

4. The minister of Jesus Christ must advocate in his Church an *unpopular discipline*. Here let us stop to solve one problem. The men of the world are perpetually reproaching professors of godliness for their sin. Urge religion upon them, and they will reply, "I am in as fair a way for heaven as your Christians." And often we find it no easy matter to repel the charge. We lie down under it, and reply, "Truly there are men, without the pale of the Church, as generous, as pitiful, as public spirited, as hospitable, as quiet, as peaceable, as kind, as neighborly, as some within." "We know," they will say, "that we do not pray as often, as loud, and as long, as some of your hypocritical professors, but all this we more than balance by our other virtues."

Now from all this it would seem their wish, that the Church were more pure. Surely they would have reformed the very thing they complain of. But the very moment the Church commences a course of discipline, with any wayward brother, the

world arms itself against all their efforts. And often 's there raised without the Church, an opposition that would deter the Church from attempting to purify her fellowship. And the minister of Jesus Christ is understood to be on the side of the Church's purity. Hence he becomes the butt of rebuke, with all those who would shield the offender; and should he be passive, even to a fault, still he must bear the whole blame of the process, and become often the scape-goat that bears away into the wilderness the sins of the whole brotherhood. Thus he becomes a large partaker in the afflictions of the gospel.

We are now prepared,

II. To say that the exhortation of the text implies *two things*.

1. That we so *minister* in our holy office, as to *make sure* to ourselves all the trials that *faithfulness*, in a world like ours, *must incur*. We must form the very character the ungodly disapprove, nor be willing to lack its most odious ingredient. We may not lay aside for an hour, that sobriety, that spirit of dissent from error, that honesty which holds the tongue the sure index of the mind, that elevation of the affections which shrinks from a supreme engrossment in the conversation and the cares of the life that now is.

We may not conceal the features of the new man, and be religious in *secret* only, or when in the company of God's people. The world would agree to this. Can we but act the mere gentleman in their society, and fawn and flatter as they do, and ever smile and be happy, whatever the conversation, or sentiments, or temper, or men with whom we come in contact, this would satisfy them, and we might be as religious as we please in our bed-chamber. But such was not the course of Jesus Christ, nor yet of Paul, even when he became all things to all men. There must go with the man of God, visible as the features of his face, the strong outlines of his heavenly character. After all the allowance has been made that can be, for the difference of character and conduct that may exist between the disciple and his Lord, still, in a world like ours, all gay, and thoughtless, and dissipated, we are obligated to put on so much of the Lord Jesus Christ, and wear the lineaments of his image so prominent as to ensure us a share in the reproach that fell on him, and must help others to do the same; and must pour the whole mass of our influence into a mighty effort to make the whole Church of God as unlike the world as possible.

We must feel obligated to draw upon ourselves the reputation of sustaining an *unpopular creed*. We are obligated, I know, to give *offensive truth* the most *unoffending* aspect, and may exercise all the wisdom we can summon in desecring the *Tempora molia fandi*; but when all this is done, still the whole truth, first or last, must come out, fully and plainly, and, when distinctly seen, will not be approved by ungodly men. And the odium felt toward the truth, will be promptly transferred to the man who enforces it upon the irritated conscience.

Now the faithful minister of Jesus Christ may not attempt to shun the trials that will thus ensue. It must be his wish, as soon as possible, to give the truth all that plainness of exposition, and point of application, which will ensure the trials that follow. He may not keep the offensive doctrines out of view, nor exhibit his creed obscurely, nor throw in any salvo to prevent the truth from taking a rank hold, or so conduct that his daily lightness shall neutralize his Sabbath-day efforts; else he wickedly shuns the afflictions of the gospel. And with the same decision must he urge the unpopular duties of the gospel. He may not keep them out of view, nor present them obscurely, nor invent excuses for neglecting them, nor lavish his smiles upon the man who uniformly stands aloof from them. The precepts of Jesus Christ in all their self-denying, and expensive, and laborious, and holy, and unpopular attitude, must be promptly exhibited, as claiming the obedience of a world. And the *duties* of the Bible thus fearlessly exhibited, will as surely *convert* men, or *offend* them, as the *doctrines*. The matter of fact is, that the *precepts* imply the *doctrines*, as well as the *doctrines* the *precepts*; and the man who urges home upon the conscience the *hated duty*, no less than he who exhibits the *odious creed*, must calculate, unless the disciple be above his Lord, to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

And he must be known to be the advocate of a watchful discipline in the Church of Christ. He may be as adroit as possible in dividing the odium with the members of his Church, it should be their wish to be partakers with him, but when he has lain hid, and others have operated, as long as possible, the hour will at length come, in every bad case of discipline, when he must have an opinion of his own, and express that opinion, and make proselytes to that opinion, and it will be against the conduct of the offender, and will draw upon him the odium of one who needed the rod of discipline to make him decent. And the offender has friends who

will enlist with him, and feel with him, and hate with him, the minister of Christ, who led on his Church to the act which covers the Christian character of the offender with a cloud. Indeed it would be wrong, if it might be so, that a Church of Christ should bear, without the countenance of their pastor, the reproach of having administered a cruel censure upon a professed follower of Jesus Christ: Hence no escape from the afflictions of the gospel.

2. The injunction of the text implies, that when our brethren in the ministry have taken the course now described, and have drawn upon themselves the afflictions of the gospel, we *stand by* them, and *defend* them, and *encourage* them, and take, as far as may be, a part of their trials upon *ourselves*. I have suspected this to be the burden of the exhortation. The aged apostle exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, or Paul his prisoner, but to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, He must participate in the trials endured by his Father in Christ for his faithfulness in the dispensations of the gospel.

Let it not be said that the offence of the cross has ceased. I know that Christ's ministers are not now in danger of the same kind of persecutions as in the days of Paul. They do not fear dungeons, or faggots, or chains, or wild beasts, or the bloody cross. They may apprehend other woes however, as the lash of slander, the want of bread, the permanent enjoyment of a peaceful home, and the means of educating their offspring. And who would not avoid these by a more desperate effort than would be made to escape death itself. I know, too, that faith can lift the mind above a host of trials, and render the hour of desperate onset a time of triumph, and make these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, issue in a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I know, too, that many ministers, not reputed unfaithful, escape the trials I speak of. There are no pointed exhibitions of truth, no extra efforts to save men from death, no energy of discipline, nothing to break in upon the dead calm by which a multitude of souls are cradled into the profoundest slumbers. And the result is, no revivals, not much growth in grace, and, of course, no disorder. And men, under such a ministry, often sleep so sweetly, that any voice which shall wake them, even the voice of the Spirit of God, is unwelcome. Now such a ministry, I know, will escape trials, and will need none of our sympathy. Pastor and people will plod on, till *he* is stretched to heaven, and they scattered upon

the mountains, or gathered and saved at length under a better ministry that will need our sympathies.

III. I shall now offer some reasons why the ministers of Jesus Christ should *participate* with their *brethren*, in the *afflictions* that arise from a *faithful discharge* of their *duty*.

1. To *sustain* our brethren when they are in bonds for the gospel, is a *duty* we owe to Jesus Christ. He sent them to preach his gospel, assuring them that they went out as lambs among wolves, and promised to be with them even to the end of the world. And he makes good his promise, and is with them, and is a partaker in all the afflictions they suffer for his sake. Would we then do him honor, we must sustain whom he sustains, and sympathize with those who cannot compromise the honors of their Master to escape the cross. Permit me to say, as a minister of Jesus Christ, that I ask of the world no greater honor, than to be considered a prompt partaker in the afflictions of every ambassador of his who suffers for his name's sake.

2. It is a *duty* we owe to *our brethren*. If we are the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ we all belong to the same embassy, and are obligated to kindness, not merely from Christian affection, but from that endeared brotherhood begotten by the additional relationship of office. Hence, with regard to every minister of Jesus Christ, I am bound, either to dispute his commission, or prove him a traitor to his Master, or stay his hands when they hang down. It was a law in Israel that if a beast had fallen under his burden, one that was passing by must lift him up; what then are we not obligated to do for our brethren in the gospel, when they faint under its afflictions.

3. Unless the ambassadors of Jesus Christ *sustain each other*, the influence of the gospel ministry, and of course its usefulness, are greatly *diminished*. Common sense declares that unity is strength. And each minister of the Lord Jesus Christ knows how his soul is waked to energy by a knowledge of the fact that he is sustained by his brethren in the same office. And the men we are sent to save are the more prepared to yield their hearts and their deportment to the influence of truth, when they see it brought to them by a united band; having all one commission, and one Master, and one creed, and one heart. It then comes like the overtures of peace, brought not by a single ambassador, but by the general of an army. Then the commission is respected, and the overtures receive prompt and serious attention.

4. Not a *few* of God's ministers have *quit* the work and others in the hour of conflict have looked about them for some other employment, because they conceived that they were not *promptly sustained* by their brethren. They had been given a stubborn field to cultivate, all grown over with thorns and briars, and they labored till they had richly earned the confidence of those who had occupied a less stubborn and more fruitful section of the vineyard; but at length they became wearied with perpetual effort, and finally quit the field. And it is a query worth our attention, whether a little timely help, would not have kept them in the work, and rendered them immensely useful, while now they are at some other service, and must die out of the vineyard. And there are probably many at this very moment looking about them for a school, secretaryship, or professorship, or a clerkship, by which they may earn a piece of bread for their children. And this at the very moment when we are making every possible effort to send forth more laborers into the vineyard. Now, why not make some effort to sustain those already at the work, and by partaking in their afflictions wake them to renewed enterprise, and a far more extended usefulness?

If any who have been commissioned are unworthy, then publish their character, and send them back to the plough, and the residue sustain. Shall those who are happily located fear injury to themselves, if they speak a kind word in behalf of some afflicted brother? I will not allow myself to believe that the legate of the skies can act from a motive so contracted. I will rather believe that depression of mind, under long protracted trials, has begotten in the minds of some good men the false impression that they were not duly sustained in their conflicts. And I will, in the mean time, place high in honor those noble men who have earned and obtained the reputation of strengthening the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees, and who have ventured to say to the fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. They have kept many a good man in the field, and thus have virtually made more ministers than many who have pleaded eloquently the cause of charitable education. "These ought ye to have done, but not to have left the others undone." Said the apostle of the circumcision, after giving us a catalogue of his afflictions, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" This, it seems, was the lesson which his own trials had taught him.

FINALLY—Brethren, feel not that the subject was an unnecessary

exposure of ministerial weakness. We shall not give the churches confidence in us, by showing them that we have little confidence in one another. We shall not bless them, by neglecting and despising those in the ministry who suffer till they abandon the brotherhood, and go back into the world to get their bread. The desperate enemies of God, who are quarelling with their minister because he has ventured to tell them the whole truth, may be glad if we will leave him unsustained, till they can devour him. But the good sense of God's people, and of all generous, noble-minded men, will love and honour us the more, the stronger is that ligature that binds together the hearts of God's ministers.

## SERMON XXXIII.\*

### THE MERCIES OF GOD NOT OBEDIENTLY RECIPROCATED.

ISAIAH I. 2.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

How provoking is the sin of ingratitude! Among men it is considered unpardonable, while every other crime is forgiven. To be ungrateful argues a want of ingenuousness, of which even the most ungrateful are not willing to be accused. And can we wonder that pride takes the alarm, when a charge is brought that argues baseness, not to be found in the herd of the stall.

The descendants of Abraham, to whom the prophet refers, furnish us a long history of ingratitude. God had so distinguished them as to render them eternal debtors to his mercy, but they rebelled against him. He called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, a land of dark idolatry, gave him a large posterity, and made them the objects of his peculiar care. When oppressed with famine, the king of Egypt must feed them. When enslaved, God raised them up a deliverer, who brought them out with triumph. He bade the waves of the sea roll back and leave them a passage, and return to discomfit their foes. He miraculously clothed, fed, and guided them forty years. He then divided Jordan, and introduced them into a beautiful country, which, being watered with enriching dews and timely showers, furnished them all that heart could wish. To give them room he "drove out the heathen with his hand." They had riches, honors, pleasures, and health. God delivered to them his word, called them his children, and placed in their magnificent temple the symbol of his presence.

When the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, and were abandoned to dispersion and slavery, he still kept his eye on Judah. He gave them wise kings, faithful prophets, and a mild and happy government. Still had they the means of knowing the mind of God. They had their temple, their high priest, their holy

\* Delivered in New-Jersey, at the rising of the sun, on the Fourth of July, 1814; in a time of great and general interest on the subject of religion, and intended to prevent the usual desecration of the day.

altar, and their daily sacrifice. For many years they sat under their vines and fig-trees, and none made them afraid.

Thus God nourished and brought them up as children. Had he not a right to expect their obedience? Was it not enough to astonish heaven and earth, to see it withheld? Can we, without amazement, be told, that in contempt of all this succession of mercies, that people made them other gods, and bowed to images which themselves had carved? They imprisoned their prophets, profaned their temple, hardened their hearts, and generated a posterity prepared to embrue their hands in the blood of Christ. All this mischief achieved by that people, God resolved to destroy; but first commands heaven and earth to listen to the story of their apostacy: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."

How aptly does this whole history apply to us! If Judah's ingratitude has ever been *surpassed*—if it has ever been *equalled*, it has been in America. While attending to this short history, you have been making the comparison between that nation and ours. *We* have been nurtured with the same fatherly care, and have been equally rebellious.

In pursuing the subject, I shall follow the natural division of the text, and show, *first*, that *God has nourished and brought us up as children*, and *secondly*, that *we have rebelled against him*.

I. I am to show that God has nourished and brought us up as children. A kind parent aims to promote the best good of his children, and to this point bends every effort. So the dealings of God with us have been calculated to promote our best good. "He hath not dealt so with any" other "nation." In proof of this assertion we have only to look at facts. It is asked, Wherein has God given us proof of paternal affection? I answer,

1. In preparing us such a goodly land. It is believed that no portion of the globe is to the same extent so *fertile, healthful, and pleasant* as the United States of America.

Our soil is *fertile*. Hardly does any land furnish its inhabitants comfort or luxury that ours does not yield for us. Our valleys wave with corn, our hills are white with harvests, and our very mountains, to their highest cliffs, feed our flocks. Till God shall become angry, and shall forbid the showers to enrich our fields, we never need be dependant for our bread or clothing on any other

nation. What one region of our country does not produce, grows abundantly in some other.

And we draw sustenance from our bays and rivers. Thus were "the fields to yield no meat, and should the herd be cut off from the stall," we should be still supplied. On this point every reasonable desire is satisfied, and every ground of fear removed.

To *fertility* God has added *beauty*. Ours is all that rich variety of scenery which can please the eye or charm the heart. Our extensive plains, encircled with cultivated hills, watered with meandering streams, and opening upon the traveler as he reaches the eminence, afford prospects the most enchanting. If any doubt whether our land is beautiful, ask the Christian, who, in some favored hour, ascended the mountain, and felt his soul rise from the broad-spread landscape to the God who planned and built the scene;—ask *him* if "our lines have" not "fallen to us in pleasant places." Ask the mariner, who has been shipwrecked upon the coast of Africa, and has seen the sable tribes making a delicious meal on reptiles—ask him if we have not a goodly heritage. Ask the traveler who has scorched his feet in Arabian deserts, and has climbed the Ararat, if the tender mercies of the Lord to us are not great. Ask one, if you please, who has seen the lawns and parks of polished Europe, if nature has not furnished our America with richer lawns and nobler parks. Will it not excite gratitude to compare our country *in point of beauty*, with any region of the globe? What was once said of England is more true of America. "It is a paradise of pleasure, the garden of God. Our vales are like Eden, our hills as Lebanon, our springs as Pisgah, our rivers as Jordan, our walls the ocean, and our defence the Lord Jehovah."

Nor is any portion of the globe, to the same extent, more *healthful*. From the eternal snows of the north, and from the sultry heats and deadly blasts of the south, we are well removed. The longevity of our grand parents, recorded on yonder tombstones; the many in our assembly today, on whom is seen the blossom of the almond-tree, bear witness that God has blessed with health and long life, his American Israel. The numbers who can be spared from the sick and dying bed, to wait on God this morning in this house, bear testimony to the salubrity of our clime. Yes, God has fraught every gale with life, and has wafted health to us in every breeze. The effects of his bounty are seen in every countenance, and felt in every nerve.

In all this God has acted the part of a kind Father; has nourish-

ed and brought us up as children. The land of Canaan, although described as flowing with milk and honey, was not a better land. Nor will God demand less of us than of Israel. He charges us with every field, every spring, and every river. He notes against us every shower that falls upon our hills, and every dew drop that moistens the vales.

2. There was a display of God's parental affection in giving us existence in this favored land. Long had it been the lonely haunt of savages. Our forefathers were natives of other realms, realms now perhaps in ruins. If God had not intended to be a father to us, we might there have been born, and there have lived, in the midst of oppression, tears, and blood. We might have been forced into those armies which have perished on the plains of Europe, stiffened with December's frosts, or fattening the soils with their blood. But God had kindnesses in store for us, and bid our fathers fly to some other land.

But *whither* could they fly? When they first began to feel oppression, America was unknown in Europe. It had lain hid beyond a vast expanse of trackless ocean, ever since it sprang from chaos. True, it had been visited, but from its dreary bourne, no one had returned to bear tidings. Driven before the eastern tornado, the wretched had known its rocky shores as the place of their midnight shipwreck; else unknown. But Divine Goodness, which had long kept it in reserve for us, raised it into view, just at the moment when oppression was preparing our fathers to wish and pray for some asylum where they and their children might be free. The immortal Columbus sought our shores. Our ancestors followed him, under the same Divine escort. And here we are this morning in a land of plenty, health, and freedom.

My hearers, do you not feel that God was kind in all this? Think then of the millions, who are this day miserably poor, on that ground where *we* might have been wretched paupers, if our forefathers had remained at home. Think of Europe's precious youth, who have been lately torn from home in their tender years, to man the navy and fill the armies. Think of the fathers, who now need sons to prop their age, but have lost them in battle. Ah! and mothers, more helpless still, without a child remaining to solace their widowhood. See that band of females! they have been to the shore to salute their husbands, but they return in despair; their husbands have fallen in the field.\* Think of the pleasant

\* A scene actually witnessed not long since in England, on the return from Spain of a remnant of Lord Wellington's army.

cottages wrapped in flames by the torches of a desolating army. Recollect the sufferings of that little Swiss Republic, to whom liberty was so dear, that mothers left their infants under the oak, and fought and fell by the side of their husbands. While humanity bleeds over these scenes of distress, let piety raise to heaven a tearful eye, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

3. As a parent his children, the Lord has instructed us. We were from infancy taught to read the Scriptures, and were early placed under the droppings of the sanctuary. Many of us have been devoted to God in baptism, and have thus been made members of the school of Christ. Pious parents have whispered truth in our ears. Ever have we had line upon line, and precept upon precept. In no other quarter of the globe have *all classes* the means of instruction. And in this matter has not the Lord been a kind Father? If a doubt remains, think of those crowds of Papists, who through ignorance of the Scriptures, pray to departed saints, and tender gold for the pardon of sin! See those hordes of Mahometans, stupid as the beast, till their infuriated passions arouse them to spill a brother's blood. Think of the millions of Pagan tribes, who to this day worship a block of wood. Yes, think of the *hundreds* of millions, who never saw a Bible, who never enjoyed a Sabbath, and to whom no kind angel of mercy ever carried proffers of pardon. Think of these things, and you cannot doubt the fatherly kindness of God in providing for our instruction.

4. God has exercised parental love in *defending our country in times of danger*. Our whole history, from the first landing of our forefathers, is but one continued, affecting account of God's care of them and us. When that first ship brought that little band of persecuted Christians, and landed them, in the midst of winter, on Plymouth's bleak, inhospitable coast,—when they there kindled their first fire, amidst howling beasts and yelling savages,—when they there fell on their knees, and to heaven raised their eyes, streaming with tears,—when they covered their little babes with leaves blown from the trees of autumn, and stationed a sentinel to watch the foe; how could it be doubted but that they would be driven from the land they had reached? Who could have predicted or would have dared to hope, that God would soon give them peaceable possession of all this extensive country?

And afterward, when the savage band conspired to destroy that little company of strangers,—when the scalping knife was raised

over the slumbers of the cradle,—when the savage yell disturbed the midnight dream, and the angry flames were consuming the little thatched hovels where our mothers slept, who could have thought that God intended so soon to give the word, and bid those savages retire to the western forests?—who could have believed, or dreamed, that those miserable hovels would in a few years be exchanged for these beautiful mansions which now adorn our land!

And when, afterward, the merciless Frenchmen bore down upon us from the north, and in the west hired against us the bloody tomahawk,—when their ships of war covered our lakes, and spread destruction along our Atlantic shores, and the savage band broke in upon our frontiers, each pressed on by infernal fury; who could have thought that heaven designed, by this war, to prepare us for future conflicts, and raise us up an immortal Washington to be the future savior of our country.

And when, at length, the very land that gave us birth became hostile;—when her floating purgatories thundered on our coast and burned our cities, and her hard hearted veterans were ravaging our country, stripping our fathers of their flocks and herds, and our mothers of their well-earned food, and of the couch on which they dared not rest, and could not sleep;—when at length we were forced to make an appeal to the sword, and our little companies of undisciplined troops were rallying round their General;—when our fathers began to fall in the high places of the field, and our mothers, with some of us infants in their arms, fled from the foe, and saw him burn their dwellings;—when at length the temples of the living God were converted into barracks, profaned with the soldier's oath, and dissipated night with their blazing spires;—when the meek ambassador of the cross\* must die for loving his country, and for wishing to be free; and when all hearts began to ache and to bleed, and Heaven had not yet begun to give us the victory,—in this trying hour, who would have thought that God intended so soon to deliver us from the oppressive yoke of our parent country, and make us an independent and happy republic.

While we look round us, and see some present, who still wear the scars they received in that perilous hour, we feel emotions of gratitude which we cannot suppress. Yes, fathers! while we bless God for being our rock of defence in the desperate hour, we

\* Mr. Caldwell, of Elizabeth-Town.

thank *you* for the efforts you made to earn and deliver to us the fair inheritance of freedom. We never will, *no never!* forget your toils and dangers. We will cherish you in your declining years, and when you are dead, we will lead our infant children to your graves, and tell them the history of your sufferings in the cause of freedom. But, fathers, while we thank you that you fought in Israel's hosts, we entreat you to love Israel's God. And ye aged mothers, you fled with us from the malice of the foe: O! flee with us from the wrath to come!

Here I could stay and mention other mercies till the sun had gone down. God has given us a happier form of government than is now enjoyed in any other portion of the globe. Life, property, and the rights of conscience are secure. Parents are not constrained to send their children, at the call of a tyrant, to be trained up to the art of murder. As yet *we* have suffered but little by the present distressing war. The foe has destroyed others; fellow-citizens have spilt their blood in the field, and others have lost their all, while we are unmolested. Nor have we felt the distresses of famine. The poorest among us have bread, while, in our world, and doubtless in some parts of our land, there are those who are destitute. God has kept us too from those plagues and pestilences which have desolated other countries. Our breezes are yet laden with health. O how good is the Lord!

And we could tell of *individual* blessings. God has guarded our lives. In the midst of a thousand snares we have been safely kept. Who can say why *we* have not been numbered among the millions dead, or the thousands now in the agonies of dissolution. Every day and every hour have our lives been forfeited. If God had bidden us die any morning or any evening, he had still been just and good. But he yet allows our blood to flow warm in our veins, and the heart to beat high with life in our bosoms. In all this how strong a testimony of the Divine goodness!

But our wonder must increase. God has not only spared us, and defended us from harm, but has with his bounty rendered our lives comfortable and happy. We have been surrounded with every thing that could sweeten life. Our friends have smiled upon us and loved us. "God has fed us with the finest of wheat, and with the honey out of the rock has he satisfied us." We have sat peaceably in our dwellings, and have seen the rich harvests ripening in our fields, while other dwellings have resounded with dying groans, and other fields have been fattened with human gore. Thus God has employed his wisdom and power in making rebels happy.

If all this does not excite our gratitude, the beasts of the stall will find a tongue to reproach us: for "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib."

But, to crown our other mercies, to blacken our ingratitude, and raise our wonder to its climax, God offers us eternal life through his Son. We are pressed with the obligations of dying love. The Holy Spirit, with kind intent, has come down among us. Through all the past year he has been knocking at the door of some of our hearts. And perhaps many present have continued to reject his kindest entreaties. And still Divine compassion waits to save.

Thus after our cup has run over with earthly blessings, God has opened to us all the treasures of heaven. First he fills our table with his fruits, and his wines, and then invites us to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Here is unparelled benevolence. No world has known the like. The angels have seen nothing like it in heaven, devils have heard of nothing like it in hell. That God should be kind to the *good* is to be expected; but that infinite wisdom and love should exhaust their skill to make a *rebel* happy, is enough to excite wonder in the breast of Gabriel.

Having thus nourished and brought us up as children, had not the Lord a right to expect obedience? Are we not the basest of creatures if we do not love and serve him? I appeal to conscience, which God has placed as his witness, in your bosom. What demand does that messenger of heaven make upon you to-day? Should not the passing hours be spent in God's praise? If otherwise employed, will not the God of Israel be angry? And yet we know that none will give him praise but those who love him. All others will profane this day, and thus provoke his wrath. I proceed to the other part of my subject.

II. While God has been exhibiting all this parental affection, we have *rebelled* against him. Every breach of God's law, every departure from duty, every unholy affection and improper action is *rebellion*. In our case, as in that of Judah, when God complained by the prophet, we exhibit *degeneracy* as well as *rebellion*. We have departed from the piety and rectitude of our forefathers. I shall at present mention some of the prevailing sins of our land, by which it is manifest that we are both a *degenerate* and *rebellious* people. And while I proceed, every one must allow his conscience to do its office. It is to no purpose that the gospel is preached, unless the truth is *felt*.

The first sin I mention as proving our *degeneracy* and *rebellion*, is the want of family religion in our land: instance family prayer. While we are commanded to pray with all manner of prayer, lifting up holy hands to God, many families entirely neglect the duty. From no domestic altar ascends their morning and evening sacrifice. They rise with the sun, and address themselves to the business of the day, without asking God to watch or guide them. I fear some of my hearers did not pray in their families this morning. God only knows. And no doubt as many will retire this evening, without thanking God for preserving goodness, or engaging any heavenly guard to watch the sleeping pillow. Now if parents do not pray in their *families*, we cannot hope that they do it in their *closets*. That parent who finds secret prayer delightful, will endeavor by example to teach his children prayer. It is reported that some *professors of religion* have no prayer in their families, and ask no blessing over their food. Some are said to pray only on the Sabbath, and ask a blessing over one meal in the day. Why not, with the same propriety, pray once in the year, and ask only an annual blessing over the ingathered harvest? This would cut the business short.

In this point we have degenerated. It is said that among our forefathers there was no family without a domestic altar, no little helpless immortals without a father's prayers. They partook not of the Divine bounty till they had blessed the Giver. Could they return they would blush to own their offspring.

How can the Christian neglect duties so plain? How can the father, whose title implies the warmest affection, let his children retire at night, till he has committed them to the care of God? If neglected by the father, how can the mother, a name yet more tender, lay her little ones upon their pillows, till she has put them under the care of the Watchman of Israel. How do careless parents know that their children will live till the morning? And should they die on that night, when they were not the subjects of parental prayer, how must those parents feel? With what heart-rending anguish must they convey their bodies to the grave. The neglect of this duty in particular, and of family religion in general, is doubtless a crying sin, which proves our *apostacy* and *rebellion*, and must draw down Divine judgments.

2. Another common sin, equally manifesting *degeneracy* and *rebellion*, is the neglect of discipline in families and churches. Many families have no government. The children never feel restraint, and so never learn obedience. The consequence is, they often

despise their parents, and prove scourges to society. The world is the loser by their existence. They live only to cumber the ground, and reproach their parents. How ashamed ought parents to be of such children! and how afraid should society be of such parents!

In Churches the same neglect of discipline prevails. Some, who have no pretensions to heart religion, are admitted to the communion. Many are seen there who are not *moral*. Yes! the lips of profaneness touch the symbols of a dying Christ! Hands polluted with the intoxicating bowl, and trembling under its dire effects, are moved to the sacred cup! The scorner, in many places, takes his seat among the followers of the Lamb! The very disciples of Iscariot, who envy Jesus a throne with the Father, and would pluck every gem from his crown; who trample upon truth; and would gladly extirpate the Church, or at least kindle a hell in her bosom—these come forward, with a brazen front, and commemorate the dying love of Christ! Were He to come and put himself again in the power of sinners, would not many of our communicants leave the sacrament and go to crucify him? In the days of our forefathers, there was not this want of discipline. Every family was a little Church, in which pious parents bent every effort to make their children like themselves. Departure from duty met reproof. The child who would disobey a parent, disrespect superiors, disturb devotion, or profane the Name of God, would meet the frowns of his play-fellows.

The church-member who walked disorderly was reprov'd, and at once either reclaimed or cut off. None came to the Lord's table, who were not strictly moral and hopefully pious. They had no idea, in those days, that unrenewed men had any right to the children's bread. If they were correct, we are degenerate. It would be happy for the Church and the world, if that golden age could return. And return it must; discipline must be administered, before there will be a reformation of morals, or any extensive revival of religion in our land. And have we not reason to believe that a reformation in this matter must precede the removal of those judgments which we begin to feel. If God frowned because he *disapproved*, why smile till he *approve*!

3. The profanation of the Sabbath is another general sin, proving us *degenerate* and *rebellious*. Once that day was respected in America. The man who did not regard the Sabbath was not esteemed. The person who walked the streets on that day, unless to or from

the house of God, was considered a disturber of the public peace.\* Then the waterman anchored his vessel in the harbor, till the hours of Sabbath were by; the traveler delayed his journey, and the young laid aside their pastimes. Now the sailor begins his voyage, the traveler pursues his journey, young men their pleasures, and children their sports on that sacred day. On many public streets the way to the temple is obstructed with teams, and as you enter the very doors of the sanctuary, your ears are assailed with the oaths of the heaven-abandoned teamsters. The inn-keeper and his family can never hear the gospel; they might as well live in India: they must be at home to serve the Sabbath-breaker. In many parts of our land the evening of the Sabbath is not regarded.

And there are none who dare oppose this flood of corruption. One plea is, there are no laws. If we have no laws sufficient to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, and our legislators refuse to enact any, we must be a very corrupt people; if we have, and dare not enforce them, then our corruption is incurable. In either case, we have a striking demonstration that we are a rebellious and degenerate people.

4. "Because of swearing the land mourneth." This sin proves us *degenerate* and *rebellious*. The profane oath used to be the subject of public prosecution. Men dared not take in vain the name of the Lord their God. When respect for the great Jehovah did not restrain, the fear of man did. But the gold has become dim. In many awful instances, the child who has just begun to speak, is taught to swear. The evening streets profanely echo with the names of the eternal God. The inn, formerly the peaceable asylum of the pious traveler, is now often rendered intolerable by resounding oaths and curses. What sin can be more daring? It is a direct attack upon a holy God. It evinces a heart desperately rebellious. Its prevalence evinces a state of society monstrously degenerate.

5. Another sin, equally proving us *rebellious* and *degenerate*, is intemperance.† This is a growing sin, which should alarm every friend to human happiness. It prevails among both sexes,‡ and in

\* In one of the largest States in the Union, a public officer stopped the Lieutenant-Governor, as he was walking out on the Sabbath, and obliged him to return.

† It is credibly reported, that in the first settlement of this country, spirituous liquor was kept only by the apothecaries, as a medicine.

‡ It is ascertained to be fact, that under the pretence of the sick headache, many ladies of fashion retire to sleep off the fumes of excessive drinking.

all classes of society. Numberless families in our country are rendered miserable by this unnatural iniquity. To-day they are happy and useful, to-morrow lost. Intemperate creatures are now found in every place. They come to our holy communion, they are entrusted with public offices, they officiate in our churches, and have, in some distressing instances, made their way into the sacred desk, and have there stood in the place of God's ambassador.

6. Another sin which proves us *degenerate* and *rebellious*, is the existence of two *hostile* political parties. The manner in which these parties treat each other, prove us a vicious race. Each accuses the other of designing the ruin of his country, of being vile, and false, and under foreign influence. Now if both divisions speak truth, in bringing this charge, then we are all an abandoned people; if one party only speak truth, still about half of us are irrecoverably lost; and if neither keep the truth, then "all men are liars." Take either ground, and we are a wicked race. An unhappy result of this political division is, that we have corrupted the press. It is almost impossible to learn *truth* from the public gazettes. By party prejudice and rage, facts are discolored. The honest man dares not confide in what he reads. On either side the plainest facts are sometimes obstinately and perseveringly denied:—I do not charge it all to the editors, nor dare I attempt to exonerate them.

Once things were not so. Our fathers knew but one party. they were Americans. They contended only for the interests of their *own* country. Every public paper was the vehicle of *truth*. If one said, "I saw it written thus in the *newspaper*," there were none to contradict. Nothing was written there that was not believed to be truth. But that golden age is gone. Truth, unable to breathe our polluted atmosphere, has taken its flight. As if the tongue, that "world of iniquity," could not sufficiently disperse falsehood, men have taught the paper and ink to lie; and yet there is not a shadow of evidence, that there may not be on both sides of the question, the firmest friends and vilest enemies of their country.

Here I could enumerate many other sins; among which are conspicuous a disposition in professors of religion to conform to the world, the little regard paid to an oath, a proneness in ministers to seek *popularity* rather than *usefulness*, to consult the *taste* rather than the *good* of their hearers, and the prevailing propensity to asperse character:—I am ashamed to name any more.

These sins have offended God, and he has come out of his holy place to punish us. If we do not repent, how can we hope that God will not treat us as he has other wicked nations, and discharge upon us, ultimately, the full vials of his wrath. Is there not occasion why this day should be devoted to God? If he be for us, none can be against us; but if God forsake us, we are as stubble, and can be trodden down by any foe that he may commission. And can we hope that he will continue to protect us, when discipline and prayer are neglected; when the name, the worship, the Sabbath, and the sacred honor of God are disregarded; and when every sin that can be named prevails? Will he continue to shield us by his power, when no longer his people? Will he be "a wall of fire round about us," when no longer "the glory in the midst of us?" As the Lord liveth, our sins have placed us in danger.

Is it not then a time when all classes of men should fear before the Lord? Ought not the ministers of the Gospel to take their stand between the porch and the altar, and cry, with incessant tears, "Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy heritage to reproach." Have they not reason to fear that the ark of God may be taken from us, and carried to the heathen? Alas! if we look round us must we not fear that the divine glory is now hovering over the threshold, in the attitude of departing. Since our iniquities put us in danger, may every watchman be awake upon his watch-tower, and be ready to give the alarm, that if he cannot save others, he may at least free his own skirts from the blood of souls.

And shall not parents, who look forward to the destinies of a rising offspring, which they are about to leave in the midst of dangers like these; parents to whom God has committed in charge souls more precious than material worlds,—shall they not this day mourn over their own sins and the sins of their children? Shall they not bring them in faith and prayer to the arms of a compassionate God. My dear fathers and mothers, soon opportunity to pray for your children will be gone. Your withering locks will soon lie in the dust. We do hope that before your dissolution arrives, we shall be the subjects of your earnest prayers. We entreat you to pray for us to-day.

My Christian friends, it will become us to lie low in the dust to-day, and to review all our sins, by which perhaps we have stumbled the penitent, and provoked our kind Redeemer. Think, brethren, of the impending dangers. Everything dear to the pious heart is at stake; the country bought with the blood of our fathers;

yes, and the American Churches bought with richer blood. As we inquire now respecting the seven Churches of Asia, others may, another day, inquire, "Where are now the once flourishing Churches of America?" O, is this ground, made sacred by the impress of a Savior's feet, to be trodden down by a savage band? Is this temple of God to become, ever, a Mahometan mosque. After God has baptized it with his Spirit, will he suffer it to become a heathen temple? "O! tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Askelon!" The enemies of truth will triumph. Christians, pray this day for Zion. Go to your closets, while others are abusing the day, and deplore the prevailing iniquities, and weep over a people, who by their sins, are destroying themselves. If God will not forgive us, and still be for us, we die. And the prayers of the saints must bring the blessing down.

One word to the impenitent. This is an important day for you, but I fear that some of you may this day do your souls much injury. The saints consider your danger very great, and many a prayer has ascended this morning from the "dwellings of Jacob" in your behalf. If ruin comes upon our land, you have no place of refuge. The Christian has a strong tower, into which he can run and be safe; but destruction will overtake you if out of Christ. O! what need have you to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep! All your sins are still written against you. Not one of all the myriads is pardoned. See to it that you do not act today so as to provoke God to anger, and perhaps induce him to abandon you for ever. May we all so spend the day as to do our country good, and promote our future eternal blessedness.

## SERMON XXXIV.

### THE INDUSTRIOUS YOUNG PROPHETS.

ISAIAH VI. 1-3.

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take there every man a beam, and let us make us a place there where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants, and he answered, I will go.

ABOUT nine hundred years before Christ, there was at Jericho or Gilgal, some place near to Jordan, a school of the prophets, at the head of which was the worthy and venerable Elisha. The government of Israel was in the hands of Jehoram, a degenerate son of the impious Ahab. It was a time of general corruption; the prophets were treated with neglect; and the honors due to God were given to an idol. Still the prophets were employed in promoting the worship of God, and their number increased till they had occasion to enlarge the place of their tent. In the simple and interesting history of this enterprise, we learn, that the prophets, though poor, and not held in very high estimation *in that degenerate age*, were pious, honest, and industrious.

They seem to have dwelt together, that under the tuition of their honored father, they might become prepared to teach and prophecy in Israel and the neighboring countries. They were, no doubt, at this time, frequently consulted by the leaders of Israel, notwithstanding their degeneracy and corruption.

I presume it can need no apology, if I glance from this school of the prophets to the education of a gospel ministry. O could I, in the transition, bring with me into gospel times the faith of Elisha, and transfer into my audience the zeal of his associates! Then the building we propose to erect would soon rise, and the Church, down to the latest ages, feel and rejoice in the benevolent enterprise. I shall take occasion to remark in the

First place, *That, up to this moment, very inadequate provision is made for replenishing the gospel ministry.* This treasure is committed to earthen vessels; ministers are dying men. When we have served the Church a few days, we go the way of all the earth, and

\* Delivered at the laying of the corner-stone of Amherst College, Aug. 9, 1820.

the places that knew us know us no more for ever. But the Churches must still have a ministry; and that ministry be composed of *men*, not *angels*; *men educated by human means*, not inspired with miraculous gifts. Hence there must be made a perpetual effort to create this supply of pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. But the present ratio of supply is entirely inadequate to the exigencies of the Church. On this subject there needs no other argument but a statement of facts, of which there could be presented a list that would move any but a heart of iron. A very few of these facts, drawn from the very best authorities, I will take the liberty to mention.

The nine millions of souls in these United States, have the service, it is believed, of only about two thousand five hundred ministers who are competent to preach the gospel. But if instead of this number we had nine thousand, each must then have the care of one thousand souls. But in a large proportion of our country, owing to the scattered state of its population, five hundred souls would be an extensive charge. Hence, nine thousand ministers, in addition to all we have, would be but a bare supply for this district of the Church of Christ. But this number would equal that of the ministers educated in times past in all the colleges in the United States in nearly twenty years. While, then, we might be preparing this supply, many ministers will go to their graves, and others be disabled, and our population will have almost doubled.

We are assured, that in the three southernmost of the Atlantic States, containing, perhaps, a million and a half of souls, there are but one hundred and ten competent ministers; while in one district of South Carolina, containing nine hundred square miles, there is but one place of worship, and that not used, and not one Christian church or minister of any denomination. In the whole of Indiana, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Illinois, Michigan and Missouri, a district of country large enough for a continent, and containing at least three hundred and fifty thousand souls, there are not twenty competent ministers; of course, but one to more than twenty thousand. In East Tennessee, there are in seventeen counties more than one hundred thousand, while fourteen of these counties are without one regular minister of the gospel. In the west of Virginia, in eight counties, are forty-seven thousand souls connected with no religious society; and four whole counties without any religious institutions whatever. In another district there are fifty-three thousand souls, in another twenty thousand,

and in another still sixty thousand, all in about the same deplorable condition. In Pennsylvania there are extensive districts in which there never was a school, where more than half the adults can neither read nor write, many never saw a Bible nor any book, nor ever heard a sermon. One district, of forty thousand souls, has but one fixed pastor. In the state of New-York there could be settled immediately, were they to be found, two hundred ministers. And if we should survey the limits of New-England, we should see some dreary moral deserts. In the two oldest counties of New-Hampshire, there are about forty-five towns without a ministry. But I have not time to enlarge. Allowing that these statements may be in many respects not exactly correct, still they are evidence of a wide and fearful desolation. If but the one half is true, it presents to the eye of charity a moral landscape of wide and fearful dimensions.\*

If you could read the epistles that pour these complaints into our ears, you would weep if you ever did, or would die with shame, or would rise to a tone of charity that many have not reached. Now these desolate places must be cultivated, these wastes of death must be fertilized. But where are they to find a ministry? The common resources are utterly inadequate to this home supply. But in the mean time we need missionaries to send to the heathen. Of these there are six hundred millions who pay their supreme homage to stocks and stones. The United States, it is computed, ought to despatch to their help at least two thousand missionaries, *and will do it*, if the time has come, as we presume it has, when the Christian community, with the charter of eternal life in their hands, can sleep no longer.

And still the ministry must be replenished at home. If the probability is, that we shall feel it our duty soon to support among the heathen, a number of missionaries greater than that of the ministers now within our limits, pray from what resource can we obtain that enormous supply? To *export the whole* of our ministry, would render our own country the valley of death. It is impossible not to see that the Christian churches have neglected their duty too long. We must be more thoroughly awake soon, or nothing but a boundless desolation stares us in the face. The wastes of death are already so wide that they almost outmeasure

\* We are happy to say that the state of things, in all these cases, are greatly altered for the better, and that this institution, notwithstanding its youth, has had its full share in producing these happy results.

the hope of cultivation, and they are daily augmenting their horrid circumference. Our children, *when we shall have done all that we can*, are very likely to be among those who shall cry for the bread of life, and perish before their cry is heard. When they shall have attended our funeral, they may retire to the west, and there pine away in their sins, while there falls upon their ears no sound of mercy, and their eyes see not upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth. We may miss our children in heaven, and know then, but know too late, that they have perished through our negligence. While we thus weep over the fearful delinquencies in the ministry of reconciliation, it is cheering to know,

II. That we have the *materials* and the *means* of an abundant supply. When I speak of the *materials*, my eye is searching among the churches for the happy subjects of our late revivals. Many of them I perceive are in the vale of poverty, and would rejoice to be useful, if they might presume to hope that they could be equipped for the work, and that God would employ them in his service. They are waiting, it is presumed, till this institution rise, and some kind voice invite them to come and take sanctuary under its covert. If they could equip themselves they would; or if they dared to hope that they were worthy, they would pour their cry into our ears, and give us no rest till we had made them the recipients of our charity. A few years since, if we had been awake to this interest, it would not have been easy to find materials. God had suffered our youth to grow up in unbelief, and thus had chastised us for our negligence. But, anticipating the close of our portentous slumber, his mercy has waked, and prepared the rising generation to be educated, and employed to lead to conquest and to glory the sacramental hosts of God's elect. If we were prepared and would enter to-morrow one hundred upon our opening list of beneficiaries, it is presumed they could readily be found, and their hearts would leap with joy to know that they might be furnished to the good work of pointing sinners to the Savior.

And we have abundantly the *means*. If each person in the United States would give one cent a year for this purpose, it would amount to ninety thousand dollars annually, a sum the interest of which would discharge annually and for ever the expenses of more than fifty beneficiaries; or if the principal should be expended, it would support for one year nine hundred. If each church member in the United States should contribute to this

object annually one dollar, it would probably raise the sum of four hundred thousand dollars, and support four thousand students. Most congregations, beside supporting the ministry, could defray the expenses of one student annually, and thus furnish every seven years one minister. In one timely shower of rain, God could restore all we had expended for years; or by warding off one storm, could save for us a far greater amount. The man who could lose an ox every year, and not be poor, or could bear the expense of one fit of sickness, could pour the price of that ox, or the expenses of that visitation, into the treasury of the Lord, and not be poor. But if half the number who *could* make this sacrifice, *would* do it, and devote the avails to this object, we could very soon tenfold the number of our ministers, and make the desert and the solitary place glad. If one can spend idly, in the course of the year, ten days, and not be poor, he could employ those days, and not be poor, in earning something for this benevolent purpose. But if half who actually make this sacrifice should thus employ their time, the treasury of the Lord would soon be full. If the youth who annually spend ten dollars in mere extravagances, would give the one half of this expenditure to educate pious and worthy young men for the gospel ministry, there would be made no farther calls upon the Christian public. If farmers would cultivate each a quarter acre of their waste lands in the best manner, and give the proceeds to the Lord, it would probably tenfold the sum that has usually been given for all the benevolent purposes for which contributions have been made. If the extra crops of the present year, were devoted to the Lord, and expended in thrusting forth laborers into his harvest, the fields that are white would soon be gathered in. Were that sum saved, which is annually lost by mere negligence, it would for ever supply the churches with a well-educated ministry, would furnish an army of evangelists, and would fertilize the wastes of a moral world. Instead of its being the fact, as the covetous daily plead, that our resources are exhausted, they are really yet untouched. The man can hardly be found, who has denied himself a comfort to revive a famishing world. And, as it will always happen, those who complain the *most* have done the *least*, and most of those who complain, have done nothing. The man who loves to do good with his wealth is attentive to every call of charity, and has made every benevolent institution feel the effects of his liberality and his prayers, is grieved that he does so little, and has never been heard to say, that the calls upon his charity have become so frequent as

to be oppressive. That we have the means abundantly, of making exertions that we have never made, none can doubt.

III. It is our duty to *use these means*, and supply ourselves and others with a well educated ministry. The duty of preparing *ourselves* a ministry admits of no controversy. If a congregation in each thirty or forty years wears out a minister in their service, it is but honest to calculate, that such a congregation should, in every such period, in addition to supporting the ministry already in their employ, educate one, that the list may be kept full. The only question is, Shall we provide a surplus, for those who are destitute of a ministry, and cannot be expected to supply themselves? A very little reflection, it would seem, must render this matter plain. If we look about us upon the waste places, we shall feel that we are imperiously urged to provide them a supply of pastors. There are Churches very near us, which have been so unhappy as to lose the blessing they once enjoyed. Perhaps the surviving members had no partnership in the sin that stripped them of the ministry. They are begging for help, would do all in their power to provide themselves the gospel and its ordinances; but when they have done all they can do, they still hunger for the bread of life. The Domestic Missionary Society, instituted for their relief, have assured us, that, although their funds have been low, much of the time since their organization they have done nothing, *because men could not be found suitable for the service*. When I read of this fact, it had on my ear the effect of a dying groan, and stole through the heart like the cold stream of death. Said I to myself, Are the Churches that our fathers planted, which they watered with their tears, in whose bosom they expired, and in whose prosperity, though now in heaven, they have still a deep and unalienable interest—are they to become extinct? Is that covenant broken, which it was promised should be perpetual? Had their Redeemer said, “I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me,” and has that city been demolished, and have those walls been thrown down? Have the children who there received the seal of the covenant, no promise left on which to hang their hopes? If we are to do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith, to help them to re-establish in their temples the ministry of reconciliation is the first *duty* of piety, and the first *dictate* of humanity. They hunger and thirst after the bread of life, have received a pledge

that God will sanctify them through his truth, and cannot be denied the blessing requisite to the fulfilment of this promise.

Or if we turn our eye to those who have gone to the western woods we shall see opened before us a field which we dare not refuse to cultivate. They have been used to the blessings of a Christian land, have heard and loved the Church-going bell, have enjoyed schools, academies and libraries, and have been revived by the ordinances, and must they now be excluded for ever from these privileges? They cannot educate for themselves a ministry, nor build in the wilderness the unnumbered conveniences they left behind. They have turned their eye to us, and if we refuse them help we cover them with unmingled despair. They have thus before them none but the comfortless prospect of seeing their children become wild men, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them; nor *this* the least; for, without the gospel, there is nothing before their dear devoted offspring but the blackness of darkness for ever. The mother, that had devoted her children to God, and has gone with them into the western wilds, must now die crushed with the tremendous thought, that she became a mother, merely that she might people the realms of death. Already she has hung her harp upon the willows, and there it must hang, till some kind missionary enters the door of her cabin, and wipes away her tears; and this missionary *we* must educate. Ten long years must still roll away before he arrives, and she in the mean time, bleached by the frosts of age, trembles on the brink of the grave, but dare not die till her hopes are accomplished, and her children saved.

And who are these inhabitants of the forest? They are our fathers and mothers, our brethren and sisters, our children, our friends and neighbors. They were born in the houses we occupy, have gone from our families and our bosom, were the companions of our childhood and our youth. We took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company. Hence the cry they utter sounds in our ears loud and eloquent as the shrieks of death. If we do *not hear nor help* them, then the mother has forgot her suckling child, and feels no compassion for the son of her womb. Do you say, They *shall* have a gospel ministry? My heart responds, *They shall*.

But I hear too the voice of the savage, sounding from the bosom of that trackless forest still beyond. And there is in that cry a wild and native eloquence.

“You have stripped us of our hunting ground; all in life that

we held dear ; you have corrupted our morals ; our tribes, already incalculably diminished, have nothing before them but the dreary idea of being swallowed up, unless it be the more fearful apprehension of perishing for ever in our sins. Once we were the heirs of your soil, we now only ask to die the heirs of that salvation, which is revealed to you in your Bibles." A cry like this has been uttered and is heard. Already the heralds of salvation have gone to look up the remnants of their depopulated tribes, and point them to a Savior. Their sun is setting in the west, and we should give evidence that we had their un pitying *nature* as well as their *soil*, were we willing to see it go down in total darkness. If the few that remain may live for ever, it alleviates the retrospect of their wrongs, and creates one luminous spot in the Egyptian cloud that hangs over the place of their fathers' sepulchres. I would give any price for their forgiveness and their blessing ; and it cheers my heart that my country is beginning to pay the long arrears which are due to that injured people.

Now suppose, that not merely from the west, but from other heathen lands, we hear a cry for the gospel. If the millions of India ask us to send them back in Bibles and missionaries the wealth we have imported from their shores, we can say to them, "Be ye warmed and be ye fed ? If Palestine, and the shores of the Mediterranean, are seen pining with spiritual famine, and should beg us to send them that bread of heaven which their forefathers sent to ours, would there be no eloquence in that prayer ? Or if Africa, poor ill-fated Africa, should beg us to make them a Sabbath and build them a sanctuary, and send them a Bible and a missionary ; would they deserve no answer ? Or if they should be too much oppressed to utter any cry, and we should only know that their highest Deity is a serpent, and their richest hope the repose of the grave, can we pass by on the other side ? Their sons have served our fathers and us ; we have taught them nothing but our vices ; and if now, when the promise is about to be fulfilled, and Ethiopia is stretching out her hands unto God, we should refuse them the gospel, how can we answer for the stripes, and chains, and servitude, and famine, with which we have taxed them ? What defence can we make when their compassionate Redeemer shall advocate their cause.

Poor Africa must share, though late, the blessings of the gospel ; it must be sent to the shores of Palestine, must be propagated in India, must sound through every isle of the ocean, and must go, with its stores of blessings, to every section of this dark and

desolate world. But it cannot be sent ; the miseries that it would alleviate must remain without a cure, till there is a great augmentation of the army of evangelists. Hence we *must* use the materials and employ the means in our power to equip young men for this service. And every year's delay will bury millions who have never heard of Christ, and have no faith in his blood. Hence we are urged to the work, by all that is fleeting in time, by all that is valuable in the soul, by all that is bright and rich in the thought of heaven, and by all that is dark and dreary in the idea of hopeless perdition.

IV. *Union* in the Christian world will insure *success*. Said the young men to the aged and venerable Elisha, "Be content, we pray thee, and go with thy servants." There was union ; and very soon the trees of Jordan fell, and the school of the prophets was builded. How simple, how interesting, and how full of instruction is this page of sacred story ! How the venerable prophet, as he bore up a beam from the wood, evinced his faith in the covenant, nerved the young men to exertion, and magnified his office ! Let the Christian world unite, and the work we propose will be easy. When all shall do a little, none will be burdened. We can educate teachers for ourselves, and furnish a surplus for the outcasts of Israel. And to do it all we hardly need deny ourselves a single comfort. We have only to gather up the fragments and let nothing be lost, and they will feed millions of the hungry. When we can *unite* in the effort, it will be easy to do all that *duty* and that *benevolence* require. The waste places will be repaired, the destitute will be furnished with the bread of heaven, the heathen will be tamed to civility, and will burn their temples and their idols, Ethiopia will stretch out her hands unto God, the posterity of Abraham will own their allegiance to their Savior, and be again grafted into their own olive tree, the Turk and the Arab will exchange the mosque and the Koran for the sanctuary and the Bible, the Tartar will pitch permanently his tent about the house of the missionary, and Jesus, the long neglected Redeemer, will receive the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever.

And there is nothing visionary in all this. It is all promised, it is all expected, it will soon transpire ; and the man who will not believe, like the infidel of Samaria, may die in the gate, while the perishing inhabitants of a world are rushing to the banquet of the Lamb. The angel, flying through the midst of heaven, and having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth,

will publish it to every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people. This angel is the gospel ministry, and this prediction is fast accomplishing.

Will any ask, What has all this to do with the present occasion? The answer is obvious. You have met to lay the foundation of an institution, designed to recruit the ranks of the gospel ministry. There are many who would become soldiers of the cross, if any would equip them. The subscribers to this generous fund, and the founders of this noble edifice, have in view this single object. It is an institution, in some respects, like no other that ever rose; designed to bestow gratis a liberal education upon those who will enter the gospel ministry, but who are too indigent to defray the expense of their own induction. It has been founded, and must rise by charity. And every man who shall bring a beam or a rock, who shall lay a stone or drive a nail, from love to the kingdom of Christ, shall not fail of his reward. I believe this institution will collect about it the friends of the Lord Jesus, who will be fed by their philanthropy and watered by their prayers, and will yet become a fountain pouring forth its streams to fertilize the boundless wastes of a miserable world. In vision I see it among the first institutions of our land, the younger sister and the best friend of our theological seminaries, the centre of our education societies, the solace of poverty, the joy of the destitute, and the hope and the salvation of perishing millions.\*

Connected as it is with the recruit of the ministry, the salvation of souls, and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, it will rise, and will soon have a claim upon the charity, the prayers, and the tears of the whole Christian community. If some who may aid in the work have other motives than the glory of God, still I will hope, and I *do believe*, that the great mass of the donors have their eye upon the future glories of Immanuel, and are erecting this institution as a monument to his honor. And having put their hand to the plough, they will not look back. They will still enlarge their charities, and increase their hopes, till this sacred spot, where they are erecting the school, has attracted the gaze, and gladdened the aching hearts of believers in every destitute section of our land.

The subject now makes its appeal to all classes of men, to all the tender relationships of life, and to all the sympathies of human

\* We are happy to say that this prediction has been fulfilled long before this time.

nature. Its first appeal is to *the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ*. They are the sacred depositaries of divine truth, and are obligated to perpetuate the ministry of reconciliation. Here you may educate your children, born in your late revivals, and committed to your care to train up for the Lord. Here you see revived the hope and the promise of your future prosperity. "Thy children shall all be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Here we hope will be educated many of your future pastors. You have here an additional pledge, that God has not forsaken you, and that he will never leave the vine he has planted in this western world, to be trodden down by the boar of the wood, or wasted by the lapse of time, or the ravages of death. "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers."

And *congregations* have a singular interest. You have had just occasion to fear that you might one day become waste places, through a lack of pastors. But the thought must be dreadful, whether you regard a *future* life, or only the *present*. When the lips which now address you in your respective sanctuaries, are cold in death, and you are met to pay the last offices of affection to your deceased pastors, how it would darken the glooms of that evening, and lessen your hopes of salvation, to apprehend a famine of the word. But the most judicious, till the Church waked to the duty of educating herself a ministry, feared all this. The increase of our population, and the urgent claims of the heathen and the destitute, seemed to leave us, till we discovered this remedy, nothing to look for but ultimate desertion and ruin. For with the gospel, it was known there would desert us the Sabbath and all those institutions which are the glory of our land. Hence the very infidel, who has no hope for himself and his children beyond the grave, but would have them civil, and decent, and wealthy, and happy in the present life, has a deep interest in this institution.

But the subject addresses itself specially to *believers*. You love the Lord Jesus Christ, and love his Church, and have a deep interest in whatever has respect to his honor. And the eternal life of souls is near your heart. If this institution then promises to promote either of these objects, it will be dear to your hearts. And you know the ministry is appointed for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying of the body of Christ. Of course an institution designed to enlarge this ministry, is connected intimately with your best interests, your highest pleasures, and your

richest hopes. And as you shall see its walls rise, we shall presume on your co-operation and your prayers.

The inhabitants of this whole *vicinity* have a deep interest in this institution. It will not *confine* its blessings to you, but it will offer you its benefits with the fewest inconveniences. If God has given your children his grace, you have here an opportunity to educate them at your own threshold. And if you are too poor to purchase the privilege, still this institution opens to you its doors. Nor is the thought to be despised, that here there will be collected those who have an interest at the throne of grace, and whose daily supplications must bring a blessing upon the whole vicinity.

To *parents* this subject cannot want interest. If there should be no prospect that our own children be here prepared for usefulness, still the institution will stand, we trust, when our bodies have mouldered in the grave, and be a nursery for our children's children down through many generations. In an age like this, pregnant with such high and holy promise to the rising generation, it is a blessing to be a parent. We may have higher hopes than any age that has gone by, that God will pour out his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring.

The *friends of correct sentiment* will rejoice to see a school of the prophets opened among a people who believe the truth, and in a neighborhood where there is a pious and orthodox ministry, where prevail the doctrines of our forefathers, and where the assurance is so strong, that these same funds shall never be perverted from their original design. We have seen error attempting to roll its desolating flood through our churches. We have seen prostituted to the vile purpose of disseminating false doctrines, funds that were consecrated to the interests of truth. We have seen the Redeemer degraded to a mere attribute, an angel, a man, and even a sinner, by the very charities that were intended to give him a throne in every heart, and an altar in every house. We have seen fountains, opened by the liberality of a pious ancestry, so poisoned, that every stream they issued carried sterility and death through the provinces they were designed to fertilize. Next to the grace of God, and relying on his blessing, the best means of cleansing those waters, or damming these streams, is to prepare for the churches a full supply of scribes well instructed in the kingdom of God. And the hope could hardly be stronger, that the funds here deposited for that purpose, will be for ever held sacred to the design for which they were consecrated.

The *poor* will feel a special interest in every transaction relative

to this institution. The fund subscribed is exclusively for them, and can never be diverted from their use. Here then is one institution where envy can have no employ. The rich would not be willing that the Christian public should educate *their* children, they would prefer to *purchase* the benefit. Once it was said, "To the poor the gospel is *preached*," now the poor may become qualified to *preach* the gospel. They may dispense the blessings which it has been their province to receive, may teach where it was their privilege to learn, may become *beneficiaries* to an extent that shall qualify them to become *benefactors*. Here, if you cannot educate your own children, and God has given them his grace, and they are otherwise qualified, you may send them to live by the temple and feed upon its offerings, till they are prepared to be prophets in Israel. O, it must carry hope and joy into the habitations of poverty to day, to know that there is laid the foundation of an institution, destined to pour its blessings exclusively upon the indigent! This is a blessing that has lain so beyond their hopes as to have hardly been an object of their prayers. Before they have called, God has answered. Hence, to the full extent of their power they will pour into this fund the little streams of their charity, and will watch the progress of its rising honors and its growing interests with paternal fondness and solicitude.

Nor will the rich have any feelings but those of pleasure. All other institutions have opened their doors to them, while this one, which promises promotion to the children of their poorer neighbors, will receive their patronage and their prayers. Nor can they know but their posterity may be poor, and one day hang their last hope on the promised aid of this kind and benevolent institution.

I cannot suppress my wish to recommend this institution to the patronage of *females*. They have recently signalized themselves as the friends of religion and of the gospel ministry. Many an ambassador of the cross owes his courage and his success, to their charities and their prayers. Here they will have opportunity, I hope, to see some of their noblest wishes gratified. Here they may consecrate their charities, and toward this place may turn their eye when they pray, and find their spirits cheered, their prayers answered, and their hopes accomplished. In the zeal they show for these objects, they evince that they know how to appreciate their own comforts. The gospel, in addition to the promise of eternal life, renders them free, respected, and happy, in the life that now is.

This institution has a claim upon the *patriot*. No country is so blessed as when science and religion blend their influences, and shower upon society their united blessing. But this school, more than any other, will tend to that balance of influence, and approximate us toward that equality, which is ever the basis of a government like ours. It will raise the poor, widen the bonds of affection, and vastly increase the amount of happiness. We hope to enlist in this benevolent design the whole aggregate of patriotism within the compass of its influence.

The *ministers of Christ* will say, God speed, to an enterprize calculated to increase the laborers in the vineyard. We shall thus give evidence to the world, that all we say respecting the scarcity of ministers we fully believe; for if things were otherwise, we could not act more unwisely for our own interest than to thus raise up rivals, who might rob us of our parishes and our bread. How it must gladden our aged fathers, to see an institution rise, designed to prolong the cry of glad tidings, which begins to die away upon their palsied lips. When they can address sinners no more, and can only cast an eye over the valley of vision, and survey the vast fields of the slain, it will rejoice their hearts to see other prophets taking their stand by the side of that valley, intending to prolong the prophecy till the dry bones have become living men. When the aged Elisha went with the young prophets to the banks of Jordan, to cheer them in their toils, and aid them with his counsels and his prayers, he showed a strong regard to the future welfare of Israel, and deeply engraved his memory upon the hearts of the young prophets. Unless I greatly mistake the feelings of my aged fathers, their eyes will be bright with joy while they see these walls go up. They will fall on their knees, and spread their hands toward heaven, and give us their dying blessing; and may their prayers return into their own bosom.

If now, in my concluding remarks, I should address you as *Christians*, I would say, This institution, if permitted to rise, (and we look to *God* for this permission,) and if not grossly perverted from its original design, is connected intimately with the dispersion of that Egyptian darkness which has so long brooded over an apostate world; with all that is interesting in the rescue of the idolater from his gods, the Papist from his relics and his saints, the Jew from his Talmud, the Mahometan from his Koran, the African from his chains, and the assassin from his pistol and his knife. You have enlightened views of your Maker, have a Bible, a sabbath, and a sanctuary, can feast at the table of the Lord, and

entertain hopes of a rich and happy immortality. I plead for those who are immortal like you, and like you must die, and be judged, but have never learned the true character of God, nor heard the story of a Savior, nor have discovered any escape from the glooms of the sepulchre ; who look to that home as the seat of perpetual darkness, forgetfulness and silence ; who have never kept a day of rest, and can hope to remit their toils, their cares and their miseries, only when their heads shall slumber on the turf. Religion would make them as happy as you, and heaven as blessed.

But I do not appeal exclusively to *piety*, but to *all the tender feelings of humanity*. When you cast your eye over the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty, every aspect of wretchedness which you descry, gives importance to the transactions of this day. We plead for the unhappy, for the lost, and the miserable. I think I see, without the aid of inspiration, a band of missionaries, educated in this school, issuing forth to chase misery from this polluted world.

You are a father, are loved by your children, and cherished with that tenderness which your infirmities and your age require ; we plead for fathers, who in their declining years are deserted by their children, and left to perish by the frosts of age, who are borne to the bed of some river, that they may be swept away by the tide, and become the food of the shark or the alligator.

You are a mother, and perhaps a widow, and your children would shrink from no sacrifice that might prolong your life, or soothe your pains or your cares ; I plead for mothers whose offspring are monsters, and can force them at the point of the spear upon the flames that are consuming the corpse of a husband, and can drown their dying shrieks in acclamations of infernal joy.

You was left in your infancy an orphan, and have found in this inhospitable world a guardian and a friend, who has nursed your childhood, and watched your youth, and reared you to respectable and promising manhood ; I plead for orphans, who have no home but in the place of skulls, no house but the house of silence, where sleep the ashes of a merciless mother, no friend but death, who stops the rage of hunger, blunts the edge of care, extinguishes the fire of affection and hope, and finds the wretched a covert and a calm amid the clods of the valley.

If the relief of miseries like these has the least connection with the events of this day, these events will have *some* claim upon the sympathy of every feeling heart. If we might only hope, that by means of this institution, *one more missionary*, than would other

wise be educated, will enter the fields of labor, and go to some *one province* of this dark world, and there create a light that shall guide home to heaven *one benighted soul*, it would be worth all the pains and the wealth that shall be expended in founding this school. "The redemption of the soul is precious and it ceaseth for ever." You might cover that field with silver and gold, and if the whole would buy off one soul from perdition it would be well expended. And I must believe that more than *one missionary* will be sent, and more than *one sinner be redeemed*, by the means that are here providing; and in the boundless joys thus generated, shall find all the reward I wish, for any plea I can offer, or any exertions I can make, to advance this interest.

If we are utterly mistaken, and any feel otherwise, we rejoice that the field of labor is large. They may glorify God in some other way, may feed the poor, disperse the Scriptures, support the missionaries already educated, or educate *others in some other school*. Or if any will neither aid this charity nor any other, and their consciences will approve of their neutrality, they shall receive no reproach from us if they do nothing. If we are disposed to do good, and our motive is the glory of God, it will ill become us to reproach others. To their own master they stand or fall.

In the mean time, I hope that those who cannot conscientiously labor with us, will utter no reproaches, nor make any effort to dam the streams of charity that might flow to this centre, and issue hence to carry their fertilizing influence through the wastes of this miserable world. If once the object was good, it is so still. If unhappily some may not have had in view the Divine glory in their most zealous efforts, still the character of the institution is not changed, nor its importance diminished, nor its claims cancelled. I close with one remark to the friends of this institution.

How important is it, that we suitably prize and improve the ministry established among us. What will it avail us that we have pitied the destitute, and the heathen, if at last we die impenitent, and sink below them in perdition. We may send them the Bible and the ambassador of peace, and still neglect that book and that ministry, and die unsanctified. The ministry can be a blessing to the heathen, only as it may become the means of their conversion; hence to feel anxious for them, and found an institution with a view to furnish them a ministry, and yet under the full advantages of that ministry live without God and without Christ in the world, is to act with unpardonable disregard of our first best duty. It would be a fearful event, if finally we should lift up our

voice and weep and say, "My mother's children made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Each of us has a soul that must live for ever, that must be washed in a Savior's blood, or must endure the terrors of his wrath; to save this soul is our first concern, and we may wake in its interests too late. If we should give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burned, and yet lack that charity to which salvation is promised, we should die fools at the last. It is true that the religion of the gospel is benevolent; it is true that the covetous man is an idolater, and has not eternal life abiding in him, but there is also a religion which all evaporates in care for the safety of others, which has little to do with the closet, or the heart, or the Bible, or heaven. O let this day bring us all to our knees. Let the walls of this edifice be bedewed with the tears of repentance, and may we all be pillars or polished stones in the mystical temple, which Christ is erecting, that when the top-stone is laid we may be there to aid the shout, Grace, grace unto it. "Amen even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

## SERMON XXXV.

### THE NATURE AND RESULTS OF SANCTIFICATION.

JOHN XVII. 17.

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ was a perfect man. This we must believe as confidently as we believe his divinity, else we shall have confused ideas of many portions of divine truth. And as he was a perfect man, and would be in all things a pattern of what his people should be, he must have a perfect religious character, and perform the Christian duties as far as they would be applicable to his exalted nature. Hence, we often find him engaged in prayer.

Whatever difficulty there may be in the idea of a divine Redeemer's praying, the fact we are bound to believe. In his inferior character as Mediator, he acted by commission from the Father, and would take instructions from him, and put confidence in him. When the last scene was coming on, and he knew that soon he must hang upon the tree, he offered that memorable prayer from which the text is selected. He prayed most tenderly for his people; and among the first blessings asked, he prayed for their sanctification through the truth.

*There cluster about this subject many interesting questions, to some of which I purpose to turn your attention.*

I. What do the Scriptures mean by sanctification? Sometimes it means being set apart to sacred use. Thus every seventh day is sanctified. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" Thus the tabernacle and temple, the priests and altars, and sacrifices, and all the sacred things of the Jewish dispensation were sanctified.

God speaks of sanctifying his name, which he does when by his judgments he rebukes the gainsayers, and stills their blasphemies. He thus convinces men that he is holy.

I could name many other uses of the term sanctification; but its principal use, and that intended in the text, is, in application to the work of rendering an unholy creature holy. Men are by nature

unholy. They exercise forbidden affections, and do not put forth the affections that God requires. The prayer of Christ in the text was, that his followers, through the instrumentality of truth, might be made what God requires them to be; having the affections of the heart, and, of course, the deeds of the life, conformable to the divine law.

II. Another question may here very properly be,—When does this holiness begin? And the answer is obvious. It begins at the moment of regeneration. Till then, all the exercises are unholy; for “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” Nor is there any degree of alarm, or any amount of conviction, that can generate one holy affection in the heart, previously to this period. Of course all the prayers offered, and all the exertions made, prior to this change, are unregenerate prayers and exertions. Nor can it be believed, consistently with correct Scripture views, that, anterior to this moment, there is any approximation toward correct feeling. No alarm, nor the most distinct conviction, can bring an unregenerate man to feel any more correctly toward God, or any holy object, than he did in a state of carelessness and security. And although we would not pretend to say that the Divine influence in the hour of awakening may not restrain the sinner, and hold him back from the blasphemous thoughts and affections which he might otherwise put forth, yet in all this there is no holiness.

And then it may be a question whether the sinner, under alarm, does not wax worse and worse, till the moment of passing from death unto life. If he has more light—if he sees more distinctly the objects of his implacable hatred, does he not obviously rise in his hatred, till it is changed into love? This point, however, it is not my object to press. We must concede that holiness begins when the heart is changed.

III. Is it always small in its beginning? Does that text in which the kingdom of God is compared to a grain of mustard seed, and that other where it is compared to leaven, teach us that grace in the heart is thus small at the first? Or do they illustrate the primitive smallness of the Christian Church, and its ultimate growth and enlargement? They may be meant to apply in both cases, but aside from these texts, we are taught unequivocally in the Scriptures, that the believer is, at the first, sanctified but in a small degree, and that he “grows in grace” till he arrives at the fulness of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. He is at the first,

a "babe, and has need of milk, and not of strong meat." Afterwards, he "forgets the things that are behind, and reaches forth to those things that are before, and presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The light that has shined in upon him shines "brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." Hence, we gather, that though the work of regeneration is from its very nature instantaneous, the work of sanctification is progressive, and is, at the first, comparatively small.

IV. But how will this comport with what believers have thought was their experience—that at the first they felt a glow of holy affection, which they termed their first love, which afterward they lost! And the Scriptures, they have supposed, favored the idea. "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." But was that love of espousals, thus accredited to Israel, all holy love?—or was it not, in great part at least, merely that natural joy which might arise from the comfort, and pride, and novelty of their emancipation? It surely soon vanished, and they murmured, and made them gods, under whose guidance they purposed to return to Egypt. And that whole congregation, you know, died in the wilderness. They were, evidently, as a body, destitute of holiness; hence their love of espousals must be explained as something else than delight in God.

But why may not the same be said often of that joy with which the heart of the new-born seems to overflow? Can we be allowed to believe it is all holy love to God? There can be, as yet, but little knowledge of God, or of truth. Hence that strong affection can hardly be allowed to flow wholly from objects so dimly seen. Is there not often far greater probability, that it is the mere effusion of animal affection? Or, at least, that it has far more of nature in it than of grace. There may not seem, afterward, the same hilarity; but is there not more knowledge of truth and duty, and more stability in the way of God, more fixed principles of action, more humility, and more undeviating confidence in the Savior?

In which position would the believer most readily go to the stake, and lay down his life for his Master? when, during the first month of his regeneracy, he fills the air with his song? or, when a few years afterward, he has learned the corruption of his heart, and at times, perhaps, hardly dare hope that he is born of God?

May not the joy abate, and there be, at the same time, an increase of the principle of holiness that develops a heavenly mind? Surely it is the believer of continued experience, and not the man renewed but yesterday, that is rooted and grounded in the truth, and who cannot be driven about with every wind of doctrine. Whether this question is decided right, however, I wish each one to judge for himself.

V. Another question arising out of this subject is—does the good man at all times advance in holiness? and are we so to understand that text, “The righteous shall hold on his way”? Here, perhaps, again, it is not easy to come at what we are sure is truth. I have believed that it is otherwise, and that, while there are times when the good man progresses rapidly, there are other times when he makes no progress, and others, again, when the progress of holiness, if I may so speak, is backward. Thus Israel, sometimes, bent their track directly to the promised land, at other times did not move for many days, and at other times marched retrograde. So we have seen the plant spring up and grow as if life was in it, and then perhaps for weeks seem stationary, and then again withering under drought, and seemingly about to perish. Whether these analogies may teach us truth or mislead us, still I have believed it thus with the child of God. And the only position contested, I believe, is, whether the Christian is ever in the way to do himself essential injury. That broad promise, “All things shall work together for good to them that love God,” has been used as implying the negative. That the promise is true, and that the full import of it will be accomplished, there cannot be a doubt. But what is its import? Does God merely promise, in this precious text, that all *the events of his providence* shall conspire to bring his people to a higher seat in heaven? Or does he promise all this, and more too, that their very backsliding shall conspire to the same result? Would he promise, that if they forsake him, and sin by going after their idols, this very sin shall tend to purify them? Would it be safe to trust a wandering believer with such a promise in his hand? Is it reasonable to believe that it will tend to the health and growth of the heavenly mind, to have it wounded, and polluted, and ensnared by transgression? Have we any assurance that Peter and David might not have reached a nobler Christian stature, if they had stood firm in the hour of temptation? I confess, I think there is no such assurance.

Do not facts warrant us to believe that Christian minds of the same powers and opportunities, have made different degrees of advance in the ways of God? The one is seen to climb the steep of Zion, with brisk and steady step, and far outgo the other, while to us there appears no reason why the other might not have *lea* in the enterprise. The professor who comes at length to the grave in old age, and, as we hope, a believer, but who can look back upon whole years of relapse and of wandering, has he those marks of maturity, and that animating hope, and that strong and conquering faith, seen in the man who moved steadily on in the ways of God, till his Master called him? You are thinking, perhaps, while you read, of two old men, contemporaries who died, it may be in the same year, members of the same communion, the one having hardly deviated from the path of life an hour, while the other has seemed to be alternately a Christian or a worldling, as the times were. Now which of them seemed manifestly to fall asleep in Jesus, while the other was saved perhaps, though as by fire? You have all answered me. Pass through our Churches, and tell me where is the venerated man of God, who is to the world around him a walking conscience, and carries heaven on his brow, in whose life there have not been some dark seasons of marked, and guilty, and hurtful relapse? Let me say, I do *not* believe that the Christian does make uniform progress in holiness, but does sometimes become stationary, and sometimes retrograde in the heavenly road.

VI. Are we then to believe, that while every Christian in heaven will be perfect, there will still be a difference in their Christian stature, and their amount of enjoyment proportioned to their industry in acquiring holiness in the present life? On this point there can be very little doubt. There will be a difference in heaven among redeemed spirits, as one star differeth from another star in glory. Doubtless God will have employment for them all in his kingdom. As in a building there is a variety of materials, places to fill requiring more and less strength, but all necessary; so in that mystic temple whose topstone is to be laid in heaven with shouting, Grace, grace unto it, there may be required, to give it its greatest strength and beauty, souls of very different capacities.

VII. It is then obvious that we are ourselves selecting the position we shall occupy in heaven, if any. On our industry will de-

pend our growth; and on our growth our station in the kingdom of the Redeemer. And how can men be indifferent what is the position they shall hold among the redeemed in heaven! Increasing holiness bears its present fruits, gives its immediate as well as its future rewards. In what other enterprise, then, shall we be so ambitious to succeed as in this? If there is any one thing surprising above all others, it is that believers in Christ should be slow to put on his image. The Psalmist would never be satisfied till he awaked from death in the likeness of his Redeemer. There is surely no joy like that which is begotten by a holy temper:—hence, how can one who has tasted this joy, find any other pleasures, which, for a single hour, can become its substitute? Let me close by presenting a few motives to engaging with ardor in this heavenly enterprise.

1. I have hinted that we shall be *happy* in proportion as we are *holy*. We are mistaken in supposing that any particular circumstances are requisite to render us happy. There is but one thing requisite, likeness to Jesus Christ. And this is a happiness within the reach of us all, in proportion as we are willing to exercise his temper, and copy his example, and put on his image. Hence that rich and precious intimation, “Christ in you the hope of glory.”

2. We shall be *useful*, other things being equal, in proportion as we are *holy*. No good man can be satisfied who feels himself to be living to no purpose. Find me the Christian who is never happy, and, sure as life, he is never useful. He is a cumberer of the ground, and can never reflect on the day that has gone by with pleasure. The man who is not aiming to bless his generation may dig after comforts, but he can never find them. He may read all the promises over, day by day, but there will not be found a word of consolation for him. He might derive more from some act of real Christian benevolence, than he does from a whole Bible full of consolations: and to be *holy* is the way to be *useful*. To follow Christ has an eloquence in it that no exhortation, nor argument can hold out. “Be ye followers of me, as dear children.”

3. There is *dignity* and *character* in being *holy*, that nothing else can produce. What man is great like him who walks in the consciousness of exercising the same affections that Christ does? In what matter should not men feel indifferent, rather than be willing to be losers in this mighty concern? How can it seem a small thing, whether we put on, or not, the character that glows in the view of heaven? the character that he wears who receives the homage

of all the redeemed, and is adored by cherubim and seraphim? How comparatively trifling a matter is it, that we are honorable in the estimation of those who judge according to the outward appearance. The apostle could say to his enemies, It is a small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment. How noble his character, while he thus regarded supremely the inward adornings of holiness! Would we then aim at character—character that will stand the test when worlds are burned up—let us press on after **HOLINESS**

## SERMON XXXVI.

### THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

JOHN XVII. 17.

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

THE grand purpose for which God gave to men a revelation of his will, was, that the truth thus revealed might be the medium of their sanctification. It is hence spoken of as the sword of the Spirit, the Sanctifier. If it be asked, Why God does not make men holy without the use of truth, we answer, that he would not thus treat them as moral agents. There must be in that case a mere act of his sovereignty, and man become virtuous without design. Indeed, it seems to me to be keeping within the record to say, that men cannot be saved without a knowledge of Divine truth, in consistency with the nature God has given them, and the heaven he has provided for holy beings. The very nature of holiness implies that men have felt the force of truth, and yielded voluntarily to its influence. To repent implies, that we see the truths, that the law is good, and that we have broken it, while we were under the most sacred obligations to obey it. And faith implies, that we feel distinctly the truths, that we are lost, that Christ is able and willing to save, and has warranted us to make application to him. Hence men cannot be forcibly made to repent and believe, not acting themselves, voluntarily, in view of truth, without an infringement of their agency. Or, rather, such faith and repentance, if we could suppose its existence, would not be their own act, and could not, on the Gospel plan, avail them to salvation. *Let us then inquire, how and why Divine truth is used in rendering men holy.*

I. It presents to view the objects of holy affection. To love God is a holy affection. But God cannot be loved, till men are acquainted with his character. In his word, his character is all presented. Had we no Bible, we might see his mighty power and Godhead in the works of creation; but only in the oracles of God do we see his whole character. There every attribute is written,

and the full Deity made known. *Now*, if we have that temper to which goodness is lovely, we shall not fail to love him.

The complete character of the Lord Jesus Christ is, in the same book of God, revealed for our faith. We can see for ourselves, whether he has those attributes we can love, and is such a Savior as we can trust in. There could be no faith in him without this delineation of his character.

The Christian character, also, is presented in the Bible, as the object of our affectionate regard. We there learn the divine law, and have opportunity to approve: and the same may be said in reference to every holy object on which God requires us to place our esteem

And we learn, too, in the same book, the objects we are required to hate; for holiness consists in feeling disgust towards the objects of unrighteousness, as well as complacency in righteousness. There we learn the temper of our hearts, and all the moral wrong in ourselves that we are to loathe and repent of. Thus a primary use of truth in our sanctification is to present us with the character of the objects toward which we are to exercise holy affections, the objects we are required to love, and the objects we are required to hate.

II. Another use of truth is to present motives to the exercise of the right affections. The Bible amply assures us, that holiness is a lovely attribute of character. It is what renders God lovely, and angels, and the whole family of the redeemed. Hence holiness is indispensable to good character; and here is a motive to aim at a high standard of holiness.

The Bible assures us, that only where there is holiness there is happiness. This begets the peace and joy that reign in heaven; while its opposite has occasioned the ruin of this world, and the miseries of hell. These facts are so amply illustrated in the word of God, as to show the loveliness of virtue, and the hatefulness of vice, thus presenting us new motives to become holy. The Bible presents motives to holiness, by drawing out holiness and depravity to their final result in heaven and in hell. In the one world, holiness has produced its full effect in the everlasting peace and blessedness of its population; in the other, too, its full effect in the unspeakable misery of its hopeless inmates. Thus Bible truth presents men with motives to become holy, and being urged home by the Spirit of God upon the understanding and conscience, is the medium of sanctification.

III. As holiness must beget the love of holiness, it must also produce love to that truth which is the medium of its own production. The Christian, then, wishing to progress in that holiness which is begun in him, will be the friend of Bible truth, will aim to grow in the knowledge of it. As this is seen to be the medium of his cleansing, and as he now aspires to be clean, he must desire to know more of truth. All Bible truth will please him, for it all has one and the same effect, his cleansing. He will thus be a diligent student of the Bible, and will never feel that he knows enough of it, while there remains in his heart or life one moral pollution to be cleansed away.

IV. It will follow then, of course, that the Christian who is a child in Bible knowledge, will be a child in holiness. To the same extent that he remains ignorant of divine truth, he will remain un-sanctified; and men will learn, without inquiring of him, how much attention he gives the sacred volume. Apparent exceptions to this position are easily explained. We have seen men of small intellect and small acquisitions in science, generally, who yet appeared to be rapidly growing in holiness. In such cases, it will always be found, on a close acquaintance, that, though the man may have no general knowledge, he is daily conversant with the testimonies of the Lord. If one will learn *sanctifying* truth, he may become sanctified, though he may remain ignorant of other truth. We frequently meet with the contrast of this case; men possessing a large amount of general knowledge, but knowing little about their Bible; in which case there will not be seen much advancement in the stature of piety. If we are acquainted merely with men and money; though we may be acute worldlings, this knowledge will not tend to purify the heart. The knowledge that will render us holy is to be gathered from the word of the Lord. "Sanctify them through thy truth."

V. It would seem to be a truth unquestionable that the man who is under the process of sanctification, will have an increasing thirst for a knowledge of divine truth, till he dies. As the heart becomes purified, the love of truth, the means of its purifying, must increase. And let the thirst for truth increase, and it needs no argument to prove that men will grow in the knowledge of it. We shall find, then, no believer who thinks he knows enough of the Bible, no man, however old, or infirm, or poor, or occupied, or neglected, if he has begun to be sanctified, who will not wish, by

learning more truth, to nourish the spiritual life that is begun. More and more, as the cleansing operation goes on, and he feels the pleasure of being holy, will his mind be open to conviction, and the truth become adapted to his taste as the honey and the honey comb. The love of truth, in the aged believer, becomes his strongest appetite. Old men are not accustomed, you know, to abandon, in their latter years, the objects of their appetite. How often do they rather become the slaves of some strong governing principle, which is seen at last to be mightier in death than ever! And in the man of God, who is struggling with his corruptions, and desperately bent on the mastery, the appetite for truth must be the ruling passion while his eye can see or his ear hear, or his mind perceive, or his heart and conscience be impressed. He will carry his Bible with him to his death-bed, and put it by his pillow, and glance his dying eye upon its pages, and ask the by-standers to teach him, and will be digesting some heavenly truth when life goes out; and the nourishment afforded his soul, by that last reflection, will add the finishing stroke to his sanctification. How can it be otherwise? Whomsoever it may condemn, though it tear from myself the last hope I have, still it must be true, that as grace advances in the heart, the love of truth will be enkindled. As there can be no natural health, and the body cannot be strong and vigorous after the appetite is gone; so is there no spiritual health, and the inner man is sickly and nerveless, where there is no relish for truth. The case cannot be, where there is growth in grace accompanied with a disrelish for the study of divine truth.

VI. It would seem, then, that it cannot be a light thing to reject, or disrelish any doctrine of the Bible. Every doctrine must have its use in rendering men holy, else it had not been taught in that Bible sent to sanctify the world. God knew exactly what the case required, what system of truth the Spirit could use to the best advantage, in rendering the world holy, and this he has published. Hence, no part of it may be rejected as unwholesome, or innutritious. Suppose a table spread, day by day, by one who perfectly knew our constitutions, knew any disease that might be lurking about the body, or any danger of the season or the climate that needed to be guarded against, and we should presume to say, that one article upon the table was injurious to health, and never taste it; how exactly would the case resemble that of the man who imagines he has found, in the book of sanctifying truth, one doctrine of pernicious tendency. How arrogant, in the preacher of the

gospel, to lay his hand on any doctrine which he may not preach, or any duty he may not enforce, or promise or threatening which he may not deal out to the friends or the foes of God! And how mistaken his people, who would have him suppress any paragraph, or hold back any doctrine or maxim of the word of the Lord! Who can judge as well as he who gave the word? Who, among the army that publish it, or the multitude who hear it, can tell better than he, what kind of truth is suited to the exigency of a betrayed and ruined world?

VII. It would seem, then, a matter of course, that sanctification will be going on among the various classes of Christians, more or less prosperously, in proportion to the amount of truth embraced in their system. We may even determine, by this criterion, what denomination is built the most substantially on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. There may be in a human system *some* truth, but not the *whole* truth. There may be so much error as shall greatly counteract the effect of truth. The system thus made out may be *somewhat* calculated to sanctify; and yet not the *best* calculated. It may nourish a sickly and palsied religion, while it can never produce the strong, and vigorous, and useful man of God. It may contain truth enough to bring men to heaven, and yet never produce, to shine in the firmament of God, many stars of the first magnitude. In choosing our religion this one question should be kept prominently in view: which is that that makes the most enlightened, the most benevolent, the most holy and heavenly temper? for there we shall assuredly find the most truth and the least error.

VIII. Might not believers be sooner ripe for heaven? or, rather, might they not all be qualified in the time that God allows them, after their second birth, for a higher seat in heaven than they do ordinarily reach? Yes. They could learn more truth, could learn it faster, and digest it better, and grow more vigorously, and pass earlier the boundaries of Christian childhood, and thus arrive earlier at the fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus.

## REMARKS.

1. May not that truth which is learned *before* regeneration, operate afterward to the forwarding of the believer in holiness? Yes. It matters not how early truth is known. Give it then a free entrance at the first opening of the mind, and pray that it may please the Spirit of God to use it for sanctification. The smallest lad in

the school may be learning now what will be useful and precious truth to him, when he shall be shining a mighty orb in his profession, or afterward in heaven.

2. Is there not more hope, then, that the children in our Sabbath-schools will be converted, than those who are to-day lining the fields, and fishing along the banks of the brook? No doubt. They will have treasured up truth to exert a sanctifying and elevating influence when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

3. Will not revivals prevail in the next generation, among a younger class of sinners than in times past? Doubtless. As we approach the millenium, and the Sabbath-schools shall have matured minds earlier for reading and reflecting, a younger and still younger generation will be sanctified, till our revivals will all be in the Sabbath-schools; and God will at length ordain praise, according to his promise, from the mouths of babes and sucklings.

4. And shall we not have then in our churches more active young men, and a race of fathers and mothers that shall shine brighter in the Church of God? Yes, young men will be indeed "strong," and the patriarchal age will return, and every gray head will indicate the presence of wisdom and holiness; thus, there will be far more select and pure assemblages for the supper of the Lamb.

5. And will not this be then a holier and happier world? So the prophet sung: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

6. And will there not then ascend to God nobler recruits of the family of believers than in any of the ages that have gone by? Yes; new constellations will appear in heaven. And the various successions of the sanctified that shall then, at different times, come home to glory, will for ever shine more brilliantly in the kingdom of their Father.

7. And can we do nothing to hasten on that day, and swell the hallelujahs of heaven? Yes; let us seize the dear youth or child, who a year or two hence will feel himself too old to be a scholar, and press him into the Sabbath-school and Bible class, and have his mind imbued with holy truth, before he gets that palsying maxim, "*too old.*" Let us all gird ourselves anew; let us cheerfully discharge every obligation; and let it be our holy ambition to share largely in the coming glory. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.*

## SERMON XXXVII.

### THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

PSALMS CIII. 3.

Who healeth all thy diseases.

THIS Psalm appears to have been a song of thanksgiving on being recovered from sickness. Hence it is full of those tender recollections that are prone to recur to the pious mind in such a season." "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever." "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust."

With a mind filled with such reflections, David came with his thank-offering to God, and called upon his soul, and all that was within him, to bless that infinite goodness which preserved him in the time of his calamity. It is, however, quite immaterial on what occasion the Psalmist ascribes to God the praise of healing all his diseases.

In nothing, perhaps, can pious minds see more distinctly the good hand of God, than in the plagues and pains to which sin has subjected their dying bodies.

I. Disease itself affords us one of our richest luxuries. This remark will seem more paradoxical than it really is. But I presume no one who has been laid upon the bed of pain, will consider the proposition false. There are moments, when, as the poet sings,

We shift from side to side by turns,  
And 'tis a poor relief we gain,  
To change the *place* but keep the *pain*.

In the attacks of disease, the jaded spirit is restless and perhaps rebellious. A day has sometimes seemed an age, and a night a little eternity. The sun has seemed to stop in his course, and the moon has delayed her going down. The index that told of the passing hours, seemed riveted to the point where it stood.

But the paroxysm subsides, and the pleasure then felt in a single moment, outweighs an hour of perfect health. To be able to breathe without a groan, is then more pleasant, than when one may wander the fields in May, and catch the richest, softest zephyr that ever fanned creation. In these precious intervals, every minute gathers the comforts of an hour, and every hour the pleasures of a month. It is impossible to describe, to one who has not known the joy of a kind and timely release from the fierceness of disease, the exquisite enjoyments of such an hour. And in this we see the goodness of God. "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." There may remain still great weakness, and much, that in other circumstances, would be called distress; but this is all forgotten amid the luxury of a temporary release, and a hope still better. One that has entirely escaped those severe attacks which immediately strip life of its comforts, darkens every prospect, and unhinges the mind from the pursuit of science, friendship, and piety, has failed to enjoy one of the sweetest repasts ever tasted, except in some hours of divine refreshment. Now, how good is God, that, since we deserve and expect to be scourged, he should mingle, with the pains and miseries of the sick-bed, such high enjoyments! Should enable us to extract from the very agonies of a tortured body, high and precious delights! If I should look through the fields of creation, for some one high and paramount testimony of the Divine beneficence, beside the gift a Savior, I should despair of finding one that would lead me more promptly to absolute assurance of God's love, than I am led by the seasons of gracious relief that *interlard* the agonies of the sick-bed. But for these relaxations from suffering, how soon would nature sink, even by the slightest disease! How many days would one endure the unceasing rage of a burning fever? the perpetual throbbing of a mangled limb! the gripe of a choleric? or even the aching of a tooth? How soon would life go out in agony, with any disease that attacks us, did not nature recruit her strength, while the disease intermits its rage. A few hours, when the pains have been unceasing, have often brought to the sepulchre the very champions of our race, men who had seemed to defy death, in any other armor, but the forked lightning, or the eruptions of some treacherous *Ætna* or *Vesuvius*.

Now, God would have been good, if his judgments had not been so mingled with mercy; if diseases had never quit the contest till life was conquered, or the hand of God stayed the plague. Then the aching tooth had proved mortal, and an infection of the small-

est joint had in a few days carried putrefaction to the very fountain of life. Hence, we can make no calculation as to the probable issue of any disease. If the disease makes its attack at somewhat distant periods, nature has time to recruit and to heal, but if there be no periods of respite, the scene is soon closed.

II. We see Divine goodness in *the efforts that nature makes to effect her own cure*. On this point, perhaps, the physician could instruct you more than the Divine; and the fact is obvious, to every discerning mind, that nature is often her own best physician. Many of the remedies which ignorance prescribes in the hour of sickness and of death, are so many barriers to the speedy return of health. The limb that has been wounded by the luckless knife, would often heal in a few hours, if the wound could be bathed only with its own blood, and the severed fibres be permitted to join their wounded parts. How soon will the fractured bone join its broken parts, and become as firm as before! How often will nature create some new disease, that it may rid itself of the dangers and the miseries engendered by some other! The palate takes disgust at food, when the stomach has lost its power to digest; and the food, if received, would endanger life. How often, when the stomach has received the deadly potion, which to retain would be quick destruction, does it exert all its power to cast back the poison and keep life in its seat! The very thorn that pierces the plowman's foot, is thrown from its unwelcome bed by nature's own efforts.

Were I more of a physician, I should love to enlarge this article—it develops the goodness of God. Many are wounded when no surgeon is near; many are subjected to disease who are unable to employ a physician; and it often happens that he who should cure is ignorant of the nature of the disease, and plies all his skill to prevent nature from doing her office. In these distressing cases, it often happens that nature cures herself. She attacks the disease, and, in spite of every hindrance, conquers and cures.

Brethren, when I thus speak of nature, I do not use that word as many do, who intend to exclude a God from his own creation. By *nature*, I mean the unseen operation of his hand who healeth all our diseases; I mean God himself, operating by certain laws which he has indented upon every part of our frame. The cure is effected without a miracle, but not without the finger of God. This we learn from the text. If we had to wait when attacked by disease, till some angel came from heaven with the appropriate

specific, or till God himself spoke, as he did in Israel's camp, and bid the disease abate, we should be no more dependent than now on the immediate agency of God. This is the very thought of the text—David, when diseased, was cured like other men, by the laws of matter, and by human means; still he takes occasion to bless and praise Jehovah as him who healeth all our diseases.

III. The *great variety of specifics* found in every part of the creation, for the various diseases of men, speak the Divine goodness. Probably there is not a plant or shrub that grows but yields us either food or medicine. The severest poisons are, at length, in many instances, considered the safest and speediest remedies. They have almost all become tame and manageable, and, like food itself, are hurtful only when taken without due regard to time and quantity. The discoveries of every year add new light to this interesting subject. The mineral and vegetable kingdoms are constantly pouring their treasures into the chamber of distress. And there seems an almost inexhaustible variety. Hence they furnish a specific for every disease. Even that most dire of all plagues, the hydrophobia, a disease which I can scarcely mention without horror, is thought at length to yield to the virtue of one plant, very common in all countries. If the serpent bite, the remedy is found on the spot. If one plant has poisoned us, there is another growing by its side that can counteract its influence. In some instances, two of the deadliest substances are, when united, not only harmless, but wholesome. The same shower and the same sunshine caused the poison and the antidote to vegetate side by side. They grow like brethren, perhaps resemble each other, but one has the power to kill and the other to heal.

Now in all this how good is God! He could have sent the plague without the remedy, the poison without the antidote. It would be our shame if we could withhold our praise, and yet live in a world so full of the glory of God, where every plant and shrub and mineral speaks his praise, and every disease yields to the specific he prescribes.

IV. It still is true that it is God who healeth all our diseases. But for that wisdom which he has given to man, physicians could never have known their nature, or the virtue of those plants and minerals which are their appointed remedy. And his blessing makes the means effectual. We can rely nowhere else. The physician often confesses that nothing operates as he expected. He

fears he is destroying the patient he wishes to cure. And often, when his skill has failed, the patient given over to death, and the grave-clothes preparing, God bids the patient live, and he returns to health. Nor should it derogate from his glory, when he blesses the means, for, still, his own agency performs the cure. Hezekiah was sick unto death; a prophet of the Lord was directed to assure him, that he should die. But he cried and prayed, and a respite of fifteen years was granted him. The event was now certain, and still a bundle of figs must be the means of his cure. But was it any the less God that healed him? Had the figs any power, independently on Him who had arrested the hand of death, and prolonged the life of the king?

The pious heart will have no misgivings on this point. Our life, our health, and all our comforts, are in the hands of God. "He killeth and he maketh alive, he bringeth low and raiseth up." It is good to feel that we are the creatures of his power; especially when we may hope, that we are the subjects of his grace.

## REMARKS.

1. A period of recovery from sickness should be a season of praise. If we have misery in *prospect*, it fills us with pain; but we can *look back* upon a season of great trial with pleasure. The miseries we remember are gone by; in retrospect they are softened and are harmless. But we had died had it not been for the hand of God. We had never risen from that bed, we had never enjoyed returning health. The physician would have mistaken our case, or would have used the wrong means, or would have found his specifics to be the deadliest poisons. And we had forfeited our lives, and could look for nothing but ruin as our desert. And where had we been if the hand of God had not been under us? To what world had we fled while some friend was closing our eyes—how employed, on the day of our funeral solemnities? "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

2. The life that God has made his care should be devoted to him. And we have all an interest in this particular. If we have never known the attacks of disease, it was God who purified the air we breathed, and warded off the pestilence that walketh in darkness. And if otherwise, if life has met with some interruption, and we have been called occasionally to the sick bed, it was God who healed us. In either case we are wholly the Lord's. Whether we feel our obligations or not, will not alter the case.

God is good, and deserves our service, whether we think and feel, or are thoughtless and stupid. There is not one, among all my readers, that does not love and serve the Lord, who can escape the charge of being a wicked and slothful servant. God has made you what you are, and given you all you have. You live by his permission, and feed on his bounty. In these circumstances, to withhold your love and your service, is impious. None can be wise, and refuse to present their bodies and souls to him as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

3. We see why many have praised the Lord upon the sick bed. It is not a place so destitute of comfort as many have supposed. The fiercer attacks of disease are separated by intervals, in which there are felt, independently of the comforts of religion, a keen and sensible pleasure; but when the heart is right with God, and these precious moments are employed in lifting a prayer, or a song, to his throne, I see nothing to prevent the joy rising to ecstasy. Even in the dying hour, the little lucid intervals of strength and reason, may witness joy unspeakable and full of glory. I do not deny that piety may operate even when the pains are on, and may even quench their fury by its ecstatic joy. But such is the immediate connection between the soul and the body, that neither can suffer alone, nor the joys of the one fail to be interrupted by the agonies of the other. Hence how welcome to the mind that longs for communion with God, are these little seasons of respite.

4. The subject will lead us to reflect with the Psalmist, on the wondrous mechanism of our natures: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous is thy loving kindness, O Lord." There is one noted instance on record of a physician who was an infidel, till he had occasion to dissect a human body. He then declared that he could be an infidel no longer; that he saw in the structure of the body the traces of the finger of God. But we may all know enough to make us ashamed of our infidelity, without the aid of surgical instruments, or operations. When we think of our bodies, how delicately strung, how easily injured, how liable to disease, and yet, ordinarily, how healthy and how firm, we can ascribe it only to God.

Our life contains a thousand springs,  
And dies if one be gone;  
Strange, that a harp of thousand strings,  
Should keep in tune so long.

But when we rise higher, and contemplate the union of the soul

and body, and survey the delicate ligatures that bind them together, the mind finds an enlarged field of dignified and pious contemplation. 'The numerous inlets of pleasure; the varied appetites finding their full enjoyment in the temperate use of the good things that God has strewed about our path; and our varied diseases finding their cure or their alleviations, in specifics that grow under our feet, and in addition to these the pleasures of those very sicknesses that were added in mercy; how loudly do they proclaim the beneficence of God.

5. To be thankful, then, would seem a first law of nature. And to be ungrateful, a charge brought against the whole heathen world, was adding as the last item to the climax of our degradation and ruin. A people *rational, sensitive, and immortal*, if they have no revelation of God, and no hopes of a future blessedness beyond the grave, should not have been pronounced ungrateful:—

“ The brutes obey thy will,  
And bow their necks to men;  
But we, more base, more brutish things,  
Reject thine easy reign.”

## SERMON XXXVIII

### THE MAN OF GOD DEVELOPED.

JOHN XV. 19.

Ye are not of the world.

It has always been the wish of the enemies of truth, to amalgamate the Church with the world. They gain by this means, in their estimation, several distinct, and important advantages. Hence a gospel is current, that bends all its efforts, to do away the distinctions, between God's people, and the men of the world. The Christian character is let down, till all its beauty, and all its honors are in the dust. It is plead that the Christian need not differ widely from other men. He may retain his evil heart of unbelief, may pursue the world as he has done, may cultivate the same pride of character, may bury himself in scenes of dissipation, and may be, in all respects, the same man of the world, as previously to his hope and his profession. If he should sometimes be profane, and occasionally gamble, and be habitually hard, bordering upon roguery, in his commerce, and trifle with Scripture, and sing a merry song, or be overtaken by any vice that is fashionable, that is not low and vulgar; all this is permitted to affix no stain upon his Christian character.

He may be in full league with the guilty population of the apostacy, need perform no duties, nor embrace any doctrines, not relished by the ungodly, nor encompass himself with any of that sacredness of character that brings a sword. Thus the man of God is robbed of every feature of holiness, that can possibly distinguish him from the mass of the ungodly; and the men of the world have only to adopt the creed, and make oath to the covenant, and come to the consecrated table, and the work is done.

They need have no knowledge of that new birth, which the Lord Jesus pressed upon Nicodemus; need not be translated out of darkness into marvellous light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God; need not disturb themselves with repentance, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, nor exhibit that transformation of character which shall evince them risen with Christ, and seeking

those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Thus the Lord Jesus is made to martial a band of miscreants. He has the attitude of a rebellious prince, who mingles with a multitude of rebels, enlists them under his banner, demanding neither loyalty nor duty, and winks at all the deeds of wrong and of outrage which they have committed against the throne and the kingdom. In pursuing the subject, *I shall give a Scriptural account of the secluded character of believers, and show, that their amalgamation with the world, would both injure them, and the ungodly with whom they are associated.*

I. *I am to give a Scriptural account of the secluded character of the believer.* Said an apostle, to those who believe in Christ, and to whom he is precious, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into marvellous light." And said another apostle, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I have made this long quotation, because almost every clause bespeaks the secluded character of the believer.

Said our Lord to his disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore shall the world hate you." Often did he say, that none could be his disciples, but such as would deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow him.

Now the very idea of a Church, implies a secluded and peculiar people. Why have any creed, or covenant, or discipline, but that God's people must have a character, and perform duties, and sustain relationships, that belong not to the world at large. I know there is a sense in which they must both grow together until the harvest. God's people must stay in this world till they have ri-

pened for heaven ; but they may be in the world, and still be the secluded, and retiring, and peculiar, and heavenly-minded people, which God requires them to be.

Hence to amalgamate the Church with the world, is to thwart the Divine plan, and join what God has sundered. The purpose of God to give his people at last a world by themselves, and publicly separate them from the ungodly in the scene of judgment, placing the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left ; speaks plainly that distinctness of character, interest, and condition, which becomes them, and is enjoined upon them, in the present life. In no Scripture are they confounded with the unregenerate. Their distinctness is kept up, through the whole series of epithets given them in the book of God ; saint and sinner, clean and unclean, righteous and wicked, holy and unholy, believer and unbeliever, godly and ungodly.

II. *The amalgamation of God's people with the world will injure them.* Men have shown great zeal in proselyting the world to a visible fellowship with the church, as if all that is desirable were gained, when men are brought to put on the garb of piety. But assuredly nothing is gained *to the Church*. She receives no accession of strength, or beauty, when the multitudes of the ungodly come to her solemn feasts, and enter the enclosures of her covenant. The army of God that goes out to wage war with sin, and darkness, and misery, can operate with far more efficiency, when none are enlisted but the loyal. Permit the enemy to enter the sacred enclosures of Zion, and what can you hope for, but that in the time of the seige, they will betray her interests, and open her gates to the enemy ?

It is when the church is pure as Christ would have her, that she can know her strength, and however small her numbers, can defend her interests and preserve her honors. But when polluted with a mass of unregeneracy, she is paralyzed and exposed. She moves to every onset, wielding a burden, that renders impossible every prompt and vigorous exertion. So the host of Gideon, while it embraced thousands who were afraid, could achieve nothing. The three hundred when separated from the multitude, could do more than thirty thousand.

Our Lord preferred to be followed by a little faithful band, rather than an army of ill-chosen and ungodly men. He could have gathered into his Church, if he would have lowered his requisitions, a mass of Scribes, and Pharisees, and Saducees, and law-

yers. Had he been less austere, to use the term his foes employed, he could have swelled his little flock to a countless multitude, and could have selected from them a soldiery, that would have made him a king, and built him up an empire. Had he but proclaimed, that he would feed by miracle the multitudes that would follow him, he could easily have outnumbered the army of Xerxes, and could have obliged the world to do him homage. But his cause would have suffered, and he could no longer have said, that his kingdom was not of this world.

When the influence of Constantine poured in upon the Church an unwieldy mass of nominal Christianity, the result was that the sinew of action was paralyzed. There ensued the dark ages, in which there was swept, from what had been the Church, almost the last vestige of truth and holiness. There was more real light and strength in the camp of that little band which fled from her sword into the wilderness, than was found in the whole Catholic communion.

And the same will be the result whenever the same experiment is tried. Bring down the standard of piety till men totally depraved shall covet the children's bread, and you have perverted the whole design of a Christian Church. The equipments of the gospel no longer adorn her soldiery, nor the Captain of her salvation lead her on to victory and glory. Hence the design to break down all distinction between the children of God and the unsanctified, and lead within the enclosures of the Church a band of God's enemies, is assuredly of all the intrigues of the prince of darkness, one of the most daring and desperate. While it pretends to strengthen the Church, it makes a deep and broad incision in her arteries, and lets out her very life blood. While it professes a wish to beautify her, so that the ungodly are charmed with her visage, it does but constitute her an image of marble, cold, blind, deaf, dumb, and powerless. While it holds out a wish to guard her interests, to watch her gates, and man her fortresses; it does but covenant with her foes, and in the dark hour of midnight, while her watchmen sleep, gives the enemy possession of her towers.

The men of this world can never be the beauty or the strength of Zion. The Lord Jesus Christ will have a Church, that puts on his image, and reflects his glory, that can be a nursery for heaven, that fosters in her bosom his own disciples, and will stand, *herself* a monument of his redeeming power. She is a city set on a hill, and her light must shine. She must have on all the features

of beauty seen in her Master, and show out to the world every line of comeliness found in his image. There must be written on her banner, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

And can all this be, when the Church shall be composed of ungodly men? Will they put on the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, or act out the graces of the Spirit, or have any light to spare, by which the darkness of this apostate world may be illuminated? Can their science, and their courteousness, and their high sounding titles, become a substitute for the ornaments of the Spirit? Let monarchs come in with their diadems, and princes with their trappings, and the multitudes of the learned with their philosophy, but who have none of them been taught at the feet of Jesus; and is the Church thus made beautiful? Ah, it would depend on who saw her. She would dazzle the eye which could look only on the outward appearance, but would be deformity and corruption in his view who looketh on the heart.

What will the Church gain then, when she has opened her bosom to the multitude? May the believer look for *individual enjoyment*, from being associated in covenant with those who are wise and honorable in this world? Will such fellowship ensure to him esteem and respect, from those who shall thus have pledged themselves to treat him as a brother? We answer, *no*. When the men of the world have put on the garb of piety, facts assure us, that they will by their ungodly conversation bring rebuke and shame upon the Lord's people? Believers will not run with them to the same excess of riot. Hence their scruples of conscience, which will still render them a peculiar people, will not fail to bring upon them the sneer and the contempt, and the buffetings of the whole proselyted brotherhood. The stricter principles, and purer doctrines, and higher standard of Christian morality, adopted by the real disciples of the Lord Jesus, will be denominated enthusiasm; and whatever they may do more than others, will go to sink their reputation, and cover them with reproach.

What then are we to think of that gospel, so called, which aims at this monstrous confederacy? which would flatly contradict, or artfully neutralize, every requisition of discipleship in the family of Christ, and thus mingle the Church with the world? On what page of inspiration shall we find the solitary text, that thus confounds the Lord's people with the multitudes that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? And who would venture to make such an experiment *on the life of the church*,

unless unequivocally instructed from heaven? Alas, the experiment *has been made*, and *is making*, the Divine authority to the contrary notwithstanding. Many Churches are bleeding and expiring under the operation of this philosophy. It has polluted their creed, and changed their ministry, and robbed them of their covenant, and thrown open the doors of their fellowship to the wide world. The hedges of the vineyard are broken down, and the result is, that the boar out of the wood devours the vine. I proceed to say,

III. *That the men of the world are injured no less than the Church*, by this promiscuous amalgamation of those who have no similarity of temper. Let me remark,

1. *A profession of religion increases the disposition and gives men better opportunities to do mischief*: and this, it will be acknowledged, is a curse, and not a blessing. I know it has been said that the enemies of the Church may be restrained, by the gospel being so accommodated to their taste as to win them to its faith and its fellowship. Do away, it is said, those doctrines that they disrelish, because harsh and unreasonable, and those traits of Christian character that give offence, and they will all rush into the fellowship of the gospel, and be good and harmless Christians!

This point the history of the Church shall answer. Judas gained admission into the fold, had access to the Lord of glory, and won the confidence of the unsuspecting disciples. But Judas was still a thief and a devil, and became the leader of that band, that broke in upon the retreat of prayer, and arrested and bore away to the judgment seat the Son of God. There probably was not another wretch in Israel, who could have pocketed the price of blood, and gone as he did, to seize, and bind, and sacrifice the Lamb of God. The foe had to wait, after he had whetted his teeth for the prey, till one, placed in the very presence of truth itself, should become sufficiently hardened, through its perverted influence, to administer the betraying kiss, and sell his holy Master. So Julian had done the Church far less injury, had he not been nursed in her bosom. It was there his heart acquired that hardness, and his conscience that obduracy, that qualified him to be the patron of that gross, and God-provoking idolatry, which kindled its fires so zealously about the saints of the Most High God, and sent many from the stake and cross to heaven.

Ah, and before we leave this bloody spot, in search of other facts, all establishing the same truth, I would point you up to heaven, and tell you, that devils could be made, only in that pure and

happy world!! It was there, right where God and the Lamb are unceasingly adored, that the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, was schooled, and disciplined, and equipped;—for what? for the greatest usefulness, and the highest honors, like that of Gabriel, had he proved obedient; but becoming a rebel, and carrying all his heaven-taught science with him down to hell, he was prepared to display a cunning, and a prowess, in deeds of wrong, that have justly drawn upon him the epithet of the *old serpent*.

You may now pass down, from the empyreal apostate, through the whole catalogue of baptized worldlings, and tell me if one of them was restrained by his profession, from doing mischief to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. I know that their initiation into her mysteries, and their unwarranted touch of her consecrated things, have led them to change their *mode* of warfare, and to attack her interests and her honors, in a covert and disguised assault, made in the night time, while men slept. There have been few open and avowed infidels, who have held their place within the enclosures of the Church. But they have done none the less mischief, but the more, because they lurked in ambush. The foe who meets you in open day, you may vanquish far more easily, than he who comes under the covert of the black and dark night.

The thought I venture to urge is, that the superior growth of depravity, acquired under the touch of sealing ordinances through the perversions of a deceived heart, have made men the *more inimical* to the Church of Christ, and the *more desperate* in their attacks upon her interests and her honors. Hence some of the worst of men have come from the house of prayer, where they had been familiar with all the hallowed objects of piety. No young men have sworn more profanely, or gambled more desperately, or abused the Scriptures more wantonly, or sneered at piety more contemptuously, than the wayward youth, who had been accustomed to bow at the family altar. Not that such cases are so common as the contrary; for a pious education is the most promising path to heaven; but when they do happen, they are noticed, and afford us awful proof that truth perverted, is more deadly in its effects than error.

Tell me if God has ever directed, that the Church should tame her enemies, by placing them in her bosom? Is it thus that we tame the viper and the asp? If such would be the course of wisdom, we have not done half enough. The Church should have no

enclosures, no creed, no covenant, no watch, no discipline, no barrier that should operate to keep the vilest of men from entering her holiest places. Let us spread at once the net of a loose and superficial discipleship over the whole multitude of the ungodly, and thus, by a single effort, put a period to the Church's long protracted conflicts, and save men the pain and the danger of doing mischief. But there is yet room to doubt whether God has prescribed any such means for taming depravity, or terminating the conflicts of his people; and whether the Church has not by this time-serving policy, multiplied her wars and her dangers.

Why will we not look about us, and see what testimony our eyes will furnish us. Who are the enemies of the Church in the present day? who lead in the attacks upon her? who unsettle her ministry? who dilute her creed? who abridge her rights? who rob her of her interests? who, by setting at defiance her laws, and drawing upon themselves her tardy and hesitating anathemas, distract her peace? Ah, look once into the churches that are rent with division, and party, and strife; and tell me, if in each case there is not some son of Belial whom, like the serpent in the fable, the Church had warmed in her bosom, but now has to feel the effects of his venom? Where in the churches is there division, and strife, and hatred, and there is no *professor* warm in the quarrel? A single man, can go out infuriated from the sacramental cup, and spread a wider ruin than a score of abler men, about whom there have never been cast the sacred enclosures of the covenant. O, I wish I had not half the evidence I have, that I announce a solemn and sacred truth that ought to have been publicly announced far sooner. Whatever, then, a profession of godliness may do for unregenerate men, it does not curtail their power or disposition for doing mischief. I remark,

2. An amalgamation of unregenerate men, with the Church, *does not increase their means of becoming holy and happy*. No plea has been so popular, with those who have wished to push unregenerate men into a closer contact with sacred things, than that they are thus furnished with better means, and a fairer prospect of obtaining salvation. It has been the boast of some modern preachers, that under their ministrations, ungodly men are induced to quit the ranks of infidelity, and become Christians. They have skill, it seems, in rendering the gospel palatable, and men will receive it from them, who would have perished, before they would have received it at the lips of a harsh, and homely, and unfeeling orthodoxy! Not to stop now, to inquire whether these converts are

not rendered tenfold more the children of hell, than previously to their having been disciplined; let me ask whether the means of grace used with them, are thus increased? and whether their prospects of heaven are thus brightened?

That same gospel, which would induce the unsanctified, without being renewed, to avow themselves believers, and thus teach them in the outset to utter a lie; would not be very likely to teach them much truth, after their being drawn within the covenant. And moreover, if an impression contrary to truth must be made to bring them to the house of God, or within the enclosures of a Christian church, it is very doubtful, whether they would afterward listen seriously to the truth. The same pleasant song that charmed them at the first, must continue to hold them, or they would escape like the bird from the grasp of the charmer. They must have a gospel as false throughout, as was that first lesson, that induced them to quit visibly the fellowship of infidelity. And if so, they remain in all the darkness of their former state, with no more chance of being enlightened, than under the ministration of a Bramin, or a Mufti. Or suppose your polished and soothing preacher has done his part, and induced the infidel to abandon his creed, for some general confession of the truth of the Bible, its doctrines having been frittered down till he is satisfied; and he has exchanged the school of infidelity for the Church of Christ;—suppose this done, and the child thus born delivered over to be nursed, and reared, under a better gospel; let me ask, if that one fatal error, which he has adopted, will not operate like a corrupt leaven, to poison the whole system of truth. You may bring the man to the sanctuary, where is taught the faith once delivered to the saints, and chain him to his pew, and pour in truth upon his ear for half a century, and still you will never reach his conscience, till you make him feel, and he becomes willing to learn, that his heart is alienated from God, and that the profession he has made is a lie. You must teach him that the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; that he is an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and is not, and never has been, in covenant with God; and thus at the very first push of truth, thrust him from his strong hold, or he stands shielded against any attack that can be made upon him by the true gospel. Thus in order to make him listen to the truth, or in other words, to furnish him better means of grace, you bring him up to the communion table, and when there you can make him feel nothing, till you show him, that the incense and the sacrifice he offers is abomination to the Lord.

It does seem to me that when you have made the unrenewed man a professor of godliness, you have placed him where he cannot be taught the gospel. You have prepared him a shield for his conscience and his heart, that will effectually protect him, against any thrust that truth can make. It is then doubted, whether sealing ordinances are at all likely to become means of grace, to wicked men, who are admitted to those ordinances, while in impotence and unbelief.

I take it for granted, what is too evident to admit a doubt, that a mere profession does not alter the man's moral character in the least. He believes no truth that he did not believe before, is as much an infidel as ever, and does no duty that he did not; unless you please to say that coming to the communion is a duty, and this we deny. To do so is duty, if the heart be right with God, not otherwise. Indeed nothing is done, that deserves the name of duty while God is not feared and loved. And nothing will be attempted to be done in this case, merely because God commands it, but all because consistency of conduct requires it. There may be some attempt at prayer, and greater punctuality in attending upon a preached gospel, but it must all be, from the very nature of the case, a *show* of piety. The profession has not altered the man, either in heart or conduct, enough to give him another character, either in the view of God or man. How then are his means of holiness, or his chance of heaven at all altered for the better?

Beside there is produced by attending upon ordinances, when there is no piety, a positive hardness of heart, and obtuseness of conscience, which tends to remove the man farther than ever from God. It is trifling with the most holy things, and the man who shall do this, must rise to a pitch of profanity and of daring, that cannot fail to beget an abiding insensibility. It is like the deed of Uzziah, king of Judah, who, for daring to assume the priest's office, was made a leper, and continued so all his life. God will be sanctified in them that draw near to him. Thus are we driven to the conclusion, that when the ungodly come to the consecrated elements, their means of grace are *not increased*, while their prospects of heaven are *greatly darkened*. I close with one general

## REMARK.

How above all price is an honest and distinguishing gospel. In the

1. Place, such a gospel *is the only true gospel*. My audience, I

hope, are persuaded, that we have a distinguishing Bible. God intended, when he inspired his word, to give us, not the means of guessing at the truth, but of knowing it. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Hence he has made his word plain, so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err. Now we should depart from honesty, to either teach, or suffer ourselves to be taught, *indistinctly*, from this plain Bible. There must be some base design, when the truth of God, that stands intelligible on the record, is rendered obscure and confused in the lips of the publisher. The doctrines clearly taught in the Bible, must be made evident by the preacher; and the characters, there distinctly marked, not be by him blended and confounded: else we can easily be sure, that we have not before us the honest legate of the skies.

2. It is only an honest and distinguishing gospel, *that does honor to the Savior*. Its grand object is to redeem men from all iniquity, and purify to the Lord Jesus Christ a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The Church it gathers, and feeds, and comforts, has on the image of her Lord, stands out from the world, an illustrious monument of his sanctifying power, and tells all the generations that pass by, how holy, and how glorious, and how mighty, is her Redeemer. Christ has declared that his people are like him, he is formed in them the hope of glory. But if you mix up the Church with the world, and the people of the saints of the Most High cannot be known from the multitudes with whom they are amalgamated, and you call this whole mass *the Church*, which is expected to wear the image of her Lord, then you grossly libel his character.

If the ungodly, as they look upon this Church, are to learn from its character, what is the character of the Savior; and from its conduct, what is the life and conversation he would approve; and from its temper, what is the Spirit of Christ; then is the Savior degraded and abused by such a Church, and the whole design of his mission covered with reproach. He came to save his people from their sins. Are these, then, the people he has saved? these worldlings! these profane men! these gamblers! these covetous men! these ambitious men! these proud, litigious, thoughtless, prayerless men! Are all these the saved of Jesus Christ? this the multitude that he has washed from their sins in his blood!!

Thus an indistinct gospel builds up a worldly Church, and that Church by its open, and barefaced, and abounding iniquities, brings reproach and contempt upon its Redeemer. But let the Church

be pure as he would have it, be composed of only such as will put on his image and glory in being like him ; then the world will take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, and he will be honored in the house of his friends.

3. It is only an honest and distinguishing gospel *that will be useful*.

It gives the means of knowing their own character. Its very first object is to distinguish between the clean and the unclean, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Then the Christian discovers that he is in Christ Jesus, and takes the comfort of it ; and the unregenerate learn that they are in the gall of bitterness, and under the bonds of iniquity, and feel the pain of it, and apprehend the danger of it. He will have many a song, and they feel many a pang under such a gospel ; he may have high hopes of future blessedness, and they many strong anticipations of the wrath to come.

A gospel that is not distinguishing, by building up a worldly Church, withholds from sinners one of the mightiest means of grace. There is nothing that so much affects men, as to see religion embodied, and acted out by the people of God. The gospel then presents itself to their consciences in a living shape, and carries with it an influence that is irresistible. There the law is, and there the gospel is, right before their eyes all day in their houses, and in their streets ; and they must die or embrace it. But under a loose and indistinct gospel, there is no such example, and of course no such influence exerted. If there should be some few in the Church, who honor the religion they profess, which is not very likely under a gospel that does not feed them with the truth, still their influence will not be felt. They will be nicknamed, and despised, and cast out, as sour, unsocial and austere beings, of whom none may speak kindly, and with whom none will associate. Thus the ungodly under such a gospel, lack one of the most efficacious means of grace.

Hence under such a gospel there is no reason to hope, that sinners will repent and turn to God, and live. Men will not be alarmed till they know their danger, nor will know their danger till they learn their true character. Hence under a gospel, that does not distinguish, that rears not a pious Christian Church, that mixes up the Lord's people with the world, calls the whole congregation brethren, and deals out the promises without discrimination ; sinners cannot be said to enjoy the means of grace, will never

bécome alarmed, and will never repent, and will die in their sins and where Christ is they can never come.

To the people of God, who are under a process of sanctification through the truth, it is of unspeakable importance that they enjoy a distinguishing gospel. Else they will ripen but slowly for heaven, will not enjoy the comforts of religion, nor be extensively useful. To place them under a tame and temporizing gospel, is like the attempt to grow plants in the shade. They may just live, but they can neither be vigorous nor healthful. Place the men of heavenly birth, where they can have the whole truth, and feel its influence. Then they "spring up, as willows by their water-courses." Every day advances them in the Divine life. Their religion is healthful and vigorous, and there is reason to believe that they will feel the blessed effects for ever. They will be, when they die, better prepared for heaven, will take a higher station, and shine more illustriously in the celestial firmament.

O, then, suffer not a Christian *for a world*, to spend his days under a loose and indiscriminating gospel. Advise him to sell all he has and buy a better gospel, or go where the truth *is* proclaimed, that they may daily feel its influence, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Amen.

## SERMON XXXIX.

MAN HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER.—No. I.

GENESIS IV. 9.

Am I my brother's keeper?

THUS early did the apostacy of the human family display itself in murder, in falsehood, in supreme selfishness, and in gross and daring impudence. Cain, you know, had murdered his brother, and he now *lies* in the hope to conceal it from God, and impudently repels the insinuation that it was at all his business to be his brother's guardian. He would have no care of his brother; he might die or live, it was no matter that concerned him. His own interest was care enough for him; his brother must be his own keeper. This same principle of depravity, *supreme selfishness*, has ever predominated in the breast of the human family, and may be placed at the head of the causes that operate to make and keep the world miserable. Yet the question put to Cain implies that God will govern us by another law. *We are to know* what has become of our brother. His life and health and happiness is to be the object of our care, and that by the authority of God himself. As he would not suffer Cain, so neither will he suffer us to throw off this obligation. And what then becomes of the argument by which men quiet their consciences, while they make no exertion to bless or save the human family? When God shall make inquisition for blood, and shall inquire of us as he did of the first murderer, Where are all those millions of heathen that lived in your day? what reply shall we make? When he inquires, Where are all those profane men and Sabbath-breakers that lived in your time? Where are all those intemperate men that came under your notice, and formed a character for perdition with your connivance? Shall we be able to wield successfully that argument of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Or is there some other law like this, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's." Wealth is here added by the translators, but it applies as well to other things as to wealth. We are to seek another's health, and happiness, and salvation, as well as our own. "Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Perhaps by *some such law* God will at last deal with us, and not by that contracted self-love which Cain made his only law of life and action. And if so, why should men act on a principle now, that must be abandoned in the day of retribution? One would not like to enter upon some litigated case, having planned his defence on a principle totally different from that on which alone his cause can stand. Wisdom would dictate a far other course. We are all looking forward to the judgment of the great day, and *it will come* whether we look for it or not, and God has given us the principles on which he will proceed. By these, then let us prejudge ourselves, that in the great day we may stand.

On application to the law and the testimony we shall find that God has made us all our brother's keeper. And would we know who is our brother, the same book will bring within the circle of our brotherhood the whole human family. Hence the obligation to do good to *all men* as we have opportunity, will come down a mighty burden if you please, upon all our shoulders. Cain defended himself on a spurious principle, and the judgment of God overthrew it. There is not, then, a man in our streets but is obligated to look so far into his neighbor's concerns, as to know, if possible, whether there is not some good he should do him. God will not consider it a wanton interference, an abridgement of our neighbor's liberty, if we so far interest ourselves as to settle the question that there is no point in which we can bless him. Did we see his house on fire in the night time, we should haste to it, and burst open his door, and if he slept too soundly to be waked, should throw him out of his house, and none would consider it a gratuitous intermeddling in another man's matters. But the law of God does not say that we may interfere merely to promote his wealth. Can we in any point do him good? If so, the obligation rests on us.

Now apply this principle to the case of that multitude who are scorching up their vitals by intemperance. Is it abridging their liberties if we interpose? Can it be viewed as wanton officiousness if we snatch the cup from their lips? Suppose it a quicker poison that would take life in an hour, might we then dash the cup away? Suppose the father drinking it would poison and kill his whole family; might we then be so officious as to pity his wife and children, and rudely force the potion away from him? Suppose it a razor or a halter, instead of the cup, and you must become officious or his wife is a widow in an hour, and his children orphans; may you act in that case? Will one oppose

the man who is opening his jugulars, and must be a corpse in an hour, and at the same time furnish the instrument to another with which he opens a vein that will dispatch him in a week? By what kind of consistency do men sustain this mode of reasoning? Does God see any difference in these cases? Or has mere human sophistry separated what God hath joined together?

*Let us look a little while at the right we have, and the obligation we are under, to interfere in the case before us, and dam, divert, or dry up that flood of intemperance that is pouring desolation upon society.* On this subject we claim in our favor every law of nature, of God, and of man. We claim the obligation of every law of kindness, humanity, self-preservation, and necessity. And we know of no law that bears in any shape upon our case, that does not declare most unequivocally our duty in this matter. Let us look,

I. *At the law of God.* Whether the divine law will be felt on this subject or not, its authority should be read. Many will plead that it principally enjoins abstaining from injuring our fellow men. We assert that it enjoins more, and renders duty positive exertion to do them good. "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Here is authorized and even enjoined the very attack we would make upon this vice. And we have here the rule of our perseverance; we are not to cease while sin is upon him. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear." Here we are authorized, if the case requires, to make our rebuke loud and public. Good magistrates are represented as being a terror to evil doers, as enjoined of God to use coercion to keep men back from sin. The discipline of Christ's church is founded in the principle that it is right to hold men back from doing wrong by all the moral force that can be applied. The laws of Israel required even that men be held back from sin by the apprehended punishment of death. The parent must inform against his disobedient child, even when the issue must be that his child be stoned to death. The sacredness of the Sabbath was by divine direction guarded by the sanction of death. Thus we sufficiently see that the law of God enjoins more upon men than merely abstaining from injuring their fellow-men, enjoins also the duty of keeping them back from sin. Not merely may I not kill, but I must hinder one from killing himself. Not merely may I not steal, but I must hold back my neighbor from theft. Not merely may I not, by any possible construction, put the cup to my neigh-

bor's mouth, but must, if possible, prevent him from putting the cup to his own mouth. The law of God is not that tame negative, spiritless code that some would render it, but is exceeding broad, and binds to all those actions that comport with its spirit. There is no fear, then, that by any moral power we shall put forth in reclaiming the world from its beastly indulgences, we shall not be sustained by the law of God. We shall be condemned if we do not put forth such power by that very law. I remark,

II. That the *religion of Jesus Christ* embodies, as one of its first principles, the duty of restraining men from sin. It is difficult to view the operations of this religion as distinct from the operations of the law of God. Its uniform aim is, as far as it relates to men, to render them holy and happy. To do this it would enlighten the world; warn them of the coming judgment; exert all possible restraining moral influence over the wicked passions, and place before men every fascinating motive to flee from the wrath to come. The spirit of Jesus Christ characterizes this religion. He came from heaven purposely that he might throw himself between the sinner and the misery he earns, and thus block up the way of death with his own body and blood. And he stands and pleads with wretched men. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness like the waves of the sea." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die."

The religion of the gospel is a benevolent religion. Its possessor is not content to be happy alone, but would extend his own enjoyment to the whole race of the apostacy; would rouse a dormant world from the sleep of death, and break them off from the habits that are destroying them. He has read in the sacred book that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God; hence he sees heaven shut for ever against the whole multitude, and nothing before them but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Here piety becomes tenderly and laboriously compassionate. It cares for the sufferings of the *body*, but holds it to be an infinitely more important object to save the *soul* from death.

And there is one thought on this subject that has amazing weight. Intemperance excludes men, if not wholly from the house of God, yet very lamentably from the means of grace. Where is the intemperate man that has not vacated his seat in the church meeting, in the conference room, and in the place of prayer? Who

of them attend regularly the means of grace, as those who hope to be sanctified through the truth? And they will be found to have commenced a very loose discharge of the duties of the family and the closet, if indeed these duties are not wholly abandoned! The Bible is read but little, and very few of its precious truths are treasured up, and reflected on and prayed over. The time that all these require is lost in unprofitable talk in the place of idle concourse. Thus all hope of heaven is cut off. The Sabbath becomes a perverted institution, and furnishes, instead of leisure to seek and serve the Lord, opportunity to drink and perish. Could you know the true reason in every case why men desert the sanctuary, you would find in many cases, that the insidious practice of mingling strong drink, and the temptation offered of thus devoting the sacred day of the Lord unobserved by men, are generating this habit. That day when the last and best excuse that tipplers have for the practice, will not apply that it renders them strong to labor, is spent in beastly indulgences. Thus God is twice insulted, nay, three times. The body that should be the temple of the living God is polluted; and he that pollutes the temple of God, him shall God destroy. The fruits of the earth, grown by the divine agency, are perverted from their benevolent designation. And the Sabbath of the Lord, made for man, to instruct him and fit him for the kingdom of God, is abused to a purpose more vile than any day of the seven. How God will feel while men thus employ the very hours he consecrated, in selling their souls into bondage to the devil, it can be easily conceived.

Now the heart of piety bleeds over the miseries that are coming upon this infatuated multitude, and all the laws of piety urge the believer to step in and stay the plague. I remark,

III That the *laws of humanity* give us the right, and impress the obligation to be active in putting a period to the prevalence of this destructive vice. The intemperate man, beast as he has made himself, is still a brother. He descended with us from the same common parent, nor can we by any process of reasoning throw off the relationship he sustains to us. Could he be metamorphosed into a brute, and all the relationships that tie him to men be dissolved, when he becomes intemperate, the case would alter. Then humanity would make upon us its smaller claim as when a beast suffers, or as when a serpent dies. Till then the claim of kindred calls for pity.

How ruined is the man who has accustomed himself to the arti-

ficial stimulus till the habit is fixed ! The money that should buy him food and raiment, buys him disease and pain, and despondency. That labor that should earn his family reputation and pleasure, and health, and science, goes to pull down their habitation, and cover them with rags, and feed them coarsely and scantily, and plunge them from respectable life into poverty and wretchedness. The man himself is ruined ; his health, his ambition, his intellect, and more and worse than all he can have no part in the kingdom of God. And down toward the same ruin he drags, with all the power he has, his hapless family. Suppose him to have a wife how altered is her prospect. She married a *man* ; his face was human, his breath was sweet, his heart was affectionate, his countenance spoke the kindest emotions. He promised her his heart for life, and she gave him hers. But she now embraces a savage, and must wither under his insults if not his blows, and must sue a bill from him, or wear out life in the den of a tiger. And must see her children, the pledges of an honest affection, under the training of a brute : must know that little short of a miracle can rear them to comfort, or knowledge, or character. Her high hopes for them are sunk, and she becomes thankful if she may but keep them with her and furnish a rag to cover them, and a piece of bread to feed them. She must see her comforts all torn from her, the very bed she brought to him, and the conveniences her father gave her. She had begun to move in circles of high character, and had taken an elevation from which she must now come down. She was the mistress of her house, but is now a menial. And all this, were it all, would be comparatively nothing. She must see her companion come down from independence to beggary, from reputation to neglect, from health and promise to disease and gloominess, and death and hell. Once, perhaps, she hoped to live with him in heaven, but as no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God, she abandons this hope, and tries now to save her children. Here again her burden is a world. How can she hope to counteract the influence of a father's example, and unteach a father's precepts, and neutralize a father's influence. She had always told her children to obey their father, but if they obey him now they must die with him and be damned with him.

Thus she surveys her household with despair and sees not but that every star of her night must be covered with a deep and dark cloud. She was the mother of a promising family, and dwelt in a comfortable habitation. But her miserable associate involved his interest, and mortgaged his dwelling, and sold his lands, and gave

up his business, and she must now try to keep herself warm in that darksome hovel. I see her, on some cold December's evening, returning from the wood with her fagots, that she may keep the life-blood flowing warm in the veins of her infant. And I see her little bare-foot lads trying to repair their father's wrong, bearing on behind her some brushes for the fire. Poor lads, they hope their father will come directly and bring them home some bread. Ah, he comes yonder, but has spent the shilling to glut his appetite, and another is leading him home. Go now and meet that abused wife at her door, and enter with her and take the inventory of her table, and if your heart does not ache, it is made of marble. There is nothing there to eat : if there is, the mother earned it last night when she should have been allowed to sleep.

Go now and visit her father's house, and see how many comforts lay around her cradle ; how overflowing is the table where she was reared ; how full of all life's dainties that house where she, in an evil hour, committed her person to that being who now holds her as with the paw of a panther ; and then if there is anything you will not do that can be done to stay other wives from such a destiny, and other children from such a famine, then feel that you lack the common sympathies of humanity. What can possibly give us a right to interfere, and save a fellow creature, if we have none in this case ? Where can the laws of humanity operate ? Might I tear that imploring female from the jaws of a wolf, or the mouth of a crocodile, or the rush of a cataract ? And by what law ? The law of humanity ? And is this law so binding that I must even risk my life ? Well, she may die a slower death, by the abuses of an intemperate husband, but not a surer one ; and her children may not as certainly perish as if already in the embrace of a bear, but the danger, if they are young when the father becomes a brute, is not much less imminent.

When, then, may the laws of compassion operate—when are they binding as the very law itself of God, if not in this case ? To publish the tippler, or dash in pieces his bottle, or refuse him a shelter in your house, or employ in your service, are deeds direct of compassion, if by such means we may have the remotest hope of forcing him to the necessity of abandoning his cups. If we may not do this without intrusion upon his rights, then we may not cut the halter he is hanging on ; may not dull the blade he has whetted to butcher himself ; may not extinguish the brand with which he intends to set his house or a world on fire ; may not seize the maniac and put a chain on him ; may not hunt down the

tiger who is lurking in our village for some hapless lad whom he may devour. To deprive him of citizenship, and put a guardian over him, and a prison wall around him, are the kindest deeds, if his beastly appetite has deprived him of the power of self-government. We should pray that the very same deeds may be done to us when we shall have unmanned ourselves, and rendered coercive measures of restraint indispensable. To all these measures the laws of humanity propel us.

Why have a prison for the thief, and none for the inebriate? The thief is the less dangerous man. He will do his deeds in the dark, and will not contaminate our children by his example. Why incarcerate the robber? He but causes property to change owners, while the drunkard breaks in upon the more sacred compact of marriage, sunders the parental and filial relationships, and robs the domestic circle of its comforts. The highwayman robs the stranger, the drunkard his own family. The former takes the booty and is gone; the drunkard stays to rob again and again of every shilling that is earned by his family, or given them in charity, till he has stripped the bed from under them, and the clothes from off them, and the bread from their mouths, and stays not till, if possible, he has rifled them of home, and character, and hope, and salvation. Where then is the robber with whom humanity requires us to wage war rather than with the man who is thus spoiling his own house? I know not where that compassion has originated that will tolerate a man in plundering his own house, but will hang him if he forcibly take a dollar from the stranger on the highway; that will suffer him to totally destroy the reputation of his family, but will imprison him and fine him till he is a beggar, if he slander the reputation of your daughter; that will permit him to wield day after day the weapon of death over his own poor wife and hapless children, but will fasten him up with iron bars and bolts if he once thrust the knife at your bosom.

I believe our apathy on this subject a sin that the whole sober community will have to answer for in the day of retribution. God has constituted us our brother's keeper, and will ask us directly, Where is Abel, thy brother? in a tone of remonstrance that will shake a thousand worlds. I will hint at one other law that binds us to assume this guardianship of our fellow-men.

IV. I refer to the law of *self-preservation*. I name this last, not because the most binding, but as that law which all men are least reluctant to obey. While we suffer the sin of inebriation to pre-

vail, we are filling the land with *paupers*. Who are they that become a public charge? Why, perhaps nine times in ten, the intemperate, or their families, or their descendants, to whom this vice has bequeathed penury. And who must be taxed to support them? Why the sober, civil community. From their table must go the bread to feed them, and from their forests the fuel to warm them, and from their earnings the raiment to cover them, and from their hearts the pity that relieves them in sickness, sorrow, and death. And the burden is increasing daily. Our children, if we train them soberly, may have to labor one day in seven to save from starvation the descendants of that mass of drunkards who now reel through our streets, and disturb the quiet of our evenings with their oaths and imprecations.

Ah, and more yet, our supineness is multiplying crimes and criminals. Whence the murders that so increase in our land, till they have tenfolded since our recollection? Whence the growing insecurity to travelers, and the frequency of mail robberies? Whence that amount of theft around us, till every door must be barred, and property watched with a sleepless eye? Whence the petty frauds in commerce? Whence the multiplied litigations, till some towns are about bankrupt through their influence? If ninety-nine-hundredths of all this be imputed to the unnatural and monstrous use of ardent spirits, it would not come far short of the truth.

Hence the tax upon the civil community to prosecute and imprison that army of convicts which we do not assign to the halter. May we not then try to save our property? Must we levy a perpetual assessment upon our children's children, down to the end of time, for the support of every child whose miserable father shall please, by his vices, to place upon our charity. We have pitied the English nation while their poor tax has covered at length the whole produce of their soil; but intemperance is doing the same deed for us. And if we are not wise enough, I hope our children will be, to exclude this canker-worm from our entire territory.

In the mean time, intemperance is opening hard by our house a deep and dark gulf for our offspring. We intend to educate them respectably, and to hold them distant from the drunken and miserable community around us. But how know we that some incident may not throw down our children into this community? How know we that some son of ours, while in the field with a tippler, may not learn to taste the cup, and at length scorch up his vitals with the liquid fire? How know we that some daughter

of ours, now sweet and lovely, may not at length come under the paw of some tiger-like inebriate; be lashed like a slave, and starved like a criminal, and thrown naked and exposed to the cold of winter by her inhuman husband? How know we that some large branch of our family may not become sunken down to proverbial meanness and degradation by this iniquity? and our very name be used, as we know other names to be, as expressions of all that is degraded and vicious, and improvident, and mean in human nature. In view of such possibilities, shall we still adhere to the plea of that first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" What concern of mine is it?

And who will say I have exaggerated. Have you not known some family that was promising to thus sink and rise no more? This subject presents the retailer of ardent spirits in a painful and distressingly interesting attitude. I address him in the next discourse.

## SERMON XL.\*

### MAN HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER.—No. II.

EZEKIEL III. 20.

His blood will I require at thy hand.

*Is it lawful in the sight of conscience and of God, to vend ardent spirits?*

EVERY man should be able to justify himself in the business he pursues, and when he cannot, by good and substantial arguments, should abandon it. It is a fearful thing to persevere in any course that conscience disapproves. There can be in such a case, neither peace with ourselves nor fellowship with God. Darkness, deep and ominous, must shroud our path till it is illuminated by the law of the Lord.

Can the vender of ardent spirits justify his employment? If he surveys the ground on which he stands, will he not become convinced that very soon it must sink under him?

Dear fellow-men, the Christian public has treated your case and character with great forbearance, because perhaps we had all been measurably in the same condemnation. *You vend* the poison, and too many of us suffered our money to buy it, and our families to use it. *We* approved of your offering it for sale, and you approved of our drinking it. Thus we fostered the sin between us, as in that noted case in Scripture applying to a somewhat different subject, "That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire; so they wrap it up." The importer and the distiller, and the retailer, asked a reward, and the mistaken community of purchasers uttered their mischievous desire, and so we wrapped it up.

When at length we began to wake to the subject, we could not *immediately* require you, at perhaps a great pecuniary loss, to quit the trade, till we had begun to practice some self-denial, and had abandoned the use. But if we are all under the same obligation to elevate public sentiment, the dealer must not continue in the trade till there is no one to buy, and then quit from necessity, else nei-

\* This sermon was written at a time when many conscientious people were engaged in the traffic of ardent spirits, and at about the commencement of the temperance reformation.

ther God, nor man, nor his own conscience, will allow him any credit. The reformation must feel *somewhere*, and at some time, your influence, or we shall fear that the enterprise was effected against your wishes. If you *will sell* the last gill you can, and make the last man drunk that will give you opportunity, and put in your purse the last penny that you can make the trade earn you, we shall doubt whether, if God had left it to you, the world would ever have been reformed. Part of the community, and we hope, by this time, the larger part, are mourning that you have not abandoned the trade long since; the residue may possibly hope you never will. In which of these divisions is there the most prayer? I think there can be little doubt. And you are choosing to which of these very opposite communities you will belong. Every prayer offered for the upbuilding of the Church is against you, and so is every desire that the world may be peaceful, and industrious, and happy, and holy. And it would seem as if one would hate to pocket his earnings in the face of so much prayer.

You are aware that very few good men are now your customers in this article, and that the number is still diminishing. But this, it would seem, must give you rather a direful view of your calling. The *godly* may not come around you. It has been whispered to them from heaven, that they may not come into your secrets, nor join their honor to your tipping and drunken assemblies. You are employed, it seems, on the dark side of that line, that separates the children of light from the children of darkness. Your stand is at the *tap*, where you draw off, and deal out to the most ruined part of your race, poverty, and pain, and decrepitude, and blindness, and infamy, and despair, and shame, and death.

And *all this* is not *all*, for in addition to the present plagues which your trade inflicts upon men, it promises, assuredly, to undo them for ever. It seals them over to the adversary, and confirms them the enemies of all righteousness, through all the future periods of their being. And what a horrid occupation must that be that so mars and spoils the works of God. What if the light of the last day should break in upon you with the cup of liquid fire in your hand, reaching it out to one who is at that instant hurried away to the judgment, to answer for the sin of making himself a beast at your bar, must you not follow on or go before him, and answer for the sin of vending the fire. Are you not the very man whom the Scriptures reprobate for putting the cup to your neighbor's mouth. If you will attend awhile, we will review the arguments by which you are sustained in the practice.

1. A vender of ardent spirits, on being asked why he continued in the traffic, responded, *I am sustained by the public authorities. They have licensed the trade, and I pay over to them a certain part of the profits. I can show you their hand and seal.*

But have they pledged themselves to answer for you when God shall come and make inquisition for blood? and when the vagabond husband with his haggard wife and beggared offspring, shall cry to heaven for vengeance on the man that pilfered them of bread, and clothed them with rags, and covered them with infamy?

I know they may have then gone out of office, and others may occupy their seats. Corporations, I know have their life time, and their office is temporary, and their account will be summed up in eternity. But do they incur any moral responsibility for the correctness of this enterprise? Will they stand between you and harm, in the great day of account? I know they have underwritten for your honesty and integrity, and for your good moral character, and have made oath to all these points, but as to the *lawfulness of the enterprise in the sight of God*, have they underwritten here? Or have they left you to settle this matter with God.

And besides it is said corporate bodies have no souls. Of course they have no conscience, and will not come into the judgment, and will not be present to respond for you when you shall be charged with pouring a stream of death through the streets and lanes of our beloved country. They will have sunk down into common men, and will be judged not as public men, but as private citizens.

But to be serious, O what a day the *last day* will be, when every one must answer for the sins done in the body. But if the men who signed your papers shall be condemned with you, as guilty accomplices in your work of death, what then? Can you apply any remedy to the fatal and final mistake in that evil hour? I would certainly handle your conscience *kindly*, but I would do it *honestly*, because I shall be at the court on that day, and must be condemned with you, if I handle deceitfully the word of the Lord, or cry peace and safety when sudden destruction comes upon you. I would rather become security for every demand and every claim that may come against you in these minor courts, than answer for the charge of making one drunkard, or one homeless and hopeless and vagabond child, or one broken-hearted mother. I had rather be your city scavenger than your mayor and your alderman on terms like these. If the license you have, will be current only in a human court, and heaven's King will despise it, I would go and

throw it down on the table of the corporation, and would go out, and before I commenced the sale, would demand a new revelation from heaven, that should contain at least a clause like this—*Thus saith the Lord, They who license others to commit sin are answerable for the sin, and they alone, and let all the people say Amen*

II. Another, on being asked why he continued the trade, made answer, *That it was profitable, and that he chose to reap the profits.* Or as one might honestly interpret his language, he cared not whether it was right or wrong. He would have been willing if he might have been paid for his labor, to have manned the guillotine, or to have kindled the fires of the auto-de-fe. If he could make a good trade of it, would buy in the fagots, that were destined to be used in burning a world. But it is believed there are very few such men so lost from reason, hope and heaven. And with this few we will not spend our time at present.

III. Another, on being asked, replied, *The trade supports my family,* and propped his argument by Scripture: "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." He faltered as he uttered the text, seeming to doubt whether God inspired it to foster the crime of drunkenness. A very simple comment would say, It surely must be of some consequence, *how* we provide. May a man *steal* his bread, and purloin the garment that warms his children? One may not provide for his family by gambling, nor by extortion, nor by robbery, nor by usury. By none of these means, is it believed that one could lawfully make the provision enjoined in the text. Thus the argument goes for nothing, if we are required to use Christian discretion as to the manner in which this provision shall be made. We may not do evil that good may come, unless we would have our damnation just. The *end* will not sanctify the *means*. That end which is not achieved by measures of righteousness, is not pursued with regard to the authority of God.

IV. Another trader replied, *This is the business I was bred to.* So King Alexander and the man of Elba, and Cesar and Sennacherib, were *practised*, if not bred, to the art of blotting out nations, and pouring out human gore, and must be sustained in the trade of blood, because they were bred to it. And Alexander the copper-smith, must oppose the gospel, because else he should have no

shrines to make for Diana. Did he reason well, or did he probably lose his soul ?

That you was bred to the business of making or vending ardent spirits, may involve your parents in guilt, but it cannot exonerate you from the guilt of doing what you know is wrong. It surely is your business to inquire whether your calling involves the good or the injury of the world, whether you promote its health, its character and comfort, or its undoing. Whether you aid its population on to heaven or perdition. Are you exonerated from any such inquiry ? You give us then the very answer that the highwayman will, I pursue the business I was bred to. And when you have answered his argument and persuaded him to be an honest man, I will use *your* reasons, and convince you that you ought immediately to attempt some other business.

V. Another retailer when inquired of why he continued in the trade made answer, *There is no other business I can do.* My trade in this article is my only path to competency. We may then surely ask you, whether you have *tried*, and settled the question beyond controversy, that you must sell rum or starve, that is, you must do what God forbids or die ?

Here I would remark that one should not come to this conclusion till he has made an effort. It surely seldom happens under the government of God, that men can adopt no legitimate means of earning their bread. Should the gambler, and the actor, and the slave-dealer, and the privateers-man become convinced that their calling is mischievous, and ask God to direct them to an honest livelihood, would there be nothing they could do but die ! Would he leave to beggary or starvation, the man who was devoutly praying—"Give us in a lawful and proper manner, day by day our daily bread ? Why, this question is answered in a moment. And were we obliged to answer in the negative, and duty was certainly associated with death, then we should say *die*. That man blesses the world and dies at a good old age who dies rather than sin. And as martyrdom has advanced many a cause it may possibly advance yet the cause of temperance.

VI. One brandy merchant made answer, when asked why he continued the trade, *That good men had employed themselves in manufacturing and vending ardent spirit, and still had gone to heaven.* That is, he would continue in what might be forbidden of God, provided it would be possible to reach heaven at last. Now we admit the possibility you plead, but we must tell you that good

men in days past had less light on this subject than we have, and may have done in a measure harmlessly, what you may do unpardonably. What is comparative innocence in some circumstances may be the deadliest guilt in others. Had Paul done, after he was enlightened, the same things that he had done before, he had done them to his own undoing. And he assures us, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. Had John Newton, when engaged in the slave trade, been enlightened as he was afterward, he probably had never lived to sing as he did of the grace and mercy of God.

Moreover, no man in his right reason, would act on the principle here avowed. He would not commit theft, and robbery, and murder and adultery, because men may have committed these dark deeds, and still, perhaps, have gone to heaven. The very men I reason with, would turn pale to hear these crimes palliated by the same arguments that sustain the practice of vending this article of death. One may have done in his ignorance, even conscientiously, what to do now would cost him his soul. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

Be it that there may be some good men even yet in the trade, one would hardly dare to sin, because good men will sin with him. I would not engage in unlawful commerce, were it possible that an angel would share the profits with me. The rich man in the gospel had accomplished associates till the day he perished. The argument proves, merely, that good men may have mistaken their duty, or may have known their duty, and for a time, had not sufficient moral courage to do it. Could we know the views that such men will have of the traffic, when they shall see the world on fire, their views then might decide our duty.

VII. Another merchant was heard to say, *If I should pour upon the ground the store of this article, that I have on hand, I should wrong my creditors.*

Let me just ask that man a question or two. Did you purchase that store of provisions since you doubted whether the trade was right? And did you determine that you would sell it right or wrong. How then can you answer to God and your own conscience, for the sin of buying it! A mighty sin may have been committed before you come to the question of *selling*, I mean the sin of *buying*. If your own conscience met you, and the law of

God, and poured their rebukes upon you for the sin of buying, you may so heighten the iniquity by selling, that God shall never grant you forgiveness.

And God may punish you in the very act, and cause the trade which you pursue with hesitancy and doubt, to conduct you speedily to bankruptcy. God will not, I think, if he intends your salvation, prosper you in a business that is keeping the world depraved. Is not such the character of your present customers, that you must needs be afraid of failure if you trust them! And then to be closeted with such men, as your business now brings about you, how degrading, even were you in no danger from them. But should it be, that you have greatly offended God already by the traffic, the sale of the stock you have on hand in spite of a disapproving conscience, may remove you beyond the hope of forgiveness. At the most, you cannot calculate with any certainty that another month's continuance in the trade, may not undo you for eternity.

I knew the following affecting case, most intimately. A merchant had come to the resolve to make no further purchase when he had sold out the stock of spirit that he had on hand. But while he was doing this, his largest customer in this article became by the too free use of it, a blind man, and must now go sightless, groping his gloomy way to the grave, if indeed with the loss of his eyes, he does not part with his life too, and go down at last to perdition. Ah! what you ought to do with the stock on hand, would be a question easily settled were the world on fire, or could you see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. If the loss of it would render you a bankrupt, I know not that the case is altered the dust of the balance. Are you not your brother's keeper?

Money is not to be placed in the scale against duty, a moment. If the loss *would not* render you a bankrupt, pour it out; if otherwise, give it up to your creditors, and advise them to pour it out. And let it be at no hour of the day, nor day of the week, nor week of the year, nor year of time, when you ever embark in another recruit, and our prayer shall be that God will bless you.

VIII. But another dealer was heard to say, *If I do not supply the drunkard with the means of his own undoing, another will, and I may as well have the profits as any one.*

And would you add, I may as well be *condemned for it* as another? The dictate of wisdom is, If it would be wrong to do it,

don't *you* do it. It is fearfully hazardous to commit sin, because it *will be* committed. Let them do it that dare do it, but let no one rush upon destruction with his eyes open. No argument has done more mischief than this, and yet none is more weak. Must I be willing to sin, and risk my soul, because somebody will sin if I do not? May I keep a gambling house because there are a great many people who will be inconsiderate, and become mad on the game, and will gamble, and if I do not provide them the means of their undoing, and have the profits of it, others will? Shall I go farther still, and keep that house which the wise man calls the way to hell, because if I do not another will? Shall I furnish daggers and firebrands, because men will be so depraved that they will burn houses, and I may as well have the profits of furnishing them the means as any one? Men will practice forgery; and hence the worthless Burrows, who sells well executed bank notes as pictures, to which any villain who has skill in penmanship can affix the signature, can offer a plea as good as yours in support of his calling. Somebody will print, and furnish notes for counterfeiters, if he does not. Ah! the argument proves too much, and so proves nothing. Will not God ask you in the last day the fearful question, where is Abel thy brother?

IX. I knew one merchant who sustained himself in the practice by the plea, *That good men should be the only venders of ardent spirits, as they will keep the most decent houses, and sell the poison most discreetly.*

It frightens one to bring up the conclusions that can be sustained by this argument. It would go to prove that every gateway to hell should be kept by an angel, not indeed to keep men from entering and passing that way, but to make men pass on to perdition decently. No! no! Highly as we respect and esteem some of the men who have been formerly employed in the traffic, we would, if possible, from this time, disassociate it for ever from character and decency. If the article must be sold for the use, and ruin, and utter damnation of men, *I would place at the top the same lying serpent that handed Eve the apple, that it might appear the very infernal commerce that it is.* The prince of hell would thus have opportunity to separate from his kingdom all that is moral, and decent and healthful, and his empire be dark and dreary as he would have it. But you will say I am too severe. No matter, if I am only on the side of truth.

X. But a retailer says, *The importers and distillers are in fault and should not furnish the temptation.*

Ah! it would, indeed, be very convenient for us, if other men would dam up the currents of death, and leave us nothing to do. It would indeed be a blessing incalculable, if the distillers and importers would stop their business, and thus quench the stream of liquid fire at the very foot of its *Ætna*. But can we not, and will we not quit sinning, unless the means of sinning are put out of our reach? Dare you not disoblige that portion of the community that ask you to kill them, and damn them? Do they so hold your destiny in their hands, that you may not hope to prosper without their friendship? Suppose our rich importers should bring in whole ship loads of poignards, and place them on the side walks of our city, and you should seize one, and plunge it into some human heart, would the court lay the sin, or any part of it, at the door of the importer, or would it sentence you to be hanged?

I know it would be very convenient, if we could persuade *other* men to do *our* duty, and stop us, when we will not stop ourselves, in the paths of unrighteousness. But we have no right to expect that reform will begin at this end. Men will stop manufacturing and importing, only when the trade is no longer profitable. While the trade is in the way to gain and wealth, there are men who would not abandon it, hardly if they saw the world on fire. No! public sentiment must be urged *up*, till there shall be none to drink, and then there will be none to retail, and then there will be none to import or manufacture. This is the order and the process by which all the good has been accomplished that ever has been done in the world.

XI. There is another reply that we have heard from venders that should not pass unnoticed. They say, *Legislators should, by heavy imposts and taxation, stay the influx and the creation of the article, and thus cure the evil, by drying up the fountain.*

All this is visionary. Till the people are willing to quit the use of it, and venders to dispense with the gains of it, our rulers know well that they shall lose their office if they meddle with it. It would be both convenient and desirable, and more yet, duty, that our civil authorities remove the temptation by legislative acts, and thus save us the labor and toil, of boosting public sentiment to accomplish the matter in another way. But a corrupt community under a government like ours, will always have a legislature that live at peace with its corruptions. The men in office will duly

represent their constituents, and wear, *at least*, all the vices prevalent among the people. Hence a good influence must travel upward, and reach the legislature by individual impulse.

As said already, *men* have consciences, *legislative* and *corporate* bodies have none. *Men*, too, expect a future judgment, but *corporate and legislative bodies* fear only a loss of their influence, office and salary. Vice may flow *down*, therefore, but virtue must *climb*. When far more than a moiety of our population are strictly temperate, and have no interest to serve by conniving at lust, especially when the better part shall feel that their interest would be served by having the community temperate, *then*, it will be popular to legislate on this subject, and the authorities of our land will make whatever enactments we pray for.

Only let the people quit drinking, and the venders quit selling, and *then, when we stand in no need of their help*, our legislative bodies will be the perfect sycophants of the *temperate*, as they are, and long have been, of the *drunken* community. Thus the destroyer will be strangled in his dotage, but every man of discernment must see that the power and influence that shall do the work, must be *individual*, and not legislative.

XII. But said *one*, (not the last by ten thousand,) my property is my own, and I will not permit my enjoyment of it to be abridged by your hypocritical and fanatical opinions.

*Your property your own!!* You do not mean that you created it, nor yet that independently of God you earned it, or gained it. If your wealth was through the products of the earth, it was God that sent the showers, and shaped the seasons, and tempered the atmosphere, and grew your wheat for you. If it was through success in trade, it was God that lifted you up, that furnished you with the mind you used, and directed the gale that blew your commerce home, and stayed the storm that might have wrecked your fortune in a moment. If gotten by toil, then it was God that nerved the arm to labor, and built, and sustained every muscle and sinew that went to the work, and made the heart beat, and the lungs heave, and forced the life stream along in its dark and mysterious channel.

If you mean any thing that contradicts all this, your property *is not your own*, but the Lord's. The silver and gold are His. His are all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If we are God's stewards, and our wealth is his, we may not use it in contravention of his authority and still expect that

he will give us day by day our daily bread. He will rather blast us with the breath of his mouth, and destroy us with the brightness of his coming. Oh! how terrible is that account, which we must give at last of the manner in which we have squandered the Lord's money, in trying to undo a world that God would render blessed. It seems to me, that there is an inference, plainly deducible from the word of the Lord, like this: "If God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all," in what light will he regard the man whose whole powers are bent to counteract by every possible means in his power, the purposes of his mercy. When he shall make inquisition for blood, will not the whole catalogue of venders stand out in bold relief, on the tablet of the judgment.

I think I see a reason, why the very men who have increased their estate by this traffic, should be, now the light has broken in, among the first to see, and cure the plague. If the subject should press any consciences in our land, it should be the consciences of the men who are living at ease on the gains of this trade. Their motives to feel, and act, it would seem, must be weighty as a world. Let me present a few of these motives.

Retailers! Ye know not what ye do. You cannot fully estimate the amount of mischief you may have done to families, and to souls already. *You* must live, if God will let you, and *your offspring*, in the society which your traffic is corrupting. The plague may reach some child or friend of yours, and he may quit life in the cabin of the debauched, and moulder in a drunkard's grave. This world belongs to the Lord Jesus, while your trade is increasing its alienation from him. The misery produced by ardent spirits is causing a thousand hearts to ache, and we wish some evidence that yours ache. The retailer brings about him a community in which his soul cannot live, and be in health. An estate gotten by a traffic that is cursing the world, cannot go down to posterity with the blessing of God. Many things indicate that the entire world will soon be subdued to the Lord Jesus, but this cannot be, and the trade in alcohol continue. The dying groans of the *thirty thousand* drunkards, who perish annually in our land, should move you. The moans of their widows and orphans should move you. That "drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God," should move you. "Wo to him that giveth his neighbor drink," should move you.

God will make you your brother's keeper. I have learned that a poor woman went to a neighboring grog shop, and requested the

dealer not to sell any more rum to her husband, as it sometimes rendered him a madman. A few days afterward in a rum excited frenzy, he plunged the knife into her throat. She stayed the blood with her hand, and ran to the shop, and there poured out her life-stream at the feet of the wretch who had just pocketed the price of her blood.

Not long since the following tragedy was acted over in New York. One of our builders was suddenly called to the death-bed of his child. A man in his service, supposing that his employer would naturally return no more to the building during that day, determined to spend it in the pleasures of a debauch. When men have made up their minds to be drunkards, they will not stick at all at a lie. He hasted off to one of our *good moral characters*, whom the authorities of the city have licensed to sell ardent spirits, and in his employer's name asked for a quart of rum. I do not know that he offered, as the reason for getting it, that his employer's child was at the point of death, a very common subterfuge in these days, but he was denied the rum because he had no order to this effect. He went, however, to another dealer and procured the quart, and drank it, I know not whether at one draught or four, and immediately sunk into an apoplectic slumber, profound as the sleep of death, and came not back again to reason, till he awoke in the world of wo. This remark is made in the firm belief of that section in the book of God which declares that no drunkard hath inheritance in the kingdom of God. The miserable man seems to have been mad on his own destruction. He did the deed in the very face of death. He would have feared to play the fool, had not his employer been called to the death-bed. If he had feared death as much, or had any fear of God before his eyes, he might have escaped perdition at that time. Or had he been a man of truth, then he had lived, or had the man, or rather the woman, that sold him the quart, *for it was a woman*, had there been the fear of God in her heart, then he had lived. Poor soul! he had several chances of living, but they all failed.

And let me say here—though I am quite ashamed to suppose that a woman would encourage that sin that is binding her sex in chains of iron—the woman who sold him the potion that brought him to a premature grave, had lived with an intemperate husband, who in a fit of intoxication, had burned the building that stood on the very ground where she sold the rum. Thus men and *women* too, it seems, can sport with fire-brands, arrows, and death. It would seem that *one* had had the means of being warned and wak-

ened, if any warning would render woman wise. But she took up her husband and buried him, and then went to selling *rum*. I sincerely hope she will not follow him to the drunkard's grave. When her bed was on fire first, and then her house, and she at length a widow, who would have dreamed that she would have employed herself in selling liquid fire! *O tempora! O mores!* I passed it a few evenings since, the evening of the Sabbath, and saw at her door two sturdy sons of Erin fisting and biting each other, like sons of Belial, and screaming at each bite, and pounce like panthers on some craggy rocks of the Alps. We called the watch, and had them put where they would get sober, and where they would have opportunity to meet the police, all breakfasted and warm, and answer to the board, who gave them license to be riotous, for the tumult of the Sabbath evening.

O, how it sickens the heart to know one such case all through! I remember that it was a law in Israel, that in an extreme case, when a house had the leprosy, it should be cleansed by being burnt to ashes. But it seems that even burning does not cleanse the modern leprosy. The disease outlives the fire, and comes up from the ashes like the fabled Phœnix, all fledged for a renewed occupancy. I suppose it finds a covert in the crumbling walls and burning timbers, and comes out again to infect the timbers and walls that are used in repairing the ruins. I fear nothing will cure it but the heat of that pit, "the pile whereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it."

In a town at the north, where the cause of temperance gained a few years since a sudden and powerful ascendancy in the public mind, there died a rum-seller, in circumstances that made a powerful impression on many minds. Another family lived in the house with him, and one day the lady of that family, perceiving by what she heard and saw, that something was going on that was wrong, burst suddenly into his apartment, and found him hanging by the neck. She called her husband, who immediately cut him down. But as it was his purpose to die as soon as he could recover strength, he broke from the embrace that held him, ran to a shelf, seized a razor, and hastily opened a jugular vein, and died in a few seconds.

The history of the transaction is short. The man had begun to be intemperate, was a customer at his own bar, and very soon perceived that he must feel the pressure of the *hard times*, which tipping always produces, especially when one becomes an inebriate

at his own bar. He had been observed to be gloomy, but I do not remember that any apprehensions as to such a result had been entertained till the fatal moment when he was found hanging by the neck. How long he had been in the trade I do not remember, nor can I judge to what extent he had offended the Lord, by the ruin he had brought upon other families. He was a dealer in the article; and I remember that the society afterwards formed in that town, calculated, that every trader in the town manufactured, at the least calculation, one confirmed drunkard every three years, and sent one family down into the vale of beggary and rags and wretchedness. If, then, unless this calculation was erratic and wild, he had been a dealer in the article three years, and I know not but he had twenty, he had probably ruined one family, and God in righteous indignation made him a victim to his own traffic. I would willingly have thrown a veil over this scene, and saved his widow, who has married honorably, and his children, who, for aught I know, are doing well, the pain of applying this scrap of history to their own case, were it not that we have been silent too long already, and indulged our sense of delicacy till we have allowed the plague to spread through every limb of our rising and otherwise happy republic. But we must be no longer so much afraid of wounding the sensibility of the living, as not to expose the speaking facts which have transpired in the madness and ruin that men have brought upon themselves and others by the sale of strong drink. If we had only courage enough to dig through the wall, and lay open the chamber of imagery, as the prophet was directed to do, and see the train of misery and death that moves in the wake of every rum-dealer in the land, the tale would make the ears of every one who heard it tingle. Oh! he has the heart of a tiger, and blood is his legitimate prey. When we see how with a spirit of cold moneyed calculation, he can take the lovely woman and the beloved wife and crucify her husband, and turn her from her home, to starve and freeze, and make her children beggars and homeless and fatherless at a price at which one would hardly cut off the head of a dog, we are amazed at the long-suffering patience of God. And I know not whether he even weeps at the outrages he commits. Were I not the subject of feelings too strong to trust myself, I would stop and address him if I might in a voice loud enough to reach the two oceans. I would say, that the man who is destined to such a business, ought to have been whelped by a wolf and destined to wear his teeth and his appetite, that his personal equipments might agree with his office,

and herd him with his kind. I would train him to his work in the business of a blood-hound, that he might scent his prey afar off. I would at least have him bred a hangman, and spend the whole fountain of his tears before he should be placed at the tap. Then his employment and his soul would be in unholy symphony.

But I must return from my impassioned feeling, or you will say I rail. In our country every man must be free. True, but the term is abused. One ought not to free to make disastrous inroads upon every family that he may have it in his power to destroy. He ought not to be free to do this even if the father of that family is willing that it should be done. If one had power suddenly to convert men into panthers, and could obtain license so to do, he ought not to feel himself at liberty to do it, till the whole community around him are consulted on the question whether it would be safe to have a panther run at large. To be free is not to be free to destroy, and he has not this kind of freedom even with regard to the soil he owns. He may not so use it as to injure his neighbor. He may not dig a deep pit and leave it open. He may not overthrow a building, even if he will, and can operate only on his own premises. He may not incautiously blast the ponderous rock that may lie in his own territory. He may not be free to remove some natural embankment that wards off a stream which, when turned upon his neighbor's habitation, would endanger the life of his family. One may not have the freedom to set fire to his own house. He may not fall the tree that may even throw down his neighbor's enclosures. Free as we are in this country, we are free only to use our own things so as not to injure our neighbor. And on this principle it is easy to show the extent to which men are free to sell ardent spirits.

Having finished my rhapsody last evening at rather a late hour, under strongly excited feelings, I retired to my bed, and fancied myself employed in advocating the cause of an injured man. He had been prosecuted for a libel by one of our retailers who would impede the cause of reform by bringing odium upon the man who ventured to rebuke his iniquitous traffic. It ran as follows, as nearly as I can remember.

May it please the court. I have risen to advocate the cause of an injured man. You have heard the testimony, and the wretch stands before you. What has his history been but that of a miser, a swindler, a calumniator, a robber, and a bear. I know the court feel element while I name that man after the blackest prowler of the desert. He has lived to counteract the benevolence of God,

and send want and misery, and infamy and death, into habitations, otherwise the abode of comfort and hope. It has been his employment, the work he delights in, and what his soul is shaped to, to barter disease, and famine, and riot, and ruin, for farms, and dwellings, and moneys, to hoard up, and boast of, and buy a name with, and friendship, and influence. I will not name his calling, for he disgraces even that, and there are men in it whose shoe latchet he may not unloose. The power of calculating his own interest is the only one of his soul that he has cultivated. He would depopulate the world, if he could hold in fee simple the whole territory. Principle he has none. What is right, or virtuous, or decent—he never once asks himself, when money can be had.

He would ruin his family to gain pelf, would school his offspring in his own house with the tippler, the lewd, and the lost, and then wonder why he has not better children. All the degraded pay court to him, will serve him because he feeds their appetites, and blunts their reason, and kills the keenness of their consciences, and smiles on their deeds of darkness and desperation. A friend he has not, nor cares to have, unless that friend will help him heap up gold.

His very advocate is bought over to him by the fee, and has cursed his client as he passed him a thousand times, loudly and fearlessly. If you would kill the charm that his money has, his cringing advocate would rise, and put off his hypocritical face, and shout a loud and long amen to every execration I can dash upon him.

How has he treated my client, and why? hated him, insulted him, belied him, excited others to do the like deeds, and all the while be buying eulogies for himself by his drams.

And for what all this! For knowing him too well, for rebuking him too sharply, for holding out no Bible hope to him, for unbaring perdition to him, for hurting his fraudulent gains, by advocating a virtue that will not be duped by his money, and forming a public opinion that desecrates him, and last and most of all, by exhibiting a manliness of deportment, and a rigidness of morals, that casts upon him a shade dark as the sulphurous smoke of the pit.

The court will not rebuke me. They ought so to do, were I speaking of a man. But they know, and the jury know, that my client has encountered a bear, who cannot be made more black, nor mischievous, nor deformed, than he really is.

I submit the case. I need not have said any thing. The jury will stay in their box and write their verdict. They will rescue

my client from the claws of the Ursus, and beat him off to go and hunt other prey, with his teeth blunted, and his nails shortened, and his track scented, as he traces his future midnight routes.

Justice will overtake him *now* and *hereafter*. Now, by your verdict, and hereafter, by the storm of rebuke that will brood over him. His ill-gotten estate will go to the winds. Some heir of his will squander it as fast as he obtained it, and send his father's name with it into oblivion.

Ah! but I just now remember that he will be tried by a higher court, and have a being when the moon is turned to blood. Let me say to him, Poor man, think of that last day. Will your abuse of my client ease your expiring pillow? Will it stay the rage of the fever? Will it cool your burning tongue? Will it light up your dying chamber? Will it bribe off death, and hold at bay his angels? Will it illumine your avenue to the dark world, or upward to a better? No.

## SERMON XLI.

### TRUE PIETY PEACEFULLY PLEASANT.

ROMANS VIII. 6.

But to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

WE have here precisely the contrast of the dark picture contained in the former clause. That we may not mistake the character drawn in this clause of the text, we have the description in the verse preceding: "While they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, they that are after the spirit mind the things of the spirit." They dwell with delight on the character of God, the plan of mercy, and the glories of heaven. Their thoughts and their affections are spiritual. They are frequently conversant with the things unseen, and find a real substance in all the objects of faith. With them, the body, with all its wants and cares, is a minor consideration, while the amazing interests of the soul are paramount to all other interests. To them the duties of religion are pleasant, and the cares and vexations of this life unpleasant, when they intrude upon the thoughts and cares of a better.

To be thus spiritually minded is life and peace; or the life of true piety is a life of peaceful pleasure. This sentiment we shall illustrate.

1. A life of holiness is calculated to fill the mind with the richest enjoyment, and raise it to its highest state of improvement. The objects of contemplation that lie before the believing mind are dignified, and worthy its occupancy. The mind was made capable of dwelling with interest and profit on nobler objects than we can see or handle—objects that can be seen only by the eye of faith. Hence the mind connected with a heart that is holy, rises above all that is created, and employs its powers in contemplating the glory of God, and the emanations of that glory which are spread over other beings. Some object of sense may be the vehicle that conveys the mind to God; and when there it finds an infinite resource of all that is grand and rich. His attributes have each their attractive charms. To gaze upon but one would be all the heaven that a finite creature wou'd need. But the whole

combined become a cluster whose brightness entrances every power of the mind, and oblige it to forget itself—lost in a grandeur, a greatness, and a glory which no language can describe. The plan of redemption which discloses the doctrine of a Trinity, and raises a hope in the breast of sinners, opens before the believing mind a scene which it would love to linger through all the ages of its duration. Here the spiritual mind feasts, and grows, and lives. It is an atmosphere far above that which breathes about the carnal mind. It is true that the good man has too many thoughts that are earthly, sensual, and grovelling. He is too often conscious of starving a heavenly mind by detaining it on earth, and filling it with sublunary cares.

But, habitually, the good man has some rich and noble thoughts every day, and grieves when they do not return every hour. He has laid up his treasure in heaven, a treasure to which his earthly good things will not compare, and about that treasure his mind loves to hover and play. Now who does not see that a mind thus occupied, has a more dignified employ than one that exhausts all its energies in the contemplation of what can moulder and rot. While the one may be said to live, the other is subjected to death. In these sublime contemplations the reasoning powers find a profitable employment, calculated to give them life and vigor. No man reasons correctly, who does not give to unseen things a paramount value. Nor has any man a subject worthy to employ his powers of research, who has always dwelt upon the objects of a created world. It is the Christian who can the sooner mature his mental energies. When the great Newton was wandering about among the stars, had he not been the friend of God, and seen his hand in every law he discovered, he would still have died as a child, and would have carried an infant mind to the judgment. But every thing he saw bore the impress of an unseen agency, and led his mind up to the Author. The doctrines of the Bible, the duties and the destinies of men, employ to advantage the energies of a spiritual mind. When it can there trace the history of Providence, or force its way down through the dark track of prophesy, it finds all its powers put in requisition to vindicate the ways of God, to discover the designs of his mercy, and date the period of his forbearance, and its own deliverance. Thus to be spiritually minded is life, inasmuch as it gives the intellect a proper employ, and best promotes the improvement of this noble power of the man.

2. A life of piety furnishes the heart with those affections which give it the highest pleasure, and best promote its improvement.

There is no small object in God's kingdom. If he is not the immediate object of the affections of his people, still they have a noble object. If they love his law, his gospel, his government, his Church, or even the humblest individual in his household, there is no one of these affections of which angels would be ashamed. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." The objects of Christian affection are all of that nature that God highly approves, and to which heaven is closely assimilated.

How altered is the man, who, from having placed his warmest regards on the dying objects of time and sense, is brought by the grace of God to love these higher, better objects; who, having long employed his heart in exercises of pride, envy, covetousness, wrath, malice, lust, and every other base and sordid affection, is brought to the exercise of love, joy, and peace; who having indulged unbelief and all the catalogue of wrong affections that follow in the train, is now adding "to his faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." It is impossible not to see that such a heart is more at rest, has a nobler employment, breathes a higher, purer atmosphere, and enjoys a better peace, than the man who suffers his affections to linger about the objects of sense.

Occasionally his enjoyment bears a very near relation to heaven itself. God is pleased to disclose his character, and grant a glimpse of his glory, and before it every object that was ever loved disappears, as the stars are hid by the beams of the sun. But these seasons are too short, and cannot be mentioned as the habitual condition of a believer. Still in the darkest hour, the believer has heavenly affections, and may be said to live, while the unbeliever, in his happiest hours, is the prey of spiritual death.

3. Piety cultivates a better conscience than can be found in the carnally minded. The Christian is the only man who considers conscience his friend, who esteems it a blessing that God has placed this monitor in his bosom, and who expects with pleasure its admonitions. He aims to have his conscience enlightened, takes proper pains to acquaint himself with duty, treasures up the truth, and with a moral sense thus illuminated, guides himself by its dictates. It becomes his habit to submit every moral act to the decisions of this internal court. Thus preserving a pure conscience, it often approves of his deeds, and when polluted is sprin

kled again from dead works to serve the living God. By such a course, this power of the soul is honored and improved, till the man carries the law with him, and is enabled, in a good degree, to square his life by its precepts. You will perceive that it is my aim to describe the thing as it should be. Too often, however, the good man does not cultivate that tenderness of conscience, which his comfort requires should exist. It was so polluted before his conversion, and has even now so little light, that it may almost be said the light that is in him is darkness. The Christian, however, has one happy resort. When he has defiled his conscience, he applies afresh to the blood of sprinkling, is forgiven, and has peace of conscience. Probably Christians greatly differ in this respect, and no doubt they differ as widely in this aggregate of their joy. Other things being equal, he is far the happiest man who has the purest conscience, who most promptly applies for its decision, and most cheerfully obeys its dictates. Still, in every good man, conscience is more or less honored and cultivated, while in the opposite character, it is hated and neglected, as heaven's unwelcome sentinel.

4. A life of piety promotes happiness. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. This is a point that will be generally conceded. It is said, however, that there are some whom religion has made unhappy. They are cut off from the pleasures of sense, while their hopes of glory, and their enjoyment of God are too inoperative to render them happy. That in many cases this appears to be true, there can be no doubt; but there can be as little doubt that the failure is chargeable, not to religion, but to its absence. Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. Said our Lord to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." And of all believers it is said, that they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it would be infidelity to doubt whether God will fulfil his promises. In Christ they are all yea and amen.

In these doubtful cases, then, we are to fear, either that the heart is not yet renewed, or that sin is still indulged, for which God in righteousness withholds his comforts.

There is opened before the believer a vast *resource* of comfort. He has joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, whom having not seen we love, and in whom though now we see him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He has fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. He finds a friend and a brother in every follower of the Lord Jesus.

He enjoys the ministry of angels. He is conscious of penitence, and has ordinarily a hope of forgiveness. He is permitted through rich grace to cast an eye forward toward heaven as his everlasting home. He may have many trials in the present life; but the promise is,—and on this promise he lives,—that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. Darkness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. He will be likely to have his enemies, but no weapon formed against him shall prosper. He will be tempted, but with every temptation God will make a way of escape. In a little wrath God may hide his face from him for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will he have mercy upon him. His shoes shall be iron and brass, and as his day is so shall his strength be. God will be with him in six troubles, and in seven he will not forsake him. This charter reads, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt—neither shall the flames kindle upon thee. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” “Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” The promise and the persuasion is, that “neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The covenant that binds him to his Lord is an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure. Hence, while he is assured that to live is Christ, he is equally confident that to die would be gain. What he shall be it does not yet appear. He has about him a body of sin and death, has many fears that he may perish at last, and often, perhaps, refuses the comforts offered him, because his prospects of heaven are so clouded that he dares not to rejoice. Could he know that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, this would fill up the catalogue of his comforts. As things are, he would not quit his hold of heaven for a thousand worlds. And if he must wade them in his own tears, if to save his soul he must let every creature comfort go, still the hope of heaven can make amends.

If, in this shaded description of the good man, any of you suppose that I have made him, and left him unhappy, then is there a doubt whether you are of the character I have described. In the midst of his tears the good man is happy. He weeps because he is a sinner, and because he hopes he is forgiven. He is troubled on every side, but not distressed, he is perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. His light afflictions are but for a moment, and will work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus, to be spiritually minded, is life and peace. I close with one

## REMARK.

If thus abundant are the joys of the spiritually minded in this life, how unspeakable must be the glory of the life to come. The Christian, when he escapes from this dark world, will leave behind him this dying body. It is now a clog and a vexation to his heavenly mind. When the spirit may be willing, the flesh is weak. But the long expected moment arrives soon, when this mortal shall put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in victory. This weary head, as said the dying Harriet,\* will soon rest sweetly on the bosom of Jesus. We read, They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. The inhabitants of the heavenly world shall no more say they are sick. The weary are to be at rest. Every tear shall be dry.

The disembodied mind will be greatly enlightened. There will not hang over it those dark mists that now becloud every prospect. The ways of God will be illuminated, and the wisdom of all his purposes appear. No more shall it be said that clouds and darkness are round about him, or be doubted whether righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his throne. The believer will no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face. He will then be satisfied, having awaked from death in the likeness of his Redeemer.

Which leads me to say farther, he will be free from sin. He will no longer tire under the body of this death. I shall be like him, said one of his holy family, for I shall see him as he is. What unutterable joy must this thought create. There can be no hope so rich as that the day is coming when I shall no more offend my Savior by sin, when my conscience will be no more polluted, and my peace destroyed by disobedience. One might wish all the

\* Harriet Newell.

years annihilated that separate him from that happy hour. How does the animated soul leap forward to embrace the pleasures of that lovely moment. Yes, my brother, you may hope that one day sin will no more have dominion over you. If it seems a blessing too rich for such a worm as you, then you have only to adore the grace that issued this doom. Just so kind are the designs of God. And if his grace does not draw forth our warmest gratitude the very stones of the street will cry out.

Here when the Christian quits the body he will leave behind him all his fears. The fear that he may yet perish sometimes fills him with agony. He would give a world to have this one question settled. Conceive, brethren, how you must feel if one day you shall find yourselves in heaven. You will look back, and the danger is all over. It was night about you, but the true light has come. You passed close by the margin of the pit, but God covered it with his hand. You was condemned, but the Lord Jesus gave his life for your ransom. You grieved the Spirit, but he did not utterly forsake you. You became cold, and he revived you; you wandered, and he brought you back with stripes. Of all the wonders of heaven, you will say, this is the greatest, That I am here. They went to perdition from my neighborhood, some of my own mother's children have perished, and I in heaven. And why, Lord Jesus, why me. Why was I pressed on to this abode of joy, while my own brother is lost, and my father is lost, and she that bear me, and bent over me and heard my dying lips, have missed the way, and can never mingle their song with mine. Blessèd Jesus, thou hast been my deliverer.

## SERMON XLII.

### THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH MADE TO PROMOTE HER INTERESTS.

ISAIAH X. 5—12.

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith, are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

WE sometimes discover, in a scrap of sacred story, a rich and lucid comment upon the essential doctrines of revelation. The simple statements of facts, dissipates the darkness that obscured the ways of God, and removes the cloud behind which rolls the wheels of Providence. Let us only read of what God, by his immediate agency, or by the agency of others, has *done*, and we shall find very little mystery in all he has *said*. The *doctrines* are nothing more than the general principles of the Divine administration. The moment men put themselves in the attitude of quarrel with what God has *said*, they invariably tax themselves with the necessity of denying what he has *done*. The father who returns to his house, and finds his beloved child a corpse, and still denies the sovereignty of God, proves himself a pitiable reasoner. A doctrine so pointedly illustrated, can no longer be matter of doubt, unless he choose to believe a lie.

The history of the Assyrian invasion, foreseen and described by the prophet in the text and context, is one of those expository Scriptures, which illustrate and confirm, what are erroneously termed the hard doctrines of revelation. God is here seen in the attitude of administering correction to his people, and using wicked men as the staff, destined like any other rod to be committed to the fire, when the children are reduced to obedience. If instead of intending to bless the people of God, they mean not so, mean no service to their Maker, but their own elevation, intend to injure whom they hate, all this does not disqualify them to be the sword of the Lord. There is something fearfully interesting in the Divine sovereignty, thus illustrated by the very finger of God himself. We must either believe what God has spoken on this subject, or deny what he has done, and what he is doing daily before our very eyes.

I must detain you a few moments, on the historical facts in the case, and then notice more largely the doctrines they inculcate.

I. *We attend to the historical facts.* God had a church in the family of Abraham, but they were so wicked, that he styles them in the text a hypocritical nation. He would correct them for their sins, and would employ for this purpose Sennacherib the king of Assyria, the very staff they had leaned on. But that prince would intend no such good to the covenant people of God; his object would be devastation and plunder. It was in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. He boasted, and heaven knew his impudence, that his power was great, his victories numerous and splendid, his princes, monarchs, and the gods all too weak to resist him. And the worst is yet to be spoken, he threatened that he would do to Jerusalem's God as he had done to the deities around him. How contemptible must he have appeared to him who sitteth in the heavens. Thus the axe boasted itself against him that hewed with it, the saw against him that shook it, and the rod threatened him who lifted it up.

God now resolved that when he had chastised Israel for their idolatry, and their waywardness, he would curse the Assyrian for his pride. He might live till he had performed all the Divine will upon Mount Zion, and upon Jerusalem, then God would punish the fruit of his stout heart, and bring down the glory of his high looks.

God would make him know that he was a mere worm, that an Almighty arm, and not his own, had gotten him his victories, and

that all his wrath toward the people of God, must meet a final and a fearful judgment.

When God speaks in the text of *sending* that proud and impious man, to chastise his people, we are not to understand that God would command him to go, or justify the motives by which he would be actuated. God does not punish as a *crime*, the very deed which his injunction renders *duty*. It is believed that nothing more is meant, than that God would so order events, that the Assyrian should hope to gratify his avarice and his pride in humbling Jerusalem. The history tells for itself, that the king had one purpose, and the King of kings another, and that God kept his own purpose a secret from the miscreant whom he used as his rod.

Why was he not sent of God, precisely in the same sense as God hardened the heart of Pharaoh ? by the concurrence of events, that should have produced a contrary resolve. The Egyptian's heart was hardened by means that should have softened it : by alternate judgments and mercies, that should have rendered him one of the holiest men that has lived. So the Assyrian was sent, by an agency that should have rendered him Jerusalem's warmest friend. God had given him victory over the idols whose shrines he had assaulted, and made him rich with the spoil. He should then have honored the God of battles, and should have come to Jerusalem to worship his Benefactor. He should have been content, when he had been suffered to spoil the temples of idolatry.

But these very successes made him covet the treasures of Jerusalem, and thus had the very opposite effect which they should and *would* have had, upon a benevolent and holy mind. There is a parallel case in Jeremiah. The Church had forfeited the favor of God, and must go into captivity. Babylon must lead them captive, and when Israel should be humbled, must be punished for making war with the people of God. Read the twenty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, and you will have the facts in a shape more interesting, than that in which any comment can place them.

Thus God employs wicked men in the service of his people, while they mean far otherwise, and are in fact the agents of another prince. Still God holds them accountable, restrains their wrath when it will not praise him, and finally does his whole pleasure, precisely as though the agents he employed were his trusty and devoted servants. How calculated are such facts to beget respect for the character and ways of God ! How do they corroborate the doctrines of revelation, and humble the pride of man !

It is a solemn and bitter reflection, that the people of God must

be so frequently and severely chastised. That God should term them a hypocritical nation, and the people of his wrath, and let loose upon them the armies of idolatry, to scatter and peal them. But God will assuredly take care of his own people, and though many may perish who profess his name ; still where he has begun a good work, he will not fail to employ the best means and the best agents, till the work be consummated, and the happy subjects are brought home to his kingdom.

II. *There are several doctrines that these facts inculcate, which now claim our particular attention ; each prominently suggested in the text.* There is an important sense in which unregenerate men are the servants of the most high God. He employs them to bless his people. They mean not so. While they are doing their work, God restrains them. When their work is done, as God intended it should be, he will punish them for not doing his pleasure from right motives.

1. *There is an important sense in which unregenerate men are the servants of the most high God.* This general truth is seen distinctly in the service done by the Assyrian for backsliding Israel. God would send him, and would give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

In support of the proposition, that ungodly men are the servants of the Lord, we say, *He gave them being.* He made all things for himself, yea even the wicked for the day of evil. If men have become alienated in their hearts, still God is their rightful Sovereign. His propriety in them is original and unalienable. If they have entered into the employ of the adversary, still God has given them no discharge from his service. His right to them as his creatures can admit of no question.

And it will not be denied that men, however offensive their character in the sight of God, are dependant on him as their *Preserver and Benefactor.* "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Said the Psalmist, "The eyes of all wait on thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Thus wicked men are the *property* of God, and are *preserved* by him, two essential relationships between the master and his servants.

And he has occasionally *styled* them his servants. "I will send and take al. the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, *my servant* and I will bring them

against this land." His *anointed*, and his *shepherd*, are terms which God applied to Cyrus. And he commissioned the prophet to say to Israel, "The sons of strangers shall build up thy wall, and their kings shall minister unto thee—For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish." Thus the world, from its crowned heads to its meanest vassals, are constituted the servants of the Church of God.

And *he assigns the ungodly their work*, as the master does the servant. The law of God, in all its minute detail, is the rule of duty to every ungodly man. And he has sometimes specified the service which he required of individual sinners, still withholding from them a knowledge of his purpose. Sennacherib must scourge the backsliding Church, Nebuchadnezzar carry them to Babylon, and Cyrus restore them, and rebuild their city and their temple. Nebuchadnezzar was sent to punish the iniquity of Tyre, and was then directed to take Egypt as a prey. Thus have the enemies of God been assigned sometimes a specific task, as the master decides in what field each servant of his shall toil.

*And God sits in judgment upon the service which unregenerate men do for him.* I refer now, not to the last judgment, but to decisions which God passes, and punishments which he inflicts in the present life. Nor yet do I refer to judgments, which God inflicts upon the wicked *generally*, but to those instances when he has terribly reprovèd them, for not doing to his mind the very work assigned them. I shall notice here but a single case—Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was the Lord's sword to punish Israel, and all the nations bordering upon Israel. So eminently was he sustained as the Lord's servant, to scourge the nations, that destruction was threatened to every nation that did not submit to him. And still, in performing the very service for which he was thus made great, he so offended God as to render his overthrow as conspicuous as had been his pride, his insolence, and his oppressions.

I remark once more, in confirmation of the fact that wicked men are God's servants, that *he rewards them for their labors*. For the hard service which the king of Babylon performed against Tyre, in which every head was made bald, and every shoulder pealed, he was commissioned to go and take the spoil of Egypt as his reward. Indeed, so extensively was that man employed by the God of heaven, to scourge the enemies of Israel, and his own Church when they needed chastisement, that there went out in his behalf this wonderful edict: "I have given all these lands into the hands

of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and the beasts of the field have I given him also, to serve him; all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come."—"The nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it and dwell therein." Even Israel was commanded, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, and his people, and live." I will mention only one other case, out of scores that might be mentioned, where God rewarded a wicked man, for services done him. Jehu seems not to have been a man of God, but for the service he performed, in cutting off the house of Ahab, and destroying idolatry, his children, to the fourth generation, should sit upon the throne of Israel.

It is believed by many, that the promise contained in the fifth commandment, and all those which secure present prosperity to the liberal, are often fulfilled to ungodly men, who from wrong motives, have honored their parents, or been generous to the Church and people of God. Perhaps many a wealthy man in our land, who yet has no treasure laid up in heaven, has received his wealth of the Lord, in reward for deeds of kindness done his people, or exertions made to extend and bless his kingdom. With the measure they mete, it shall be measured to them again. If, without loving God, they will feed his children, and sustain his ministers, and spread his gospel, he will, without loving them, fill their barns with plenty, and cause their presses to burst out with new wine. It was perishable treasure that they loaned to him, in perishable materials he will reward them a thousand fold. But the wealth he bestows, since they gave him not their hearts, cannot be accounted a covenant blessing. It may be so abused in their hands, as to ripen them for an earlier destruction. May the mercy of a pardoning God prevent!

Thus do we argue, that wicked men are God's servants. He gave them being, is their preserver, and benefactor; has stiled them his servants, has appointed them their work, sits in judgment upon the services they render him, and rewards them for their labors. I have not said they were servants in the same sense in which his people receive this appellation. Unhappily it is in a widely different sense. The one accomplishes his purposes with no such design, and is rewarded with the meat that perishes; the other receives the law at his mouth, does his will with design,

and has for his reward the meat that endureth to everlasting life  
I proceed to the

2. Prominent suggestion of the text, *God employs wicked men to bless his people*. If God would say to his Church once, "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish;" why has he not thus published to the world a permanent and established principle of his government? And if *nations* hold their being and their prosperity, on the condition that they subserve the interests of God's people, why do we not infer with assurance, that *individuals* are under the same law? Hence all the ungodly, and especially those who shall die in their sins, live to serve the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This subject is illustrated in the parable of the tares and the wheat; they must both grow together till the harvest. It is easy to see how grieved and injured would be many of the people of God, were not his enemies permitted to live. Remove the wicked husband, and the pious wife is a widow, poor, and dependant, and exposed to temptation and reproach; while her children, the seed of the covenant, are perhaps removed from her, must be uneducated, be reared without the means of grace, and in a world, cold, and inhospitable like this, might be constrained to beg their bread. Thus the promise of God would come to the ground.

In other cases, one who is not born of God may be, as it regards temporalities, the support of a Christian Church. His death might remove its faithful pastor, and the people perish for lack of vision. On the exertions of one wicked man may depend, in a variety of ways, the instruction of a vast number of the rising generation. God, then, will sustain him in life, and fill his storehouse with good things, and bless *him*, that he may bless others, and continue him down to the extremest old age.

It may happen that one who does not love God may be a valuable citizen or statesman. The pressure of government may be upon his shoulders, and a state or kingdom be greatly injured by his death, and ultimately the church suffer. Let both then grow together till the harvest. God has laid his plan, and will not abandon it, in which he has secured beyond the possibility of hazard, the best interests of his people.

We should have some difficulty in vindicating the ways of God, if the multitudes of the ungodly, especially those who at last perish, had no profitable employment in his world. A wise and good *man* would not make provision for the idle and the vagrant. He would be unwilling to foster inaction, or waste his property

Hence it cannot be that the blessed God, who makes the wants of a disloyal world his care, has not the wisdom to find them employment in his house. Thus his known character gives us assurance, that he will not give breath and bread and raiment to beings for whom he has no service in his kingdom, and whose existence and agency in that case would but cumber and curse his creation.

Let us look at facts, and let them speak in behalf of God. They were doubtless ungodly men who built the ark in which Noah and all his were saved from the miseries of the deluge. Joseph's ungodly brethren raised him to that seat of honor and power which he filled in Egypt. The impious Pharaoh fed the Church of God during a long protracted famine. The blood-thirsty Haman elevated Mordecai in the court of Persia. The princes of Babylon procured Daniel his great advancement in that monarchy. So the Canaanites lived and prospered, till they had cultivated their land, and made it fertile and beautiful for the comfort of Israel. They built cities, and planted vineyards and olive yards, and Israel eat the fruit of their labors. Cyrus sent back the Jewish captives to their land, and Darius contributed from his own purse to build the house of God, and supply the daily sacrifice. Judas marked out the Lamb, and the impious Sanhedrim, and the Roman soldiery put forth the decree, and built the altar, and slew the sacrifice, that atoned for sins, and procured the redemption of a world. The proud Cæsar reduced the world to one empire, that the way might be prepared to promulgate the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Columbus suffered every thing but death, that he might search out a place for the pilgrims, just at the juncture when they must flee or suffer.

I know that the wicked have sometimes persecuted the people of God even unto death. But this is still the same service, as faith views it. When believers are matured for heaven, their death is precious in the eyes of the Lord. While men have forged their chains, and built their dungeons, and lighted their fagots, they have performed a service as necessary to the accomplishment of the grand plan of redeeming mercy, as when they have housed, and fed, and cherished, and comforted them.

Yes, from the time of Cain till this very day, wicked men have served and blessed the Church of God. And the increase and the joy of his kingdom admits now a foreign agency, as readily as when Jerusalem was rebuilt, and the second temple set up. Men pursue their own inclinations, and do what they please, while God directs all their energies into the same channel, and renders them

subservient to the interests of that blessed kingdom which he has established in this world. Not a muscle, a nerve, a passion, or a thought exists for any other purpose; or worm or sparrow perishes but with this design.

Many a foe of Zion, many who finally will have no interest in a Savior's love, are employed in accumulating wealth, clearing forests, cultivating farms, and building habitations to accommodate the friends of God, in that day when the knowledge of him shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Hence we read, "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." And we read again, "Though the sinner may heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

Every storm that blows has its commission to bless the Church, and every passion that raves has the same charge. The revolutions that have been so frequent in our day, so disastrous to kingdoms, ruinous to individual fortune, and torturing to the heart of sensibility, though managed, as they evidently have been, almost exclusively by ungodly men, and usually with the basest design, have helped to prepare the way for the heralds of salvation to carry glad tidings of great joy to all people.

That scourge of nations, and contemner of human life and human happiness, who lately died in solitude on one of the isles of the sea, though long the curse of Europe, and remembered with horrid interest by the millions whom his ambition bereaved, and immortalized by the rivers of blood that every where flowed at his feet, still wrought for the Church of God. He gave popery a deadly wound, crushed the inquisition, avenged no doubt much of the blood of the martyrs, and though himself a tyrant, was the means of enkindling a spirit of freedom, which will, not long first, result in the downfall of every despot in Europe, and through the world.

The tract system, that mighty engine by which God is now promulgating the honors of his name, was the invention of infidelity, and was first used in corrupting the world with error.

The wise and discerning can see evidence in the events of every day, that wicked men are employed in serving God's people. When their treatment is unkind, it renders believers humble, watchful, prayerful, and heavenly-minded. Thus the promise, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;" and another promise more ample yet, "All things are yours; whether

Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." We do not say that Christians could not be sanctified in a world where they should be treated only with kindness; but we apprehend that in such a world they would ripen for heaven more slowly. They would be too well satisfied, and wish no other or better home.

Even the buffetings of the adversary have been made a blessing. Job was thus made a humbler and a better man. And Peter, when Satan had sifted him as wheat, was a more useful apostle. When John, in his vision, was questioned respecting some who appeared to be approaching heaven from this world, "Who are these arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" the question being referred, was answered, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The idea distinctly conveyed is, that tribulation made them illustrious spirits. And we have all noticed in our walk through life, instances of believers, who evidently were making great advances in the divine life, in the most adverse circumstances that can be well conceived of. When they have not dared to pray, nor attend a place of worship, nor enter into covenant with God, it has seemed as if every lash of adversity pressed them on toward their home in the heavens. We have admired the straight-forwardness of their course, when they have wet every foot of their way with tears.

Thus since the revolt in heaven, and the fall in paradise, devils, and those whom they have led captive at their will, have had employ in the service of God's people. Directly and intentionally, or otherwise, they have served the people of the saints of the most high God, and will continue in the service, while the earth shall remain, and there shall be on it a believer ripening for heaven. And God is so sovereign in managing the affairs of his people, that he asks not the consent of the ungodly to be thus employed. They pursue their own plan, and he his; but whether they love or hate, are kind or hostile, their highest love, and their bitterest rebukes, achieve for the people of God the same object, and push them on toward their house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

3. *They mean not so.* It is very far from being the intention of wicked men to serve the people of God. So much may be asserted on the authority of facts, and what is more yet, on the authority of God. Sinners have one purpose which they intend to accom-

plish in every enterprise of theirs, and God another in the decree that assigned them that service. "Ye intended evil against me," said the injured Joseph, "but the Lord meant it for good, to save much people alive." Haman intended the ruin of Mordecai, but God purposed his high exaltation. The princes of Babylon meant the ruin of Daniel, but God would advance him to the highest renown. The infidels of France, while they spilt the blood of the priests, and confiscated their funds, purposed the overthrow of religion, but God meant a deadly blow at Antichrist. Voltaire contrived the tract system, to proscribe the Scriptures, but God designed the dissemination of the gospel truth. And when the wicked intention is *less* or *more* manifest, still the case does not widely differ.

It does not as we conceive prejudice at all the position we maintain, to allow, that there are individuals among the ungodly, who wish well to those who love God, and are daily employed in doing them kindnesses. The questions to be asked in that case are, do they esteem God's people any the more because of their piety, or less? or do good to them the more cordially, or the less so, because they love God? Is the zeal to do them favors *increased* or *diminished* because they are partially sanctified? Men may continue kind to them notwithstanding their religion, and still be the farthest possible from intending to bless them as the friends of God. The most selfish motives may induce them to act: as the Christian may be the wife, or the husband, or the brother, or the child, of the unregenerate benefactor, and the instinctive affections do all we see done. And even then it is doubtful, whether there is ever a wish in the unrenewed to do them spiritual good, to advance them on toward heaven. I know of no authority, either from Scripture or fact, to warrant the supposition, that any believer ever had an unregenerate friend, who wished him to progress in putting on the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. What! wish a wider and still wider separation, and finally an eternal remove from them we love! urge them to depart from us, be more unlike us, and have less fellowship with us? and this because we love them! There would be something strange in all this.

Nor will it be any argument against the position, *they mean not so*, that men are not conscious of this operation of their hearts. The same heart that is desperately wicked, is deceitful above all things. Very few are conscious of hating the character of God, or his law, or his government. You may go to the careless, stupid, prayerless multitude, and only one in a thousand will confess

that he hates God, and he rather because of his orthodox education, than his consciousness, and the residue will most of them be angry, that you should presume to charge them with a crime so monstrous. You may accuse them in the very language that God uses, of having evil hearts of unbelief, of being carnally minded, or of being dead in trespasses and sins, and if you make them understand that all this implies, that they do not love their Maker, and his people, they will resist the imputation in the very face of this inspired testimony. If no charge may be brought against the unregenerate, but such as they are ordinarily conscious is true, we must either find them in a state of conviction, or may press home upon them no guilt of any shape or hue.

If then the doctrine may stand, it is but what every believer in divine revelation expects, that God will employ his power, to convert to the use of his people, what is or is not done with this view. He would not leave them in a world where, our doctrine true, there are so few to design their good, without some sure promise that he will defend them, and will by all events, promote their present sanctification, and their ultimate blessedness. Hence the broad fields of promise. "The wrath of man shall praise thee." "He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings come down upon his own pate." What a keenness is there in that divine challenge in the second Psalm; "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." The address of God to the tempter soon after the fall, contains the very sentiment we enforce, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." And said our Lord to his disciples, "I came not to send peace but sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." From language like this, with which the Bible is filled, we should seem to be justified in supporting the position *they mean not so*. It is not the design of unregenerate men to bless, directly or indirectly, the people of God. I proceed to say,

4. While God employs wicked men in serving his people, *he holds them under close restraint*. Look at the fulfilment of the pro-

diction of the text in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the second book of Kings. That prince *was sent* as predicted in the text, and his generals with a great army encamped under the walls of Jerusalem. There Rabshakeh, in the name of his master, insulted God, practised perfidy with the king of Israel, abused and ridiculed the people, and pretended to have a commission from God to destroy Jerusalem. Hezekiah committed the matter to the Lord, and in sackcloth appealed to him to defend his own great name, and save his people. And God, by his prophet, sent him an answer of peace. Said Jehovah of the proud monarch, who had come to wage war with his honor, "I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me." It was a moment of awful interest. Just without the gates of the city was a victorious army, of nearly two hundred thousand men. *Now* it was that faith only could penetrate the dark cloud, that hung over the city and sanctuary of God.

But God had chained that impudent blasphemer to the foot of his throne, and he had now gone to the extent of his limits. When men, in abusing God's people, have enough of the fiend about them, to go on and insult God himself, then his people are safe, for the Divine honor must be vindicated, and God will do that himself, most promptly. I should be afraid of no man who would curse me, *and my Maker too*. I have then only to stand still, and see the salvation of God.

That proud man was in the hand of a mighty Conqueror, and here was Israel's safety. "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest." That night the angel of the Lord entered the Assyrian camp, and slew a hundred four-score and five thousand. When Sennacherib awoke, and saw his whole army dead corpses, he returned to his own land, and went to worship in the temple of Nisroch, his god, where two of his own sons imbued their hands in his blood. When men have blasphemed God, he can easily overtake them, and slay them. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." That impious man perished in the very temple of the god he worshipped, that Jehovah might doubly avenge the insults that had been offered him, on the idols to whom he had been compared, and the wretch who had defied his power. Thus God, while he had that blasphemer in his employ, was careful to hold him under close restraint.

We infer the same doctrine from the history of Balaam. He would have cursed Israel, because he loved the wages of unright-

eousness. And he persevered in the design, while conscience, and the dumb ass speaking, reprov'd his madness. But God loved his people, and although Balaam's success could not have hurt them, still he would not allow his impious maledictions to contaminate the atmosphere that breathed through the camp of Israel. After all his pompous efforts, he pronounced a blessing only, and the curse lighted upon his own head. He perished by the sword, and went to his own place. *He* intended one thing, and *God* another, and he failed because God kept a bridle upon his lips.

So Haman was hanged upon the gallows he had erected for Mordecai, and the foes of Daniel were food for the beasts of prey that would not devour *him*. In the bloody scenes of Bethlehem, the very child escaped whom Herod would have slain, and the curse of God fell on *him*. If time permitted, I could swell this catalogue of facts, indefinitely, all going to show, how *terrible*, as well as *sure*, are God's restraints.

But his restraints are sometimes *merciful*. Saul of Tarsus is a happy case. He set out with the fury of a beast of prey, and dragged to prison and to death all that loved the Lord Jesus. At length he must needs go to Damascus, and try his zeal upon the lambs of the flock in that region. But he had now finished his career of blood, and the grace of God arrested him. It would not longer comport with the Divine purpose to permit the prowling wolf to range among the sheep-folds.

And we could give *you*, had we time, more recent facts, of both descriptions, where *judgment* and where *mercy* produced restraint. Ask the ministers of the gospel, who notice and record such facts, and they will tell you of many a man, who raved against God and his truth, like a mad bull in a net, up to the time when God subdued him by his grace. Or they will turn over the darker page, and tell you of the *sweeps of death*, among the enemies of the gospel, till all your blood would chill. In some fearful instances, a whole gang of gospel opposers, infidel, and hardened, and desperate in character, have perished, in such rapid succession, as not to leave a doubt behind, *whether* God did it? or *why* he did it? Men have found a grave *on the very day* when some impious vow against God or his people was to have been executed, and have roared upon their beds, when they have learned, too late, that their sins had found them out. We might not *say* at their funeral, that they had gone to their own place, but verily we *thought so*, and trembled. We have seen them stripped of their property and their influence, at the moment when it was too evident to doubt

that the interests of the Church required that they should be brought low.

But whether the divine restraints are *merciful* or *vindictive*, they are *sure*. Wicked men are governed by the same voice that controls the waves of the sea. "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Till covenant love consent, the children of God cannot be hurt in their person, their interest, or their character, by the ungodly. A plan to injure them may be all ripe for execution, and is still as perfectly under the Divine control as at any previous moment. Men may gnash their teeth, under the agonies of painful disappointment, and curse the hand that restrains them, but God will not be moved from his purpose, nor abandon one of his little ones, if he must destroy a world to protect him.

5. When their work is done, as God intended it should be, *he will punish them, for not doing his pleasure from right motives*. This doctrine is exhibited with the greatest distinctness in the history of Sennacherib. When the Lord had performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he would punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. So it was threatened Babylon that she should be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. And all the other nations which were the rod of God's anger to Israel, and accomplished his decrees, perished for injuring the Church. So the nations that slew the martyrs, although they fulfilled the purpose of God, are yet to suffer, and perhaps perish, for that sin.

And all the finally impenitent will go on accomplishing the decrees of God, with a heart that meaneth not so, and when their work is done must perish because all their motives were wrong. Devils are doing the same thing, accomplishing God's design without intending it. And now the question is, How is God to be vindicated in this procedure? We have facts in the case still, by which this question can be settled.

*First*, "he meaneth not so." There was no design in that proud monarch to do the divine pleasure; else surely he would not have so blasphemed the God he would serve. It never enters into the heart of the ungodly to do, what ultimately they will accomplish. And it is a maxim with men, and why not with God, that we deserve neither credit nor reward, for the good we do without intention. Suppose there operate no very *evil* design in an act that works our good, if there be the absence of a design to do us a kindness, we feel under no obligation for the good that is done.

In a dark and cold night, you call for hospitality at the door of some stranger, but you are denied lodgings, and come home, and find your house on fire, and extinguish the flames, and save your house, and your family. Do you thank that man, for the kindness which his inhumanity did you? Does he, on hearing of the event, feel that you are obligated to him? Or does he have but the deeper sense of his own baseness? It is then a plain case, that God can give his creatures no credit, if they serve him without intention.

2. A fact in the case must be noticed; "It is in his heart to destroy and cut of nations not a few." Not only was there in the heart of the Assyrian, no good motive, but there was a motive positively bad; and still he did the pleasure of God. Hence, why should he not be punished? And why should not all ungodly men be punished, though it shall at last appear, that they have accomplished the divine purposes? "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." One gives you poison intending to kill you, but you have some obstinate disease upon you, and the poison cures you; is he the less a murderer? Was Mordecai indebted to Haman for his advancement, or Daniel to the princes of Babylon, or Joseph to his brethren?

Will it be denied that all unregenerate men act from wrong motives? Then assuredly their motives are neither positively good nor bad. But a moral agent cannot be wholly indifferent with regard to God and his law. There is no such being among all the creatures of God. Our motives in every action that may be considered *moral*, must be positively bad or positively good. Hence if you acknowledge that unrenewed men do not act from good motives, and this must be true or they are Christians, then they act from bad motives. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil."

Thus every unregenerate man is thrown upon the very ground, where stood the proud and impious Assyrian. Not that every man is accustomed to sin with that boldness, or has so thrown off restraint, as he had; but there is in his heart, while God is rendering him serviceable to his people, the absence of a good motive, and the presence of a motive positively bad. And if we allow this, we justify God in his dealings with the Assyrian, and thus approve of the principle on which the last judgment will proceed. I close with

#### REMARKS.

1. *The sovereignty of God, and the agency and accountability of the sinner, are associate truths.* In the passage we have contemplated,

God makes a very bad man do his pleasure, and still pronounces him free, accountable and punishable, in these very deeds. Hence sovereignty, agency, and accountability, centre in the very same act; and if compatible once, then are they kindred truths for ever; and what God has thus joined, let no man put asunder. If Sennacherib could do what God intended he should, and yet act freely, and deserve punishment, another sinner *may*, and every sinner *does*. I will give you one parallel text: I could give you many. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." What, did God determine the deed, and still their hands wicked who did it? Just so; or the mind of God has been very unhappily expressed.

Do sinners still ask, "Why doth he yet find fault?" We answer, not because sinners do not accomplish his purpose. He never thought of bringing a complaint against them on this ground. He will take care that his purposes be accomplished. But he has still this charge against them *that they mean not so*. To please God, men must not merely do what he purposes they shall, but do it with an intention to serve and honor him. He has a right to the allegiance of the heart. The meanest parent demands this, and thinks his child disobedient until he serves him with design.

2. *How wrong is that notion, that if the matter of an action be correct, it is of no importance what is the motive.* In the scrap of sacred history that we have contemplated, the whole result, as bearing upon the agent, turns on the motive. The Assyrian corrected the Lord's people, this was well; but he meant not so, and this was the source of his ruin. His motive was, butchery, spoil, and dominion; this brought the curse of God upon him. He might have corrected the Lord's people, as he did; and accomplished his purpose, as he did; and been now in heaven, if only he had *meant so*.

Thus is established a general principle of the divine government; the *motive* is the *whole* that God will notice. If men will be careful on this *one point*, God will provide for the residue. They need have no fears that his decrees will not be done, and that exactly as he determined; but the motives with which they are done, will decide the destiny of every agent employed, from the beginning of the creation to the last day.

3. *God did not create intelligent beings merely that he might destroy them.* His ministers have been represented, as making this assertion; or advancing sentiments that must lead to this result.

Now the sovereignty of God, as taught in this discourse, leads to a directly opposite result. Here we see him employing men, of the very worst character, in doing good; makes them correct his people, and feed them, and clothe them, and sanctify them, and bless them. And if God can oblige bad men, who do not love him, to do him a service like this, and still leave them free, and permit them to be as happy as they can be, and will at last merely demand of them that their motives were good, none but devils, and men desperately hardened, will complain.

They all have liberty to attach themselves to his family, and be his people, and be served, and be happy. But if they will not quit their sins, will not love the Savior, and will not serve voluntarily, so good a Master, they must either do nothing, that shall turn to any good account, or God must employ his wisdom and his power to turn all they do into a blessing to his people; and is this a hardship? For my life I cannot see, that in all this God does the impenitent any wrong. Or would it make them happy to know, that on their way to perdition, they had done mischief that God himself could not repair!!

I should think from what I know of God, that he *would do just so*. It is spoken very much to the praise of Cromwell, that he could employ to advantage the vilest man in England. And it seems to me that every good man must be glad, as every angel is, that God has this power, and this wisdom. "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

If any would prefer not to serve as the ungodly do, while they *mean not so*, but prefer to do the voluntary service of a child, they may, and this is the very thing we wish and what God wishes. You need not build a Jerusalem, in which you are not to dwell, or a temple in which you are not to worship, unless you prefer the condition of a slave, to that of a son or daughter. You have but to come in at the invitation of the Gospel, and you may in an hour belong to the family of Christ.

God lets you do what you please. And if he turns your mischief into good, this cannot hurt you. Serve him willingly, and he will reward you, and love you. O, can there be a fairer offer? can there be a kinder God than this? I should think devils would be ashamed to complain of this doctrine. I know it exalts God, but I cannot see, if the life of my soul depended on it, what there is hard, or cruel, or oppressive, or discouraging, in the divine sovereignty. If men choose to say, that God is not sincere in offering them mercy, and that he always meant to destroy them,

after making them hewers of wood and drawers of water in the camp of Israel, and that they have only to *serve* and then *perish*;— if they will give divine truth this construction, and thus pervert it to their own ruin, we have only to leave them in the hands of a sovereign God, and rejoice that he is not the Jehovah they suppose him to be.

*Finally, this subject must afford comfort to God's people.* Here they see all their interests identified with the prosperity of God's kingdom, and he determined to make that kingdom happy, and employing for this purpose all beings and all events. If their enemies would hurt them, he puts his hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips. He bids them "fear not," and has pledged his word, that all things shall work together for their good. He will guide them with his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory.

Ye happy believers, my soul casts in her lot with you. The God we serve is a gracious, and a mighty God. He rolls along the spheres, guides the events of every hour, manages the wrath of man, and the rage of devils, controls every storm, and directs the course of every atom. He is known in the palaces of Zion for a refuge, and his name is a strong tower into which you may run and be safe, whenever alarm comes over you.

It was in the confidence which this very doctrine inspires, that the Psalmist could say, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." A people so shielded, so served, and so beloved, can want only a song, equal to the gratitude they owe their Lord. They may keep at their Master's work, high in the confidence that he will never leave them, never forsake them. Amen.

## SERMON XLIII.

### WRATH CONQUERED BY LOVE.

ROMANS XII. 21.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

A VERY good man once said, "If there is any one particular temper I desire more than another, it is the grace of meekness; quietly to bear ill treatment, to forget and forgive; and at the same time that I am sensible I am injured, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good." But this sentiment, be it remembered, could be learned only from heaven. It did not belong to the systems of heathen philosophy. In them it was taught, that to forgive, till revenge had been taken, was weakness. To swear undying wrath, and plot the most summary redress, and sleep not till the enterprise was accomplished, all this was the height of virtue. And above this it is not to be expected that unsanctified human nature will rise. Hence every unchristian land is a field of blood. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

At the dawn of the age of mercy, a Pliny said, but had learned the sentiment from that very religion he affected to despise, "I esteem him the best good man, who forgives others, as though he were every day faulty himself; and who at the same time abstains from faults, as if he pardoned no one." But it was one from heaven, who had long enjoyed the harmony of happy spirits, and had himself the power to mould the hearts of men into his own image; who came down in all the amiableness of God, and taught the world principles of kindness; that to forgive is possible, and that the meek are blessed. His conduct accorded with his principles. When smitten on the one cheek he turned the other. When led as a lamb to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth, and when nailed to the tree, he merely prayed for those who drove the nails, and plead in their behalf that they knew not what they did. When he quit the world, he made it one of his last acts, to engrave upon

the hearts of his followers, as with the point of a diamond upon a rock, the very next text I have read you. Its spirit has constituted ever since, and will while the earth is blessed with a trace of his religion, the leading and prominent *social* virtue of his people. It is that feature of their Master which if they do not wear, they cannot *now* be recognized, nor can be known when they come to heaven.

Suffer me to make three inquiries, When may it be considered that one is overcome of evil? How may we save ourselves from the shame and the injury of being thus vanquished? and, How may we overcome evil with good?

I. *When may it be considered that one is overcome of evil?* This is a calamity that may doubtless happen to the *good man*, but is a matter of every day's occurrence to the multitudes of the ungodly. I remark, then, that a man is overcome of evil,

1. *When ill treatment excites the angry passions, and produces harsh and ill natured language.* In this snare unsanctified men are caught daily. Even men of correct habits are sometimes surprised by sudden and unexpected abuse, and rage when they should reason. But in every such case much is lost, and nothing gained. To lose our recollection and temper, and thus be brought down to a level with the man, whom we should rather have held in dignified and Christian contempt, is to be in a very uncomfortable sense overcome or conquered. This unhappy result was perhaps the very design of the onset. The foe has gained his whole object, and his antagonist is vanquished.

2. One is still more completely overcome of evil, *when he settles down into confirmed hatred of the offender.* He gives place to the devil, and lets the sun go down upon his wrath. By suffering anger to rest in his bosom, he becomes in God's esteem a fool. His passions have the mastery over him, and he becomes and remains a conquered man. And as he pores again and again over the insult that at first unmanned him, and thus deepens the tone of his anger, he may be seen in a figure putting chains upon himself, and rivetting the very fetters that bind him. Hardly may he be said to wish an escape from his bondage, or to make the least effort to break the chain that holds him. And not the miseries of an Algerine bondage, could more jade the spirits or vex the heart. It may be, too, that the foe was one whom in his calmer moments he would disdain to set with the dogs of his flock. Yet he has done the very deed he intended to do, and glories in his victory.

How unhappy, that one should be thus rendered a captive and a slave, by suffering his passions to rise upon him, and bind him.

3. One is overcome of evil *when he indulges designs of revenge.* The Divine injunction is, that we return good for evil, that we love them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us. If the enemy hunger we are to feed him, if he thirst we are to give him drink, and thus heap coals of fire on his head. By no other means can we so readily conquer our foes. We use in this case a weapon whose thrust they can neither parry nor endure, under which they melt and perish.

But when we take the opposite course, and return evil for evil, we grant the foe a victory. We suffer ourselves to be driven from the delightful duty of doing good to all men, the only post where we can be happy. The foe who invades our land, and drives us from our farm and our home, has not gained a point, to him more dear, or to us more disastrous; for not the family and the fireside yield us better comforts than the habit of doing good as we have opportunity. No wealth will buy a luxury like it. Money will purchase food, and raiment, and ease, and influence. But the habit of blessing others with kindnesses, of making glad every heart about us, this is angel's food. The recollection of good done, can make calm the surges of adversity, and render light the gloomiest evening. It has produced a smile upon the brow of death.

It is when nothing can hinder us from doing good, that we are like God. He sends rain upon the just and upon the unjust. Now who will deny, that when injuries prevent us from acting like God, we are overcome of evil. We cease then, for the time being, to have any right to say, that we are the children of our Father in heaven, who causeth his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. And what result more painful, and more degrading, could any foe desire, than thus to dislodge us from all the comforts and privileges of adoption.

4. We are overcome of evil, *when the ill treatment of one, leads us to suspect the friendship of others.* If to some extent it should be the fact, that suffering one instance of abuse, should draw upon us the necessity of suffering other abuses, and the treachery of one friend make others treacherous; still this is far oftener true in imagination than in reality. In the gloomy moments of suffering injury, we are often induced to believe a lie. An *individual* may treat us rudely and unkindly, and he may be the only one in the whole circle of our acquaintance, who would be willing

to injure us. The contrary apprehension is begotten by the gloominess of the mind. And we are sometimes so ungenerous as to believe ourselves abandoned by a whole list of friends, because one has proved treacherous. Thus we are plunged into distress, are ready to say that all men are liars, and by our groundless suspicion, and consequent coldness and distrust, produce the very miseries we forebode. Our apprehensions are the very demons that break the tie of friendship, and dissolve the bonds of brotherhood. They beget distance, caution, jealousy, and neglect, and the result is abandonment and hatred. Thus in an evil hour we draw upon ourselves the very miseries we might avoid, and the foe is suffered to inflict a wound deeper and deadlier than he had hoped to. The bonds of friendship are sundered, the peace of the mind is destroyed, the interests of Zion are injured, and the foe sits and smiles in his ambush at the miseries we inflict upon ourselves. We are overcome of evil.

5. We are more yet completely overcome of evil, *when abuse begets habitual sourness of temper.* When God does not prevent by his grace, long protracted injuries, inflicted by insidious foes, are prone to produce this unhappy result. The spirits are jaded by adversity, and become expert in transferring odium from one person or thing to another, till very soon it can be expanded over the whole creation of God. There is begotten an acid temper, and the very landscape is robed in gloom. The irritated master wreaks his vengeance upon the unoffending slave. The innocent child dreads the return of his ill natured father, and the very wife turns pale, when some foe has kindled anger in the bosom of her husband. The indulgence of one unkind affection, like some leprosy, infuses its poison through the whole soul. The eye it looks through becomes a contaminated medium, and transfers its own disease to every object of its vision. The man had a friendly heart, but he becomes a misanthrope; he did enjoy society, but would now be content with a hermitage; he prized Christian fellowship, but he doubts now whether piety itself can make an honest man. How evidently is such a man overcome of evil.

6. One is overcome of evil, *when he attempts unnecessarily a public vindication of his character.* I say *unnecessarily*, for it cannot be denied that a good man, without his wish, may be forced into such a measure. Often is this the very object which some malicious foe would accomplish. He knows perhaps, what is too true, that the best character will suffer by handling, and when he cannot catch the good man in crime, will compass his wishes if he can so

fix imputation, as to force him to go into a proof of his innocence. Conscious that he cannot himself establish the *positive*, he would put the virtue he hates upon proving the *negative*, or of perishing.

He issues his libel, invents circumstances that shall favor it, employs all the truth he can, in corroboration of his falsehood, and where truth fails to fill out the picture, he scruples not to employ a lie. He would try both your temper and your reputation. Screened from view, he would cast filth upon you, and amuse himself and others to see you wipe it off. He hopes there may be some spot indelible, or that you may sin in the act of establishing your innocence.

Now the snare is laid. But calmness, and reflection, and prayer, may easily be victorious. Good character cannot be hurt but by its owner. The tongue of slander may injure for a moment the stranger, but good conduct will invariably sustain good character. And it has come at length to be noted as a suspicious circumstance, when we court the aid of law and counsel to defend our reputation. It was a shrewd remark of Dr. Mather, "The malice of an ill tongue cast upon a good character, is like a mouthful of smoke blown upon a diamond, which at present may obscure its beauty, but is easily rubbed off and the gem restored to its pristine lustre." "Depraved as the world is," said a man of long experience, "let them have your character, and though they may handle it roughly, they will ultimately restore it whole as they found it." But let them see that their attacks enrage you, and put you off your guard, or place you in a quixotic attitude of arming yourself for a conflict with a shadow, and their object is accomplished, and you are overcome of evil.

II. *How may we save ourselves from the shame and injury of being thus vanquished?* It is possible, no doubt, to obey the injunction of the text, as well as any other in the whole list of precepts. There are exertions which if we make, with a proper sense of our dependence on God, will enable us in the most evil day to stand. Let us then, in the

1. Place, bear it strongly in mind, *That he who would designedly injure us, does himself a greater injury.* There is in nature, or rather in the divine purpose, a principle of prompt and powerful reaction. Let one attack your character, and sure as life he hurts his own. Let him spread an ill report, and that report will recoil upon his own reputation. He will be considered a slanderer. If one act will

not fix upon him this stigma, that very impunity will induce him to repeat the deed, till the character he deserves will adhere to him. Thus *he* suffers, and *not you*.

Or would he merely disturb your peace, let him but alone, and his own peace is injured more than yours. God can give you a peace, that nothing can disturb. If you must unjustly suffer, God can support you and comfort you, but this he will not do for the man who wrongs you. His, on reflection, will be the shame, and the guilt, and the remorse, of a deed which God will not justify. The wound he intended for you, will rankle in his own bosom.

Now if the man who intended to injure us, has wounded himself, then we should pity him, and pray for him, and not study a duplicate revenge. There opens upon us the delightful opportunity, to bind up his wounds, and pour in oil and wine, and we may have luxury to forget and forgive—a luxury which the whole herd of evil doers never tasted.

Or be it our temporal interest they would hurt, or our influence, there is but this one issue to all the operations of malevolence—the curse lights upon the perpetrators. Their violent dealings shall come down upon their own head. They are taken in their own snare.

2. *If we resist evil, we are invariably injured.* The foe is the more courageous, the more fierce and prompt the repulse he meets with. He exhibits now a prowess that he could never have summoned, had he coped with mere non-resistance. A slanderous report is repeated and magnified, because it has been wrathfully contradicted. The presumption is that when the mis-statement shall have varied its shape and attitude, it can be imposed upon the credulous as a new fact, that shall go to corroborate the old. And let resistance be kept up, and soon the insulated charge becomes a long catalogue of crimes, that go to establish each other, and render unquestionable the whole series of allegations. Now it is hoped that the world will say, such a host of imputations cannot want for some foundation in fact. The charge of intemperance corroborates that of fraud and falsehood. The testimony of two liars, when they substantially agree, and there has been no concert, may establish the truth.

Thus charges which are all false, and are multiplied by resistance, are made to prop each other, till there is begotten suspicion that never need have been. And the needless attempt at investigation fixes the impression, that character is crumbling, and that a still bolder push will be accompanied with complete success. Thus

by wrestling with the blast, we are liable to be discomfited, when had we lain down and been quiet, the storm would have beat upon us a little, and passed over, and we should have seen the sun again in all his brightness. The foe intended to render us unhappy, and he learns that he has, and hopes most cordially that another onset may undo us. But let him see that you remain unmoved, that his attack has not even discomposed you, that you are invulnerable as the rock, and he must be the veriest idiot if he draws another arrow from his quiver. Hence, said the poet,

“ Tempest will rive the *stiffest oak*,  
*Cedars* with all their pride are broke,  
 Beneath the fury of that stroke,  
 Which never harms the *willows*.”

3. *It will calm us in an hour of onset, to feel that wicked men are God's sword.* From him we deserve all the evil that the most malicious foe can inflict. True, men are none the less free agents, and accountable, because they are the rod and the staff in the hand of the Lord. But it would argue a want of submission to parental restraint, should the child seem angry at the rod. It is our consolation to know that God holds our enemies in his hand, directs every wound they shall inflict, and has promised to restrain their wrath, when it will not praise him. He has put his hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips, and will in due time, when he has sufficiently humbled his people, lead their enemies back by the way that they came.

Hence, when ungodly men would do us injury, it should rather awaken our pity *for* them, than our anger *against* them. We have a divine illustration exactly in point, and conscious ill desert should ever lead us to say with David, in reference to Shimei, “ Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.” “ Why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins ?” If the men who injure us are to be the instruments of *our* sanctification, and then, unless the grace of God interpose, are to be the objects of *his* everlasting displeasure, be their designs never so base, how can we feel otherwise than pitiful and kind ?

4. *It will be a timely and sweet reflection, for a period of abuse, that ill-treatment is among the all things that shall work together for our good.* Trials may come from a quarter unexpected, and from those who owe us the kindest treatment. We took sweet counsel with them, and went to the house of God in company. Be it even so, still faith assures us that their injuries will bless us, will sanc-

tify us, and help us on in our preparation for the enjoyment of God in His kingdom. This one question settled, and I will inflict no wound upon my adversary. He is doing me everlasting good, and though he mean not so, still I cannot injure him who is constrained to be my benefactor. I will forgive him before he asks forgiveness, and will exert myself to induce him to pass on to heaven with me. And if unsuccessful, still the promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," will bear my spirits up through the darkest and dreariest hour.

5. *It should ever be our reflection in the hour of attack, that to be like Christ, we must not resist evil.* "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He passed meekly through torrents of abuse. It poured in upon him, wave after wave, but he stood, a rock. When they would catch him in his words, he spoke wisely and kindly. When they would stone him, he inquired for which of his kind deeds they did it. When that fiend of midnight betrayed him, after joining in the Paschal supper, and having long borne the badge of discipleship, how meekly he inquired, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Now would we be followers of the Lord Jesus, the track is plain; we must not suffer ourselves to be overcome of evil.

*Finally, there is the direct command of God.* No precept can be more binding than the text. 'To indulge a vindictive spirit is an infringement upon the Divine prerogative. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." There is a day of retribution appointed, and one is constituted judge who cannot err. In the hour of conflict we have only to refer men to that day when every wrong will be rectified. And if our sufferings are prolonged, still the years of heaven will run on till they are all forgotten. A Christian is but a pardoned rebel, and may not avenge himself. And all others may well fear to be vindictive, lest wrath come upon them to the uttermost. With the same measure that we mete, it shall be measured to us again.

III. *How may we overcome evil with good?* To do this will require the sacrifice of bad passions. The unrenewed heart has a keen relish for revenge. Not the most delicious food pleases the palate better. But this malicious appetite the grace of God must subdue, ere the heaven-born principle in the text can be adopted: a sufficient reason why the heathen have never imbibed the spirit of meekness. Parents taught their children to retain anger. In-

stance the father of Annibal, whose dying injunction to his son was, that he should never forgive the Romans: this precept he must swear he would obey. And many children learn of their parents now the same lesson. They are apt to learn, and they often have precept and practice to teach them. "Cursed parents! Cursed children!"

But let the heart be once subdued by the grace of God, and the lesson of the text is easily learned. The doctrine is simply this. If one treats us unkindly, we must treat him well. If he defame, let us say the kindest things possible of him. If he hurt our interest, let us advance his. If he expose our faults, let us cover his. If he will not oblige us, we must do kindnesses to him. If he deals reproach, we must practice no retort. If he curse us we must pray for him; if he hunger we must feed him, and if he thirst give him drink. If he smite us on the one cheek, turn the other. In one word, when he has done his best to injure us, let us do our best to bless and comfort him.

It may be well, when possible, to do another good in the very article in which he has intended our hurt. This will be entering the list with him, and will bring our virtues into a close comparison with his iniquities; thus shall we heap coals of fire on his head, and he be not a rock, shall melt and subdue him. When we would overcome an enemy with kindness, we make his conscience our ally, and bring him to hate himself and respect us. Then his weapons recoil upon his own head, and his violent dealings come down upon his own pate. We conquer him by love.

But in every effort of this nature we must *feel kindly*. A counterfeit affection will not bear us through. The heart must be primarily consulted in every such act of Christian revenge. Else the hypocrisy will be evident, and the defeat certain. When Paul said to the high priest, who had commanded him to be unlawfully smitten, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," he neither obeyed the injunction of the text, nor was in a proper state of mind to obey it. Not even piety will render it certain that we shall feel kindly under abuse. In the blessed Jesus we have the only example that never failed. He was proof against every attack. The only case in which he exhibited the appearance of anger, was when his Father's house was made a den of thieves; and then he was angry without sin. Let our temper be like his, and we shall find it easy to do right; and to be like him, we are infinitely obligated.

It may greatly help us, when we come in contact with unhal-

lowed passions, to reflect, that not certainly is the man our enemy, who may be tempted to treat us unkindly. When he has done us this one injury, if we bear it with a Christian temper, he may remain kindly disposed to us, may become a firm and steady friend: while our wrath and revenge may erect him into a subtle and dangerous enemy. He may have made his onset upon us in an hour of irritation, and may be in an hour, more ashamed of himself than we are of him.

Is the offender an ungodly man, there is a single thought that must prepare us to meet his rage with calmness. He has no treasure in the heavens. He is passing on to the blackness of darkness for ever. We shall see him when a few days have gone by, unless the grace of God prevent, covered with shame and confusion. His harvest will be passed and his summer ended, and he not saved. And can we be angry to-day with one who is to perish to-morrow? Can any sensation but pity control us, while we see a deluded man raving on the very threshold of perdition?

Or is the offender a Christian, then how it should shame us to become angry with him. Angry with a brother, a follower of the Lord Jesus! He could not intend me wrong; his judgment erred; he will ask forgiveness, before the sun goes down, of God and of me. The followers of the Lord Jesus bite and devour one another! "O, tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askalon!" The Savior must not be so wounded in the house of his friends. Let me have, I will not say my *religion*, let me have my *reason* in exercise, and I will bear any thing from a child of God. For my right hand, I will not raise it against one who is heir with me to an inheritance in the skies, and is to help me adore the Lamb for ever. Joint heirs with Jesus Christ! what a binding influence has this thought upon Christian hearts.

## REMARKS.

1. How highly should we value our Bibles which teach us this amiable lesson. But for this book, we had never learned how to *receive* an injury, or *forgive* one. It belongs not to human nature, untaught from heaven, to invent such a sentiment as the text. Our parents had been fierce and cruel, and they had taught *us* to be implacable, had not the Bible been the associate of our home. And how this one heavenly principle lessens the miseries of human life! How many the wrongs it obliterates, and how many of the social embarrasments it begets! Precious book, be thou the inmate of my bosom, till the spirit shall quit its house of clay!

2. This subject will teach us to pity the heathen. Their end-

less quarrels are because they have no Bible. They would let their children, their widows, their sick, and their aged *live*, if they had a Bible. They would forgive their enemies and be meek, and benevolent, and gracious, had they not been without the book that teaches these heavenly lessons. Send them a few of your Bibles, and they will soon beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and those vast fields of blood will be transformed into the garden of the Lord. He will accompany his word with his Spirit.

3. How happy the period of the Millenium. The Bible will then have its legitimate influence, and there will prevail the very spirit inculcated in the text. In what noble figures does the prophet teach us this truth, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cocatrice-den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." You have often read this precious text. How happy the eyes that are not closed upon the scenes of life, till that sweet morning has come, and all these tumults, that keep this world a wilderness, have subsided! May some favored child of mine live to see that happy period.

4. Let us learn, brethren, whether that day approaches. It will not burst upon us in a moment. There will be a gradual increase of that spirit which the text inculcates; till every parent will teach it to his children, and every child will love to learn. From the family circle it will spread out over the whole land, and render it Immanuel's land, a mountain of holiness and a habitation of righteousness. Do we see an increase of this spirit? Do we feel it in our hearts? Does it go out to view in our daily deportment? Then the day approaches.

5. This subject will try our piety. Can we overcome evil with good? Does the tiger or the lamb, predominate in our social intercourse? When we receive abuse, with what temper do we act? To this test our religion must at last be brought, and by this and other similar tests, the question must be decided, whether we can be happy with angels, or must make our bed in the pit. Will God sanctify us by his Spirit, and fit us all to dwell in a peaceful happy world. Amen.

## SERMON XLIV.

### A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE.

LUKE XXIII. 43.

To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

THE scene of the crucifixion was, in many respects, the most awfully interesting that ever human eyes witnessed. Many things combined to create this interest: the time, the place, the motley mixture of character among both the persecuted and the persecutors, the miracles wrought, the worlds interested in the event, all conspired to render the moment like no other since the wheels of time began to move. Angels gazed, and devils, at the whole scene, and probably every world in being was interested.

And yet, in all this scene, it has seemed to me that the redemption of the dying thief was one of the most interesting circumstances. Here was seen all the grace of Jesus Christ, and with it the supremacy of his power. He proved himself the Alpha and the Omega, having the keys of hell and of death, since, in the act of dying, he could communicate to his fellow-sufferer immortal life, and snatch the prey from the teeth of the destroyer, and bear it up to heaven in triumph. The friends of God, in every age before and since then, have fixed their eye on that hour as the proudest and most precious section of time in all the revolving ages.

The spirit of prophecy, looking through the lapse of many hundred years, and dwelling with rapture on the character and conflict of the Redeemer, foretold that he should be numbered with the transgressors. Accordingly, two men of despicable character, who had been condemned to die for theft, were crucified with him, one on his right hand and the other on the left. It was doubtless the intention of his enemies, by this arrangement, to degrade the immaculate Son of God.

We are told that one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly,

for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

We are told by one of the other Evangelists, "that the *thieves* also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth:" implying, as it would seem, that the penitent thief, at the first, joined his companion in reproaching the Lord of glory. In pursuing the subject, my object will be *to notice the evidence afforded us in the narrative, that ONE of the malefactors was saved.* I shall then inquire, *Whether there are, probably, many instances of late conversion?*

I. I am to notice the *evidence afforded us in the narrative, that ONE of the dying malefactors was saved.* The probability seems to be that he was nailed to the cross, a stupid unbeliever. If he joined his fellow in reproaching the Savior, there can remain no doubt that he was then in his sins. But between the sixth hour and the ninth, he was evidently made a new creature. Of this interesting fact we have evidence:

1. In the *faithfulness* with which he *reproved* his miserable associate. I know that the bare act of administering reproof is not of itself decisive testimony, one way or the other, of piety. We are always to notice the circumstances and the spirit with which the reproof is administered. It often happens that the basest of men, in a fit of passion, reprove their fellow-men. But the circumstances in which the dying malefactor reproved his fellow-sufferer, give his conduct in that matter peculiar weight. All about him were despising the Lord Jesus Christ as an impostor and a miscreant. The Redeemer was accused of many gross crimes, and probably the thief had not the means of knowing their accusations to be false. It would not have been surprising if he had viewed the Savior as the vilest of the three sufferers. With such impressions he would not have viewed the conduct of his fellow as very criminal. His reproof then, testifies, that he had other views of Christ than were entertained by the multitude who witnessed his agonies. And while he abhorred the conduct of his fellow, he boldly expressed that abhorrence, in contempt of the full tide of public opinion. If one should reprove the profane or lewd, while in the company of pious men, or at a time or place where and when religion was popular, it would be no very decisive testimony of his piety; but let him administer reproof when all

about him would justify the sin, and despise the reprovcr ; then it becomes an auspicious testimony. Wicked men are strongly tempted to fall in with the current of public opinion. To do what will please and be what others will approve is very much the leading principle with unbelievers. When we see them face about, and stem the current of depravity, this conduct tells in their favor.

2. The believing malefactor *freely acknowledged his sins*, and the *justice of his execution*. "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." There may be confessions of guilt, where sin is not hated. And yet a free and ingenuous confession, where there is no temporal advantage to be gained, is evidence of that compunction which always attends repentance, "He that confesseth his sins shall find mercy."

3. The penitent thief *feared the Lord*. Said he to his companion, Dost thou not fear God ! They had none but God to fear. Human justice had exerted upon them its utmost rigor. And yet the dying thief confessed, that there was wrath for them to fear. It is manifest that he believed in a future righteous retribution, and was acting with reference to that day, when he must give account of the deeds done in the body.

4. There was evidence of *meekness, humility, patience, and submission*. He rebelled not against the authority that crucified him, submitted to what he deserved, and seemed willing to suffer, without complaint. He felt and acknowledged that he was receiving "the due reward of his deeds ;" that no injustice, but the contrary, was done him, while he was made a public example of justice. He took to himself the punishment of his sins, and submitted, without a murmur, to the rigorous operations of human law.

And with his submission there seems to have blended meekness, patience, and humility. In fact, these attributes of mind are very much the same, and have their distinct names because of the varied circumstances in which the same Christian grace is brought into exercise. When the suffering penitent cheerfully cleared the Savior of every fault, and charged crime, and guilt, and desert of punishment upon himself, he used the legitimate language of humility. He did what every sinner must do before he can be accepted of Christ, took to himself the punishment of his sins. He appeared to have received the death he deserved with meekness, and to have endured with patience the pangs that brought that death upon him.

5. The dying malefactor discovered *strong faith* in the Redeemer. He viewed the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, believed

that though he saw him dying, he should live again, that he was the possessor of a kingdom, that he had power to bless and save him, and in the exercise of this confidence, committed his soul to the Redeemer's care; "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Now it would be no other than a strong faith that could thus operate at such a moment. It was the hour, and the power, of darkness. The object of his faith was, at that moment, in a state of *debasement*, *shame*, and *contempt*. He was believed to be an impostor, was viewed as a malefactor, had been condemned as a criminal, and was suffering the penalty of human law. Such would have been the view of unbelief. His disciples had forsook him; one had betrayed him, and one denied him. If we except the conduct of the Savior upon his trial, and while hanging on the cross, and the wonders that transpired at the time, the earthquake and the darkness, there was every thing to tempt an unbeliever to view the suffering Savior with scorn and contempt. And there were doubtless those present who would explain those strange phenomena so as to lay the fears they might awaken. And we do not perceive that they had any effect upon the Jewish Sanhedrim, or the Roman soldiery.

It must, then, have been a strong faith which would lead the dying thief to commit his immortal interests to one who was thus in the very depth of disgrace, and one, with whose character he was, probably, but very little acquainted. He doubtless saw in the Redeemer, while hanging on the cross, a dignity of deportment, illustrative of his high and holy character. He heard him pray for the presence of his Father, and the forgiveness of his enemies, which might convince him that an august personage, one more than human, suffered by his side. Still that faith was strong which could surmount so many obstacles, and commit such amazing interests to one apparently so unable even to help himself.

6. There was, in favor of the penitence of the thief, the evidence of *prayer*. One would hardly suppose that he had *leisure* to pray, as he hung upon the torturing nails, and groaned with every breath, and bled in agony at every pore—there could be but little leisure either to think or pray. But in the midst of all this he prayed, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." There is a prayer, I know, that is not of faith, nor can any form of prayer be to those who cannot know the heart, decisive evidence of piety. It is a sure *negative evidence*, but not *positive*. If one *does not* pray, he is unquestionably an unbeliever. Still it is said of Saul, "Behold, he prayeth," and this fact was mentioned as an evidence of

his piety. And prayer is frequently thus spoken of in Scripture, and must be viewed in the dying malefactor, as evidence of piety.

Finally, however, our only assurance that the dying malefactor went to heaven is to be gathered from the declaration of our Lord, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But for this assertion of the Redeemer, we could only have *hoped* that the miserable man was saved, and it would have remained till the judgment day a doubtful question, like the conversion of Nicodemus.

II. I proceed to inquire into the *probability of there being many late conversions*. By late conversions I mean, what you will understand me to mean, conversions which take place in the late hours of life. Although I shall dwell more particularly on the scenes of the sick and dying bed, yet many of my remarks will apply to the period of old age. I confess my unshaken belief that the instances are rare when a person reaches heaven after spending almost the whole of life in sin. In support of this opinion, I refer you, in the

1. Place, to the *Scriptures*. The whole aspect of the sacred volume exhibits this truth. Of the many thousands of whose conversion we read in the Scriptures, but one is said to have been converted in the dying hour, and but few are known to have been far advanced in life. From the very nature, however, of this article, I can make no quotations. If any doubt the truth of the remark, it will belong to them to bring forward, if they be able, Scripture testimony to the contrary.

The promises and invitations of the gospel imply that God's chosen time to make up his jewels is the early part of life. "Those that seek me early shall find me." "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

The same may be inferred from the *threatenings*. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." If you will examine your Bibles, almost every page will teach you, in one form and another, that religion is to be the business of early life, and not of a dying hour.

2. That few are converted in the late hours of life is manifest from the *very nature of religion*. It is spoken of as a thing that commences, and by time grows and is matured in the heart. It is compared to leaven hid in the meal, which gradually operates till

the whole is leavened. Paul speaks of the Christian as “forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” And again, speaking of the family of believers, says, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” From these representations, and a thousand like them, it would seem that the believer is converted generally long before he dies, and has time to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, till by degrees he becomes matured for the heavenly state. Converted late in life there would be no time for this gradual progress. The Christian’s life could not then be a warfare—he would have no need of the whole armor of God. All the directions given to the Christian how to live, and how to feel, and how to speak so as to honor religion, would seem to be lost, if the great body of believers were not converted long before they die. Indeed, the very idea of a visible Church, makes it manifest that the great body of the redeemed will be enlisted early in the service of God, be members of his Church below, and in this world, by discipline, and instruction, and frequent communications of grace, become qualified for the rest and the glory of heaven.

3. The fact that a *preached gospel* is God’s *instituted means* of salvation, goes to show that we are to expect but few conversions on the dying bed. For “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.” “For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Speaking of the heathen, the same apostle says, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” The three thousand on the day of Pentecost were awakened under a preached gospel. And ever since then, this has been the grand means of the salvation of souls. But these means are scarcely applicable to the dying man. True, he may have heard the gospel before, and the truths he has heard may awaken him when on the dying bed; or the gospel may be preached by his bed-side, if infidel associates have not fenced the truth from his dying chamber. Still it is not to be expected that when one has neglected religion till the last days of his life, God will then

send him the gospel, and give it such efficacy as to change the heart, and if not, the hope of a death-bed repentance is small.

4. As far as we can know the purpose of God from Scripture or fact, it is his purpose to employ his people in this world as instruments of his glory, before he takes them to heaven. Inquire of the children of God the date of their conversion, and they will almost uniformly point you to some early period of life. Our revivals prevail principally among the youth. The psalmist says, "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." God says, "They that honor me I will honor." Believers go from strength to strength, till every one of them appeareth in Zion before God. We fight for the crown, we wrestle for the prize, and strive for the victory. But all this is incompatible with a death-bed repentance, and renders it, I think, clearly improbable that there are many such instances.

5. Many circumstances conspire to render the exercises of the sick and dying bed *doubtful*. In that situation we are to expect from the very nature of the case, that one will be filled with alarm. He views himself on the verge of eternity. All he does must be done quickly. Conscious that the whole of life has been mispent, that he must soon die, and that there is no work, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, nor device in the grave, and that judgment will tread upon the heels of death, he becomes alarmed of course.

And if the paroxysms of disease do not prevent, he is very liable to become the subject of rational conviction. Shut up from the scenes of a busy world, he will naturally think on his case; and the more he thinks, the deeper will be his impression of his guilt and ruin. The truth he has heard he will now recollect. The invitations he has neglected, the admonitions he has slighted, the warnings and reproofs, will all return anew, and pour their congregated light upon his conscience. It is an honest hour, and the truth will be felt. Hence a state of alarm and conviction would seem to be a thing of course, if the ravages of disease leaves any leisure or strength for reflection.

And such a state of mind is very liable to be followed by calmness, hope, and joy. From the very constitution of our minds, and of some more than others, we are liable to vibrate from one extreme to the other, from a state of deep depression and despair, to a state of ecstatic joy. We have seen persons who, on the loss of some dear friend, seemed as if they should die, and yet, in a few days, would be even light and trifling. In times of awakening, some have seemed to be filled with the terrors of hell and in a

short time were more vain and trifling than ever. With a dying man who is conscious that he has lived without God and without Christ in the world, there is such an amazing interest at stake, that he will naturally grasp at a hope that he may be saved. When death stares us in the face, a hopeless state is intolerable. Hence the dying man will be constantly looking about him for evidence that he is a believer, and will be very liable to obtain a hope without evidence.

When hope is once acquired, many things will conspire to strengthen it. It may be succeeded by great joy. The idea that one is safe will naturally render him happy. And this false joy by re-action will strengthen his hope. Friends who are about the sick-bed, if pious or not pious, will be glad to see the sufferer happy, and will be tempted to do their utmost to strengthen and confirm his hope. And if pious, unless peculiarly faithful, they will be liable to aid his delusions, and strengthen his refuge of lies.

He thinks his passions subdued by the grace of God, when in fact they are only tamed by the paroxysms of disease. The appetites do not demand unlawful gratification, for they have for the present ceased their operation. The patient imagines that he has ceased to love the world, when in fact he is only beaten off from its embrace by the rage of disease. Because he is constrained to abandon the cares, the pleasures, and the vexations of life, and is led to think much on the subject of death and judgment, he presumes that he has become heavenly-minded.

As the words of the lips are little to be relied on, and are not spoken of in Scriptures as full evidence of piety, it is difficult to suppose that a dying man should be able to apply to his piety any very decisive tests. He cannot mingle with the ungodly and show us that he hates and reproveth their vile conduct. He cannot engage in trade or business, and so prove to us that he will not be hard and dishonest in his dealings. He cannot know the miseries of those around him, and show his benevolence by flying to their help. He cannot mingle with God's people in the sanctuary and the place of prayer and conference, and show us that he loves the people and worship of God. He is not exposed to temptation, and cannot prove to us that he has a religion that can overcome the world, and stand against the influx of iniquity.

In one word, a sick and dying man can bear but little of the fruits of holiness. He cannot give us the same evidence that a person in health can in the same time, which leads me to observe,

6. That the time is so *short* generally in which we can observe

the exercises of a sick and dying man, that whatever the case may be, our hopes cannot rise very high. If one in health, without any special event of providence to alarm him, become the subject of awakening conviction and hope, still we at first rejoice with trembling, and often many months elapse before we lose all our fears that he may return again to a state of stupidity. And our apprehensions must be greater still in the case of one whose exercises commenced while he stood on the verge of the grave.

7. The fact that so many have appeared well in the sick and dying chamber, while death was seen to hang over them, but have on their recovery lost their impressions, and appeared even worse than ever, has rendered suspected the exercises of the sick and dying bed. It is true that we have no authority to say that God may not do more for those who die than for those who recover. This matter we must leave with God till the last day. Very few persons have failed to witness one or more instances in which recovery to health has disappointed high hopes of piety. In some cases all doubt was gone, and if the patient had died, there had been the firmest confidence of meeting him in heaven; and still on his return to health, a few weeks made him careless, and the morning cloud and the early dew were dissipated. With very many facts like these before our eyes, how is it possible but that every prudent man should admit with caution the validity of those hopes of heaven, that are generated upon the death-bed. And now what use shall we make of all this? I

## REMARK.

If death-bed repentances are so doubtful, then *delays* in matters of religion are imminently dangerous. To-morrow, perhaps, you betake yourself to the sick-bed, and it proves your death-bed. There is something said to you on the affairs of your soul, and it may be that you are serious, and finally begin to hope that you shall live in heaven. But that hope may prove a spider's web, and you may lean on it and perish. Your friends may think you gone to heaven, but they may find, when the last day has come, that you are on the left hand. Attend to religion now in health, and then, when you die we shall have hope of you, and comfort in you. Now, if you want advice we can give it, but on the dying-bed, if we call on you, you will be too weak to receive instruction, and we can only pray for you, and perhaps let you perish.

## SERMON XLV.

### THE FATHER THE PROTOTYPE OF THE SON.

JOHN XIV. 8, 9.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?

THE doctrine which our Lord here intended to teach is evidently this, that in himself dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It was impossible to know *him* and not know the *Father*, to see him and not see the Father. In him the divinity was embodied, and thus, in the only possible way, brought down to human view. He was God manifest in the flesh. In no other case was it possible that any man should see God.

In our ideas of the Supreme Being, if our views are correct, we conceive not of a being possessed of locality and visibility, but of attributes dwelling in one incomprehensible, and infinite mind, whose duration applies to every point of time, and whose presence to every portion of space. When we think of him, or pray to him, we conceive of a junction of every great and amiable attribute. We worship a cluster of perfections which, as to the mode of their existence, lays the foundation for the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It will be my object to show that these perfections, which, when associated, constitute the object of our worship, were all found in the Savior, were attached to the man Christ Jesus, and prove him to be truly divine. If in him some of these attributes are less conspicuous than others, it is because his connection with human nature, and the point of time at which we view him, rendered it difficult, if not impossible, that such attributes should be developed. Every perfection which it was possible that he should exhibit clearly, was exhibited, and all others which enter into our ideas of God, are said to belong to him, and are inferrible from what he did. The truth at which I aim is this; If we find in Christ Jesus every attribute of Jehovah, and if these attributes appear not to be borrowed but to belong to him as originally his own, it is our duty to own his divinity, and worship him as our Lord and our God. I notice how freely the Scriptures ascribe to the Savior these attributes.

For instance *Omniscience*. The most superficial observer of the history of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot fail to have noticed how perfectly naked and open to his inspection were all creatures and all things. Peter came to him to inquire respecting their obligations to pay tribute. Our Lord, it is said, prevented him, i. e. he knew his errand and anticipated his request. He sent him to the sea, and directed him to angle for a fish which had swallowed a piece of money, and would be at the shore ready to be taken when Peter should cast in his hook. Here was displayed in one act intuitive knowledge of the natural and moral world, such as can belong to none but God.

When, in fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, he would enter Jerusalem amid the hosannas of the multitude, he sent two of his disciples to bring an ass which they would find tied in a certain place, and whose owner was friendly to their Lord, and would readily send his beast to do him honor. Here was exhibited an omniscience which can belong to none but God.

So while Nathaniel was under the fig-tree he saw him. He knew of the sickness and death of Lazarus, although he was at a distance, and had received no intelligence of these events through any human communication. When he would eat the passover, he knew that a man friendly to his religion would go for a pitcher of water, and would meet the disciples whom he had sent to prepare for the feast, and offer them for this purpose an apartment of his house. He knew the hearts of all about him; that the scribes and pharisees had come to catch him in his words; that the disciples were contending for superiority, and that Judas had it in his heart to betray him.

*Omnipresence*, as distinguished from omniscience, was an attribute which could not be displayed in connection with humanity without bringing the latter into doubt. If at the same moment that he was teaching the multitude on Mount Olivet, he had also been known to be in the same employment by the sea of Galilee, his cotemporaries would have doubted whether he had a human as well as a divine nature, or would have believed that there were more than one Messiah; and either of these errors would have been dangerous. Hence we are not to expect to see in the history of his life any evidence of this attribute, but must learn that he possessed it from what he says of himself, or from what inspired writers say of him.

His *Almighty Power* is conspicuous in every part of his history. The waves of the sea were calm at his word; he created bread to

feed the multitude ; every disease yielded to his touch ; devils were dispossessed at his bidding ; and the lame, the deaf, the blind, and the dumb were relieved at his command. His voice waked the dead, restored the dying, and fed the living. Of his almighty power there cannot be a doubt with such as credit his history.

And we see some traces of his sovereignty, although this attribute is evidently concealed by the very design of his incarnation. He came to teach the truth, to save men's lives, and not to destroy them ; to explain, rather than cloud the purposes of heaven. Still in many things that he did he concealed his motives, and gave no account of his purpose. He performed cures in Capernaum, and not in Nazareth, where he was bred, and where they claimed a right to his mercy. He blasted the innocent fig-tree because it did not yield him fruit, while yet the time of figs was not come. He scourged the market-men from the temple, and refused to tell them by what authority he acted. He selected his apostles from the fishing-boat and the shop of the tentmaker, passing by the scribes, and pharisees, and lawyers. And in all his distributions of grace, he chose whom he would to love and follow him, and left whom he would to perish.

He acted with an independence which bespoke him the sovereign Lord of his own kingdom. He took counsel of none. His own apostles he made acquainted with his purposes no farther than was necessary for their comfort and usefulness. Many of the most decisive steps relative to his kingdom he appears to have taken without giving any indications that he acted by a wisdom not his own, or a power not his own. His infinity, his eternity, his ubiquity, and his spirituality, as they are properties of divinity, were in a measure concealed by his humanity, or were attributes which could not be clearly exhibited in a point of time. We know that he possessed them all, but we gather this knowledge from the testimony of Scripture.

His *wisdom*, which forms the connecting link between his natural and moral attributes, was conspicuous in all he did. His very enemies acknowledged that he taught as never man taught. We think we see a supernatural wisdom in all his plans, in the clearness with which he exhibited truth, the promptness with which he answered every question, the acuteness with which he silenced his opponents, and the success which attended all his movements. A wisdom more than human, his enemies being judges, guided all the operations of his kingdom.

His *holiness* he displayed in his own perfect obedience to the

law, in his unqualified approbation of the obedience of others, and his frowns upon every transgressor. In his determination not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, and in his dying to fulfil its penalty in behalf of those whom his mercy would save, he gave the strongest possible testimony that he was holy as God is holy.

His *justice* was less conspicuous than many other moral attributes, because his errand into our world was to snatch rebels from its power by his own blood. He would not be a judge between a man and his brother, and would not condemn the adulteress. And yet never did any one so strictly observe the rules of righteousness as he did, and never had those rules been so clearly exhibited as we find them in his instructions. The grand rule embracing all others, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," was never exhibited till it dropped from his lips. Thus, not to mention that in promotion of justice he laid down his life, it is manifest that he made it a first law of his kingdom that justice should be done to all beings.

His *truth* and *faithfulness* are without a parallel. What he said always accorded with strict veracity. All his promises he fulfilled, and every promise is sure to be accomplished. Never did he speak of things past, present, or future, but his language accorded with fact; and if all men are liars, he must have been more than human. His whole life was a perfect comment upon his own assertion that he came into the world to declare the truth.

His *goodness* and his *mercy* none could ever doubt. He spent his life to make the wretched happy, and died to save them from endless misery. He mourned and wept over those who would not be made happy, and prayed in his last hour that his murderers might be forgiven.

Thus every attribute of divinity which could be exhibited in connection with human nature, and in a point of time such as was his public ministry, was clearly displayed as inherent in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we hear it said that he grew in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and man; if we find him receiving intelligence like other men, and praying as he taught them to pray, this only proves, what no one denies, that he was strictly and properly a man as well as God. His humanity would have been doubted if in every thing but sin he had not exhibited the properties of human nature. Hence he hungered, and thirsted, and was weary; he was grieved, he wept, he prayed, he bled, he sweat, and he suffered. All this must be to render him a man. And yet he could create the very

bread for which he hungered, and the wine for which he thirsted ; could sustain his own weakness, and take up the life he laid down. He could do for himself the very things which he asked the Father to do for him. While he lay in the manger, and while he hung on the tree, he still sustained the government of the world, and was the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace.

And it seems to us that these opposite attributes must meet in one who is both God and man. Why because we see weakness shall we deny his deity, rather than deny his humanity, because we see him possessed of infinite power. Some have taken one side of this question and some the other. There have been many who have denied his humanity, and we live in a day when others are attempting to strip him of his divinity. But the prophets foresaw in the child that should be born a junction of divine and human attributes. He was the mighty God, and yet he was to hang upon a tree ; he was to be a man of sorrows, and yet Jehovah in addressing him styles him the man that 'is my fellow ; he was made under the law, and yet the government of the universe was upon his shoulders. And what the prophets thus foretold is manifest in all his history. He could still the sea, and yet was in an agony on the approach of the hour of his dissolution ; he could raise the dead, and yet died himself.

Unable to see how these different attributes can be in the same person, some have asserted, and would have us believe, that all that was more than human were mere borrowed attributes ; that Jesus was a man like other men, or at least a mere creature, and that God granted him for the time being divine attributes. Now we read that God will not give his glory to another ; but whether God is not believed while he thus asserts, or whether men have discovered that as a loan is not a gift, so God may permit a creature to use temporarily attributes which are not permanently his, I leave you to judge. We are reminded, I know, that prophets and apostles wrought miracles, did what mere men unassisted could not do, in other words, were for a time endowed with supernatural power ; and the question is triumphantly asked, Wherein do the cases differ. The prophets and apostles were men, mere men, yet were empowered to do what belonged to the prerogatives of Jehovah, and what else is true of the Lord Jesus Christ ? With regard to these assertions I remark,

1. The Lord Jesus Christ acted as if these attributes which he exhibited were his own. He did not exhibit any signs of dependence on the will of another to enable him to do his mighty works

When he stilled the storm he merely said, "Peace, be still." When he dispossessed the demoniacs he commanded them to go out. When he healed diseases he took an attitude highly independent, "I will, be thou whole." When he delivered predictions he did not say, as the prophets did, "Thus saith the Lord." When he raised the dead his language was, "Lazarus come forth." He spoke of what *he* had done, and would do. He associated himself with the Father, and said, "We will come to him and make our abode with him." And when others spoke of what he had done, he never disclaimed the praise, or referred them to God as the author of these works. When he had communicated blessings to the sufferers he permitted them to give him all the praise. Now all this would have been unpardonable impudence in a creature the most exalted. There was never seen any thing like it in the prophets or the apostles. They used the power of working miracles as a borrowed attribute, and constantly ascribed all the glory to God. If others offered to worship them, they shrunk from the honor and declared themselves to be mere men.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ assured his disciples that the attributes he employed *were his own*, and the praise *his due*. He assured them that he was one with the Father, and that it was the duty of all men to honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He assured them that he had power on earth to forgive sins, and encouraged them to apply to him for pardon. He spoke of being in the Father in the same sense that the Father was in him. If then he was a mere creature, and had no honor or power but that which was loaned and temporary, he certainly betrayed his trust as no agent ever did before, and accumulated about himself the glory due to him who sent him.

3. It is certain that beings in all worlds viewed him with a respect which it would seem could not have been his due had he appeared great only in borrowed attributes. We hear the Father say, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The disciples addressed their prayers to him, called him their Lord, and committed their spirits into his hand. Said Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Devils did him honor, feared his power, and trembled at his approach. The Jews understood him to assert that he was equal with God. And he seems to have permitted all about him to retain their high views of his person and character.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of himself, and is spoken of, as possessing these attributes before he came in the flesh and since his ascension. Said he "Before Abraham was I am." And said

an apostle, with reference to him, "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him." And he is represented as continuing to govern the world as mediator till the judgment, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Still, however, he is to be worshipped equally with the Father for ever, and will doubtless for ever reign with him. There will continue to be ascribed to him "Power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Now who can believe that God can loan to a mere creature all his attributes, and give assurance that he shall enjoy them and the honors they attract to him, for ever? What absurdity can be more glaring? Hence what a rotten and miserable scheme it is which thus degrades the Redeemer and robs the gospel system of all its glory.

That still as mediator he acted in a delegated capacity, we know and are not disposed to deny. That in this character he was inferior to the Father, or acted under him, none will dispute. But that still he is invested with all the rights of Jehovah, and that every attribute of the true God is his without derivation, or loan, or bequest, is to me as manifest as that any other doctrine of the Bible is true.

The scheme of reasoning which vests the Redeemer with borrowed attributes, would throw us afloat on points the most obvious. How can we know that the being which we call man is any other than a brute beast vested for a few days with the loan of intelligence? He may to-morrow rot and perish like the ox. *We* do not use the power of reason, more as if it were an inherent property of our nature, than did the Lord Jesus Christ the high and holy attributes which come into view in his history. It would seem to me far easier to doubt whether men had any other than a borrowed intelligence, than to doubt the Deity of Christ. In infancy man seems like a mere animal, and often he reaches a similar state in old age. How can we know, then, that there awaits us any other existence beyond the grave than a mere beastly existence, if any. True intelligence was attached to us for a time, and we hoped to think and reason for ever, but this may all be fallacy on the principle that we oppose. Men have been styled angels in disguise, but we have, it seems, arrived at the conclusion that they are *brutes* in disguise, and may soon lay aside the intelligence which assimilates us to the angels.

## REMARKS.

1. The subject may inspire God's people with confidence. The Savior, we trust, is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. He is doubtless able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him. How can we distrust such a Savior? or be ashamed of such a Savior? or live in the neglect of such a Savior? What a glory does his Godhead give to the scheme of redemption. Those whose Savior is a man or angel may well yield to gloom and despondency; but he whose Savior built and will judge the world, is the mighty God, has the keys of hell and of death, may cast off every fear, may rejoice and be happy.

2. The subject may show us how great is the crime of rejecting the Savior. If God himself would come down to save us, our salvation must be an important object, and our ruin an incalculable loss. And how daring the impudence of disregarding a message brought to us from heaven by the Son of God! How tremendous must be the ruin of gospel sinners!

3. The subject may help us to try our religion. If in Jesus Christ we see the whole of the Divine character, we may by discovering whether we love him, know whether we love the Father.

## SERMON XLVI.

### THE HONEST AND FAITHFUL MINISTRY.

CORINTHIANS IV. 1, 2.

Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

THE ministry of the reconciliation is an office peculiar as to its responsibility, its trials, its honors, and its enjoyments. We are placed in the office through the instrumentality of men, but have our commission from heaven. We negotiate a reconciliation between God, and a rebel world. Men are *saved* by our ministry, if we do our duty; if we are unfaithful they are *lost*. If we give them not the timely alarm, we must answer for their blood. We must meet our hearers in the last day, at the judgment seat, and must know, when no mistake can be corrected, what has been the bearing of our ministry upon their everlasting destiny.

Hence we must do our duty, at the risk of interest, reputation, and life. Under every dispensation, the messengers of God have but one plain track, they must hazard the danger of being faithful. Jeremiah might not withhold his message, when he must write in a dungeon, when he must anathematize the monarch who imprisoned him, and when his message would impeach his loyalty and his patriotism, and endanger his life. Paul must do his duty in the face of stripes, the dungeon, and the cross. The hope that we can fully please the holy God, who sends us, and the disloyal to whom we are sent, is a fruitless hope; and none but the traitor will ask, whose pleasure he shall seek. If we had no interest of our own to risk, the honest man would aim to do his Master honor. But personal perdition hangs over us if we compromise the honors of our Lord. Men *should* be pleased with us when we do our duty, but men are not what they *should be*, else they had needed no gospel. The same depravity that prompts them to hate the government of Jehovah, renders them hostile to any conditions of peace, that will consist with his honor. Hence the minister of Christ, who cultivates a bending conscience, and is seen carefully providing for himself, at the expense of his Master, is of all men the most miserable, and the most contemptible.

But upon a ministry thus exposed, God has poured the highest honors. Not the gospel simply, but the gospel in the lips of men, he has pledged himself to use as the grand instrument of redeeming the world. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Not the very angels, who minister to those who shall be the heirs of salvation, have a commission more dignified. We are workers together with God, in laying the foundation and rearing the superstructure of a spiritual temple, whose topstones are to be laid with shouting, Grace, grace, unto it!

And with the *responsibility* and the *trials* of the office, God has mingled not only *honors*, but *enjoyments*. The work is pleasant. To study divine truth and proclaim the divine honor; to be conversant with sacraments and Sabbaths, with prayer and praise, is living, if the heart be right, hard by the Oracle of God. And when the work is done, the *reward* is great. They that turn many to righteousness, are to shine in the kingdom of their father, and as the stars for ever and ever.

The apostle in the context had been commending his office: had showed, by various arguments, that it was more honorable than a ministry under the law. The law he denominates the *letter*, the gospel the *spirit*. That was the ministration of condemnation and death; *this* the ministration of the *Spirit*, and the ministration of *righteousness*. The *legal* ministration was *temporary*, but that of the *gospel* remains a *lasting* and *permanent* establishment. Hence Moses, conscious that he was the minister of a dispensation that would soon be eclipsed by one more glorious, veiled his face. But the heralds of the gospel may use great plainness of speech, as they proclaim a system in which there is nothing dark or mysterious. The true light has shined; the veil is taken away, and we now behold the glory of God, not enveloped in clouds and darkness, but with open face, as in a glass, shining in the face of Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And while we gaze upon this brightness, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. And all is accomplished by the Spirit of the Lord, else the world had abode still in its native hideous darkness. Thus does the apostle, when he contemplates the dispensation of which he is a minister, rise to a tone of triumph, where language and figure are exhausted. Therefore, says he, seeing we have this ministry, we faint not. The office is so dignified, that no trials shall shake our confidence, no onset subdue our courage. We will neither use dishonesty, craft, or deceit.

but commend ourselves to every man's conscience, by manifesting the truth. Thus interesting is the attitude in which the apostle places himself, and all who after him should publish salvation to a dying world. Following the train of thought he suggests, I remark,

I. *The mercy of God qualifies men to be his ministers.* The very messengers he employs are by nature hostile to the truths and glories which the gospel reveals, and to the temper and duties it enjoins. The character of God and of the Savior displeases them. There cluster in the Godhead the very attributes that render character unlovely to the carnal mind. We naturally spurn the kingdom that God erects, and the heaven he reveals. All that was odious in the law, and more yet, we see in the gospel, till the eyes of our understandings are enlightened. It contains a law as rigid, as that which issued from the flames of Sinai, while it digs a deeper pit, and kindles a more consuming fire than were employed to avenge the broken law of Moses.

We are by nature like our hearers, the prey of a carnal mind, that is not subject to the law of God. Hence, till the grace of God renew us, how disqualified are we to be ministers of the reconciliation! But of just such men, sanctified, he makes ministers. He forgives them, and loves them, and they are then called to plead with rebels, just such as they were themselves up to the hour of the new birth. They have but just quitted the standard of revolt, and lo! they are seen standing hard by the host they have abandoned, proclaiming a pardon in the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul had gone to lay waste that very church, which a few days afterward it was his honor and his joy to edify. The devourer was caught with the very prey in his teeth, and was made a lamb. The disciples were afraid of him; nor can we wonder: a few days gone and he was a fiend; and very much so of all Christ's ministers. We mingled with the congregation of the ungodly, and could resist the kindest entreaties of a pitying Redeemer. Not one of all the multitude had a conscience more polluted, or a temper more revolting. If grace has sanctified us, how surprising our escape. *Perdition* we deserved, but are made the messengers of life. What a humiliating retrospect! One look behind, covers us with shame, east we that look but through a little space. Then the overtures of the gospel, which we now proclaim, were like music to the deaf adder. Some of us, perhaps, were pressing on to perdition like Paul, *in the very van* of that

multitude which now it is our effort to save. On this point I hardly know how to say enough. We were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." We "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

And we had a *mind* as *benighted*, as was the *heart depraved*. Whether the apostle had reference or not to the supernatural gifts, by which he and his fellows had become qualified to serve God in the gospel, we may well ascribe to his grace any small degrees of preparation in us for such an embassy. That gospel which it has become our duty and our delight to publish, little as we now understand it, was once still less understood. The Bible was a dead letter. Neither was the mind imbued with its doctrines, nor the memory stored with its facts, nor the tongue used to its dialect. It seems incredible, when we look as it were but to yesterday, and recollect how gross was our ignorance of the gospel, that we should now be the teachers of that same religion to the multitudes who are perishing as we were for lack of knowledge. But the grace of God furnished us the means of improvement, and poured in the few rays of light, covered as we still are with ignorance, by the aid of which light we are introduced into an office similar to that which once was filled by the Son of God.

But the grace of God was still conspicuous, else our *unworthiness* had debarred us from a situation so sublime and so honored. Might we but have occupied the obscurest place in God's house, been only door-keepers, it had been more than we deserved. The shame of having been totally depraved, and the guilt of having stood in the ranks of revolt so long, the habits of indolence we had acquired, and the still remaining passions, and prejudices, and the whole catalogue of moral plagues, deep rooted in our nature — all seemed to forbid us the occupancy of a station so honored. God has indeed committed the treasure of the gospel to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of him and not of us. How well does the language of the prophet become us "Behold, Lord, I cannot speak, for I am a child." And that of the apostle, "Unto me whom am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

And where is it that God has put us? Into almost the very same office once filled by prophets and apostles, and even by the

Lord Jesus himself. He has emancipated slaves, and sent them to invite back a strayed world. He has placed us on the ramparts of his Zion, and has entrusted the prosperity of his kingdom, the honor of his government, the vindication of his law, and the glories of his name, to our sleepless, and watchful, and devoted fidelity. On our way to the place of execution, and the halter about our necks, he hailed us, and pardoned us, and now here we stand, between the condemned, and the arm of justice, between the burning glories of the Godhead, and the wretches whom his ire threatens to consume. We are occupying the station that Moses filled, while Israel were dancing around the golden calf; or that of David while he offered sacrifice on the threshing floor of the Jebusite; or that of Abraham when he sent up his last petition in behalf of the devoted cities—to turn away the wrath of heaven, to stay the plague, to ward off the storm of fire, and save, if it be possible, the abandoned transgressor.

Connected with our fidelity, are the everlasting hosannas of a multitude that no man can number, or with our neglects, the weepings and wailings of the damned. Ah, why did the holy God attach so high an office to beings so debased. Why did he not commission angels, who would have been faithful, and who were worthy of his honors. They would have brought no pollution with them, would have made no compromise of truth, would have exhibited no dire instances of apostacy, would have seen eye to eye, and might have gathered in the elect from the ranks of revolt, leaving wholly behind that multitude of hypocrites, who now pollute the ordinances of God. Well may we exclaim, "I am a worm and no man," and ascribe, with the apostle, our appointment to the work, and our equipment for it, all our success in it, and the reward, if any should be ours, to the grace of God.

II. *The ministry of the reconciliation is an office big with trials.* This we should infer from its very nature. We are the agents of negotiation, between God, a holy and a good Jehovah, and men who hate his character, his government, and his glory. We preach a gospel which, till men are sanctified, they cannot love. We are directed to describe their character, in all its odiousness, and show that they have been unreasonable and vile in every principle, and in every act of their revolt. We must warn them of a coming moment when all their sin and their shame must be uncovered. We dare hide from them no part of the truth, whether they will hear or forbear: must show them that not merely is

their conduct offensive to God, but every imagination of the thought of the heart, is evil, only evil continually. We must inculcate principles that violate every inbred sentiment of their hearts, and press maxims, and doctrines and duties, that give their whole conduct the lie, and cover their whole character with guilt and pollution. We must assure them that, as God is true it will be ill with the wicked in every stage of their being, and in whatever world God may place them. We must uncover the pit before them, must prophesy evil concerning them, must say loudly and fearlessly, that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God, where their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched.

But it needs no prescience to feel assured that all this will not please. Men are not disposed to have their characters laid bare, and their hopes destroyed. The refuge of lies where they have taken sanctuary, they will not allow us with impunity to demolish. The god of this world persuades them that *he* is their *enemy* who thus beforehand brands them with the marks of perdition.

And while we are thus liable to offend, we depend on them for support. While every doctrine we preach, and every duty we urge, and every woe we announce, are at issue with the strongest biases of their hearts, we expect them to clothe our children, and fill our board with bread. While they are in the very act of doing us a kindness, we may see them violate the law of God, and may be under the odious necessity of returning the favor with reproof.

Hence trials come as certainly as death. If we watch the interest we are set to watch, and cannot be bribed to perfidy, there will grow thorns in our path, and we shall wet our couch with tears. Hence the fact that the Lord's servants have been stoned, have been sawn asunder, have been tempted, have been slain with the sword, have wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, been destitute, afflicted, tormented. Hence the scenes of persecution that fill the pages of ecclesiastical history, the agonies of the cross, the fires of the stake, the inquisitorial dungeons, and the whole catalogue of plagues, that have borne off the stage the armies of the martyrs.

III. *This same ministry furnishes an antidote to the woe it generates.* It is, of all the appointments of the court of heaven, the first. The leader of Israel had a commission less dignified. He was the minister of a transient service, promulgated a temporary economy, was conversant with types and symbols. He released men from

the chains of a human and temporary bondage, led them to an earthly Canaan, and built them a perishable sanctuary. But all these were the mere shadows of good things to come. Ours is the office, not of *typifying*, but of *substantiating*; not of *predicting*, but of *narrating*; not of breaking *the bands of a temporary bondage*, but the *league with death*, and the *agreement with hell*; not of leading men to a paradise of hills and brooks of water, but to a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; not to a crumbling material sanctuary, but to the very throne itself of God. Under the ministration we occupy, Sinai blazes not with wrath, but with glory, God is seen not through a veil but with open face; "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Such the office; every trial is light. He who may fill the first embassy in a kingdom, will suffer any privations, will risk any dangers, will endure any trials, will submit to any hardships. He will traverse, with such a commission, the dreariest heaths, and the stormiest seas, will inhale in any clime the most polluted atmosphere, will live in the wildest solitude, with beings the most rapacious and bloody. And shall men endure, supported by the honors of a human embassy, trials, dangers, and death, without complaint, which the minister of the Lord Jesus, with the high hopes that attach to his office, cannot endure? If insulted we think of our commission, and feel the inspiration of its honors, and instantly rise superior to shame. He whom heaven has commissioned, needs no human applause to animate him. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." And what if men do condemn, while God approves! There lies an appeal from every human tribunal. To none of these lower courts are we amenable, in a sense that can excite alarm. Said an apostle, "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." To our own Master we stand or fall. If our message does not please men, we have only to see to it, that it has not been altered in our hands, and, if not, take courage. When we can see affixed to every doctrine we preach the broad seal of heaven, we have no farther concern, except to inquire if we have chosen out acceptable words, and felt a right spirit. If to the book of instruction we add or diminish, the deed blots our names from the book of life, and brings upon our heads the plagues recorded. If men will not hear us, we have only to weep in secret places for their pride.

If to men it should seem that we urge them too assiduously, we

have only to assure them that they must believe or die. The direction is, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Our stand is between men and the pit, and our business to stop them. If they now think us too urgent, they will curse our supineness when they have perished. Before we have done with them, they will know the truth of all we have said, and more yet, and will wonder that we could believe it at all, and proclaim it so coldly.

If men are angry, still there is hope. This may be the first step to conviction and faith, and they may still be our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. The gospel may produce wrath, and still be a savor of life. The tenant of the tombs raved, and then believed. Our assurance is that Christ is able to bind the strong man.

But then we fear the worst, and have no hope that the miserable beings will live, whom we would warn and waken, still we may be to Christ a sweet savor, though it be of death unto death. Christ has not suspended our *reward* on our *success*. He will provide for his ministers who have dared to be faithful, though the whole population of the apostacy should go in a mass to perdition. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." For the *faithfulness* of our ministry, not for the *effects*; for the *good we intended to do*, not for the *good we have done*, shall we be tried in the last day. If the Lord has made us rulers over his house, to give them their meat in due season, blessed are those servants whom their Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. And he will soon return. In a few days we shall have his decision upon our conduct, and till then it is of small importance what is human opinion respecting us.

Thus the godly minister takes courage. If our toil be hard, we serve a good master, and the period of rest is nigh. If we should even faint and die under the fatigues of the service, still we can die in no other circumstances so honorably. If our present privations are many, and our joys few, there is just before us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. If the corner of the vineyard where we labor is unpromising, still we know that Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. We have only to fill the place appointed us, as God shall give us ability, and for what remains he will provide. Do we but cast our seed corn upon the moist field, we shall see it after many days. Should the seed lie buried in the dust till we are in heaven, we may still see the

fruit of our toil. Thus our commission so presents its consolations in the time of trial, that we may well say with the apostle, "Having this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not."

IV. *The text prescribes that open and ingenuous conduct, which it is the duty of Christ's ministers on all occasions to exhibit.* Let us notice them,

1. *In their daily walk.* The apostle says of himself and his fellows, probably in allusion to the intrigue and duplicity of the false teachers, "That they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and did not walk in craftiness." He does not mean to imply that this had ever been their course. They had, from the period of their vocation to the apostleship, refused to reach any point of enterprise, by deception and fraud. Even when Paul says of himself, that, on a certain occasion, being crafty, he caught them with guile, he is thought merely to have alluded to the language of his enemies.

The ministers of Christ have nothing to hide, have no budget of secrets, and may say and do nothing that is inconsistent with simplicity and godly sincerity, either in their social and commercial transactions, or in connection with the functions of their office. The world will doubt, if we show duplicity in one case, whether we are sincere in any case. If we can smile complacently upon the man we would betray and ruin; if with one hand we can embrace, while the dagger is fast held in the other; can *soothe*, and *flatter*, and *hate*; men will have no confidence in us, when we thunder the anathemas of the law, or breathe out the counsels and the accents of mercy. If it cannot be said of the minister of Christ, that he is a sincere and honest man, nothing can be said of him that does not put the whole brotherhood to shame. The man may be able in theology, and in oratory, may be a profound general scholar, may have made the multitude bow to him; but if he be, to adopt a very homely, though a very significant figure, a two-sided man; if his assent and his smile are not tokens of approbation, and we may fear he will betray us, when pledged to serve us, then has he not renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and will be as readily suspected of insincerity in the pulpit as by the fireside. Heaven's ambassador must exhibit in his countenance, and on the face of his whole deportment, the simplicity of the man of God. The veriest wretch with whom he has intercourse, ought not to doubt for a moment his honesty

Toward his ministerial brethren, duplicity is doubly odious

We are but distinct agents, attached to the same grand embassy, and sent to make overtures to the same disloyal multitude. When we have no trust in each other, the foe is strengthened, and our defeat and shame sure—the least approximation to duplicity destroys confidence. We may differ in shades of doctrine and points of duty, and still, if honest men, may co-operate, and there may be in the general embassy an efficiency and a unity, that shall pour honor upon Christ, and shame upon the adversary. We must have confidence in each other's prompt and cordial co-operation, or the world we have come to sanctify, will be strengthened in every deadly and desperate principle of revolt, and will sleep on till they are waked by the terrors of the last trumpet.

The motives to such a confidence are obvious. Our trials and our enemies are numerous, and are the same, and the same our joys and our friends. We serve the same Master, and hope for the same heaven. Without an asylum in each other's bosom, in this outcast world, where we find so rarely an honest friend, we should be the loneliest of all flesh. No union can be more sacred. There is not only Christian sympathy, but the fellowship of office. There belong to the sacred ministry special hopes and promises. In what relationship do the hidden things of dishonesty wear an aspect so monstrous, or wage a war so cruel, as when they disturb the intercourse, and break the compact that binds together the ambassadors of the Lord Jesus? One would sooner lose confidence in his mother's children, and betray his offspring, than see marred the fellowship of the Divine legation. That Jesuitical fraud, nicknamed *pious*, so long current in the church of Rome, is the worm that now devours that polluted community. May it go, with its foster mother, to perdition, and never find a lodgment in the bosom of Christ's ministers. Let us notice the minister of Christ,

2. *In his official capacity.* While the apostles renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and would not walk in craftiness, *so neither would they handle the word of God deceitfully.* They would not, nor may we, hide, misrepresent, or leave out of view, any truth, meant to be conveyed to us in our Book of instructions. The ambassador of Christ resolves, that the Bible, in all its plainness and simplicity, shall be permitted to pour forth its precepts, its doctrines, its denunciations, unadulterated, upon the congregated multitude of the ungodly. To inquire, what is pleasing, and what is popular, and what is safe, belongs only to the traitor, who would make a kiss the signal of arrest.

We may choose out acceptable words, may watch for the best moment when to press an unwelcome truth: this is duty. And in illustrating truth we may put to use all the softness and sweetness of language and figure that is possible, still no truth may be covered up or misstated. We may say to the righteous, it shall be well with them, but we must with equal plainness say to the wicked, it shall be ill with them. "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." We may dwell upon the glories of heaven, till we, and all about us who believe, shall long to ascend, but we must also raise the covering of the pit, till the ungodly, if they will not repent, shall begin to feel the scorch of its torments. He who would not handle the word of God deceitfully, cannot suffer his unregenerate hearers to choose what doctrines he shall preach, or what duties he shall urge, or what follies he shall spare, or what the fervency of soul he shall breathe into his message. If he believe a doctrine, he will not hide his faith; if there prevail an error, he dare not conceal his dissent; nor against any vice, however popular, can fail to bear his prompt and unequivocal testimony.

The minister of the gospel, *who conceals his faith*, is a traitor, and goes over soon to the enemy. And while he stays he is a plague and a nuisance. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle." Why have a plain and pungent and intelligible Bible, and put it into the hands of a crafty ministry, to be neutralized and tamed, and mangled, before it can reach the conscience? As well may the *Bible* be a *riddle*, or a *dream*, as the *herald* a *knave*. He can fritter down its doctrines till the whole Book is a mere ballad. A people with such a ministry are in a case as pitiable as the wandering Tartar

V. *The text instructs Christ's ministers how they may best commend themselves to the consciences of men. By manifestation of the truth.* To be useful, we must have an advocate in the conscience of the people. Many may not relish the doctrines we deliver, and may hate our faithfulness, but there may still be, and there must be the conviction, that we are honest men, who act with reference to the judgment. In such a case, one may be useful, even to the men who cordially disrelish the whole testimony of God. They may kindle with rage at the juncture when the truth has found an avenue to the conscience.

And this ascendancy is gained by an undisguised exhibition of the truth. When men see that we dare not go beyond the word

of the Lord, and that we dare say all that God has bid<sup>d</sup>en us; that we feel ourselves fast bound by the letter of our commission, then the conscience of our people, if well enlightened, will take part with God, and do homage to our integrity. They may wish that we would alter, somewhat, the message we have received from heaven, may even demand that the point of truth be blunted, may refuse to attend upon a ministry that handles so unceremoniously their passions, their practice, and their prejudices; but if we comply, we lose their respect, and their judgment denounces us contemptible hypocrites. They would rejoice to be successful, but the moral sense would reprobate us. While men writhe under the thrusts of truth, they yield the highest homage to the man whom no bribery can corrupt, who can be contentedly poor and homeless, but cannot be treacherous.

The American ambassador at some foreign court, may give offence, by pressing our claims; but should he violate his commission, and compromise the honor of his country and the rights of his constituents, he would lose all respect abroad and at home, and sink into deep and lasting contempt. Let it be seen early that no threat can scare us, that no bribe can buy us, that no considerations of ease, honor, or affluence, can for a moment, put our integrity to a stand, or bring us to yield an inch of the territory of truth: thus we give evidence that we have a conscience, and the enemy will be afraid that God will protect us. Men suspect, in this case, that our message is true, and fear that their obstinacy will undo them, and, feel as they may, they yield us respect. Here that Divine maxim is verified, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." The most contemptible of all men, is the man who holds this high commission, but employs his talents to lower down the terms of reconciliation, to the wishes of the unsanctified. He will stand yoked with the wretch who betrays his country, and goes over to be hated and despised in the camp and country of the enemy. But the man who is true to his Lord, who sacredly adheres to his commission, should he not be favored with any very signal success, may be respected, and happy, and safe.

FINALLY—*The apostle and his brethren felt themselves urged to faithfulness, by the consideration, that God was present. Commending ourselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God. It was the last promise of the Lord Jesus, "Lo, I am with you*

always even unto the end of the world!" The remotest idea of compromising the truth is immediately known to God, and is peculiarly provoking. All sin is committed in his presence. But of all sins, how flagrant and daring is the crime of deliberately altering the message he has given us to deliver to a rebel world! If we are faithful he is present to comfort and support us, but if we shrink, through the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, he is present to despise and reprobate us. Hence, let this be our motto, "Thou God seest me;" and let us live and die under a solemn impression of this truth. Let us have a character, and exhibit a conduct upright in his view. Then the gospel we preach will be to us a savor of life unto life. The all-seeing God will watch us till we die, will guard the slumbers of the sepulchre, and will raise us to enjoy his smiles for ever.

How delightful the thought, when slavish fear has not chased away hope, that we minister in the very presence of our master. If we are in our study he is there, or on our knees he is there, or in the consecrated pulpit, he is there; to know our embarrassments, lay our fears, raise our hopes, and pour consolation into our hearts. From what duty can we shrink, of what foe be afraid, by what sufferings be disheartened, while we serve a God at hand and not a God afar off, and may at any moment roll our cares upon One who careth for us. He who had not rather be a minister of Christ with all its trials, than wear a crown, knows not the pleasures of the service.

#### REMARKS.

1. *The subject is very humiliating to Christ's ministers.* We enter the office by mere sufferance. We were under a sentence of condemnation, and any thing short of perdition is mercy, and yet so honored! Hence no position becomes us but that of the most complete prostration of soul. Our appropriate prayer is, "God be merciful to me a sinner." From no station of usefulness, enjoyment or honor, can we fail to look back to the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged. None were more unworthy of the office than we, none more richly deserved perdition, or if we reach heaven will celebrate our escape from death in sweeter Alleluias. How free, how sovereign, and how rich the grace that could raise such beings to a station so distinguished!

2. *The subject will help us to judge, who are the true ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ.* They have renounced the hidden things

of dishonesty, do not walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully. In the aspect of their whole moral deportment there is seen the open ingenuousness of truth. When they have known the mind of God they dare divulge it; they dare, even if the message be unpleasant. If faithfulness should endanger their interest, offend their benefactors, cut off supplies from their table, and make their children barefoot and houseless, still in their message will be seen the truth, the whole truth, the truth simple, and unadulterated, as it dropped from the lips of Jesus. If they must be lodged in a dungeon, and see kindled the fires that are to consume them, still supported by his presence who said, "I will never leave thee," it is presumed you would see associated with their rags, and their wretchedness and martyrdom, a soul too honest to betray the truth.

But we see, occasionally, the opposite of all this. The man presents himself in the attitude of Christ's minister, but makes it his great object to accommodate his message to the taste of the poor dying creature whom it should be his object to awaken and sanctify. He believes many a doctrine, and reads many a precept that he dare not urge upon his people, and sees approaching dangers against which he dare not warn them. His first concern is to secure to himself the honors and the emoluments of his office, even should it require the compromise of the Divine authority, and the Divine glory. It grieves us to know that he is likely to perish himself, and his deluded hearers with him. And moreover, he generates a contagion that spreads like the plague through all the Churches, and brings the reproach of the whole apostacy upon the men who have a less pliant conscience, and courage enough to do their duty; producing a fastidiousness of taste, that prepares men to resist the pressure of truth, till they have reached perdition. And it should greatly grieve us to apprehend that our children, when we are dead, may be thrown under such a ministry; may imbibe the contagion, may deny the Lord that bought them, may hate the doctrines that should sanctify them, and under the influence of a smooth and fair and popular religion, glide down gently and smoothly to the place of torment.

3. *In a work so dignified, so responsible, and so perilous, we ought to expect the confidence, the affection, and the aid, of those for whose salvation this ministry is established.*

It should secure us their confidence to know that our ministry admits of nothing concealed and mysterious, but is open, undisguised, and ingenuous. We spread before the people our whole

commission, make our design known, and open to them our whole hearts. We are willing to earn the confidence we ask, and would say to the world, if on any point we betray your interest, believe any doctrine, or credit any precept that we do not urge, or hide the danger that approaches you, then be distrustful and jealous, believe that we have run before we were sent, and that under the guise of the lamb, there rages the appetite of the wolf. If otherwise, we deserve your assurance. The office that God instituted, that Christ personally honored, should hold a place very sacred, and very high, in your esteem.

I know there are sections of Christendom where the vilest of men who do not deserve esteem, serve at the altar. But by their fruits ye shall know them. If they deal in the hidden things of dishonesty, or walk in craftiness, or handle the word of God deceitfully, you are not obligated to esteem them the ministers of Christ. And still it sometimes happens that a false and deceitful ministry is more popular than the one that Christ approves. It aims to commend itself, *not to the conscience but to the un sanctified heart*. It prophecies smooth things, heals the wounds of the awakened conscience slightly, and assures the wicked that it shall be well with them. It covers the pit over, and makes great efforts to lay the cry of alarm. The men whom you may trust, expose your danger, and depict your depravity, lead you to search your hearts, and try your hopes; and they deserve and need your confidence. They have trials enough, when their people rally about them, and confide in their integrity.

Let me say to all the lost, it is equally your duty and your interest to love the ministers of Jesus Christ. They come to you on an errand the most kind, and it may happen, and God may know it, that when they disturb you the most, they feel the most tenderly. When it has seemed to you that they must hate you, they have gone home and wept over you, and interceded with God in agonized prayer for your eternal life. So your child thought you cruel, when you tore the thorn from his wounded hand; but was you not kind?

One thing it is easy to know, he who so presses home upon your conscience the doctrines and duties of the gospel as to offend you, is not probably governed by selfish motives. His interest, *when no reference is had to the last day*, would lead him so to soften his message as not to give offence. You would then the more generously fill his board. Still, when you find him unbendingly faithful, he deserves your esteem the more. Else you tempt

him to betray your interest. When you move him from his integrity, he but goes down with you to the pit ; or if God forgive him, and he is saved, he may first have destroyed you and your children. Let him then be faithful, and still have your affection, then his work will be pleasant, and your danger diminished.

And the ministers of Christ will also need your *help*. The enterprise in which they are employed is the redemption of men from eternal misery. And they have all the weaknesses of other men, and need in a work so awfully grand, the prompt co-operation of all who value the soul. The seed they sow must be watered with prayer, their duties must be made easy by your friendship, and their trials be softened by your sympathies. When the burdens of the ministry are thus lightened, they are still weighty enough for the shoulders of an angel. Our constant exclamation is, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Next to him who in the very work itself has continued faithful unto death, the high reward of heaven will be his, who has aided our efforts, and has labored with us in the gospel. If you could have helped in *building* the world, it would have been a service less honorable than that of helping to redeem it. It was built of *clay*, but must be redeemed with *blood* ; it took its form in a *week*, but its redemption has been progressing these *six thousand years*.

You may contribute to save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins ; may snatch a spirit that can never die, from perdition, and elevate it to a seat high in bliss ; may substitute the glories of heaven for the darkness and horrors of the pit ; and changed the wailings of the damned into anthems of Alleluia. By motives mighty like these, you are urged to ease the burdens of the ministry, to render the service pleasant and efficient by your sympathies, your counsels, and your prayers. It is sweet to know that we have sometimes the entire confidence as well as the prayers of those whom it is our work to build up in the faith and purity of the gospel. It cheers the solitude of many a midnight hour, that we are preparing a repast for the disciples of the Lord Jesus, who, when they have fed upon the word, will pray for him who published it. May every such prayer for us be answered, and then returned into your own bosoms, and when the lips are cold and the tongue silent that address you, and the sanctuary where you worship has crumbled, and other generations fill the places we occupy, may we be together about the throne, to sing and say, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for

ever : and let the whole earth be filled *with his glory.*" Amen and amen.

Finally, it is a crime of no small magnitude to treat with neglect or contempt a ministry formed after the pattern of the text. The embassy that God commissions deserves regard. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." If ministers are faithful, it is not at the option of their people, whether they shall receive or reject their message, and treat kindly, or otherwise, those who hold the high commission of ambassadors of Jesus Christ. To their own Master they are accountable for every doctrine they advance, every duty they urge, and the proper application of every promise they repeat ; and you too are obligated to insert that doctrine, if true, into your creed, to practice that duty, and apply legitimately that promise. If they deliver the true gospel, and you reject it, it proves to you a savor of death unto death. Even cold indifference is criminal toward that ministry which has immediate connection with your salvation, and the eternal life of your offspring. God will punish those who treat rudely his ministers. We could point you to the places where sterility and death have reigned for half a century, when the hand had been raised against one whom God sent to them with the news of pardon. The law in Israel, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," has been renewed in other terms under the gospel. Blessed God, let no child of mine ever hurt or offend thy ministers.

## SERMON XLVII.

### THE WEALTHY CHRISTIAN READY TO CONTRIBUTE.

#### 1. TIMOTHY vi. 17—19.

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

THE Bible admirably adapts its instructions to every character and condition in human life, from the greatest monarch to the meanest slave. And this fact is an evidence that the Scriptures are from God. They teach with an authority that men uninspired would not have been likely to assume. There is no crouching, no sycophancy, no flattery. Duty is taught to every man in the same style, with the same plainness, and the same assurance. What was said of our Lord, that he taught as one having authority, is true of the whole Bible.

In the text Paul is directing Timothy what he must say to the rich. They may not be high-minded. *God* distinguishes one man from another. "In thine hand it is to make great." They may not trust in riches, for they are uncertain, and may take to themselves wings and fly away. They must trust alone in God, the living God, who giveth them richly all things to *enjoy*. God suffers them to enjoy their wealth, but he also commands them to *communicate enjoyment*. They are to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. They must not even wait to be urged to this duty, but hold themselves in the attitude of handing out to others what God has put into their possession.

Thus they lay up in store for themselves a good foundation, a treasure upon which they may draw at any future period of want. Hence to be liberal renders them ultimately the more wealthy, and what is more important, enables them to lay hold on eternal life. Thus their duty and their interest are united, and are equally plain. To do good with their wealth is an important means of bringing them to heaven. It is that test of piety which God will demand of the rich. Hence said our Lord "How hardly do they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." We cannot then be kind

to this large and respectable class of men, unless we urge them to liberality, as an indispensable test of their hope. They have some liberty of choice as to the objects they will the most liberally patronize, but may not choose whether they will or will not be ready to communicate, for if they will not, they can have no evidence that they shall lay hold on eternal life.

In proceeding, I shall present an object, which seems to me to stand among the first, and urge its claims upon a single class of the wealthy. Let me say, that *It is the duty of professors of religion who have wealth to consecrate their property to the spread of the gospel.*

Ye disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, your Savior has set up a church in this world, has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her, and that she shall one day embrace all nations; and calls upon you to consecrate your property to the diffusion of that gospel by which he brings men into covenant with him and makes them happy. Will you hear me, while I offer five arguments to induce you to obey him in this reasonable requisition. I will enter upon the point without detaining you a moment, and when I have done, you must act as you think proper. I assert in the

I. Place, *That "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and hence that he has a right to make this draft upon you.* If I fail in establishing this point, you may lay down the book, and not read another line.

You acknowledge God as the creator of all things. *Here I found his claim*; it is prior to all others. He who built all worlds, and peopled them, and gave that people all their good things, may make a demand upon them to any amount within their power, with the certainty that it cannot be protested. "His are all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." The same is true of your silver, your merchandize, your children, your servants, and all that you have. If not, then name the good thing that you can be sure will be yours to-morrow. Begin, if you please, at the bottom of the catalogue of your comforts, and ascend, through the whole series, to the wife of your bosom, your health, and your life, and tell me which of the whole will be yours to-morrow. Dare you name nothing! Then whosesoever they are, they surely are not yours. For he who has nothing that he can hold a day, has nothing but what is borrowed. And if the good things you possess are not yours they are the Lord's, or whose are they!

And what was the Lord's at the first, because he made it, *he has carefully watched over and preserved*. Not merely could we have *had* nothing, if God had not *made it*, but we could have *kept* nothing, if God had not *preserved it*. There is no kind of independence about us; we should have been beggars, if God had not cared for us. There was an eye that watched more narrowly than we did or could, or our wealth had long since taken to itself wings and had flown away. You will own, my Christian friends, that it was the blessed God that watered your fields, and gave success to your commerce, and health to your children, that guarded your house from fire, and your lives from danger, else you would have been penniless or have perished years since. How many, once as rich as you, are now poor; or as healthy as you, are now in the grave; had a home as you have, but it burned down; had children, as it may be you have, but the cold blast came over them, and they died. And was it not the kindness of God that saved to you what you have? May he not then lay a tax upon your wealth, as large as he pleases?

But I am not through the argument. God has never *alienated* his right. He has suffered Satan to be styled the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air; but *he* owns nothing. The territories that he promised the Lord Jesus, if he would fall down and worship him, were not a foot of them his. And though men are permitted to hold under God certain rights, and which they sometimes term unalienable, still God never has, and never will, renounce his right to dispose at pleasure of all that we term ours. In a moment, if he pleases, day or night, he puts us out of our possessions, and the places that knew us know us no more for ever. Hence we can serve God only with what is his already, what he has never alienated. "Of thine own we give thee." Now that which God has put into our hands, and the right to which he has never relinquished, we may not, without the charge of embezzlement, appropriate otherwise than as he shall command us.

But I have not done. *God has often asserted his claim to what we term ours*. Once he claimed the whole world, and by a sudden and fearful dispensation, displaced every tenant that had ever occupied its soil, providing afterward for the single family that loved him. And none will say that God went without his own dominions, to lay a world waste that was the property of *another*. When he burned the cities of the plain, he but asserted, though loudly and fearfully, his right, and pressed home to the bosom and the conscience of every foe and friend he had, his claim to be

served and honored, in every valley that he had made fertile, and by every people whom his kindness had rendered prosperous.

In the ruin of all the ancient monarchies, God is seen in the attitude of asserting his claim to the kingdoms of men, as sections of his own empire, to which he will send other rulers, and other subjects, whenever he shall please. The desolating pestilences by which he has depopulated towns and cities, and the thousand nameless sweeps of death written in our gloomy history, had all their commission from heaven, to take back the life, and health, and comforts he had loaned to men. There was one kingdom we read of whose whole population went seventy years into bondage, because their land not been allowed to keep its Sabbaths, and they had not paid their tithes, and emancipated their servants at the appointed jubilee.

The storms that have wrecked our merchandize, and the fires that have devoured our cities, and all the misnamed casualties that have ruined our fortunes, have been so many claims put in by the rightful owner of all things to what we had appropriated too exclusively to our own use. And the occurrences of every day are of the same character.

I know that this is not the world of retribution, and that "No man knoweth either good or evil, by any thing that is done under the sun;" but let us not deny that God is known by the judgment that he executeth. Will he not, by repeated demands, keep men in mind that they cultivate his territory, and feed on his bounty, and are happy under his auspices? In thus asserting his claim to be served with the talents that he loans his creatures, he teaches us that one unchangeable law of his kingdom is, that he never alienates what was once his own.

I shall not offend the good man when I claim, that this has been a *disastrous*, because a *disobedient* world. Perhaps the aggregate of property lost by the various calamities that God has sent upon us, would have exactly met the claims he made upon our charity. Had that wealth been expended as he directed, it would have made the world wise and happy. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

It is impossible to say how much more prosperous this world might have been, if men had expended their wealth as God would

have them ; how much more frequently the showers had fallen, or more genial had been our sun, or more gentle our breezes, or mild our winters, or fertile our soil, or healthful our population, if we had been a better people, and had served the Lord with our substance. His promise must have failed, or he would have filled our barns with plenty, and caused our presses to burst out with new wine.

As the Churches shall wake to their duty, and give the world the gospel, I hope, and if infidelity scoffs, still I will hope, that much of the curse will be removed from this ill-fated territory, and God kindly stay his *rough* wind, in the day of his *east* wind. How many of its plagues will be cured, its wars prevented, its heaths made fertile, and its earthquakes stilled ; and what the amount of blessings bestowed upon this poor world, when it shall become more loyal and more benevolent, none but God can know.

I cannot believe, that when we shall do as he bids us, he will so often rebuke us. When we cease to waste his goods, he will allow us to continue longer in the stewardship ; when we shall be faithful in the few things, he will make us rulers over many things. If you will now consider me as having established the Divine claim, to you, and all that you have, I will proceed to say,

II. *Christians who have the means, should contribute to disseminate the gospel, because they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.* They belong to that kingdom which the gospel was intended to establish. This fact is quite enough to give the cause I plead a strong hold upon every pious heart. Ye disciples of the Lord Jesus, read for once the charter of your hopes, and while it warms your heart, tell me if you have done half your duty. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come ; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Thus it seems God and his people have but one interest. Hence when he commands them to spread his gospel, he but bids them to buy themselves blessings, bids them foster their own interest, and make their own kingdom happy. The Christian has by his own act identified his whole interest with that of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. If God is honored, he is happy, and God is honored in the salvation of sinners, and in the joy of his people. Hence God can command his people to do nothing but that which will bless themselves.

Now when did you know a king's son who would not joyfully

expend his father's treasures to enlarge, and strengthen, and beautify the kingdom to which he was heir? He thus polishes his own crown, and blesses his own future reign. What believer has not the same interest that God has in lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes of Zion? He is one of the little flock, to whom it is his Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom. He is to be a king and a priest to God and the Lamb for ever. And has he still an interest distinct from his heavenly Father? And if not, he will hold all he has at the control of God, and will need only to know his duty, and will act most cheerfully.

III. *Reason why Christians who have the means, should contribute to disseminate the gospel is, that they must be merciful, as their Father in heaven is merciful.* Over that mass of misery which the apostacy has produced their pious hearts have long bled in sympathy. And their charity is not of that kind that it can content itself with saying, "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled." They have read, and have strongly felt that cutting interrogation of the apostle, "Who-soever hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" And there is no man so poor as he who has not the bread of life. The good man would render all men happy. His charity is warm like that which beat in the heart of the Son of God, and to do his duty is his meat and his drink. This makes him like his Master, and to this he aspires. He cannot hope to rejoice eternally in the achievements of redemption, unless moved by the same pity for the miserable that he felt, he is prepared to march up promptly and offer the Savior any service he requires.

I appeal then, ye disciples of Jesus Christ, to the kindness of your heart, when I ask you to contribute to render the world happy by your wealth. Would you not cure some of the plagues that sin has generated, and that have so long preyed upon the happiness of man? Would you not quench the funeral pile, and save the young, and beautiful, but infatuated widow, that she may nurse her imploring infant, and live to rear it up to life? Would you not free one half the human family, the female sex, from that servitude for which paganism has subjected them? Would you not snatch ten thousand infants from the altars of devils, where they now lie, bound and weeping, waiting till you speak a word of mercy for them? Would you not teach the vast herd of idolaters, that there is a kinder, and more merciful God, than those they

worship? Would you not break in upon the delusions of the false prophet, and tell his misguided followers that you have read of a holier heaven than they hope for? Would you not file off the chains that have been fastened so many centuries upon poor afflicted Africa? Would you not stay the progress of war, and save from death the thousands that are marching, wan and weary, toward the field of death? O, would you not, were it possible, bring back this base world to its home and its Maker? Have you then a purse, into which God may not require you to thrust your hand, and take thence what he has there deposited, with a view to make this same world happy?

IV. *Bear with me, ye followers of the Lamb, and I will say again that you have covenanted to be workers together with God, in achieving the purposes of redemption, and must now employ your energies to widen the boundaries of his holy empire, or forfeit your vow.* It was in you a voluntary compact, and you pledged in that hour your prayers, your influence, your farm, your merchandize, your purse, your children, and all that you have. And heaven has recorded that vow, to be brought up against you, if it be violated, in the day of retribution. It was wholly at your option, whether you would enter into that sweeping covenant, whether you would swear; but you have entered, you have sworn, and cannot go back. You then relinquished for ever your personal rights, and have had ever since but a community of interest with God and his people. Now God is employed in doing good, and his people too, if they are like him. How then will it correspond with your oath to stand aloof from the calls of the Church, and disregard the command of God, and let the waste places lie desolate, and let the heathen die in their pollutions, and let the captives perish in their chains, and let almost the whole of that territory, purchased with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, lie still under the usurped dominion of the prince of hell; and let a whole condemned world go on to the judgment with all this blood upon it unsanctified? Oh, how will your broken vows rise and haunt you, in that day when the wealth you have saved shall be weighed in the balance with the souls it might have redeemed.

Once more, and I have done. *As you hope you have been sanctified through the truth, you have some experience of the value of that gospel which we urge you to promulgate.* Once you were ignorant of God, and were unhappy. You were in somewhat the same for-

lorn condition with those whose cause I plead ; you had forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and had hewn out to yourselves broken cisterns, that could hold no water. And you remember that dark period. Your mind traveled from object to object, through all the round of created good, in search of enjoyment, and “ found no end in wandering mazes lost.”

And there is a world of intelligent immortal beings seen panting and weary in the same fruitless chase. It was the blessed gospel that arrested you, and saved you. Your heedless steps it guided, your dark mind it enlightened, your erring conscience it rectified, your insensibility it aroused, your hard heart it softened, your selfishness it subdued, your pride it humbled, your wayward course it changed, your covenant with death, and your agreement with hell it disannulled. And here you stand, redeemed, regenerated ; your whole character changed, and your final destiny altered, through the influence of the blessed gospel. The curse is removed, you are a child of God, and an heir of glory, and shall one day see the King in his beauty ; *and the gospel has done it.* It has given you peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, a firm hope of heaven, and the soul reviving assurance, that all things shall work together for your good, till you rise to be where Christ is, behold his beauty, and rejoice in his love for ever.

Now the question is, whether you will contribute of your wealth to save those who are perishing as you so lately were. I now plead with you by all that religion has been worth to you, by all the joys it has brought you, by all the woes it has cured, by all the hopes it has raised, and by all the transformation it has wrought in your character and your condition. For what price would you return into the darkened, and dreary, and hopeless condition in which the gospel found you ? For what would you barter away all the delightful prospects that open before you ? and calculate on no more precious sacramental seasons, no more communion of saints, no more delightful hours in your closet, nor Pisgah-views of the fields of promise, nor fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ ? At no price would you part with these ? Then know how great are the blessings which you have it in your power to confer on those who are perishing for lack of vision.

Do you say, they can purchase the privileges of the gospel as you have ? No they will not. They know not their value, and will die in their sins, ere they will give a shilling for the light of the gospel. Not the whole of India, if it would save them all from hell, would support a single missionary.

Will God send them the gospel by miracle ? No, he once did thus send it to the lost, blessed be his name ! but he now commands *us to send it* to those who are perishing for lack of vision. We know our duty, and God will require it of us. Can we meet the heathen in the judgment, if we have done nothing to redeem them ?

I will plead no longer, but let me tell you in parting, that when you shall see the world on fire, your wealth all melting down, and those who have perished through your neglect calling upon the "rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb," and shall know that you might have been instrumental in saving them, there will be strong sensations. If you are saved yourselves, and this is doubtful if you are not anxious to save others, you will wish a place to weep over your past neglects, before you begin your everlasting song : and if lost yourself, then indeed there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

May Jehovah bless you, and dispose you to do your duty now, that you may hereafter lay hold on eternal life.

## SERMON XLVIII.

### THE ENLIGHTENED CONSCIENCE UNBENDING.

I CORINTHIANS VIII. 13.

If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.

IN the early establishment of Christianity, it became necessary to discriminate between those customs, both Jewish and heathen, that might or that might not be tolerated in the Church of Christ. In things that were *in themselves* perfectly harmless, and harmless in *their bearing*, there was no need that believers dissent from the world. In these things it was their duty to become all things to all men. For instance, Paul took Timothy and circumcised him, because it was known of all that his father was a Grecian. Circumcision had ceased to be an ordinance in the Church of God, but no law had been issued forbidding the amputation of the foreskin. Hence this might innocently be done, when it would render a Christian minister more useful; though not as an ordinance of God, obligatory upon believers under the new dispensation.

There prevailed the heathen custom of offering the flesh of the beasts they slew for the market to their idol gods, and if men made a feast the beasts were slain in honor of their idols, and then set before their guests. To these feasts Christians would be invited, and might go innocently; provided, however, that the meat on which they were to feast had not been offered to idols, or, if so offered, the fact had not been made known to them. Whatsoever had been sold in the shambles, or market, they might eat, asking no questions, whether it had or had not been offered to idols. But if any should inform them that the meat set before them had been sacrificed to heathen deities, they might not eat. And that, not because the meat had been by this ceremony polluted, or injured; for an idol was nothing at all. This the best informed believers would early know; hence in itself considered there would be no harm in their eating it. But there were some weak believers who would not have thrown off the impression that the heathen gods, whom they had before worshipped, were a kind of inferior deities, that had a real existence, and who could

not eat flesh that had been consecrated to them, without practising idolatry. Now if better informed believers, who, as to any effect upon themselves, might harmlessly feast upon these sacrifices, should do so, they would lead their weaker brethren into sin, and tempt them to apostacy. Hence they must abstain, because of the weak and unenlightened consciences of their brethren. They need not seek to be informed whether they were about to feast on a heathen sacrifice or not, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and they might partake of the bounties of God without scruple. They need ask no question for conscience' sake conscience not their own, however, but their brother's. They might eat and not sin, but their weak brother might be induced by their example to eat, and sin in eating.

Thus you have the whole case. But some of the more matured believers might say, "Why should I be judged by another man's conscience? As I know that an idol is nothing at all, and that meat offered to idols is not polluted, I will eat and let my weak brother take care of himself." Here there was occasion for the exercise of one of the most delicate principles of piety, and Paul declared that, for himself, he would eat no flesh while the world stood, if his so eating caused his brother to offend. I shall endeavor to *illustrate the conduct of the apostle on this occasion, and vindicate and apply the principle.*

He would abandon an alienable right in regard to the good of another; would care deeply for the souls that had been won to the Lord Jesus by the gospel. He considered his own conduct as contributing largely to make up the aggregate of public Christian sentiment, which should govern the infant Church. Though he could ably defend his conduct in eating the heathen sacrifices, yet many might imitate him in eating, who would never come under the influence of his reasoning, and so would be injured by his practice. It may be well to remark,

I. *His conduct did not imply that one may make another man's conscience his own guide in duty.* We are to know for ourselves what duty is, and when we know are under obligation to do it. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. There is no medium through which one man's conscience can approach and influence another, except through the medium of his conduct. If a man have any conscience, he must evince it by his deeds, and thus give it all the foreign influence it can ever have. Himself it can ever have. Himself it

can influence directly. Every man's conscience was made solely for his own use, except as it shall give rise to a conversation and deportment that may have an influence upon others. This maxim inverted was the grand error, and continues to be, in the Catholic church. The judgment of the Pope, and his emissaries, is considered paramount to the decisions of the most enlightened conscience. What the head of the church has decided is truth—however incredible, must be believed; and what he has decreed is duty must be done, though at war with Scripture and common sense. Hence there need be light in no other mind but his, and hence the Scriptures are withheld from the laity. It is of no consequence that they have a conscience, if they are not to be guided by it, but must obey the dictates of some other conscience.

Paul had no idea of abetting a principle like this. He would be guided exclusively by his own conscience, in the very practice he proposed to adopt. His judgment decided, and his heart approved the decision, that it would be his duty to live on lighter food than that which he might lawfully eat, if thereby he would bless a weak brother. That brother had no right to demand of him this sacrifice, and urge the apostle to a course of conduct not required by his own conscience. His obligation was to know for himself that the idol was nothing, and thus eat innocently, as Paul could, of the consecrated meat. Still Paul must regard his brother's good, and not make his liberty a stumbling-block to the weak. Here his own conscience bound him to a practice which his own conscience did not require of him, but for the ignorance and weakness of his brother. I think this principle is too obvious to be mistaken, while yet the apostle by no means renounces the right to be governed solely by his own conscience.

II. We are *not* to gather from the conduct of the apostle in this matter that *one* man's conscience may abridge *another* man's liberty. One man's necessities may induce another to give up his rights, and benevolence, such as the Lord Jesus exhibited when he laid aside the glory that he had with the Father before the world was, may induce him to do it cheerfully; but man may not require it of him, by any other law than that of love. If we are confident that another is misinformed, our duty is, if possible, to enlighten him; but we cannot require of him that he disregard the decisions of his own judgment, and permit himself to be guided by our opinion in opposition to his own in a question of morals. If Paul had been the only man in the infant Church who

had light enough to partake harmlessly of a heathen sacrifice, the opinion of others that he sinned in this matter would not have rendered him guilty. That weak brother, who could not do what Paul could harmlessly, might not require of the apostle that he confess himself guilty in acting according to the superior light of his own mind. You may blame me in a case in which I differ from you in my decision, for not reading and informing myself for not being open to conviction, for not being candid and ingenuous and inquisitive; but if, finally, I cannot see as you do, and cannot think it right to co-operate with you, however you may lament my error, you cannot require me to act differently till I change my views. Thus Paul did not give up his right to decide that meat sacrificed to a heathen god might not be eaten by a Christian, harmlessly, but he relinquished the privilege of eating it because he should thus harm his brother; he retained the right but resigned the privilege. He was very tenacious of not having it understood that he was restricted by his own conscience. "What say I, then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? No." As if he had said, My conduct is not to suffer this construction. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient." Thus did his enlightened mind discriminate, and his benevolent heart correspond.

III. The apostle's conduct in this matter *does not* go to palliate ignorance. It is every man's first duty to know what duty is, to have his conscience informed, and be prepared to act correctly in all the varied scenes that may suddenly transpire before him. He does not refuse to eat the meat consecrated to devils, because he lacked that knowledge that prepared him innocently to partake; else his ignorance had been sin. He abstains because, though all things may be lawful, yet all things edify not.

His brethren, who in their ignorance, to gratify their appetites, or to please man, would not eat while they had not knowledge enough to see that they might eat to the glory of God, giving him thanks, the very meat that had been consecrated to devils, sinned through ignorance against their own souls. They provoked God to jealousy. They neglected that injunction, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," and could not have gone in the spirit of that prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." We read of men having

their foolish hearts darkened. When men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, He gives them up to a reprobate mind. He reprobates their ignorance, because resulting from choice. And how large a portion of the sins committed through ignorance will prove, at last, to be the most enormous character, the last day will tell. Paul considered himself as having sinned the most outrageously, and almost beyond the possibility of a pardon, when he sinned *ignorantly*, in persecuting the saints; hence would be the last of men to give ignorance any covering.

IV. Neither the text nor context favors the opinion that our conscience may lean in its testimony to the testimony of other consciences. The apostle did not, after being convinced that he might innocently partake of flesh that had been devoted to an idol, yield his convictions on this point, and believe that, in itself considered, it would be wrong so to do. On this point no amount of human testimony would have shaken his convictions. In the influence that the act would have on other and weak minds, lay all the danger, and all the wrong that moved him. For himself he cared not if all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, had been devoted to some spurious deity. He could still feed upon them, and offer them in sacrifice to the God of heaven, whose is the earth and the fulness thereof. It is true, that if we find other consciences differing in their testimony from ours, it should put us upon inquiry, whether our own decision is right, should render us cautious and watchful. But when we have again and again reviewed the ground, and collected about it all the testimony we can summon, and are still conscious that we have taken the position of duty, no frowns of men, nor loss of interest, nor even death itself can move us, if we fear the Lord, to act in conformity to the views of others, in opposition to the testimony of our own conscience.

Hence the reason why the people of God have so repeatedly been denominated obstinate. Their false brethren, or the men of the world, have demanded of them what they could not conscientiously do. A Roman governor writing to one of the emperors respecting the Christians, after fully clearing them from all the charges that had been brought against them, still declares them deserving of death, because of their obstinacy. And wherein lay their obstinacy? Simply in this. They would not conform to heathen customs, when such conformity implied connivance at idolatry. They would not assemble with the worshipers of Jupi-

ter, would not put up his idols in their temple, while the heathen would readily allow an image of Jesus Christ to be erected in their temples. Thus the war began in the exclusive claims of an enlightened Christian conscience. Many a martyr was offered life, if he would bow at the shrine of Diana, or kiss the image of the virgin mother, or carry the cross in his bosom; but his choice was rather death. And it cannot be considered surprising that men who themselves have no conscience, can bend to any doctrine, opinion or practice, should pronounce this all obstinacy.

In *vindicating the principle*, from which the apostle acted, I should choose to say,

FIRST, it evinced a *deep knowledge* of the *obligations* of the Divine law. Paul did not go beyond the demands of that law. It allowed him to eat meat, even the meat that had been offered to an idol; and still it demanded of him that he yield his rights to bless his fellow-men. What, did God himself render the thing lawful, and then make another law depriving him of the very privilege he had granted? Intricate as this case may look, it presents us one of the most common maxims of Christian deportment. The property that God has put into my hands, is mine to use according to the discretion that God has given me; and still such a cry of distress may reach me as to render it my duty to devote it all to the cure of that distress. I may have barely bread enough to feed my family; but I may hear that some family is starving near me, and may be obligated to divide that bread, which is my own, and which I may in ordinary circumstances lawfully give to my children, with that starving family. I may have with me only the raiment that can warm me, and it is my own, to be used as I wish, and still a higher law may require me to divide that covering with my neighbor.

Nor does it essentially alter the case that the misery is near me, and moves my sympathy. It may be afar off, and still my perfect knowledge of its existence may render this higher law obligatory. Men need not cherish the persuasion that God makes no other claim upon their prosperity than that of being honest. Admit that this is the first claim, the second is like unto it, that we be benevolent. And how came we by the persuasion that the latter claim is not as binding as the former? If one had an estate of fifty thousand dollars, and he owed one thousand, how could he presume to count that he has forty-nine thousand to bequeath to his children, till he had inquired whether the law of benevolence did not levy its claim to five or ten thousand dollars more, previously to his de-

ciding what portion he might leave to his children? Or may one give his whole estate to his children, and leave them to discharge all his obligations of charity? If so, he should have educated them accordingly, and be sure, before his death, that he has a benevolent offspring, who will obey the law of love. Or is the law of benevolence more loose and undefined than the law of righteousness, a law that we may or may not fulfil? No. We are as strongly obligated to be benevolent, as to be honest. Paul would obey the statute requiring him to abstain from meat, if the salvation of his brother required it, as promptly and perfectly, as the statute of honesty, requiring him to pay for the cloak or the parchment he had purchased. Is it that the law of man has required honesty, and fixed a penalty to its violation, while the law of benevolence is a law of God, that men have made the distinction they have? I answer, the law of God binds the good man firmly as any municipal statute. When he says, "To do good and to communicate forget not," the statute takes hold of the conscience of the good man equally with that municipal statute requiring him to discharge the note to which he put his hand and seal.

My life is my own, and God has made it my duty to preserve it, but the case may happen when a higher law may obligate me to lay down my life for the good of others. It may be my duty, at the greatest risk, to attempt the rescue of others from death by fire or flood; or there may come again a period of the Church, when the good of Zion, the glory of God, and the advance of truth, may require the sacrifice of life. And this higher law must be obeyed. While the law of God allows us to provide for our own interest, there is in the same statute-book a law to this effect, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Now by what argument shall one free himself from obligations of obedience to this statute, while yet he feels the authority of that other statute in the same book, "Thou shalt not steal?"

This making the whole of religion to consist in honesty, (we will not now stop to inquire whether the sticklers for this religion are more honest than others,) is virtually denying that there is any law of benevolence; that there is any case when God himself requires us to give back a right he has given us. And yet this is the very law that governed the apostle. God had given him a right in common with others to eat meat, and even the very meat that had been devoted to an idol, but God commanded him, if his brother's good required it, to forego this right, and abandon the very privilege that had been given him by charter and by oath.

We have here, probably, one of the most wide and glaring distinctions found among the professors of godliness. There are those who obey and those who do not obey this law of benevolence. And the pretence for disobedience is, that the law is not definite. God has required me to pay that I owe; here the *debt* measures exactly the *obligations*. But the law which reads, "Lend, hoping for nothing again," leaves it doubtful how much I must lend. And that law, "Give early of thy substance to the Lord," leaves it doubtful how much we must give. And that law, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them," leaves it doubtful how much we must *do* from the difficulty of deciding how much we would *have done*. And still these statutes require us to *lend* and *give* and *do*, and are as obligatory as the laws of honesty. Paul determined to obey these higher requisitions, and be governed by the law of benevolence.

## SERMON XLIX.

THE ENLIGHTENED CONSCIENCE UNBENDING.—No. II.

I CORINTHIANS viii. 13.

If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.

To have discriminating views of the obligations of the divine law, is one of the first prerequisites to a healthful growing piety. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The renewed heart must have a relish for obedience, as far as the rules of obedience are known. And he is the wisest believer who can discern the most accurately the bearing of the divine precepts upon the common every-day concern of human life. Perhaps it would not be asserting too much to say that in the want of this is seen the grand cause why so many professed believers are of so little use to the Church of Christ. They have some general knowledge of the divine precepts, but do not take the pains they should, or have not the means that would be desirable, in learning to trace the law into its ramifications of bearing and of import. They know they should not worship idols, but do not discern when wealth, or honor, or pleasure is pursued idolatrously. They know they should not perform common labor on the Sabbath day, but do not discover exactly when their conversation or employment has become too worldly to comport with the sanctification of that holy rest. They know they should not steal, but do not discern when exactly their covetous practices or hard dealings have transcended the limits of honesty. They know they should not lie, but how often can they be seen hovering on the very line of demarcation between falsehood and truth. They may not swear profanely, but *when exactly* their hasty and passionate dialect transcends the bounds of Christian soberness, they may not be very skilful to discern. The Church have embosomed some whose language had all the coarseness and repulsion of profaneness, except that the name of God was not used.

Now nothing can be more desirable than that the Christian character be better purified. And this would be the sure result of a better knowledge of the spirit and extent of the divine precepts.

I proposed, in the preceding discourse, to *illustrate the conduct* of the apostle in the case before us, and *vindicate and apply the principle* on which he acted. I remarked, under the first particular, that he could not mean *that one man should make another man's conscience his guide*; nor *that one man's conscience should abridge another man's liberty*; nor did he mean *to palliate ignorance*; nor *that one conscience might lean in its testimony to that of other consciences*.

In vindicating the principle on which the apostle acted, I observed that *it evinced a deep knowledge of the obligations of the divine law*. I now observe,

SECONDLY. The apostle evinced *expanded benevolence*. He allowed his love to the brethren to abridge his freedom. What otherwise was lawful he would not do, if it would injure them. He acted on the broad Christian principle that he was to regard in all his conduct the sanctification and salvation of his fellow-men. He must look around him, before he acted, to see on whom the influence of his example would bear, and shape his actions, and even abridge his liberties by this consideration. He carried with him the strong and controlling impression that he was acting for the Church and for the world. His deeds were all immortal. Souls bound for eternity were all around him; and if he gave them any impulse, it must be toward the kingdom of God. For this he must give account at the last. The law of God that left him free, had a law above it that required him to be benevolent. The license to eat was modified by a precept that required him to beware lest his liberty became a stumbling-block to them that were weak, and thus souls perish for whom Christ died.

And we shall find this a Christian principle of broad and mighty application. If I have wealth and leisure, it may not be a sin occasionally to let an hour pass unoccupied; but I may not be idle in the place and in the presence of those who may be tempted by my example to idleness, and poverty and crime. If I have abundantly the means, it may not be wrong to wear better vestments than those whose idleness, or improvidence, or appetites, have clothed them in rags; but I may not set an example of that extravagance in dress which will lead others into dishonest and criminal adornings. The case may be such that a very strong necessity may require me to employ the hours of Sabbath in secular toils; but care, such as that with which I would eye the approach of death, must be taken lest my example, upon such as cannot know my necessity, may exert a destructive influence against the com-

raundment of God. I may see a man so consummately mischievous and wicked as to be justified in denominating him "a child of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness;" but great care must be taken not to deal in railing accusation. The case may occur when I may lawfully put to my lips the cup that contains strong drink; but not for a world may I do it in the place, at the time, in the circumstances, or in the presence of men who may by my example be drawn into the vortex of inebriation. I may be where vice is so bold and so supported, that it cannot safely or profitably be rebuked; but I may not linger there a moment beyond the limits of a dire necessity, lest others be tempted to abide there because they love to. I may be lawfully absent from the sanctuary or the place of prayer; but I may not, *under the price of a soul*, set the example of treating contemptuously the ordinances of God. I may see occasion to pour my rebuke upon the highest authorities of my country; but I may not refuse to submit to "the powers that be," and that are ordained of God. There may be many deeds which, in themselves considered, a good conscience would approve, but which, in their bearing upon the spiritual interests of men, conscience would denounce iniquitous. This world is governed by public sentiment; which I may not corrupt for my life. The mass of its population are moving on to hell by an impulse to which I would not add the weight of a feather for a world. A very small remnant are "straying upward," whose advance I would not retard for my house full of silver and gold. Such was the spirit of benevolence with which the apostle declared, "I will eat no meat while the world standeth, if meat make my brother to offend."

THIRDLY. There was in the conduct of the apostle in this matter a display of *great Christian magnanimity*. He acted emphatically under the impression, "None of us liveth to himself." He did not care that every act of his went to gratify himself, and exalt himself, and add some gloss to his own reputation. He could not agree to dissociate himself from the brotherhood, and be content to guard himself from danger, and leave others to spell out their own escape and manage their own defence. If *he* could go to a heathen feast and eat harmlessly, but his brother who should go with him might receive damage, or the host who invited them be sustained in his idolatry, he would not be there. Thus he headed the infant church, as some generous-hearted and brave commander, who would place himself in the edge of every battle, and be among the last to retreat, and die the shield and champion of his

warriors. Thus he patterned after his Master, who laid down his life for the sheep, who was rich, but for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.

And the Christian spirit in all ages must be the same. When the child of God might hide himself from exposure, he may not, if his retreat would endanger his brethren. If others would defend the hated doctrines, and the self-denying duties, and handle the more obnoxious matters of discipline, and he could gain applause by *inaction*, he covets no such honor. Nehemiah would not hide himself in the temple, from the threatened invasion of his three inveterate enemies. If others would build the walls, and defend the fortresses, and watch the enemy, and his own life was ever so precious to the enterprise, still he would not lurk behind the walls, and hide himself in the sanctuary.

Believers may not take their shoulders from under the burden and leave their brethren to bear it. The spirit of the gospel has none of the world's time-serving mixed with it. If attacks must be made upon the whole army of the gods, and Jupiter should himself array the host, Paul would dare his thunders and expose his weakness, and lead the Church of God to the onset. Thus he stood in the streets of Athens, and poured out his contempt upon their priests, their shrines, and their sacrifices, till we wonder that he lived to rehearse the adventure. He knew the commander he marched under, and the goodness of the cause he supported, and the firmness of that decree that pledged him the victory.

If exposure is demanded in the cause of the Lord, the believer dare be exposed ; if courage is wanted, the Christian has it. If one has it not, he may well doubt whether he shall triumph at the last with the sacramental host. If sin is to be attacked in its stronghold, you may send any Christian to the onset. He has commenced with sin a war of extermination, and has no measure to keep with it. If the vice be popular, he cares not. If interest holds him back, he cares not. If he must go to the onset alone, he dares to meet the enemy of God and man in his deadliest assault. He dare tell a whole community by precept and example that their Sabbath-breaking will destroy them ; that their profaneness is cowardly, and vulgar, and ruinous ; that their vile cup, when it has enriched a few, and made paupers of the multitude, and murdered wives and children, and blasted their individual and civil reputation, will, in its final results, damn eternally the whole mass of its advocates, from the man who gains an office by its in-

fluence, down to the vagabond who dies in the ditch by the use of it. If sin is to be attacked, there is not a single coward among all God's elect. And if any hope they belong to that number, who dare not commence hostilities with sin, they had better know soon, that when the marriage supper is spread, and those who were ready have gone in with the bridegroom to the marriage, they must be in outer darkness.

FOURTHLY. The apostle, in the case before us, displayed *great Christian wisdom and prudence*. I know that some would suppose that the very opposite of this was true ; that if he wished to put down idolatry and convert the heathen, he must go to their feasts, and eat their sacrifices, and drink their oblations, and by no means separate himself from their society, lest he lose his influence over them. He must not push matters so far for fear of a reaction that should frustrate all his hopes. But Paul had more wisdom, and knew that in order to cure idolatry he and his brethren must stand wholly aloof from it, and thus render those ashamed who practised it. Had he attended freely their feasts, and took all his weaker brethren with him, he would have done mischief in two ways. The heathen would never have abandoned their gods, and many of the Christians would have gone back to idolatry ; and thus the whole work of founding the Christian churches would have been to be done over. Exactly thus may we prescribe for the cure of other vices. To cure profaneness, we must mingle, they say, with the swearers, and smile at their witty oaths, and invite them to our houses, and employ them in our service, and let our children hear them swear, and never let them know that we are ashamed of them ; thus they have the full benefit of our chaste conversation, and we shall occasionally have opportunity to check them ! To cure intemperance we must not be too bold in our measures. We must not refuse to drink wine occasionally, nor advise others to quit it wholly ; must not deprecate the sale of the poison, nor refuse to keep it in our houses, nor refuse to deal it out to the laborer, or the visiter, nor forbid our children to take it, nor cry down the whole article as useless, a curse and a nuisance ; all this will drive the intemperate from us, so that we can have no influence over them to persuade them to quit it ! Exactly the opposite advice that Paul would give. By such prescriptions we might keep this a drunken world for ever ; might sow the seeds of inebriation in the appetite of every child, till one generation after another shall go down to hell rapidly, as a merciful God shall be provoked to execute his law, till at length this lost world would become de-

populated and no millennial period ever come. Ask Paul to prescribe, and he would say, "Touch not, taste not, handle not."

Sin is one of the things with which we can make no covenant. It is like fire; we are scorched to death while we parley with it. Let me illustrate my views by an anecdote. A neighbor of my father's, a merchant, is said to have been in his store one evening, and snuffed his candle and threw the ignited wick into a barrel of powder. Quick as thought he thrust in his hand and took it out, but was afterward on the point of fainting when he reflected on the danger he had been in. This was told me as a fact in my childhood. Be it doubted, if you choose, still it illustrates the danger of dabbling with sin. He might not deliberate, nor ask counsel, nor proceed moderately, or he and his family had perished. Just so with sin: to parley with it is ruin, to be intimate with it is death, to abide under its power is hell.

Paul was wise in keeping no measures with idolatry. Whether to destroy it, or save his brethren, or himself, or honor Christ, was his highest object, his conduct was noble. To flee from it, and have no fellowship with it, even if he must never taste flesh while the world stood, was the very course of heavenly wisdom. He would thus render ashamed the worshipers of idols, would exert the strongest influence on the infant Church, and best honor and please his Master.

But the question will rise, Are we obligated by Paul's example? We surely are. He was teaching the truth of God under the infallible guidance of his Spirit; and whether he advances that truth in the form of exhortation, or of logical argument, or expostulation, or states the resolve to which the Spirit's influence had brought his own mind, I know of no argument by which we can repel the truth under one of these forms of instruction rather than another. I know of no sentiment more dangerous than thus to cavil at truth because taught by men we hate, or in any particular form of language. We could easily in this way destroy the influence of more than half the Bible.

And besides, there was nothing unreasonable in his resolve. There would be no danger to health or life from the entire abstinence from meat which he proposes. And the object to be gained was worth the sacrifice. And moreover, the gospel enjoins self-denial on every Christian, and promises heaven on the express condition that we deny ourselves and take up the cross and follow Christ. It would seem surprising, then, if any should doubt but that the apostle was inspired to teach the churches this high prin-

ciple of benevolence, practised at the expense of a long protracted course of self-denial. It is that redeeming principle that has saved the Church, and will save the world. Till Christians understand it, and act upon it, they have not learned the heavenly art of being useful; and if they may even hope to reach heaven, must assuredly calculate to be in that world stars of the smallest magnitude.

#### APPLICATION.

In applying further the principle which actuated the apostle in the case we have reviewed, I would say, in the

1. Place, That *honesty* should lead every believer to its adoption. We profess to have passed from death unto life, to have been plucked as brands from the burning. And we see those around us who are urging their way to hell, and we profess to love them. If possible, they should be stopped in their career. And if there is the most forlorn hope that our example would do any thing to stop them, our example should be employed. Else how can we be honest in our profession. If *idleness* is destroying souls, (and probably few sins are destroying more,) how can we be honest if we will not refrain from wasting precious hours with prayerless idlers, who, in the hordes that indolence collects around them, are learning and teaching the deadliest principles and the most polluting practices? And if drunkenness is destroying souls, how can we be honest in our profession of benevolence, if there is any amount of sacrifice within our power that we will not make to dam up and dry up this broad, and deep, and dark river of death, that is bearing down to hell such a mighty congregation.

2. *Consistency of character* should lead us to adopt this high principle of Christian benevolence. We profess, as Christians, that religion has a value paramount to all other interests combined. We believe that interrogatory assertion, that the whole world is not to be compared in value to a soul. Hence any sacrifice possible should be made to save a soul; and if the world see us ready to make none, will God save our character?

Believers are accustomed to pray that the kingdom of Christ may come, that men may be converted and saved, and we profess to be asking for large favors. But when we have risen from our knees, and it is seen that we can practice no self-denial to have our prayers answered, can we hope to conceal our hypocrisy? Can we have any consistency of character in the world's estimation? Will they hear us pray? Will they have any faith in our tears? No, none.

3. It will be seen, of course, that we cannot be *useful* in the *absence* of this high principle of Christian benevolence. The world honors and believes the man whose actions tally with his tears and his professions. By him they will be influenced. But they must not see us trying to escape the cross. They must not *hear* us *pray*, and then *not see us do*. We may not rebuke their profaneness, nor their Sabbath-breaking, nor their gambling, and then edge along as near as may be to the very crimes we have rebuked. We may not reprobate their intemperance, and yet drink temperately with them out of the same cup. We do them no good by our admonitions. They will wield dexterously that motto, "Physician, heal thyself." Believers should not forget that though they may have learned more than other men of Bible truth, yet in native unsanctified cunning, the men of the world are before them, and will perceive a discrepancy of character even sooner, perhaps than themselves. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

4. Without that spirit of high Christian benevolence which will lead us to make great sacrifices to bless our fellow-men, our religion will not render us *happy*. The child of God is happy in doing good. In this God is happy. When he had built the world and made man, he surveyed his works with delight, because they were all good. When we cannot reflect that we have done good, the mind corrodes itself and is put to pain.

FINALLY—We cannot be *safe* while wanting this spirit of Christian benevolence. Every soul that is born of God has it. It is that most prominent feature of the Divine image that was lost in the fall, and is restored in regeneration. "If one loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen." "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another."

## SERMON L.

### THE CONCENTRATED RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL.

ISAIAH LIV. 13.

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

IN the preceding chapter there is brought into view the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessed effects of his death upon the beings whom he died to redeem. "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Under that new dispensation which his mission should introduce, the barren should sing and the desolate become fruitful. The Church is directed to "enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitation," with the assurance of a large increase of her spiritual offspring. She shall branch forth on the right hand and on the left, shall inherit the Gentiles, shall forget the shame of her youth, and wipe off the reproach of her widowhood. Her Maker, the Lord of Hosts, will be her husband ; and the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth her Redeemer. "In a little wrath God hid his face from her for a moment, but will now, with everlasting kindness, have mercy on her."

This language, though highly figurative, is yet easily understood. The prophet evidently looked forward to gospel times, and sung of a period then very distant, but in its events more glorious than any that had gone by. We can easily believe that he had at length a distant but delightful view of the present period, and pleased his soul with the very scenes that are now transpiring before our eyes, when the children of the Church should become wise and happy. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

That God has cast our lot in a favored period of the Church, there can be no doubt. And the man who is not thankful to see opening before himself and his children, a prospect so rich, must have a mind which none will covet, and a heart which is the seat of very sordid and groveling affections. It will be my wish, in what will now be said, to awake your attention to those objects

which Isaiah saw, and in which he exulted some twenty-five hundred years since. I would then remark,

I. The *present* is a period of *great interest*. This is a truth which must impress the mind of every thinking man. In addition to what our fathers have told us, we have learned by our own experience, that the world is undergoing a vast moral change. So rapid are the movements of Providence that we can scarcely keep pace with its present history.

1. This is an age prominent in its *benevolent exertions*. Our fathers, with all their piety, made almost no exertion to better the condition of a miserable world. They held in their hands the charter of eternal life, but made few inquiries respecting the extent to which this blessing was enjoyed. They often read the command, "Go ye unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," but had no idea that it was a precept binding them to disseminate that gospel on which they hung their own hopes of everlasting life. Few of us that have lived fifty years have received from our parents any lesson on this subject. They taught us those branches of duty with which they were acquainted, and put into our hands that book from which, through the teachings of the Holy Ghost, the present generation has learned one new lesson: that those who have the gospel must give it to the world.

Hence the Christian world has waked to the subject, and the benevolent heart has learned to expand, and spread its sympathies over all the miseries of the apostacy. Nor have the advocates of that charity which regards only the body, and terminates its toils at the sepulchre, any cause to mourn at the change. Since the Bible has been making its way to the habitations of poverty, it has not diminished their wonted supply of bread. He that pities the *body* may have no compassion for the *soul*, but he who aims to save the *soul* from death, will feel for the miseries of the *body*. The charity of the gospel is generous and impartial.

Nor yet have the advocates of that charity which begins at home, the least occasion to regret the exertions made in the more distant field. It was since we cast our eye upon India, and heard the moans of Africa, and saw and wept over the desolation of Palestine, that we have pitied strongly the wandering tribes of our own America, and have attempted to build up the waste places in our immediate vicinity. We had begun to translate the Scriptures into other languages, that we might export them to other nations

before we had made the inquiry whether there were not families within ten minutes' walk of home who had no Bible. The poor in our land, and under the eaves of our sanctuaries, have reason to bless the day when the Christian world began to pity the distant heathen.

I said the Christian world had *waked*, I should have said they had *begun to wake*: for many who eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, are yet as profoundly asleep as though nothing new had transpired. Still to some extent exertions are made to carry into effect the system of the gospel. The Bible is going into every language, and missionaries into every country, and the hope and the promise is, that soon the angel having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, will publish it to every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people. The rich are casting of their abundance, and the poor their mite, into the treasury of the Lord. More is done now in a single year to lessen the miseries of the apostacy, than had been done perhaps in ages previously to the commencement of the present era.

And no part of Christendom is yet impoverished. Too little has been done to be esteemed a sacrifice. We have distributed to the hungry nothing but the crumbs of our plenteous board. We have done so little that scarcely a conscience in Christendom is satisfied; so little that if our children should hereafter learn the amount of our charities, they would burn the record that they might conceal our shame. Philanthropy must yet ten-fold its sacrifices, or the present generation of the heathen must almost all share the destiny of their unpitied predecessors. But when all this is said, and said truly, the present is *comparatively* an age of charity. There begins to be opened an avenue to the conscience and the heart. There is *some* pity where there has been none, there is some interest felt where recently there was indifference the most profound.

2. The present age is distinguished by a *union of interest and effort* among the friends of the gospel. Most that was done till recently was the effect of individual exertion. The pious heart was always benevolent. I should offend my readers and myself, if I should deny to our dear parents who are resting in their graves all the sympathy and the charity which they entailed to their offspring. But benevolent exertions during most of the ages that have gone by was personal and insulated. The Christian Church had not learned that union of effort would augment her strength, and multiply the resources of her charity. This discovery under

the aids of the Spirit, has produced those wondrous efforts that constitute the glory of the present era. Our Bible and education societies have contributed greatly to break down those barriers, that have so long and so mischievously separated the followers of the Lord Jesus. How consoling to see Christians while yet they are firm in advocating what they conceive to be the doctrines of truth, lay aside the rigidity of their sect, and unite their efforts to advance the interests of a common cause, and the honors of a common Master. The Foreign Missionary Society, which gives high promise of cultivating vast tracts of the moral wilderness, have set the Christian world an example, and are acting with a wisdom and an energy for which every believer in the Churches should give thanks. And that union which begins to exist at home, on heathen ground is perfect. There, we are told, the communion of each Church is open to the fellowship of others. The concert of prayer, if no other existing fact could be named, is an instance of united effort which distinguishes the present era from all that have gone by. Here is united the whole Christian Church in offering to the God of grace, the same prayer and the same intercessions. Dear brethren, whether you have or have not been happy on these occasions, you may rest assured that no feature of the present epoch yields a higher hope that the latter-day glory is nigh. God will hear the entreaty which is poured into his ear at the same moment, from ten thousand lips. He will regard those petitions, which, as that sun encircles the earth, is sent into the court of heaven from every isle and continent where dwells a heaven-born, mind. The enemies of the Lord Jesus and his Church, had never such just occasion to fear the total ruin of their cause as at the present moment. They have hitherto been able to *divide*, and have hoped by this means to *destroy*, but they now see formed against them an impenetrable phalanx by whose firmness all their boasted prowess is covered with the utmost contempt. Hence infidelity has quit the field, the Pope is palsied in his chair, Dagon prostrate before the ark, the bands of Mahomet are beginning to be weakened, the Turk is beginning to perish by the sword, and his slaves are demanding emancipation.

3. The present era is marked by that *general diffusion of knowledge* with which no former age has been blessed. I refer now to that kind of knowledge which moves the springs of action, a knowledge of the present state of the world. The groans of the wretched have been unheeded, because they have not been heard. We had no conception a few years since, that six or seven hun-

dred millions of our fellow-creatures had never heard of a Savior. We had not explored the vast tracts of moral desolation, nor had taken the gauge and dimension of human misery, depression and contempt. The prince of this world hid the extent of his dominions, and concealed the immensity of their unnumbered population, in the mists that issued from the bottomless pit. No encroachments were made upon his kingdom, because the great mass of the Christian community had never known the magnitude of his empire. Believers had long prayed, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," but they had never conceived to what narrow limits that kingdom was confined, and of how little a portion of his promised inheritance the Prince of peace had taken actual possession.

But on these subjects there is now poured in upon the Christian community a beam of light. The vehicles of religious intelligence visit now the humblest cottage, and awaken prayer and charity, wherever the Bible, through the Divine blessing, has produced a heavenly temper. We are becoming as familiar with India, and with the isles of the Pacific, as if they had floated into our vicinity, and were in the circle of our neighborhood. The unread servant-boy peruses the records of Christian research, reads, learns the list of charity, and weeps at the funeral of the missionary. Thus is beginning to be touched every spring of charity, thus is brought upon his knees every believer that has the smallest interest at the court of heaven. And the happy result is, that the Christian world is organizing. There is making a simultaneous attack upon the various outposts of the kingdom of darkness. The widow's mite mingles with the charities of the wealthy, and hastens to constitute that river, which carries fertilization and life to the famishing population of a world.

4. The present is an era of *self-devotion*. In the ages past, if any section of the Church waked to their duty, and would have sent the bread of life to the hungry, they found it almost impossible to procure an agent who would go and dispense their charity. He must know, before he could be employed, that he should be well supported, and might soon return; that he should be under the protection of human law, and that his life should not be exposed to the paw of the lion, and the mouth of the crocodile. But God, at the juncture when they are needed, has raised up men for the service, whose minds are subjected to none of these cowardly misgivings. They offer themselves, with all their wealth, and their children. They ask nothing but their raiment and their

bread, wish never to return, have no anxiety for human protection, brave the terrors of a trackless wilderness, and can sleep sweetly in the society of beasts and savages. If thirty families, farmers and mechanics, are needed for some distant and hazardous mission, one hundred are ready. It is true that there is a lack of able and well-educated ministers, even yet, but this arises from a distressing *deficiency of the number*, and not from a *want of a spirit of self-devotion*. Thousands are wishing for a share in this work, if they can but be fitted for the service. They will pledge themselves to serve you in any country, to traverse any desert, or cross any sea, or surmount any dangers, if you will give them opportunities for preparation; and will refund your charities if their hearts faint at the service.

If the occasion would permit, I could mention, as distinguishing the present era, a number of other particulars equally interesting. God prospers, remarkably, the enterprises of his people. There is a vast increase of general knowledge, and general happiness. The bonds of slavery are breaking. The terrors of despotism are softening. The rights of conscience are beginning to be better understood. The art of war is slowly coming into disuse. The unhappy begin to know their condition. The ignorant invite instruction. The heathen are contributing to furnish themselves the means of science, and the bread of life. Infidelity is ashamed of its tenets. The governments of the earth are beginning to aid in raising the degraded and the lost to happiness and heaven. And much as the philanthropist may still find to weep over, he will desery in the present movements of the world many things that give promise of a happier age at hand, when he may wipe away his tears.

II. It is important that *our children be educated for the period in which they are to live*. If the text contains a promise, then it also points out a duty. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." That parent has forgotten the first dictate of affection, who does not wish that his children may be wise, useful, and happy, and who does not, by every means in his power, prepare them to act well their part in the generation with which they must mingle.

1. The rising generation should be *well instructed in science and religion*, that they may act well their part in the age that is opening. Else they can neither be useful, respectable, nor happy. The time has been, when men could have been respectable, without any knowledge of books or of science, but those dark ages

have gone by. The Bible and the tract, and the vehicle of religious intelligence, and even the voluminous commentary, are to be put into the hands of every child throughout Christendom. And he must be able to read and understand their contents, or he will wish that his father had been a Turk, or a Hindoo, and that his mother had borne him on the banks of the Caspian, or at the source of the Ganges. He will be interested in the excursions of the missionary, and must be able to trace his track on the chart, and feel the perils of his station. He must lead in the operations of charity, and must know how to minute and express his thoughts. Perhaps he must become an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, and must have his mind enlarged in the pursuit of general science. I know you intend to select his employ, he must follow the track you have chosen. No. He will choose for himself, or rather God will choose for him. When you are laid in your grave, he will hear the voice of the Lord, will be afraid to disobey, and will enter and labor in his vineyard. He will leave his plow, his trade, or his clerkship, and will go at the call of some benighted community, to carry them the Book of the covenant, and the message of mercy. And when he shall wish to be useful, if he find himself ignorant and disqualified, he will blame that father, whose memory he loves to revere, but who unkindly introduced him into an enlightened age, with an uncultivated mind.

And our daughters, as well as our sons, must be equipped for the peculiar duties of the age. The gospel has always raised the female sex to an importance which, in lands not blessed with its light, they cannot reach. It was to be expected that an age like the present would bring them into a still more important station. And they have shown their wisdom by their exertions to disseminate that gospel which has rendered them free, enlightened, happy. And they will be, hereafter, the guardians of their sex. And they must then be equipped for the service to which they will assuredly be called, and will be ashamed of their parents, if, when we are in our graves, they shall find themselves too illiterate to take an interest, and act a high and holy part, in the scenes of this illustrious age.

A parent can hardly be more unkind to his children than to neglect their improvement, at a period like the present. It would be cruel to leave them in the midst of enlightened society with minds suited to the taste of a Turk, or a Tartar. I should be afraid, in such a case, that they would hate my memory, and trample with contempt upon my ashes.

2 We must not merely attend to their *mental improvement*, we must teach them charity. The suffrages of Christendom have been taken, and it is resolved that the miseries of the world must be relieved. But this relief will cost us something more than "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled." We are pained, and so will be our children, if we or they must know of miseries which we may not alleviate. While the eye is pouring forth its tears, the hand will distribute its bounty. But in this matter much will depend on habit. We could give you the names of men who have prayed, "Thy kingdom come," with great fervency this half century, but have never, perhaps, given the price of a Bible to aid the increase of that kingdom. And now, when the claims of the perishing millions are understood, every such prayer they offer is their disgrace. Our children must be taught to be consistent. If they will need mental improvement, because they are to live in an enlightened age, they will no less need a spirit of Christian benevolence, because they are to live in a *liberal age*. Hence, while they are mere children they should be taught to cast their little mites into the treasury of the Lord. When they read the pathetic story of a burning widow, or an immolated babe, or a suffering missionary, tell them, while the tears are flowing, that they must send those heathen a Bible, and contribute to the support of that missionary. Carry them with you to the monthly concert, and enrol their little names upon the list of charity: thus will you prepare them to fill some distinguished station among their enlightened and liberal contemporaries. They will be pillars and polished stones in the house of the Lord, and will do you honor when the weeds shall be growing upon your sepulchres.

But if our children should carry into manhood the opposite character; should they be ignorant, and covetous, and infidel; should they set themselves to oppose the work of the Lord, and dam up the streams of charity, and exhibit a dark, and contracted, and illiberal spirit; as sure as God is true there is nothing before them but disappointment and shame. They will cover our graves with reproach, and attach a stigma to our name which will adhere to it till it has perished. In the conduct of the child the world will read the character of the parents, and the dead will be arraigned and condemned at the tribunal of the living.

The means of avoiding this doom are in our hands. Let us make our children acquainted with what God is doing, let us put into their hand and pour into their ears the weekly intelligence, and water the radice with prayer, and then, whether we live to

see the effects or not, our children will rise up and call us blessed  
But,

3. They must have the benefit of our example. If we are found opposing the work of the Lord, are unwilling to be enlightened, and are vexed at every solicitation of charity, we shall have children in our own likeness, and they will live only to prolong our disgrace. But if we march up to the work of the Lord ourselves; if our children hear us pray earnestly for the devoted missionary, and see us afflicted when we have missed any opportunity to give of our substance to the Lord, and glad when opportunity presents, and generous in our contributions; they will naturally imbibe the same spirit, and we shall be honored, and God will be served in our offspring. If we are afraid that a course like this will render us poor, and injure our children, it is either because we lack the necessary information, or doubt the truth of the promise. It is plainly written and easily understood, "Give early of thy substance to the Lord; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses burst out with new wine." Now what parent that believes this text to be the word of the Lord, would not rather, far rather, that his children could have a claim to this promise, than any possible human security for the stability and the increase of their fortune! It affixes to every bond we hold the seal of heaven; secures the timely shower, the prosperous breeze, the wisdom necessary to plan our concerns, and the happy combination of circumstances, in every hour when we shall need the interference of a heavenly friend.

Let us, then, leave our children a well-selected library, a mind well cultivated, a conscience awake to duty, a heart habituated to feel the woes of another, and, depend upon it, our estates will be more secure, and our offspring better provided for, than if we should leave them with the opposite habits, in the possession of a kingdom.

Do you say, none but God can do all this for our children? True: and all that is required of us is, that we wish it done, that we entreat him to do it, that we set the example and use the means required. Then if our children will not be obedient, we can have peace in death, and the curse of being their destroyer, will be removed from our shoulders. But we need have no such fears. The frequent and extensive revivals with which God is blessing the churches, gives encouraging promise, that from among the rising generation there is to be selected an army of combatants, who are to march under the captain of their salvation

to victory and glory. There is more hope that our children will be saved, than there has been, with respect to any generation that has ever inhabited the globe. If this is the period predicted in the context, and there are many indications that it is, then the promise is, "Thy children shall *all* be taught of the Lord." Or if this prediction is not to receive its *full* accomplishment, till the lapse of a century, still its *partial* accomplishment may be the inheritance of our children.

III. *The course described will render them happy.* "Great shall be the peace of thy children." The evident indications of Providence are, that there has dawned a new era of the Church. If then we do our duty to our children, set the example and enforce the precepts required, our hope may be that they will be among the ornaments of the risen and rising generation. They will go into life with habits suited to the sphere in which they are to act. They will associate with a benevolent community, will have a delightful employ, will witness most glorious displays of the wisdom and power of God, and will doubtless have those communications of the Spirit which create the best possible enjoyments of a rational mind. If these hopes are not all a dream what a blessing it now is to be a parent. When our hearts have ached for our children, how such a hope would have cheered us. If they may live and act worthily amid the scenes of such a period, it is quite enough. **AMEN**

SERMON LI  
THE BRIDGELESS GULF.

LUKE xvi. 26.

And, besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

THE evident meaning of the text is, that the rich man could expect no relief from heaven. Not only could Lazarus bring him none, but none could be brought. There was no communication between the two worlds. They were forever separated by an impassable gulf ! and whether its bottomless caverns will ever be filled, or a bridge erected, I shall, at present, leave those to guess, who venture to doubt the plainest text, who dare to die in their sins, who hope to reach heaven by the way of hell, and who hang that forlorn hope upon a straw.

Two points the parable settles : that the wicked shall be punished, and that they shall be punished after death. The rich man had received his good things. Now the beggar receives *his* ; and the gulf that separates them is impassable. Christ did not make Abraham say that the rich man had received *part* of his good things, and that the gulf was not passable at *present*. We seem to be taught the irreparable loss of his soul. To say the contrary is to charge Christ with using a figure calculated to deceive, and this is to blasphemously impeach his truth and his goodness.

Christ would not have represented the rich man as dying, and *then* lifting up his eyes in torment, if sinners were not punished *after* death. Nor would he have represented him as separated from the smallest comfort by an impassable gulf, if there were any possible relief for those who once make their bed in hell !

And those who deny that there is any hell but the grave, will gain nothing, when they understand this parable. Be it the grave or not, the rich man found it a place of torment ; a place where sensitive beings enjoy no comforts, not even a drop of water to cool their tongues ; a place partitioned off from heaven by a gulf impassable. I will here stop to quote one or two texts more, to show the weakness as well as wickedness of supposing that the Scriptures recognise no other hell but the grave “ The wicked

shall be turned into hell," and so will the righteous, if this sentiment be correct—for the righteous, as well as the wicked, commonly find a grave. He who does not cut off a right hand and pluck out a right eye that offends, is in danger of having his whole body cast into hell. But if hell be only the grave, the whole body must be cast thither, whether the offending member be amputated or not. We read, that God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell. Did any one ever suppose that the revolting angels were buried in the earth? Who that has common sense, and can use it, ever thought of putting spirits in a grave? Besides, we read of the fire, the brimstone, the darkness, and the torments of hell! Can this hell be the grave? My dear hearers, I cannot spend your time to confute an error so weak. Its advocates must be left to their own stupid infatuation.

I shall proceed to inquire, whether the miserable inhabitants of hell have any hope of relief?

I. If their endless punishment is not revealed in the Scriptures, it could not have been. I mean by this remark that every varied form of words and expression is used in the Scriptures, to express this idea, that could be. After the process of the last judgment, the wicked are to go, accursed, into everlasting fire; where they are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. And where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and where they shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. The words here used, are declared by the most approved lexicographers in the Greek and Hebrew languages to mean *eternal*; having no end. The same words, and others like them, are used in many texts, to express the duration of the miseries of the damned. And if they do not express endless duration, there are no words in those languages that do. And can we believe that they who used those languages had never received the idea of an eternity, or if they had the idea, had no words with which to express it? If then, the Deity, in revealing his will, made use of the strongest words which human language afforded, to express endless punishment, and yet has failed, how *could* he have revealed this truth if it had been truth? It seems impossible, unless he had adopted some other mode of making known his will.

I cannot stop, brethren, to hear the quibbling of those who, although they acknowledge that the fire will burn for ever, believe that the wretched victims will be released. It is as frequently

and as strongly expressed, that the finally impenitent shall be punished for ever, as that the fire shall for ever burn. And it would be impeaching the character of God to suppose, that he would feed the flames of Tophet, while there was no employ for its fires. "Their worm shall not die." "They shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."

But as to the main doctrine—what would men have had him say, that they might believe it? If he had said, "They shall never escape from hell, would they believe him? This he has said. The very name of that place of misery indicates, that there is no escape. It is called a prison. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." And as prisons are not usually left unbarred or unlocked, so we hear Christ say of this prison, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death." And to secure the prisoners still more, they are reserved "in chains under darkness." Their place of abode is also termed a pit, a furnace, and a lake of fire. These terms imply a place of fearful confinement. The text assures us that an impassable gulf confined the rich man in this perdition.

Had he said, they shall never reach heaven, or be in the place where his people are, and where he is, would this satisfy those who who try to doubt? This he has said. "Sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous." "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Christ said to some of the Jews, "Ye shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come." And in another place he says, "Where I am, thither ye cannot come." And the text again bars the finally impenitent out of heaven, by an impassable gulf. "They shall never see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them."

Had he said, Sinners shall never be forgiven, would this have given satisfaction? This he has said. Said the Lord Jesus, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." And we read again, that to those who sin wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. It is predicted, that those who regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, he shall destroy, and not build them

up. This does not look like restoring sinners to happiness after their sufferings. This would be building them up. But God intends to destroy them and not build them up.

God threatens sinners that he will destroy them with *double*, with *everlasting*, and *perpetual* destruction. He intends to consume them in his wrath. He intends to make them a perpetual desolation. They are destined to die the second death. It is the divine purpose that they shall perish forever. He intends to blot out their names forever. They are to be the subjects of endless despair. They are to weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth. Such will be their hopeless and miserable state, that they shall seek death, but death shall flee from them. These expressions all look like irrecoverable ruin. And if the Bible does not teach this doctrine, it is of all books the most difficult to understand. Instead of being that simple, intelligible book, which I have always conceived it to be, I despair of learning one truth from it. I would sell it for the fraction of a cent, and abandon myself to the fortuitous light of unintelligent nature.

II. If the punishments of the wicked are not endless, we have no security in the Scriptures, that the saints will be for ever happy. Each truth rests on the same species of evidence. The same words are used, and the same form of expression in both cases. God has sworn that the one shall live and the other die—the one be destroyed, the other saved—the one redeemed, the other damned! The one is to go away into everlasting punishment, the other into everlasting life. The smoke of the torment of the one is to ascend up for ever and ever, and, co-extensively with it, the other is to cry, alleluiah! Not a text can be found that more strongly expresses the duration of heaven's joys, than the miseries of hell. The Christian's hopes, then, of immortal blessedness are all a dream! He may yet learn the dreadful secret, that after tasting the joys of heaven, he may suddenly sink to the bottomless pit, and some fiend of darkness rise and fill his seat. And let Gabriel know that the prince of darkness, whom he thought to be an out-cast forever, may yet walk with him, arm in arm, through the streets of the New Jerusalem, and he, perhaps, be sent to fill the infernal throne! When men embrace such sentiments, they scatter firebrands, arrows, and death; and give them their wish, they fill the middle and the upper world with tears

III. If sinners are to be released from punishment, it must be en

the principle of *mercy*, or of *justice*. Let us view both sides of this question.

Are they to be saved, finally, by *mercy*? Does this idea comport with the sacred Scriptures? According to Matthew, sinners are to remain in the prison of hell till they pay the uttermost farthing. Or, as Luke has it, till they *have paid* the very last mite. They are also to suffer *as much* as their sins deserve. They are to receive the due reward of their deeds. They are to drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out *without mixture*, that is, without mixture of *mercy*, into the cup of his indignation, and are to be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. Now, if they are to pay the last mite, if there is to be no mixture of *mercy* in their cup, and if they are to suffer the due reward of their deeds, how can they be saved by *mercy*? When one has paid the debt, is there any *mercy* in giving him his discharge? Does not *justice* demand his release? If the hour ever comes when sinners shall deserve no further punishment, will not all hell rise in one united band, and press into the court of heaven, to sue for their immediate discharge, on the principle of right? And will a righteous God deny them their suit?

Do any feel disposed to take the other side, and advocate the sinner's final emancipation on the principle of *justice*? Then let this matter be fairly viewed. The Scriptures represent salvation as the result of *mercy*. "By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." To this point is the whole tenor of Scripture. By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.

Grace is to be the theme of the heavenly song. The redeemed of the Lord shall for ever praise him who washed them from their sins *in his blood*. Now if any should finally make their way into heaven, whom *mercy* has not redeemed, they could never join the song, or if they made the attempt, there would be endless discord.

Besides, brethren, when the sinner shall have suffered all that he deserves, and *justice* demands his release, it is absurd to speak of his being saved. From what is he saved? Not from deserved punishment, for no punishment is deserved. If any can have so base an idea of God, as that he would continue to punish sinners after they have ceased to deserve it, then we might conceive of their being saved from the effects of tyranny. And then indeed it would be absurd to speak of the sinner's being saved by the same

hand that still wished unjustly to punish. If any then imagine that all will reach heaven at last who have fallen under the wrath of God, let them not speak of them as *saved*. There can be no salvation but for those who are exposed to ruin, and when they have paid the uttermost farthing, sinners are no longer exposed. And yet who ever thought of any reaching heaven but those who are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Neither on the principle of mercy or of justice, then, is there any redemption from hell. And who can conceive of any third principle as a ground of reprieve from the pangs of the second death ?

IV. Salvation is represented as being through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. But did we ever read in the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit should descend and operate upon the hearts of the damned ! And is hell a place where men are likely to come to the knowledge or the love of the truth ? Under his tuition, who is a liar and the father of lies, can we hope for such effects ! I have no doubt but that those who enter the place of misery hoping one day to make their escape, will there learn one truth, which they are so unwilling to learn here. They will learn, to their everlasting cost, that till then they have always believed a lie. They will learn that he who has the keys of hell will never unlock their prison. In this truth their faith will then be strong—everlasting.

V. The Scriptures represent *Christ as the medium* of salvation to all who reach heaven. There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. But Christ will have done his work of salvation before any are redeemed from hell. We are taught that Christ must reign till he hath put his enemies under his feet, and that he shall then deliver up the kingdom to his Father. This passage is worthy of particular remark. Christ delivers up the mediatorial kingdom, immediately after he has sentenced the wicked to everlasting fire. After this period there can be no Christ to redeem them. He has then gathered in his elect, and gone to seat them at the marriage supper, and has left his enemies to contrive a way of salvation for themselves. The finally impenitent are not given to Christ, for those who are given to him shall *never perish*, neither shall any one be able to pluck them out of his hands. But those who go to the place of despair *perish*, and therefore are not given to Christ and will not

be saved by him. Thus the argument chases the sinner down to hell and leaves him there, with no Savior to redeem him. How he shall be able, unassisted, to burst its bars, or quench its flames, or quit its caverns, I leave those to guess who dare run the dreadful risk.

VI. The finally impenitent die with a wrong temper of heart, and must undergo a thorough change of temper and character, or there could be no salvation for them. Indeed it would not be salvation were they taken from the place of torment but left in possession of their evil hearts of unbelief. Salvation consists in being saved from the dominion of sin. Those who are rescued from hell then, must first be made holy. Now it would seem very strange that God should send them to that polluted world to acquire purity. Hell, it seems, is the school where men are qualified for heaven, and he their instructor who was too vile to live in heaven!

Can we believe that the flames of the pit will have any tendency to purify? Afflictions in the present world make wicked men no better. "Why should they be stricken any more, they will revolt more and more?" The merest wretches that ever appeared in the shape of men, have been those who had been subjected to almost perpetual affliction. And it would seem as though every stroke made them more stubborn. And why should the rod of divine wrath have a different effect in hell? That men will for ever grow worse in that world I can believe, but to believe that they shall grow better, requires credulity which I do not possess.

And the decree of Heaven with regard to them is, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse. Men are to perish *in their iniquities*, and there is neither promise nor intimation that they shall ever be cleansed. How then can they ever be qualified for that world where nothing impure shall ever enter?

VII. We read that wicked men are to have their portion at last with devils. "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." If then they are ever redeemed, their associates in misery will doubtless be redeemed with them. But we read that Christ did not take upon him the nature of angels nor die for them. Devils have no share in his blood, nor any hope of emancipation through his merits. This question was long since settled. They must remain in their chains, and there is full

reason to apprehend that men will for ever have their part with them in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

## OBJECTIONS.

I feel it my duty to answer a few of the more specious objections to this doctrine. The more common objection is that drawn from the mercy of God. The argument is, that God is too benevolent too inflict so sore a punishment on his creatures. It seems they are afraid to admit the idea of endless punishment lest the sentiment should tarnish the divine glory. If they are sincere in using this argument they will manifest their sincerity by holiness of life. They will make it their constant effort to obey, and have others obey, the divine law. And if we do not see this, we shall doubt whether they oppose the doctrine we advocate, from respect to the divine character. But be their motive what it may the argument is flimsy. It is founded on this hypothesis, that it is more important that God should appear merciful than that he appear holy, just, and true. God is good, but he will forever hate those who are filthy and polluted. God is good, but he is so just that he will render to every one according to his works. God is good, but he is so true to his word that every threatening he has uttered he will execute. If then any are saved, in their salvation mercy and truth must meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. We are incompetent to say, what divine goodness operating in unison with the other attributes of Deity may do, or what it may refuse to do.

In this world some suffer all their life. From the cradle to the grave they hardly draw a breath in comfort. And these unhappy sufferers are not always conspicuous for wickedness. We see infants suffer from the day of their birth till they find an early grave. Now if all this is consistent with the goodness of God, it may comport with the same goodness, to leave those, who have spent all their lives in sin, and gone down to hell in unbelief, to suffer for their sins for ever.

Besides, brethren, mercy must have some channel, through which it may flow out. While God pardons rebels he must still maintain the dignity of his character, and must support the honor of his law and government. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the only medium of mercy from God to sinners. Him the wretched sinner has rejected till he gives up the mediatorial kingdom. Hence there is no channel through which mercy may be communicated to the inhabitants of the pit. God will remain merciful and gra-

scious for ever, but his mercy will avail those nothing who have dammed up its streams.

Much is made of that text where Christ is said to have gone by his Spirit, and preached to the spirits in prison. It seems impossible that any one should have gathered from this text that Christ went and preached to the inhabitants of hell. When Peter wrote they were spirits in prison : but he does not say they were when Christ preached to them by his Spirit. Indeed, we are assured that this took place at a time when once the long-suffering God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing. During this time, that holy man, inspired by the Spirit of Christ preached to them, and they continued disobedient. Now they are spirits in prison.

For argument's sake, let us suppose that Christ did go and preach to the inhabitants of the pit. What would he preach? Doubtless the same doctrines which he preached on earth. He would demonstrate to them that the fire should never be quenched, nor the worm die. He would assure them that they should by no means come out thence till they had paid the uttermost farthing. He would repeat to them the divine decree, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Could he contradict what he had preached to them on earth?

Provided he did preach to them the same doctrines which he delivered on earth, what would be the effect? Would those be profited by his preaching there who rejected him here? Would those who perished from Nazareth be any better pleased with divine sovereignty and election, than when they led Christ to the brow of the hill to cast him down, because he taught these doctrines? Would those who condemned the Prince of life, those who platted the crown, and those who drove the nails, and then went down to hell—would they now choose him as their Redeemer? Have the flames of the pit melted the hard heart? Shall we wait till men have known the bitterness of being damned, before we recommend Christ to them? Brethren, have any tidings reached you from the pit? The preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ—what effect does it have in the infernal prison? Does any revolting spirit ground his arms? Are any hosannahs to the Son of David heard to resound through the vaulted caverns of hell? My brethren, falsehood is inconsistent with all truth, and always finds its way beset with contradiction and absurdity. Embrace the truth, and it is consistent and can be defended without an effort.

Much is said about Christ's descending into hell, and great exertions made to prove that this is the only hell. It is true that the same word sometimes means the grave, and sometimes the place of misery. It is worthy of remark, however, that words are used in the latter sense not used in the former. The grave is never called a lake of fire, or a furnace of fire, or a place of outer darkness. If we should admit, what is not true, that *sheol* in Hebrew, and *hades* in Greek, mean nothing more than the grave, we should lose nothing. The question is settled in texts where these words are not used.

And what if it could be proved that Christ descended to the bottomless pit? There was a divine promise that his soul should not be left in hell. The wicked have no such assurance. He is not there now.

If Christ went to hell, it is not said that he went to redeem its prisoners. We are not told that he bore home to heaven with him any of the spoils of hell. We are not told that he conveyed thither a drop of water to cool the parching tongues.

Much is said of Christ's restoring all things, and destroying the works of the devil. These texts, they say, settle the point that all will be saved. It is surprising how men will reason when they have first resolved how they wish a thing to be. Suppose a rebellion break out in a human government, and some brave general be sent to restore order, would this imply the indiscriminate pardon of all the rebels? If he should imprison some, and execute others, and intimidate others, so that the rebels grounded their arms and forsook the standard of revolt, we should say that order is restored. So Christ must reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet. Then he is to give up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father. There is nothing said about his pardoning them all. Every knee shall bow to him; but it is not said that every enemy shall be brought to love him. A conquered enemy bows to his conqueror. Every one shall confess him to be Lord; but it is not said that all shall love him, and elect him as *their* Lord. His enemies shall feel and confess his power, and be trodden under his feet. During his reign they shall be cast into prison, and he, as Mediator, will go out of office, leaving them in bonds. The works of the devil are destroyed when his plan is frustrated, his hopes cut off, his emissaries ashamed, and his kingdom demolished. His works are destroyed when he and all his coadjutors are safely secured in hell. Then order is restored in the divine gov-

ernment, and is the better secured if some are made the everlasting monuments of his wrath.

Much is made of those texts where Christ is said to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, where he is called the Savior of the world, and where he is said to be the Savior of all men. The evident meaning of these texts is,

That Christ died for men and not for devils; for our world in distinction from any other.

That he died for sinners of one nation as well as another; for Jews and Gentiles.

That he made an atonement adequate to the pardon of all men; so that whosoever will may come and take the water of life freely. And

That he does save from temporal evils, and from present deserved wrath all men. Through the merits of Christ, the basest of all men are allowed a probation, are kept out of hell while the offers of pardon can be made them, and they have opportunity to form their character for eternity.

In connection with these texts, we find woes and curses denounced against those who reject Christ, making it manifest that finally all will not be interested in his blood. The context in each verse limits its meaning. For instance, in that text where Christ is said to be the Savior of all men, it is added, "especially of those that believe." Now if all, believers and unbelievers, are to reach heaven at last, how could Christ be in any special sense the Savior of believers? But if all men are saved by him from many temporal evils, and believers from eternal misery, the text is plain. And provided honesty and prayer be our commentaries, the other texts are equally plain

Instead of sinners being redeemed from hell, the dreadful probability is, that their miseries will endlessly increase. That they will continue to be disobedient and refractory, there is no room to doubt. Restraint being removed, they will doubtless feel and display more desperate wickedness than in the present life; and we cannot believe that God will release them from obligations to obey and love him, because they have become less disposed. The same law which is binding on us, will be in full force in hell. If, then, God continue to mark iniquity against them, and to punish that iniquity, their torments must for ever increase. And this doctrine we seem to be taught, when we are told that death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. Instead, then, of their prospect brightening, it will darken. The clouds that hover round the pit

will become more and more impenetrable for ever ; as often as they raise their eyes their hopes will sink. This dreadful point I will not press

Now, my readers, if I have advocated the truth, the saints will love it ; but if I have advocated error, those will love it who know not God and who obey not the gospel. This is always a fair touchstone of truth. Whatever sentiments we embrace, if we would recommend them, we must do it by a holy life. On whichever side of this question the truth lies, there will be seen the most holiness ; for truth has a sanctifying influence, while error has the contrary effect. Several instances have happened within our day, of men murdering themselves and their families, having first embraced the opinion that all would be happy beyond the grave. I confess I feel afraid of sentiments that can so steel the heart, that a man can embroil his hands in the blood of his children. And if you please to term these extreme cases, look at those which are common. Where do you find the most religion, the most benevolence, the most humility, the most prayer, the tenderest conscience, the most meekness, and the most heavenly-mindedness?—in those who embrace, or in those who reject the doctrine of unlimited punishment ? Where you see these effects, there is truth ; and where there is error, these effects are not seen.

## SERMON LII.

### THE PRESENCE OF GOD THE GLORY AND THE GUIDE OF HIS PEOPLE.

EXODUS XXXIII. 16.

For wherein shall it be known how that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

AFTER the disgraceful affair of the golden calf, which resulted in the death of three thousand of the men of Israel, Moses as usual interceded with God that he would forgive and would still love his people. God at length so far regarded his intercessions as to say that Moses might still lead the people to the land of promise, and added, "Mine angel shall go before thee." But to that man of God this was not enough, and he still interceded that *God himself*, and not a created angel, might guide him to the promised rest. From this last and inimitably eloquent plea we extract the text: "For wherein shall it be known how that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight! Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

Finding himself so far successful, Moses was not yet satisfied, but asked permission to see the divine glory. And God, having put him in the cleft of the rock, and covered him with his hand, made all his goodness pass before him and proclaimed himself gracious to whom he would be gracious, and merciful to whom he would show mercy. Here we might stay to remark, that the glory of God is his goodness. Moses asked the Lord to show him his glory, and God made his goodness to pass before him. We might remark again, that goodness never appears so inviting, as when exhibited in the shape of grace and mercy. And further, that God is a sovereign in these exhibitions of his glory. He will be gracious to whom he will, and will show mercy to whom he will. We might learn too from the context, that in our present state we cannot bear a full view of the divine glory. When we ask God to show us himself, we may well beseech him to first cover us with his hand, or hide us in the cleft of a rock. It is more

than probable that even in heaven we shall not be able to bear the full exhibitions of his nature ; but we shall see him in the Lord Jesus. In him there will be such a softening down of the burning glories of the Godhead that we may see him with open face. But we must proceed to a particular consideration of the text.

How would it be known to the nations bordering upon Israel that they had found grace in the sight of God, unless notwithstanding their sins he would still go before them, and conduct them to his rest. His presence would render them a distinct and separate people, and would mark them out as the Lord's peculiar inheritance. In what will now be said the text will be considered as applicable not merely to that people, but to the people of God in every age. The doctrine which I shall attempt to illustrate is this :

*The presence of God with his people distinguishes them from the world, and thus becomes the best possible evidence of their adoption.*

By the presence of God we are to understand the manifestations he makes to them of his glory, the views he gives them, and the correspondent affections of heart which he draws out toward himself, his government, and his kingdom. The real believer who has known the pleasure of these manifestations will ask for no further explanation. He has adopted it as his dialect in his closet, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and has felt the pleasure of saying afterward, Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than when their corn and their wine increased. There is no believer who is not acquainted to a greater or less extent with the joy that God's presence gives, who has not at times been alone, and found God in the place of retirement, and can understand us when we speak of the believer as being with God, and enjoying God. On this point then I shall not enlarge, but proceed to show how the presence of God operates to distinguish his people from the world, and how this distinctness is evidence of their adoption.

I. I am to show how the presence of God with his people operates to render them *distinct from all other people* ; " So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth " We easily see how all this was literally fulfilled in the case of Israel. While God led them through the desert by the pillar of cloud and of fire, and was present in the tabernacle and afterward in the temple to respond to all their petitions, to guide and light them in the way, to protect,

and feed, and cheer, and comfort them, we easily see that there could be no people like them. Egypt and Babylon, and Syria, and Philistia had no such guide and protector. No power, strong to save, and wise to guide, marched in the van of *their* multitude, and spread over them the wing of his protection and mercy. All their deliverances were by might and by power; but Israel had only to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, or when they went forward had only to follow the cloud that moved before them. Hence every foe was afraid of their coming, and every danger kept its distance till they had reached the place of their rest. Thus they were rendered a separate people, and the presence of their Lord was a wall of fire round about them, and the glory in the midst of them. And the Divine presence distinguishes his people now.

1. By *elevating* their views. It is the glory of man that he is an intellectual being. He was not born like the brute to be the mere slave of appetite, and at best the child of instinct. He can perceive, and think, and reason, can contemplate on the character and works of his Maker. But the apostasy threw him down from this elevation, and tended to make him a reptile as well as a rebel. It rendered him disaffected to the objects, that it was his elevation and his honor to contemplate. It excluded God from all his thoughts, and put in his place the creature he had made. Hence would you survey every thought of the ungodly, and trace every track of the mind, through its devious and degraded course, you would find it exhausting all its energies in low and debasing thought, thought whose highest objects are material, and whose highest flights do not transcend the starry heavens, and seldom rise so high. It holds more generally the tenor of its way, amid the appetites and cares and woes of a dying body. Hence its paramount concerns are, what shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clad, and how shall we obtain wealth, and honor, and influence? How shall I become the greatest among my fellows, and the leader among my equals? How shall I chase away want, and care, and fear of death? With thoughts like these, all low, and sordid, and debasing, the mind labors till the smiles of God invite it upward. Even when partially sanctified, if God hides his face, and there remains nothing to look upon, and nothing to contemplate but created objects, the heavenly mind of necessity must become sordid and terrene. The Christian forsaken, is but a worm or mole, and must feed on dust and ashes.

But the presence of God elevates the mind. It rises when he is seen, to higher and better thoughts, and finds and breathes a sublimer, purer atmosphere. The Christian has sometimes been afraid to live, lest he should lose the heavenly vision, and become again an alien and a slave. He has shunned the society of his dearest friends, as in a sense beneath his elevation, and incapable of sharing in his pleasures. He has viewed his Christian brethren as too darkened in their views and too sordid in their taste, to climb with him the Pisgah, where he surveys the fields of promise. Now this is the only employment where the mind can be said to be at home, and be furnished its legitimate occupancy. The man assumes in such an hour the attitude he held in Eden, when all the beauty that bloomed about him was viewed as but the mirror in which he saw distinctly his Creator :

“These are thy glorious works, parent of good ;  
Almighty ! this thy universal name :  
How glorious these, thyself how glorious then ;”

and is led to cry in the same elevated language,

“Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,  
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.”

Hence, only during these happy periods, does the *mind* find its native, sublime, and dignified employment.

2. The presence of God with his people gives the *heart* its noblest, happiest employment. Man is not merely qualified to think nobly, but to feel nobly. When his thoughts are properly employed, if the heart does not feel corresponding affection, more than half the man is still enslaved and miserable. True, it seldom, perhaps never, happens, that the man is thus divided, half a tenant of the upper world, and half of this. Men may think of God philosophically, and may find the subject of their thoughts elevating and pleasant. But if, while the mind converses with God, the heart is hard, and cold, and sordid, it cannot rise to any very great elevation. It may speculate about his attributes, and names, and operations, but in its sublimest flights, all that makes heaven glad is hid ; all that angels see, and admire, and adore, is covered with the veil of night. Hence said one of the best of men, “An undevout astronomer is mad.”

But when God is present with his people, he does not suffer them merely to stand and philosophize about the exteriors of his being. They look upon him without a veil, and are happy. The

eye affects the heart, and draws out into active and delightful exercise, its strongest and its best affections. God, who is seen, is loved supremely. All his attributes are lovely, and his name is lovely, and his law is lovely, and his kingdom lovely. He would have the view continue for ever, and if it might continue would be satisfied. He gains in such an hour his best ideas of heaven, and when the vision is fled, and he would think of heaven, he endeavors to recall what he felt in that hour when his faith was strong, and God was nigh. Indeed the Christian is furnished from these seasons with his best, his happiest contemplations, and often experiences the benefit when the period of his joy is gone by. They go to form his character, and to render him a distinct man, from the best of those who have never enjoyed such delightful seasons; which leads me to remark,

3. That the presence of God with his people tends to form and mould them to *uprightness of Christian deportment*. I know there is a rapturous glow of religious joy, which is mistaken for the Divine presence, but which bears no heavenly fruits. When the rapture ceases, it leaves the man proud, and vain, and selfish. He compasses himself about with sparks of his own kindling, and walks in the light of his own fire. He imagines himself the favorite of heaven, as he could not else have been admitted to see, as he terms it, the Divine glory.

Now, when the soul has been with God, the effects are precisely the opposite of all this. It renders the believer humble. We cannot see God, without discovering by contrast our own true character :

“The more thy glories lure my gaze,  
The humbler I shall lie;  
Thus while I sink, my joys shall rise  
Unmeasurably high.”

No apostle appears to have been admitted to more intimate views of God than Paul, yet none was humbler. Many of those expressions of lowliness, which have enriched the prayers of God's people in all ages of the Christian Church were uttered by him who had been caught up into the third heaven, and had seen things that were unutterable. He was ever after less than the least of all saints, was not meet to be called an apostle, and was heard to cry out, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” The same will always be the effect of seeing God. “I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear,

but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Ezekiel and John, when they saw God, fell on their faces. Hence a sight of God will not fail to render our deportment humble.

It will also produce deadness to the world. Uncover to our view the glories of a better world, and this must fade and lose its brightness. How mean and poor will appear the enjoyments and the interests of the present state, to one who has held, if but for an hour, uninterrupted communion with God. Nothing that is seen and temporal, can have any glory or any worth afterward, that can be deliberately compared with what was seen in God. Hence there will be a suppression of covetousness and envy, and of all the passions that grow out of them, and the deeds which these passions generate. Hence, when you meet with one whom nothing but gain will satisfy, who will cry after his gains, as one did when he missed his idols, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more," you may presume, without much fear of mistake, that he has never tasted of that joy of which we have spoken. He has seen no better things than those that are earthly and sensual, and they have become his supreme good. Moses would not wish to stay in the wilderness, after he had climbed Pisgah. Nor would Peter and John, after they had seen transfigured the Lord Jesus, have any wish to quit the place.

The presence of God generates a heavenly mind, makes every thing earthly look small and insignificant, and tends to render the man a pilgrim and a stranger. Hence a life of godliness, a course of conduct that has supreme reference to the life to come. The man becomes so changed, that the world takes knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. He cannot enter again into all the little cares and quarrels that previously engrossed his mind.

4. The presence of God inspires *pure and heavenly hopes*. There must sit a gloom upon the brow of impenitence, when there is any thought. The impenitent man who is happy and who covers his face with a smile, while there hangs over him the wrath of God, is an object of painful contemplation. Not that there is any virtue in despair, or any merit in gloom and melancholy; but how can he be happy who casts his eye along the track of life and sees awaiting him ever, the horrors of the death-bed, and all beyond is the blackness of darkness forever? And there can be but little hope of a better doom till God has smiled upon the soul. Then there are generated high and heavenly hopes. The mind argues thus, God would not give me these comforts merely to render me

miserable. He would not thus lift the veil that covers eternity, and show me himself and some of the glory that surrounds him, and then shut those glories up for ever from my view. As reasoned the wife of Manoah on his suggestion that because they had seen God they must die, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands: neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these."

Thus every believer will argue, when he has evidence that he has experienced true Christian joy, has seen the reconciled face of God. He will say within himself, God has not done all this in anger; it cannot be in his heart to thus render every earthly scene dull, and raise my hopes of what he will one day do for me, when he has no such kind intentions. Should a prince, who had power to choose his successor, but had no heir to whom it was expected he would bequeath the throne, call some beggar frequently into his palace and put on him the royal vestments and the crown, would he not gather the hope, and gather it legitimately, that the prince intended that one day he should wield a sceptre? Else why tantalize him with the investiture of the royal equipments? And if God never intends to bring his people to heaven, why give them these foretastes of his glory? Why lift up upon them the light of his countenance and put gladness into their hearts, such as cannot be created by the increase of corn and wine, when no favor is intended him beyond what earthly objects can produce? Thus the presence of God inspires hope; scatters the gloom that hangs over the mind; and casts upon the prospect the light of life. The good man becomes of course a cheerful man. He can pass through many a dark scene joyful and happy. He has songs in the night, and is thus made to differ from all others.

Thus the presence of God with his people, signalizes them by elevating their views, by furnishing the heart its noblest, happiest employment, by moving them to uprightness of Christian deportment, and by inspiring pure and heavenly hopes.

5. The presence of God with his people, distinguishes them by *enlightening and sanctifying their consciences*. There is probably no point in which God's people differ more from the world than in the superior sensibility of their consciences. I know we meet with numerous instances where there is a profession of godliness, but a total destitution of moral sensibility, but I know too that in no such case can there be the grace of God. He who does not aim to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward

man, manifests that he neither understands the law nor the gospel, nor has felt the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Nor can there be a doubt but the presence of God with his people tends, more than all other things, to put right this power of the soul. Sin has disordered its judgment, and unbelief keeps it disordered. But when God is nigh, and is looking into our inward parts, then conscience can be heard, and will speak, and her sentence will be according to truth. And when this happens *often*, there is found the habit of correct judgment. And conscience will carry her faithful news into the dark hour. We have seen the apostate, who really never did enjoy the presence of God, still very wretched, because he had come in contact with truth and had imperceptibly learned what is duty. And we have always seen the backslider miserable because once he did approach near to God, and when there had his conscience corrected by the law and the testimony. Hence he could never wander so far as to forget wholly what once he knew of truth and duty. It is true that as he wandered his conscience became less and less sensible, and would at length, but for the covenant faithfulness of God, have been seared as with a hot iron. With the apostate this often becomes the fact, though probably not always in the present life. But the believer will have a conscience more or less correct in proportion as he walks with God. You never knew the case when the believer had been spending the Sabbath in near communion with God, when he could spend the evening in a light and trifling manner. You never saw him come warm from his closet and wrong or backbite his neighbor. When you see him worldly, and forgetful of duty, proud, contentious, envious, or idle, you know assuredly that he has had no communion with God that day. When you see in him on any occasion a want of regard to duty, you infer infallibly, that he has been for some time without any visit between his Savior and his soul. Show me the man who has just quitted his labor to go alone and pray, because he could not wait the ordinary season of retirement, and that man will not speak wrongly, or deal unmercifully with his beast. Show me any two men who are contending, and I can predict with certainty that one of them at least is not thirsting for God, for the living God. There is a total and unchangeable dissonance between communion with God, and all iniquity. Bring up the conscience, as it is brought up in an hour of spiritual enjoyment, to a close contact, to a strict and rigorous comparison with the testimonies of the Lord, and its prompt and, if necessary, desperate fidelity will bear unequivocal witness to the

truth that God has, while it was near to him, stamped upon it his own impress. And it will often wear the image it has received, when the memory of that season of fellowship has almost fled.

II. That all this is *evidence of their adoption*. "Wherein shall it be known how that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

I use the word *adoption* without the wish to force this upon you as precisely the thought sustained in the text. If you please, substitute *repentance*. The idea is, how should it be known that the family of Jacob were God's peculiar people, his inheritance, but by their distinctness of character and conduct from all others. Perhaps adoption is a term as suitable as any other. Their distinctness of character becomes evidence of their adoption, by the peculiar characteristics of that distinction.

The Mohammedans are a distinct and peculiar people. They have a system of laws that bind no other people, and a form of ceremonies and a mode of propagating their faith such as no other people have adopted; but all this is no evidence that they are the people of God. And I might illustrate the same truth by other comparisons. Hence, if we find a people who are like no others, this, by itself, will prove nothing respecting their relationship to God.

But we mark in the people of God, as the surrounding nations did in the Israelites, a distinctness that is evidence of their adoption; it consists in their conformity to the will of God. The Jewish family had their laws from heaven. In all their movements they made inquiry of the Lord, who gave them immediate direction, and thus signalized them from any people who had ever crossed that desert, or had ever been known or heard of in that age or country. Men had carried their idols with them, and had repeated their sacrifices and their prayers to gods who could neither hear, nor speak, nor save. But no people, till Israel journeyed to the land of promise, had ever been led day and night by a pillar of cloud, and found immediate guardianship and protection whenever they were in straits and difficulties. But if God were so angry that he would not accompany Israel, their peculiarity would cease; the nations would see that they were not defended nor guided, and would fall upon them and make them an easy prey. God could only testify his love to them, and his care of them, by continuing his presence and his glory in the midst of them. This

Moses saw and felt, when he prayed, as in the text, "Wherein shall it be known how that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

So that peculiarity in the people of God, which the ungodly see, and which it is desirable they should see, in every age, consists in their conformity to the mind and will of God. They rectify their consciences and their lives by the Scriptures, practice the duties it enjoins, cultivate the temper, and form the habits, and speak the language it teaches. And no farther than this is the case, have they evidence to themselves, or can give evidence to others, that they are the people of God.

The men of the world have the Bible in their hands, but though they believe it to be the word of God, they feel themselves disinclined to model their character after its precepts. Hence, if they see about them a people who in this respect differ from them, who make it their chief concern to obey the precepts of the Lord, and form a character after the pattern given in that holy book, it is inferred from this peculiarity that they are the people of God.

They would not thus regard the Divine precepts, but from dutiful respect and affection to their author. Many duties are enjoined that are unpleasant, that require self-denial, that curb the appetites, and restrain the passions. Men are commanded to deny themselves, to take up their cross, to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, to return good for evil—but duties like these can only be pleasant where there is a spirit of obedience, where there is love. Hence, if any man distinguishes himself from the men of the world, by his obedience to the Divine precepts, they infer from this singularity of character, that he loves God, reveres his authority, and esteems his favor a high and distinguished blessing. They are entirely conscious that they feel no such regard to the authority of God, and make no such estimate of his friendship and his love; and very naturally infer, from the conduct of the dutiful Christian, that he has a different temper from that which they possess themselves. Thus the singularity of the believer, when it consists in his obedience to God—and there must be this obedience, or there can be no evidence of faith—becomes proof decisive to all about him that he loves God, and is a member of his family.

When men have practised singularities that God has not enjoined, and have thus calculated to do him honor they have but covered

themselves with shame. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "For he that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God, and approved of men." God has not specified how his children shall feed, or dress, or walk. He has appointed them no unmeaning ceremonies, by which he would have them designated. He has not required them to wear a breastplate, a cross, or a crescent. He has not enjoined a coat of sackcloth, nor a veil, nor a sad countenance, nor torn garments, nor lacerated limbs. By no such means may men become singular, and suppose that they are thus doing any part of duty. But in obeying the commandments of God, it is their duty to differ from all who are not obedient, and to differ in this respect as widely as possible. Would to God that no believer, from this time till the last day, would, in one single case, neglect a duty, or be guilty of a deed forbidden, to please or conform himself to the men of the world. If they please, let them pronounce us rigid. To be rigid in duty, should be our choice; it is the only way in which we can bless the world by our example, and certainly is giving the highest possible expression of our love to God.

While in this respect we are seen to be a distinct people, we not only give evidence that we love God, but that God loves us. It is well known that men are not by nature disposed to obey the Lord. They do not love himself nor his law, and their language is, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Such is known to be the native character of every man. Now, if from a race of beings who are thus hostile to their Maker and their duty, it is seen that God has chosen to himself a people, and made them willing in the day of his power, is giving them his law, which they cheerfully obey, it becomes manifest that God loves them, and has adopted them, and is sanctifying them, and will finally bring them to his kingdom. As they become more and more unlike those about them, they become more and more like God. He instamps upon them his own image. Christ is formed in them the hope of glory. Thus the singularity of God's people is evidence to the world of their adoption.

#### REMARKS.

1. We see *whence* we are to gather the hope that we are believers. We are to obtain that hope from the same source, in a measure, and in a great measure, from whence others are justified in entertaining a hope respecting us,—our unlikeness of character

and conduct from the character and conduct of the men of the world. It is true, that the people of God have *Christian feelings*, which of themselves is evidence that they are the children of God, "the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." But while all this is true, it is also true that our feelings need themselves to be tested, whether they are genuine Christian feelings. There are feelings that are mere enthusiasm, which yet engender a strong, but ill-grounded hope of eternal life. But we have in the subject before us one sure criterion of the genuineness of our feelings. If they are Christian feelings, they will lead to the formation of a character, and the exhibition of a conduct wholly distinct from the character and conduct of the men of the world. They will operate to render us humble, and watchful, and prayerful, and heavenly-minded. They will render us meek, and patient, and benevolent, and merciful.

We see in many professors of godliness, notwithstanding much that is considered piety, certain things which bring their piety into doubt, certain principles, which, notwithstanding their apparent zeal, casts a cloud upon their godliness, and conforms them to the men of the world. We have seen ambition, and pride, and vanity. There are certain men in every country, and in every age, who can never be edified but where they can be conspicuous, where they can be leaders. We can always anticipate their opinion of any plan, by observing where it will place *them*. We have seen envy operate to render those unhappy who profess to love the Lord Jesus, when others had more attention, and were more honored than themselves. We have even seen some of the noblest Christian enterprises defeated by the jealousies of, as we hope, God's people. We have seen, and have often seen, mingled, the hottest zeal, and the spirit of slander, the *warmest* prayers, and the *coldest* charity. Thus the spirit of the world has gone into a warm profession, has approached the very altar, and has cursed the sacrifice.

A religion that does not transform us into the image of Christ, should never be the basis of Christian hope. We may have changed our associates, and in a measure our employment, and still may wear essentially the same character as before. If we are unlike the world, we shall see the contrast as well as others. We shall have at hand every day the means of judging whether indeed "we are risen with Christ, and are seeking those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." And in the mean time, the world will take knowledge of us that

we have been with Jesus; and though they may cast out our names as evil, will yield us that highest honor, the honor of being in some measure like him. And we need not then fear but God will make us happy, our hope will be strong, and our Christian consolations many. God will graciously guide us by his counsel, and afterward receive us to glory.

2. Would believers be useful to those around them, it must be, not by becoming like them, but *unlike* them. In this way only can they give evidence that they have enjoyed communion with God, or that they are in the habit of holding fellowship with him. But it not unfrequently happens, whether from a desire to be useful, God knows, that Christians endeavor to become conformed to the maxims and the spirit of the world. They have been known to say, and perhaps they have believed, that by putting on the character and imitating the conduct as far as might be, of ungodly men, they could be the more useful. But has it so happened? When the believer has gone with them to the place of rendezvous, did he restrain them, or did they corrupt him? When he took the social cup, did he teach them to use it temperately, or they him to become intemperate? Did his presence there make them ashamed of sin, or did they soon render him ashamed of his Savior, his piety, and his prayers? Did he render their consciences so disturbed that they quit the place, or did they render his so callous that he gave them no molestation. Did he finally lead them to the sanctuary, or did they tempt him to lounge away his Sabbath upon his bed? Did they accompany him to the place of prayer, or did they bring him at length to vacate his own seat? Did their characters finally conform to his, or his to theirs? That passage then in the history of Paul has been perverted, in which he says he became all things to all men that he might gain some. It cannot mean that he endeavored to conform his character to the character of the ungodly that he might save them. It can mean nothing more than that he adapted his arguments to the people he would save. When he reasoned with a Jew, he would reason with him out of his own Scriptures, and when with the Athenians he would argue from the language of their own poets.

No, brethren, when we would do good to ungodly men, we must aim at as wide a contrast as possible between ourselves and them. If they are light we must be sober minded, if they are profane we must pray, if they curse we must bless, if they are worldly minded we must be heavenly minded. Thus every deed of ours is useful to them, and thus only when we differ from them exactly when

they are at issue with the law of God. Were this the fact with every professor of godliness, sin would not thus be justified by our example and every transgressor would feel himself reproved by our conduct. Their own consciences would then do their office and they would blush at their own impiety. We should then hedge up their path to perdition with thorns, and should render the way of transgressors hard. They would see our good works, and many of them, we hope, would be induced to glorify our heavenly Father. They would take knowledge of us that we had been with Jesus. They would see, that as in so many instances in which we differ from them they are wrong, they are probably wrong in every point of difference.

3. The subject shows us in what light we are to view those Christians and those ministers of religion who make it their great aim to break down all distinction in appearance between godliness and ungodliness. They look for no change, and wish for none in those who are admitted to their communion, and they have been heard to say that regeneration is all a dream. It often grieves them when they see awakenings, and they sneer at the alarms of such as have gained some view of their real condition, and have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. They would have the man who has begun to put his trust in the Lord, keep on him all that belonged to him as a man of the world, and be as vain, and gay, and sportive, and prayerless, as when he stood in the ranks of death. They have their motive in all this. They would hope for heaven themselves, while no change of heart and life has even rendered them dissimilar from the great mass of the ungodly, and they would have the real Christian act like them, that they may have the better ground to hope, that in the end it shall be well with them. But their souls are lost if believers act according to their wishes, as they are then confirmed in all their delusions.

4. The subject shows us that a *discriminating* gospel is the *only useful* gospel. If the truth is exhibited so indefinitely, that men never learn their own characters, they never will see the necessity of a *change* of character. Men must know what they are, and what God requires them to be, else there is no hope "that the gospel will prove to them a savor of life unto life." The whole design of the gospel ministry is to take a people from the world, and make them wholly *unlike* the mass from which they are taken, and train them up to that familiarity of character and conduct which God requires. Its first and *its last* lesson to believers must

be, "We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, that ye may show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." And when the gospel loves this peculiar feature, it loves all its worth. When it allows men of all character to hope for heaven, the praying and the prayless, the humble and proud; the world-loving and the heavenly-minded; the temperate and the dissipated; the attendant upon God's worship, and God's ordinances, and the Sabbath-breaker, the gospel then becomes as the Koran. It even becomes in such circumstances the savor of death unto death; seals in eternal slumber the eyes it should open, sears the conscience it should enlighten, and hardens the heart it should sanctify. It becomes a soft harmonious lullaby, under which men slumber more profoundly than if no accents fell upon the ear. It would be the policy of all who give any credit to the Divine testimony, to wish a gospel that disseminates, and cutting off every false hope, urges on the Christian to every affection and every deed, by which the man of God is commanded to distinguish himself from the mass of the ungodly around him. It should catch from the lips of the Lord Jesus that saying, "Be ye followers of me as dear children," and that other saying, "He that is perfect shall be as his Master."

5. We see the imperious duty of Christian Churches to render their enclosures sacred. A Church is of no use as a light to lighten a dark world, if that Church embodies the principles of the world, and imitates its examples. Let one profane man live unrepented and undisciplined in a Christian Church, and that Church as such cannot be said to bear testimony against profanity. Let there be one drunkard there, and they bear no testimony against intemperance. One adulterer, and they bear no testimony against fornication. One swindler, and they do not testify against dishonesty. One who deserts the communion and the sanctuary, and they nullify the very ordinances which are the seals of their fellowship. One who denies the doctrines of the gospel, and they virtually give up their creed and their covenant, the basis of their union. And then what is the use of a Christian Church, when it bears no testimony against sin, and when it has no character distinct from the world! Why enclose a few of the inhabitants of the world with creeds, and covenants, and sacraments, if no reason can be offered why *they*, rather than *others*, should be embraced within these enclosures!

But would any Church of Christ render itself useful, its course is plain. We must purge *ourselves*, and watch and purge our

brethren, till our character differs, and we are separated from all the people who are upon the face of the earth. Then and not till then will our light shine before men, "that they seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in heaven." We are not to forget what we have covenanted. We have engaged to come out from the world and be separate; to deny ourselves all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in the present evil world. We have vowed that we would follow the Lord wholly; that we would take up our cross and follow Jesus; that we would crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, and being risen with Christ, would seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. And to faithfully perform these vows, both as individuals and as a Church, is to claim our constant vigilance, and should employ our daily prayers. May the Lord continue his presence with you, and thus distinguish you from all people. and make it known that you have found grace in his sight.

## SERMON LIII.

### THE GOSPEL RECLUSE.

PSALM LV. 6.

Oh that I had wings like a dove ! for then would I fly away and be at rest.

WHEN a sentiment like this originates in spleen, in disappointed ambition, in the reluctant subjugation of a proud mind, it is wholly the result of depravity, and is unlovely. One may be sick of the world because the world is sick of him, and may wish to retire from its noise because he cannot enjoy more of its confidence, its honors, and its wealth. He sees in himself a merit that others do not discern, a worth and a greatness, where others behold only pride and vanity. Hence generally a charge of ingratitude, a want of discernment, knavery and villany, all because he has not the place he has *assigned himself*, a seat higher than others are willing he should occupy.

Now a spirit like this deserves only contempt, not sympathy. It is the sorrow of the world that worketh death. If the man has no humility it would seem he might have discernment enough to put himself in his proper place.

Now there was nothing of all this in the mind of David, when he uttered the sentiment of the text. He was sick of sin, and tired of witnessing the conduct of wicked men, and would absent himself from the busy scenes of life if he might, because he longed to quit his contact with moral pollution. He was tired of violence, oppression and wrath, of scandal and strife, and deceit and guile, and hypoerisy. The comforts of social life were, for the time being, overbalanced by the miseries it produced, and he would quit the one if he might fly from the other.

To distinguish nicely between these sensations and those which are the result of mere dejection, is of great practical importance. To wish an asylum from moral pollution, and shut our eyes upon wrong, is a gracious affection ; but to be discontented with our lot, and vexed with the world because it will not love and honor us, is but the paroxysm of pride, and vanity, and ambition. And if the two exercises are closely examined they will not be found to

resemble each other very minutely. He who would retire from the world because of its moral pollution, and the consequent abridgment of its comforts, is still active in making it better. He weeps over its miseries, and prays earnestly to heaven for that sanctifying influence that can heal the plagues which afflict it. He would by no means retire from the world, if he can do anything to make it better. He would not quit the post of duty, nor spend all his energies in complaints and frowns and despondencies. He would mingle with the world just enough to apply to its plagues, every remedy in his power, for its comfort and its cure. While the man of mere discontent cares not, if he can be happy himself, if every woe he witnesses should prove incurable. He wishes only a rest for his own spirit. If the world would only honor him, and love him, it might remain as miserable as sin can make it, and not a tear would drop from his eye.

I. It will be my object in what follows *to notice some of the things that afflict the good man and contribute to render him sick of the world.* "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." If he be a man of enlarged mind, he casts his eye over the world, and surveys at one view the whole surface of its desolations. It is a world that God built for the advancement of his glory. There are scattered over it wondrous monuments of his wisdom and his power. It rolls with other worlds, which have not like this become disobedient, and like them is lighted and warmed and moved by the hand of God. But sin has rendered it a vast wilderness. On its surface it wears marks of the curse, which we cannot believe could be traced on other planets. Much of it is a stormy ocean, and much of the residue an uncomely and fruitless wilderness, from which heaven withholds its showers, or has given it up to be the prey of darkness and frost, and storms; where roam the beast of prey, and where lurk the deadly reptile, raging with hunger and armed with death.

But all this, dreary as is the prospect which it presents to one who would have God honored in all his works, is nothing compared with the moral desolations which are seen at the same glance. The *intelligent* population of this world has become apostate, and has covered it with a deformity more disgusting than its oceans, its storms, its deserts, or its beasts of prey. Three-fourths of its population have made no effort to become acquainted with their Creator, will not even use the light that shines around them, and worship, instead of God, a beast or a block. They know not that

any part of them is immortal, and make no provision but for the life that now is. Thus the mind is lost, and the vast tracts of idolatry, as to any praise that God receives, might as well have been the exclusive territory of the ape and the owl. Then we should have had before us a less afflicting view. But the heathen are *depraved* and *miserable* and yet *immortal*. Intelligence, when it becomes alienated from its author, proves an engine of misery. Beasts of prey cannot be as wretched as men. Hence the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. The heathen delight in devouring each other. Their wars are perpetual, and bloody and desperate. Their forms of religion are about as cruel as their wars. Their human sacrifices outdo in frequency and horror our utmost corruptions. Prisoners of war are offered to their infernal deities or devoured as delicious morsels. Females are *en masse* a band of slaves, children are destroyed at pleasure, and the sick exposed to perish by their nearest friends. Thus heathen lands, except when there is some special counteracting influence, can only have at best a sparse, and cruel, and miserable population. But to the man of faith this is not all. The heathen have souls that must live for ever, and enough of God can be known from his works, to render them without excuse for not loving and serving him. Hence we shall see them in the judgment, and shall see every final idolater condemned. Wretched then as they are in this life, there are more consummate miseries for them in the life to come. For the invisible things of God from the creation are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Hence when the good man, surveying the scenery about him, casts his eye to the limit of his landscape, how gloomy must be his contemplations. He sees six hundred millions of the population of the globe, immortal like himself, and like himself pressing on to the judgment, but ignorant of the way of salvation, and destined by the plainest testimony of Scripture to persist in their forgetfulness of God, and, on their way to ruin, employing their intelligence to render each other as miserable as possible. How gloomy to the good man is such a prospect! How can he fail to recognise, in the millions of the miserable, his brethren and his kindred, and how can he suppress the wish that he could quit a world so disloyal and reprobate? He will be doing all he can to lessen the woe he laments, but when all he can do is done, there will remain so much misery as to make him sigh for a better world; and he will

involuntarily utter the language of the text, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest."

I have embraced among the heathen the followers of Mahomet. We cannot contemplate those sections of the earth, overrun by the men of that religion, with emotions any less gloomy than those with which we survey the heathen world. Their character is so universally savage and their religion so bloody, as to even place them among the most forbidding of the human race. All Mahomedan countries are the seat of war, robbery, assassination, slavery, and crime of every hue. They constitute one broad empire of ignorance, iniquity, and death, where reigns the prince of darkness in undisturbed and appalling sovereignty. Every man holds his life by a very frail tenure, from the monarch to the menial; every mind is dark, every heart totally polluted, every conscience misinformed. Light is put for darkness and darkness for light. Their hope is a lie, and the heaven they expect a paradise of polluted, sensual, and bestly enjoyment. Hence no territory is surveyed with more disgusting and horrid sensations.

But when the good man limits his view to the fields of Christendom, still is there much in his prospect to fill his soul with pain, and make him sigh for a lovelier world. There are parts of Christendom where religion has not produced the blessedness it might. Their religion is concise, and dark, and dubious. It fetters the intellect, the conscience, and the affections, clouds the objects of Christian attachment, and casts a horrid confusion and uncertainty upon every object of faith. Upon all Catholic countries it cannot be denied, that there shines merely the twilight of revelation. God committed to them his word, but they have so corrupted its light, that they have become afraid of the sacred book, and have committed it to the flames. Hence many districts of Christendom are about as dark as pagan lands, and can be said to have only the appendages of the gospel; and their population, instead of being guided to heaven, are lost and bewildered amid the mazes of an awful and complicated superstition. From these darker shades religion emerges, till in a few small districts she is seen to enjoy her freedom and her beauty. Thus Christendom itself presents a dreary aspect, and is lighted rather by a taper than by the Sun of Righteousness.

Hence much of this sacred territory is an almost continued scene of quarrel and of blood. The badge of authority is the sword, and men are made decent and subordinate by the fear of death, rather than by the laws of the Lord Jesus. An armed force

protects the king, and gives efficiency to the laws and the magistrate. Nations professedly Christian can draw the sword upon one another, and either army, as God shall give them the victory, return to offer praise in his sanctuary. Could the heathen know all this, how could they be persuaded to believe our religion from heaven? What, *the Lamb of God*, the author of a religion quarrelsome, and bloody, and pitiless.

Nor can even this be said to be Christendom's foulest stain. There comes a curse from Africa upon all her fields, for having carried her sons into bondage, for having bred war in her bosom, for having crimsoned the sea with the blood of her children, torn from their parents, and borne like beasts to the market, to die by plague or famine, or what is sometimes considered worse than death, to bleed under the lash of a task-master till sufferings and toil consume them. If a few sections of Christendom have begun to wipe off this blot, it still is seen to adhere, like leprosy, and cries to heaven for judgments. God will avenge a deed that has begotten so much pain, that has spread so wide, and has so long protracted its cruelties and its misery.

But all this must distress the good man. Must he trace the very territory to which there is due from heaven a storm of wrath? Must he walk the streets, and sleep on the very ground where a righteous God will yet avenge iniquity? How can he fail to enter into the views of the Psalmist, and long for the wings of a dove, that he may hasten his escape from the windy storm and tempest.

But the good man need not look so far to see cause of pain. He may limit his view to his own country, and still wish an asylum from the pollution and the misery that lie spread out before him. The men at the head of our government, it is to be feared, are very few of them men of piety. We hear of their splendid balls and parties, but when did they once meet to unite their prayers in behalf of their country? A few of them may be at the place of worship on the Sabbath, but how many spend that day in mirth and festivity? What is there about the hall of legislation to remind a stranger that its inmates are the representatives of a Christian people, a people in the midst of whom God is their glory, and about whom he is a wall of fire? If there should come down upon us a storm from heaven, who would turn his eye to the general government, as the place whence there would ascend the prayers that might avert the calamity? When men are selected to fill the highest offices in the land, who does not know that reli-

gion constitutes no part of their qualification? not to say what I fear is true, that religion would rather tarnish than adorn the candidate. We remember the occasion when it was long a question, and at length determined on the side opposite to justice and mercy, whether we would extend the privilege of holding men in bondage, to territories where the curse had not gone. And yet we are a Christian nation, and profess that our territory makes every man free, and gives all equal rights. But why might we break the bond that bound us to our mother country, and still hold our fellow men bond-slaves for life? Their right in us was the right of power—the right that the sword gives, not heaven. And what other right has any in his slave?

I remember, too, that the laws of the United States justify a disregard of the Sabbath. The mail, with all its noise and retinue, may disturb on its route every house of worship, and carry its noisy and profane, and God-provoking influence into every village, and that by the direct authority of the general government, and in contempt of hundreds of thousands of petitioners who have preferred their prayers till they have no hope of success.

Thus from the very spot whence should issue none but the laws of piety and righteousness, where should be congregated the men who would rule in the fear of the Lord, whence there should go out a commanding Christian influence, to operate through all the parts of an extensive and complicated legislation,—from that very spot there flow out streams of moral putrefaction, to contaminate, as far as heaven will permit, the whole body politic.

Let the same principles that are supreme at the seat of government, go to regulate the social intercourse of all our cities and villages, and it is impossible not to see that we should be a miserable people. If one chances to violate the laws of honor, or is conceived to have erred, he can wipe away the reproach only by the exposure of his life. He must stand a mark for the fatal ball, or be dubbed a coward, and lose his character. Thus when the blackest crimes should receive their *punishment*, they find a pattern; where should prevail *wisdom*, originates the most consummate folly; where should be generated the *laws of kindness*, there issues a permit to any man, who will do it honorably, to spill the blood of his neighbor and his friend. Thus the heart faints and sickens when it should receive its strongest and kindest impulse, and the good man turns from the seat of the general government, as from a scene too disgusting to contemplate. Its palaces are splendid, its equipage costly, its fare sumptuous, its assemblies

large, and gay, and brilliant, but God is scarcely acknowledged there, and there reigns throughout all its circles, a lightness and a vanity that is the very antipode of heaven. And when we leave the spot, and look upon the servants of the general government in their varied dispersions, our disgust is very little diminished. We cannot say that integrity, or piety, or wisdom, has received very largely the honors or the emoluments of the general government. There has not prevailed a disposition to employ those servants, that we should employ to administer upon our estates, or that we would wish might be the guardians of our children. There have been, I know, some good men in the general government, and they have employed some servants and ministers, who have acted in the fear of God, but the mass, I believe, it will not be denied, have not been governed by the fear of God. And still they are the men of our choice, and this is the most painful thought, for the sin lies at our own door. We rise from our knees, and hand in our suffrage for the man who never prays, and would consider himself insulted, if one should urge him to the duty. Thus the good man is disgusted, and wishes to soar away and be at rest.

And as we pass down through all the subordinate branches of civil government, our prospect is not very greatly cheered. Enmity to God and his kingdom is not considered a disqualification for managing the best interests of civil society. The men that hate the Law of God, profane his name, and will not keep his sabbaths, nor honor his sanctuary ;—it is confessed we do not consider the interests of a Christian community very safe in their hands.

Is it asked whether we would make piety the test of office, we answer, no. But we would have other qualifications. We would have every man in office fear an oath, and not deliberately swear to do a duty which he has already resolved not to do. We would have him a man whose conscience is enlightened by the testimony of God. We would, that he regarded the Sabbath, and would not converse profanely, would be the friend of morality, and science, and religion. We would not have him intemperate, nor impure, nor infidel. We would have him respect the name of God, and the people of God, and all the institutions of religion. Less than this in the men of office ought not to satisfy a Christian community.

But as the good man surveys the civil government, how little of all this does he sometimes discover in the men of office. They are often the *patterns* of vice, and often more yet its *patrons*. They will swear themselves into office, by pledges they never

afterward think of, and which, at the time of the oath, they mean not to redeem. They are often found the enemies of the Church, and of the truth, of the Sabbath, of the sanctuary, of revivals of religion, and the whole code of Christian morality. Hence how long have good men petitioned and prayed, till they have quit praying, that such amendments may be made in the laws that guard the morals of the community, as to secure their execution, but all to no purpose.

Now, in view of all this, how can the good man fail to wish that he may live in a better community, and be governed by men that have a conscience, and act in the fear of God? How can it please him to commit the temporal, and, to a great extent, the immortal interests of his offspring, to the rule and the authority of men who have no impressive sense of their future accountability. A lodge in the desert, where nature only can be seen to rule by the fixed laws of God, and vice is banished, offers him an asylum that has many charms above the partial misrule of unsanctified authority.

When the good man takes a view of the churches, he has still occasion for pain. He sees often a lackness of discipline, that tarnishes their beauty, weakens their strength, mars their fellowship, and greatly retards their usefulness. Men of ungodly life are suffered to eat the children's bread; men of profaneness, in temperance, and debauchery; men who neither pray nor repent, but cast their whole weight into the scale of error and irreligion. So slow is the work of discipline in many churches, that men are constantly dying in their communion, who have been notoriously ungodly for years; and of whose piety there never was indulged a hope. There are among the professed people of God contentions, backbiting, envy, and wrath. They sit down together at the table of the Lord, and covenant to love one another, but their vow does not bind them. They can exhibit toward each other every unkindness witnessed among the men of the world. Now who would not desire a better world than this? Who, that dares to be alone, would not covet a lodge in some vast wilderness, that his eyes might not see a world which the Lord Jesus built for himself, so polluted and destroyed? Who would not wish to belong to a better community, to be conversant with wiser men, to enjoy a more kind and friendly society, and have fellowship with a more pure and godly brotherhood? "O that I had wings, like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest."

We have noticed what occasion the good man has to utter the

sentiment of the text, when he takes some of the more extended views of the objects around him. And we shall find that his disgust continues when he narrows the rule down to himself.

If he casts his eye over the town in which he dwells, he can seldom fail to see what must disgust a heavenly mind. The varied shades of political and religious sentiment, the party feelings, the jarring interests, the prejudices and the quarrels, are calculated to render one very sick of human life, and if they beget not the wish to quit the world, will render endeared the scenes of retirement and meditation. There is too little seen that deserves the name of friendship. Between very few is there a compact so firm, that the most trifling affair of interest will not sunder the fellowship, and create envy and strife. Every public measure, though the most useful and necessary, must have some to oppose it, by which it becomes almost impossible to promote our own convenience and comfort. How often, in many parts of Christendom, has the location of the sanctuary, or a school-house, or public road, riven and ruined a pleasant and flourishing town. Men have made sacrifices to gratify their will, which if made for the general good, would have cradled controversy to sleep in an hour.

Why must there be men in every little circle, who can be pleased with nothing that pleases others? Why must we calculate that every good measure will make some one angry? This might easily be made a happy world, if a very few would calculate to let the general voice govern them. And how does it happen that men do not suspect themselves in the wrong, when they are for ever on the list of opposition, when their attitude is that of hostility whenever they act with other men in public measures? The little passions of childhood are carried with some men into their maturer years. They make themselves offended at some measure, and can then no more be reasoned with than you could reason with a tempest. To try to please them but increases the spleen that controls them. "I have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, I have mourned unto you but ye have not lamented."

Thus all measures that regard the general good are more or less defeated, except when public good yokes itself with private interest, while a spirit of condescension would render this a pleasant world. Now the good man, if his mind be at all enlarged, must turn from all this with disgust, and must sometimes feel ashamed that he belongs to a community so degenerate.

If he casts his eye into the domestic circle, where it would seem we might look for happiness if any where in this desert,

there is there but little to cheer his soul. The marriage contract is so often not the result of affection, but convenience, that harmony in many cases is not to be expected. The husband and the wife have distinct interests, and a distinct character, and hope, and purpose. The kind attentions that nourish domestic joy, are put off with the marriage robes, and the result is not that sweetness which love produces, but a scene of jarring and noise, or at best, the attitude of mere forbearance. Hence, as we should expect, there goes down through the children the same spirit of selfishness and discord that reigns in the hearts of the parents. Thus where should be cradled every virtue, where should be nursed the kindest endearments, where our country and the Church of Christ should rest their hopes; there is sometimes found the embryo of all public litigation, and strife, and confusion. The seeds thus sown in the domestic circle are nourished in the schools, and thus are early matured for operation, all the principles of depravity that go to wither all that is flourishing, and deform all that is fair, and blight all that is promising in this ill-fated world.

When the good man contemplates the Christian character, not as presented in the word of God, but as exhibited in actual life around him, he still has before him a picture that fills him with disgust and with tears. The very men who are bound for heaven have carried into their religion so much of worldly maxim and of human passion, as to put a blast upon the only fertile spots that stud this desert world.

One believer has about him all that is gay, and vain, and trifling, in the higher circles of the ungodly, with scarcely difference enough to beget the hope that he is born of God. He breathes an atmosphere where the humble, and retiring, and self-condemning spirit of the gospel is very much a stranger. Another has carried into his religion the coarseness and the vulgarity that better comports with sin than piety; and would hardly seem consistent with the benevolence of the gospel. Another would seem too dull and stupid to have partaken of that Spirit which, as a well of water, is represented as springing up into everlasting life. One has rather the rashness of a heaven-daring sinner, than the gentleness of the lamb; while another has carried his maxims of prudence to a pitch that forbids the discharge of any duty which the most ungodly do not approve. We see one who is too willing to shrink from every public duty, who will hide in a corner, that he may not be called upon to pray; while another has no enjoyment but as he may go forward and be conspicuous in every measure

of piety; has more enjoyment when he may teach than when he must learn, when he may lead in the prayer than when he must join with his brother. One believer so neglects his worldly concerns, as to come under the censure of not providing for his own, and especially those of his own house, while another suffers himself to be pressed with the cares of the life that now is, to an extent that seems hardly to comport with the exercise of a heavenly mind. When once we meet with the Christian character in all its native loveliness, meek, humble, watchful, prayerful, heavenly-minded, prompt in the discharge of every duty, but willing to be unnoticed and unknown; diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord—when once we see it thus clothed in all the attributes which it must wear in heaven, we meet with it often so deformed as hardly to recognise in its countenance the features of the heavenly family. With these deformed beings the believer must mingle; must come into close and friendly alliance; to them must be bound in everlasting covenant; and from their number, deformed as they are, must select the best associates he shall find till he reaches heaven. Hence, why be surprised if the wish escapes him that he could fly away and be at rest, could go and mingle with the general assembly of the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and enjoy there the society of those who have put off the body of sin and death, and are clothed upon with their house from heaven.

But when all this is said, there still is no object in all this polluted, and disloyal, and miserable world, with which he is so much disgusted as with himself. When the circle of his contemplations is contracted till it embraces nothing but his own deformed, and polluted, and wretched heart, then does he put forth his most ardent wish, and prefer his warmest prayer, that he may be permitted to fly away and be at rest. There is no object that disgusts him so much, for in no other case is pollution so nigh him, or so distinctly seen. It often seems to him impossible that his heart should have been renewed, and he be still so depraved. He is conscious of putting forth at times every depraved and base affection. He finds himself giving to created objects the regard due only to God. Every comfort Jehovah gives is liable to be erected into an idol, and loved with supreme attachment. He often finds himself disinclined to obey the law of God, esteeming his commandments grievous. He receives without due gratitude the bounties of heaven, or blesses only his own wisdom and prudence for the benefits which God bestows. When he has sinned, he

finds his heart hard and impenitent. If he has any glimpse of God, or of heaven, and attempts to rise to some tone of higher devotion, he finds his wretched heart attracted back by some object of sense, and coveting his ease and his indulgences. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them! To obey his Redeemer requires of him a self-denial and an enterprise for which his heart is not prepared. He knows he has fallen, but cannot put forth the effort necessary for his recovery; and still does not hope to be happy till that effort is put forth.

And if the Spirit of God revives him, and this poor world is, for a time, blotted out; and he covenants anew with God, to walk in his ways, and do his commandments; still, in the midst of such mercy, compared with which, no blessing ever enjoyed on earth is equal, he sees some object that lures him away from God, and he follows it, and is plunged again into darkness and distress. In no other case, perhaps, does he commit a greater crime, or do himself a greater injury, or imitate more closely the deeds done in heaven by the fallen spirits. When God lets down so much of heaven into the soul, and permits his people for a week or a month to gaze upon his glories, it is no light thing to provoke him to eclipse the view. But the child of God who has ever been happy with the light of God's countenance, and is not happy now, must lie down under the conviction that he has done this very deed. God will never forsake us, till we forsake him. If he has caused his glory to shine upon us, he will never darken the view till our attention is divided between him and some created object with which he abhors to have his glory associated. The child of God thus laments when the vision is gone, in the pensive language of the poet:

“Trifles of nature or of art;  
With fair deceitful charms,  
Intrude into my thoughtless heart,  
And thrust me from thy arms.

When I repent and vex my soul,  
That I should leave thee so;  
Where will those wild affections roll,  
That let a Savior go?”

In every duty to God he finds himself coming short of his glory. He is ashamed of his prayers, his songs, and his sacrifices. Selfishness, pride, or ambition *mingle* at last with all his better mo-

tives, and mar every duty. "The very songs I frame," says the same poet, "are faithless to thy cause,

" And steal the honors of thy name,  
To build my own applause."

If God makes him useful he claims some of the honor, and if he does any noble deed he expects his reward. He finds himself loving too ardently the things of time and sense, has too many cares and too many ties that are earthly and sensual, that assimilate him to the beasts that perish. He could not name, should he attempt it, the Christian grace that thrives in his heart as he could wish. He lacks the humility that becomes a sinner, the patience and the meekness that befit a daily offender, the repentance that God demands, and the faith which should purify his heart and work by love. His love to God does not measure itself by the attributes to be adored, and his esteem of the Lord Jesus Christ falls infinitely below his character. His benevolence is partial and limited, and shamefully inoperative. His regard to the gospel is measured and cold compared with the interest he has in it, and the faith he has professed, and the hopes he founds on it, and the beauty he thinks he has once seen in it. When he casts his eye upon an impenitent world he views their pollutions with too little disgust, their danger with too small emotions, and their approaching destiny with too little alarm. He carries haste to his closet, and formality to the family altar, and dulness to the sanctuary, and coldness to the communion, and unbelief to the Bible, and guilt, and shame, and apprehension to the chamber of meditation. The amount of the whole is a conscientiousness that his attention and his affections are divided between God and the world, between earth and heaven. In no one point does he come up to his own standard. His language is unclean! unclean! O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death!

And when the believer contemplates the dulness and darkness of his own mind he is far enough from being pleased with himself. His dulness often renders it a task to think, and his darkness renders every view he takes confused and indefinite. And he knows that the whole is his crime. He could easily have been more intellectual in his character, had he not debased himself by his sins, had he not limited his powers of thought and reflection by too exclusive an attachment, and attention too exclusive to small and mean objects. Hence when he would contemplate the character of God it is not easy and natural for him to soar away and dwell

on the Divine attributes. Some little object, awakening a little thought, and demanding no effort, calls him back to the creation, and God passes out of his mind. As soon might the domestic fowl join himself to the bird of passage, and with untired wing light in some foreign territory, as his mind sustain any prolonged interview with the great objects of faith. Hence he seldom mounts and quickly tires. The meditation necessary for the application of truth to his own sanctification is often a weariness. His mind has been weakened by its mean employment, by its neglect of thought, for the enterprise to which piety would summon it, till almost does it need regenerating as does the heart. It often seems to him impossible that with such a mind as his he can ever be the associate of angels, and think without tiring as they do. The great truths of revelation are above him, and the bible a dark book to him. Thus he is about as much dissatisfied with his intellect as with his heart. He wonders at the clemency of God, that it should ever have entered into his heart to fit him for heaven, and that he does not abandon his purpose of making him an angel. When he believes it possible that he can ever be made capable of sublime conceptions, and soar away to hold untiring communion with his Maker, then he utters himself in the language of the text, "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest."

Hence his very great dissatisfaction with his own conduct. His settled purpose is to walk uprightly. He would do good, but evil is present with him. He finds a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. Hence his retrospect of life is uniformly forbidding. Duty has been *neglected*; and when *done*, done in so poor a manner as not to deserve the name. And every little section of life has been polluted with something that should have been left undone; some wrong affection that should not have been exercised, some wrong passion that should not have been indulged, some wrong corruptions that should not have been conceived, some wrong hopes that should not have been embraced, some wrong apprehensions that should have been spurned, and many wrong deeds that should never have been committed. Hence find we the bitterest foe the Christian has, and let him exhaust his eloquence in berating him, and belittling him, and belying him, and when all is done, although he will be accused wrongfully, he will not have been rendered more degraded than he is degraded in his own view, nor be exhibited as more unworthy of heaven than he esteems himself.

Hence the good man feels that he has all the character he de-

serves. He has done so much to insult and abuse infinite purity, has stained his moral reputation with affections and deeds so at war with truth, and holiness, and righteousness, that he wonders if it be possible that heaven should ever respect him, and angels honor him, and the redeemed associate with him. Thus the believer is more disgusted with himself than with any other object in all the creation of God, would quit if he might his contact with moral corruption, would fly away and be at rest.

Finally, it is to the believer a source of grief and pain that he must meet with opposition in every effort he makes to meliorate the condition of his fellow-men. He sees the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain to be delivered from its bondage to sin, and yet unwilling to cast off its yoke.

Men are ignorant, and yet unwilling to be enlightened. What they know not is precisely that which they wish not to know, and *their reluctance to learn*, not the want of light, is the grand cause of their ignorance. As to God, they wish not to retain him in their knowledge. They are content not to be acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ, because they will not have him to reign over them. The distinguishing doctrines of the Bible only distress them, exhibit their depravity, their *dependence*, their *danger*, their *demerit*, and their *destiny*. Hence they are willingly ignorant. They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. They hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. Hence every effort of the good man to remove the thing that pains him, to cure the wound that rankles before his eye and affects his heart, meets a repulse that distresses him. His kindness is nicknamed impudence, his tears are pronounced hypocritical, and his motives selfish. He must go into the wilderness and be a hermit, or see a whole world covered with the shadow of death and not weep for it, or contend for the truth, and carry in one hand the sword for his own defence, and with the other build the ruins of Jerusalem.

Men have a misguided conscience, and wish not to be put right. While they may act *conscientiously*, they feel secure, and hope to be forgiven if they err. The kings of Judah and Israel would have the prophets prophecy smooth things, true or false. Men would *hope* that their course leads to *heaven*, if it terminate in perdition; and you offend them if you rudely tear this hope from them. So, many species of game, when pressed in the chase, are said to hide their heads in the snow, and dream not but that they are quite secure from the huntsman till the fatal moment when they are

taken and slain. Nothing is more offensive to the ungodly than your efforts to convince them that they are unsafe. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." But if they may approach that death, and not see it, if you will suffer them to dream on, and not awake them to the reality that it is a dream, they will be your debtors. But tell them of another God than him they worship, of another Savior than him they trust in, another gospel than that which they have believed, another hope than that which they have leaned upon, and another heaven than that which they have expected, and be *your* creed the truth, or *theirs*, they are outraged. "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep: so shall poverty come as one that travelth, and thy want as an armed man." They wish not to have their old foundations torn up. They wish not to begin in their advanced years to learn another gospel. They are quite satisfied that they are on the way to heaven—*yours* may conduct to the same destiny, but they cannot now retreat. "We have loved idols, and after them we will go." "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Thus the good man, in attempting to cure the plagues around him, rolls up a steep acclivity a ponderous rock, that but rolls upon him, and consumes his strength and his spirits.

Men have polluted hearts, but they are unwilling either to know that they are polluted, or to have them cleansed. They are whole, and see no need of a physician, and know not that they are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. Tell them of a fountain where they can wash and be clean, and they will either deny their need of cleansing, or, like him of Syria, they will inquire, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? why may I not wash in them and be clean?" Or they will use the ancient proverb of Nazareth, "Physician, heal thyself." So the maniac believes himself the only man in the community who can reason, and supposes himself surrounded with madmen. Men do not thank you for discovering their unrighteousness, and consider your pity and your tears but weakness. It but mortifies them that you should presume to doubt but that their mountain stands strong. "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." O, how can the good man not weep, to see every plague that preys upon an ungodly world incurable, and find all his kindness suspected, and all his benevolence repulsed? The prophet uttered

himself like a man of God, when he said, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

Men have polluted their morals, and are not willing to know that the course they pursue renders them unhappy. Their wars, their litigations, their backbitings, their pride, and envy, and ambition, and avarice, are but so many instruments of mutual slaughter. If men were content to let others have the life God has given them, and the wealth they have accumulated, and the influence they have acquired, how happy this world might be. Then every man would hold the place that his talents give him, and that his Maker gives him, and each would scatter blessings on all around him. Moses might not reprove his brethren, when they strove together. The one that did the wrong repulsed his kindness, and he had to flee for his life. You cannot commit a greater sin, in the world's esteem, than to persuade men that they would do well to love one another. And if you urge them to be kind to themselves, you have no thanks. Tell the profane man that his vulgarity hurts his reputation; tell the drunkard that his cups will devour him; tell the adulterer that his steps take hold on hell, and lead down to the chambers of death; tell the Sabbath-breaker that God will not have his institutions trifled with, and you but utter your charms in the ear of the deaf adder. Tell men to save themselves from this untoward generation, and will they *rave* or thank *you*? Ah, the experiment has been too often made to allow a doubt to remain, but that the man of God will be abused *so* much the more, by *how* much he is faithful in attempting to cure the plagues he laments. Hence, why wonder that the wish often escapes him, "O, that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away, and be at rest."

#### REMARKS.

1. While such may lawfully be the sentiments of the good man, we may not suppose him at liberty to *quit* the post of duty. If the world, or if his country, or commonwealth, or the Church, does not please him, it is his duty to make every possible effort to render them better. It may seem impossible that we should do any good when so much needs to be done. But if every man will exert the powers God has given him, he will be accepted. And moreover, if every good man will render one little spot verdant, the gloomy picture we have contemplated will soon become brighter. Let

every child of God be what he should be, and one of the gloomiest shades in the picture is gone.

2. The subject is calculated to *endear* the scenes of the *closet*. If all without is dark, then have we the more occasion to be alone with God. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." In the closet there is light, be every other part of this world shrouded in impenetrable darkness.

3. The subject is calculated to turn our eyes to *heaven*. There is a retreat provided for the good man, where storms and darkness never come. When a few more dark days have hurried over him, he will be furnished with angels' wings, and will soar away to a place of rest.

Hence let there be no *impatience*. Heaven will be the more welcome, and the more pleasant for what we here endure.

## SERMON LIV.

### THE EVENING OF LIFE SORROWFUL.

PSALM XC. 10.

The days of our years are three score years and ten : and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow : for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

To those who do not credit the history of the Apostacy, and who still believe that there is one God, and that he is good, there must be something mysterious in the history of man. Why his days so few, and why those few so filled with sorrow ? Why so protracted, and helpless, and feeble, the years of his childhood ? Why his members so slow to do their office, and why the faculties of the mind so tardy in their development ?

Why do so few arrive at any thing like what may be termed the perfection of their nature, while the great mass of the human race never put forth any effort of thought that very highly distinguishes them from the beasts that perish ? They reach the common stature and acquire the agility and the strength of manhood, without their own care or choice, but the mind, untaught and undisciplined, remains almost in its state of infancy, till the body has reached its perfection and commenced its decay.

Thus there begins a second childhood, at the remove of but a few years from where the first was terminated. The man is seen to stand, for a moment, a being capable of some small degree of effort, and is then, while yet we have hardly known him, merged again into all the helplessness of a second humi ity. The body, it is true, retains its stature, but every limb is palsied, and every organ powerless. The mind sinks with the body, and seems at length on the point of being extinguished with it. But that the book of God has taught us otherwise, it would hardly be a sin to doubt whether the mind were not material like the body, and destined to perish at that juncture when the body begins to moulder.

Now why, says the infidel, would a good being give to any of his creatures, and especially to man, the noblest of the whole, an existence so immature, so transitory, and so miserable ! Nor can he ever gain a satisfactory answer to his gloomy inquiry, till he

believes that by sin came death, and so death hath passed upon all men for that all have sinned.

There is some mystery in all this even to the believer. In his creed, life is a scene of probation, where the soul may ripen for its future destiny. Hence why is so large a proportion of a life so short, filled up with incapacity of mental action? Why does not the mind come into being strong and vigorous, prepared to do the task assigned it? Why is not the heart prepared to put forth at the first, matured and powerful affections? Then the character might be formed at once, and the man might become, while in the present case he is an infant, matured in piety, and far less than half the probation now allowed him, would fit him to be the enlightened and useful associate of angels.

It is true, that many things could be said to vindicate the ways of God in all this, and if not, it would be easy to show, that as he is wise and good, and holds under his entire government the beings he created, he must have directed wisely all the circumstances of our probation. Here the humble believer could rest satisfied, and would be content to wait patiently till that day when all the appointments of heaven shall be freely vindicated.

The text brings into view a period of life peculiarly laborious and sorrowful: the years beyond seventy. This is an age at which but few arrive, and the few who do, rather *sigh* and *groan* than *live*. Not that every man is happy precisely up to that period, and then miserable: this would contradict experience. Some sink under the weight of years before they arrive at seventy, while a few others carry through perhaps another score of years, all the vigor of undecaying manhood. Still should we, from our own observation, draw the line between vigorous and pleasureable manhood and the haltings and gloominess of old age, we should probably fix it at three-score years and ten, where it is already fixed by the pen of inspiration.

In what follows, it will be my object to illustrate the truth of the text, and show that *the proper evening of life must ordinarily be laborious and sorrowful*. This will follow,

1. From the ordinary *weaknesses of the body*, in that advanced period of life. What our Lord said to Peter with reference to his crucifixion, might apply to every man: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Very few are permitted to carry

with them down into the vale of years, the vigor of youth. The muscles lose their elasticity, the eye grows dim, the ear is dull of hearing, and the whole body bends toward the grave. How gloomy to see the old man leaning upon his staff, or advancing with slow and cautious steps, and interrupted by every obstacle that used to increase his speed, till at length he seats himself to rest, and pants as if he had made his dying effort. The grasshopper has become a burden. The slumbers of the night are interrupted with pain, and the least exertion brings on an almost insupportable lassitude. He aches for the repose of the grave, and hopes for no alleviation till his body has crumbled into dust. He seems to live merely to sigh, and groan, and suffer.

Nor can he fail to draw the contrast between his present and his youthful days. It seems but yesterday when every power performed its functions with agility, and when he could see none about him who were more active and sprightly than himself. Action was his enjoyment, and when he had toiled, his rest was long and sweet. Now when he has made his mightiest effort he is still a child, and trembles at the shaking of a leaf. He anticipates the hour when he must be thrown, in all his imploring helplessness, upon the support of his offspring.

2. That period of life is attended not only with a weakness and failure of the bodily powers, but with a decay of the mental energies. The mind that had seemed to mature with the body, seems now to be verging with it to the brink of destruction. The power of thought, of reflection, of association, and of reasoning, the power of recollection and of memory, seem all to partake of the same weakness as do the powers of the body. How does it affect our hearts, when an aged and venerated father begins to lose the countenances of his children, forgets their names, repeats in their hearing the same tale told an hour since, and now again rehearsed with all the animation and interest of novelty—when it is seen that the plainest matters of fact are controverted, and the most sacred pledge of confidence unredeemed—when the lapse of an hour seems a year or an age, and the same friend is accosted many times during the same interview, as then for the first time recognised, and constrained to reply again and again to the same interrogation, till the kindest feelings become the prey of fatigue.

And, perhaps, amid the whole, there is, to the man himself, no conviction of failure or decay. There is the same entire confidence in every dictate of the mind, as when it remained unimpaired in the man of fifty. Occasionally, perhaps, we do see all

its former excellence. The mind makes one effort before it recollects its weakness, and there is in that effort all the vigor of matured reflection; but it sinks immediately, and then is witnessed the imbecility of childhood.

I not long since heard an aged minister of Christ address his people, extempore, on the concerns of futurity, when there was a striking display of this mixture of strength and weakness. One moment he reached his point by some strong, condensed, and convincing argument; at the next he had lost his strength, and was weak as other men. Now he softened down the burning glories of the Godhead till human eyes would gaze and live—and while yet the figure was scarcely finished, the vision had fled; he raised his hand to give the sentiment its proper emphasis, but his hand remained stationary, and the audience were subjected to the pain of carrying out the sentiment by their own effort, or of seeing fled for ever one of the finest thoughts that ever dropped upon them from human lips. Now it does not concern, in the present inquiry, to decide whether the mind is the subject of a real decay, or whether its failure is to be attributed to the derangement of the organs through which it operates. There can hardly be a doubt but that it will appear in all its strength and stature, unimpaired by age or effort, when once it shall be dislodged from its crumbling mansion. This will be believed by all who have confidence in its immortality. But its apparent decay has at present all the effect of a reality, producing in the mind of the beholder all the pity, and brings upon itself all the diffidence, the darkness, and the distress of a real approximation toward extinction.

3. The period of which we speak is of course subjected to a distressing depression of animal spirits. When there has come upon the members of the body a prostration so total, and upon the mind a correspondent imbecility, it cannot well be hoped that there shall remain the same flow of spirits, the same animation and spirit of action, and enterprise, as when there was felt all the vigor and the impulse of youth. Hence we often see the old man gloomy and depressed. Small as are the remains of his energy, mental or corporeal, he has not sufficient ambition to put in action the powers that he does possess. He feels that he is beginning to lose all his consequence and all his influence. He is listened to with the profoundest respect, but when his sentiments are communicated, he has the mortification to know, that having wholly mistaken the point, or having failed to utter the thought which he intended to communicate, or from some other cause to him inexplicable

cable, there is really no weight given to his argument, and all his labor is lost. He now begins to retire from a community who conceive, at least, that they can manage more wisely without him. But he carries gloom and sorrow into his retirement. The mind that has been active, and has commanded attention and respect, cannot, without some degree of pain, see itself neglected, and sinking into comparative disesteem. Hence we cannot wonder if we see crossing the cheek, furrowed with age, the tear of melancholy. Every dutiful child, and every man in youth and middle age, who respects himself, will readily wipe away that tear. But when all is done that filial affection and gratitude can do to smooth the aged father's path to the sepulchre, still that eye, now dim with age, must weep, and that mind, which sees decaying every organ of its communication, must naturally shrink back upon itself, and mourn that it must so early become obsolete. And we shall still more strongly expect this operation of old age, when we reflect,

4. That the man who has passed threescore years and ten, must find himself deserted of almost all the companions of his youth. He has lived to bury that whole generation who were cotemporary with his boyhood and his youth. He has parted, perhaps, with the companion of his bosom, and has been present at the interment of almost all his mother's children. He seldom meets with one who can rehearse with him the scenes of his early life, or feel any sympathy in the story of his pleasures or his escapes. He stands like a tree which was once in the bosom of a forest, but now is left to feel the full weight of every storm, while the associates of his youth, whose united energies would obtrude the blast, have all perished; and his decaying boughs too strongly indicate that he must soon yield the soil to a later growth, and permit the winds of heaven to pass unobstructed. True, he is surrounded by his children, and they are dear to him, and he to them. They feel every sigh he heaves, and would, were it in their power, return him to his former enjoyments. But they cannot restore to him the companions of his youth, they cannot relax the rigidities, or brace the weaknesses of a broken constitution. They can only nurse him, and smile upon him, while to him the world seems empty, as if some pestilence should prey upon its whole population, leaving only here and there a solitary individual, or as if some earthquake should suddenly hide from our view every human being who had known us or loved us.

It is said that the aged, while they have a keen recollection of

what passed in their youth, remember with difficulty the scenes of later life. The impressions which the mind received while it was young and tender remain, while the events more recent are lost. Hence, break up every early connection, associate with the grave and the dead all the moving scenes of life, and you have covered the aged man with a cloud, from which he will find it difficult to emerge, till he goes to his long home. Hence, it will naturally be expected, that the evening of life will be lowering and gloomy. True, if the man of eighty has loved the Lord Jesus, there still remains unbroken the tie that binds him to his best friend, and the presence of God may render him happy. I have read of an aged Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, and who was enabled to sing and rejoice on embracing the infant Redeemer. But even Simeon, in the midst of his enjoyments, chose rather to depart in peace, and enjoy the fruits of salvation in some better world.

5. There must accompany that period of life of which we speak, in spite of every effort to efface it, the strong impression that every step is upon the margin of the grave. Occasionally, perhaps, the few months that remain may seem to the aged man like a thousand years, but his habitual conviction must be that his race is almost run. The ties that have bound him to life are fast breaking. Every pang he feels reminds him that his grave will soon be ready. So tardy flows the stream of life as to assure him that soon the heart will beat no longer.

Hence, should he think of forming new relationships, he could hardly hope that they would exist till they should become consolidated. If he make any new attempts to increase his wealth, he but toils for another, and so becomes a slave. Would he improve his mind, he finds it not susceptible of new impressions, and the toil wears him out the sooner. Thus is he impeded in every effort by the abiding conviction, that already his days are nearly numbered.

#### REMARKS.

How indispensable that the aged have the supports of piety. Else that period of life must find its miseries tenfolded. The gray headed unbeliever has no view that is pleasant. When he looks back he sees nothing but a dreary waste of sin and death. No deed of his past life, no affection or motive will bear a serious review; hence he is afraid to reflect. When he looks within, he sees an evil heart of unbelief, matured by a long and obstinate conflict with God, for a dreary and fearful abode in the pit. And

when he anticipates the judgment, he has no solid ground to hope that it shall not consummate his present wretchedness. Thus is added to all the gloom induced by age, infirmity, and crime, the apprehended horrors of the second death.

But when gray hairs are found in the way of righteousness, when the man advanced in years is also advanced in grace, there is before the eye of the mind one prospect bright and luminous. He may sigh under his growing infirmities, may realize the temporary decay of his mind, may feel the loss of his friends, may mourn his loneliness, and expect soon his departure, but may look forward with pleasure to the scenes of a better life. Then his youth will be renewed as the eagle's, his mind will regain its vigor, he will meet again many of the companions of his youth, every cloud that hung over him will have fled, and death be swallowed up in victory. Now he can wait patiently all the days of his appointed time till his change come; till he come to the grave in peace as a shock of corn fully ripe.

One word to those who have approached this gloomy period of life unsanctified. Perhaps the infirmities of age may have brought upon the mind a stupidity which will forbid you to own this character. But this will not alter the reality. If you are unsanctified, the fact is known to him who in a few days will judge you. Why not make one more effort to escape from the miseries of the second death. You have sometimes known a dying effort to prove successful. Despair has sometimes inspired the onset that has saved a besieged army. One has achieved, to save his life, or rescue his family, what had not been possible in ordinary circumstances. You may have known the case where a father, to save his child, has forced his way through volumes of fire, not to be endured but in just such an emergency, yet accomplished his object and lived. Just such an effort you should make to escape from the wrath to come. What if you do feel the weaknesses of old age? if the soul is not safe, make it safe, or die in the agonies of a desperate attempt. Think not, my father, that this subject may be dismissed, because you have neglected the season in which it should have been attended to. To dismiss it will cost you your soul. It may be a late hour to attend to it, but it must have your attention. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Were you on your death bed, and had done nothing, we should urge upon you the possibility of making your escape, even then. But you are yet, perhaps, in the enjoyment of ordinary health. We wish you too well, to be willing that the miseries of old should at length

terminate in perdition. Heaven yet offers you salvation, and if you will but terminate the quarrel with your Maker, and believe on his Son, you shall live. Is it not worth an effort? I urge it, because you must so soon put on the shroud and lie down in the grave—that what is done must be done now, or *you* are for ever undone.

I must not conclude, till I have addressed those of the aged who have a good hope through grace, that with them the great work of life has been attended to. Still, fathers, you may not presume that you have no more to do. I presume you are conscious that you have not been very profitable servants. If you hope that your trials are almost over, and that you shall soon be glorified, your industry should be greatly increased. A pilgrim that has almost reached his home, will sometimes make a longer journey the last day than on any other. A miserable world should have your dying blessing. You may “yet let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven.” Perhaps some effort at faithfulness might yet render you the instrument of salvation to some perishing sinner. You can yet do much for the perishing heathen, and you can offer many prayers for the advancement of the Redeemer’s kingdom. You must not be willing to escape to heaven and leave the world as miserable as it may be, but as holy and happy as you can render it.

An increased activity is, of all others, the best means of rendering the evening of life happy. A sentinel may not leave his post till his watch is out. Not one of you will remain here longer than God has employment for you. And the hope of heaven, so soon, should beget in you the energy of a young believer. Should the soldier know, that when he has fought another battle, he is to go home and receive the honors of his king, think you that he would not try to do himself honor in that last conflict? Would you not tremble for that section of the opposing army who presented themselves before the point of his sword? And why should not the believer, of three score years and ten, who is to be so soon in heaven, summon up all his strength, and put in requisition all his wisdom, that by one decided and mighty effort, he may spread as wide a ruin as possible, in the ranks of the prince of darkness? One year spent in making such an effort, and how pleasantly could he die. He would thus stimulate those who should continue in the work after his departure, and who can doubt but in that case his track to the grave would be the more luminous, and his passage through the valley more pleasant?

## SERMON LV.

### HEAVEN'S CURE FOR THE PLAGUES OF SIN.

ROMANS XIII. 8.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.

SIN has made this a miserable world. It has bred a host of unhallowed passions, which perpetually operate to widen the wastes and aggravate the miseries of the curse. One who was a stranger to these passions, and should see how they operate, would wonder if men were happy in proportion as they rendered each other miserable!—if their only remaining joy consisted in laying waste the inheritance of their neighbors. Else why with so much industry and perseverance, do they endeavor to wrest from others their wealth, their good name, their influence, their quiet and their hope. And yet the inference drawn from all this would be incorrect. Men are not happy in rendering others less so. They may gratify malignant passions, but this gratification is not happiness; it but stimulates the plague that reigns in the bosom, and gives it an increased ability to destroy; it but feeds the fever that rages afterward with the more violence, produces inward distress, and preys upon the soul with a more insatiable and uncontrollable severity. Follow home the man who has been out to injure his neighbor, who carries home with him a shilling that is not his own, or the consciousness that he has made any inroads upon happiness or character, and as you live you find that man unhappy. He brings into his own family the passions that raged abroad, and the bed that should give him rest, is a bed of thorns. He has obeyed the dictates of his own evil heart, but he now must listen to the reproaches of a wounded conscience. He is constrained to know that he has done wrong; and is strongly apprehensive of a re-action that will render his own territory in its turn the seat of a similar warfare.

The text enjoins a temper and a conduct by which men might render each other happy, might convert this desert into the garden of God, and make our passage through it gay and cheerful. The apostle had treated of the honor, the affection, and the duty which

men owe to their superiors, and proceeds in the text to lay down rules that apply generally to all men; rules which, if observed, would tend greatly to meliorate the condition of the apostacy. We are to pay every debt but love. This we are to feel that we are to be always paying, but must ever owe. This is a debt that we are to be willing to owe to all men for ever. To this we are to be urged by the consideration that love is the fulfilling of the law; by which the apostle means, no doubt, the second table of the law. Hence he enumerates some particulars of that section of the decalogue: "Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet;" and, that no part might remain unsaid, he adds, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He then sums up the argument, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

I shall endeavor to *explain the nature of love, show how it will operate, and press the duty*, but shall dwell particularly upon the last article.

1. I am to explain the *nature of love*. There are two kinds of affection that have this title. One is an approbation and affection for a character that *pleases us*; the other is an ardent good-will toward beings capable of happiness. Both of these affections are exercises of the Divine mind. God views all holy beings with approbation, and loves them in the first sense mentioned. Sinners he views with disapprobation, but still with compassion. Hence it is said that he is angry with the wicked every day; that is, he hates their character and conduct. And yet it is said, that he "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might have everlasting life." One of these affections, that with which he views holy beings, is termed complacency; God is pleased with them. The other, that which he exercises toward wicked beings, who are capable of being happy, is termed benevolence; God wishes them happiness. And both of these affections are enjoined upon man. God and angels, and all holy beings, we are obligated to look upon with complacency, and towards all men we are bound to exercise good-will; this is the affection enjoined in the text. It is our duty to feel kindly towards all men, to wish them happy, and, as far as in our power, accomplish our wishes. It may be well to say, however, that there is one exception. There are beings whom God has condemned to everlasting unhappiness. In this case, we may not

wish to reverse the appointment of God, and snatch from misery those whose release would be inconsistent with the general good. We may wish well to all men, and still be willing to see the convict imprisoned and executed. This the good of the civil community demands, and this benevolence assents to, nay, even requires. He who would suffer the murderer or the incendiary to go at large, would find it difficult to evince his benevolence. And God may be good to all, and his tender mercies over all his works, and still there may be some whom his benevolence may never render happy. There may go after the wretch whom the general good requires should suffer, a lingering look of compassion; there may follow him into his exile and his ruin the good-will that would have made him happy; but there may be felt towards other beings an affection so strong as to prevent it from being exercised.

This exception, then, plainly, understood, benevolence, as enjoined in the text, is a high regard to the well-being of all creatures who are capable of being made happy. I was to inquire, in the

II. Place, *How this affection will operate.* Here the path of our thoughts is plain. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. It will neither kill, nor steal, nor covet, nor defraud, nor witness falsely. It will lead to the discharge of every debt but one, and that one the debt of love; it will delight to owe and pay, and still owe for ever. Those whom we love we wish happy; and in proportion to the strength of that affection, will be the energy exerted to accomplish that object. If to be calm and content will render them happy, we shall be reluctant to ruffle their temper or move their envy. If to be rich, and respected, and wise, will make them happy, we shall wish their success in business, their increased respectability, and their advance in knowledge. If health, and ease, and long life, and domestic friendship, will add to their enjoyments, we shall wish them all these; and what we *wish* for them, we shall be willing, if in our power, to *do* for them. But if only the grace of God can make them blessed; it will be our strongest wish, and our most ardent prayer, that God would sanctify them. Hence the reason why God's people expend the strongest efforts of their good-will to their fellow-men in rendering them holy. Hence the warnings, the reproofs, the threatenings, the admonitions of God toward a world he loves; and hence something of the same in his people toward those for whom they feel the highest good-will. 1

am ready to concede that the benevolence I describe does not exist but in the heart that is holy ; and still it may be urged upon all men, as their duty, that conduct, the want of which is their blot and their shame. What pleasure have we in contemplating the character of that man who does not wish the good of his fellow-men ; but can see about him percipient beings like himself, whom he is willing should be less blessed than they might be ? And yet, if we should judge from facts, we should be constrained to say that this character is common. He who would have what is not his due, what is it but a wish expressed, that his neighbor should be poorer than God has made him ? He who would unnecessarily speak evil of his neighbor, does he not express a wish that his neighbor had a worse character than the providence of God has given him ? And he who would irritate and provoke another, what wish does he express but this, that his neighbor might be less happy ? I proceed

III. To press *the duty of benevolence*. And here I would premise that the good-will which I urge is to be exercised toward friend and foe. The good which real benevolence wishes its object, is of the same value in the possession of one man as of another. Benevolence looks abroad to find happiness, and wherever it can be found rejoices in it ; or goes in search of misery, and wherever it is found, aims to convert it into joy. It is a pure and disinterested affection, hence is the offspring of a heavenly temper. I would urge it upon myself and my fellow-men,

1. By the *example* of God. I have already noticed that text in which he is said so to have loved the world, "that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." God is said to be good to all, and his tender mercies are said to be over all his works. Even to the heathen world "God did not leave himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Thus God employs himself in making a world of sinners happy. How constant and how varied are the operations of the Divine benevolence. Life and health, and food and raiment are his gifts, and are bestowed on his friends and his foes. No man is so impious but God continues to water his fields, and give health and fruitfulness to his flocks ; surrounds him with friends and helpers, replenishes his table, and fills his

cup, his store-houses and his barns ; keeps all his bones that none of them are broken, and perpetually supplies him with countless sources of comfort. There is no year, no day, no hour, when his hand is not stretched out to convey benefits to every house about you and to every being, however regardless of His agency, and however ungrateful.

Now the text, and the whole Bible, just urges upon every man this same expanded benevolence. You are required to be a worker together with God. If many around you are your enemies, and you would urge this as an excuse for neglecting to do them good, you are to remember that God does not act thus. The very man that you hate the most, is, it may be, the enemy of God ; but God continues to do him good every moment ; never neglects to cause his heart to beat and his lungs to heave ; watches him at night, and in the morning wakes him, feeds him, clothes him. And perhaps you are as much the enemy of God as the man you hate, but God is good to you. When you plough your field and scatter your seed, you expect him to make it vegetate ; and when you have sent out your ships, he sends the generous and friendly gale. Then why not imitate an example so infinitely illustrious ? If there is not a foe you have, but God is doing him kindnesses every day, and he is perhaps as much, nay more, the foe of God, why not go and do likewise ! It would not injure you ; it would not disgrace you. If it would render you unhappy to do what would render your enemies happy, then know that you have not a godly temper, that you have not the benevolence which the gospel requires. God is happy while he makes glad his enemies. It gratifies the benevolence of his heart, if they rejoice. But you would carry, it seems, if you could, sorrow and vexation to every house where you have not a friend ; you would measure their worthiness by their attachment to you, and *your* benefits by *their* worthiness. But God has pleasure in doing good, if from the heart that he make glad there never rises any incense of praise or one note of gratitude. He is pleased when men are sensible of his benefits, and when they love to praise him, but it gives him joy to do good, abstractly from any return that creatures make. Now we can meet with no ease more forbidding than God meets with. There are some into whose bosoms God has poured his blessings these seventy years, and there has never yet been awakened one sentiment of gratitude. There has risen to his throne every hour the murmurings, the repinings, the complaints, and the spleen of an impious heart and, perhaps daily, the vibrations of profane and

lying lips. Yet all this never induced the Lord to leave his fields one year unwatered, or leave him one day without light, and food and reason. Who is there, then, that can have a foe so inveterate that he is not under obligation, if in his power, to do him good? If then we find ourselves, instead of exercising such a spirit, engaged in injuring a fellow-creature, we have only to recollect how differently God is doing at the same moment. We are wronging him, and God is feeding him; we are defaming him, and endeavoring to diminish his influence, and God is giving him health, and wealth, and friends. Now one is thus placed in a very unpleasant attitude. Suppose Jehovah visible; he and you meet at your neighbor's door; you have come to ruin him, but God has come to bring him blessings. He is your enemy, and he is God's enemy. He has *once* injured you; God he has wronged and abused every day he has lived. And when the Lord has supplied *his* wants, he comes to your door and supplies *yours*, and you perhaps have been as base a rebel as your neighbor. Now, although God is not seen by the eye of sense, the fact is not altered; his benevolence leads him all this length. He bestows blessings every hour upon the man who would injure; supplies the wants that you create, heals the wounds you inflict, and repairs the reputation you destroy. O, let shame cover us! and let the benevolence of God teach us to drop our blessings on all men, at all times, if they are within our reach, and we have any good to bestow.

2. We are urged to the same duty by the *command* of God. God does not exhibit his example before us, and leave it to our option whether we will do like him. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is the law, precisely, by which heaven has bound us. Whatsoever, then, we would that others should do to us, we are to do the same to them. The command is, "That we love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us." It is enjoined, "that we love one another with a pure heart, fervently." "That we honor all men." "That we be pitiful and courteous." "That we submit ourselves to one another," and be clothed with humility. "He that would be great must become a servant." "We are to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." "Nothing is to be done through vain-glory, but each, in lowliness of mind, esteem other better than themselves." "Every man is to look not on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," that thus the "same mind may be in us which was also in Christ Jesus." "We are to follow after the things

that make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." We are to have that "love that worketh no ill to his neighbor." We are to "love not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." God urges that we should love one another by the consideration, that he so loved us, that he sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. Thus are we taught of God to love one another.

And the Scriptures teach us what the effect of this love will be. It will lead to an *affectionate deportment*, and a readiness to serve each other. It begets a spirit of *forbearance*, of *truth*, of *unanimity*, of *self-denial*, of *meekness*, and *forgiveness*. It "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." It "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Thus do we see a few of the outlines of the code of love. Thus the Divine authority binds us to the exercise of that same benevolence which God displays in his own providence toward all men. Hence our obligations to be benevolent will bear, in our view, an exact proportion to our respect for the authority of God: if the latter be supreme, so will the former.

3. Benevolence affords its possessor a *permanent* and *high enjoyment*. It is, in its nature, a sweet and calm affection, has its origin in heaven, and exerts a sanctifying influence upon every other exercise of the soul. It is an affection which we can contemplate with pleasure, and view with complacency. If I know that I love my fellow-men, I am conscious that I feel as God does, and as he commands me to feel. I see, in that case, the image of my Creator in my heart. Hence it begets joy and hope. I believe, then, that God has wrought in me, by his Spirit, has left upon the heart his own impress, and will one day make me wholly like him, and take me to himself.

But this is not all: a benevolent heart makes all the happiness it sees its own, and thus widens, indefinitely, the sphere of its enjoyment. It has a real pleasure in another's joy, and still does not diminish the good on which it feeds and thrives. If there is harmony in the civil community, or domestic quiet in any house, or joy in any heart, or peace in any conscience, the benevolent man enjoys it all, and makes it all his own. The whole aggregate of enjoyment about him becomes appropriated to himself; if *any* are happy, he is. The man of *taste* will enjoy what is the property of a neighbor. If he can see, within another's enclosures, a verdant spot, a lawn, an orchard, or a grove, his eye extracts from it a pleasure, which no power can prevent, which no barriers can

defend. It is his right, for no one suffers by his enjoyment—no one is made the poorer by his claim, or suffers to serve him. So the man of real benevolence gathers into his own heart the joy that elates the hearts of others, and into his own home, the quiet, the good-will, the condescension, the harmony, and the hope, that prevail in the home of his neighbor.

Let there be enjoyment *any where* about him, and it increases *his own*. Hence he is the only man who can beguile the miseries of human life, and rob the old serpent of his sting. Nothing can make him miserable, if there is happiness any where. Rob him of his comforts, and, in an hour, he can go and gather more. So the bee, if you take away the bread he has brought home, can hie him away to some opening flower, and gather a new supply. Hence, in the dark hour, when all others are wretched, the man of real benevolence can be happy.

The soul that's filled with virtue's light,  
Shines brightest in affliction's night,  
And sees, in darkness, beams of hope.

But you tell me, that philanthropy, in a world so miserable as this is, is likely to create more misery than joy. In every look we take athwart its wastes, there strike the eye ten objects, *polluted, deformed, and miserable*, where there is one of order, joy, and beauty. Hence it would seem, that the man of kindest feelings, must be the greatest sufferer, whilst the callous and the cold, who are unmoved by human misery, and have no tears for another's wo, have the greatest share of enjoyment. All this seems *rational*, but is not *true*. Benevolence is an affection, which carries its own reward with it, and must render the heart happy that puts it forth, were there nothing about it but misery. It finds a kind of relief in its own tears, and if all the objects on which it can fasten a look of sympathy must remain unhappy, it can gather to itself enjoyment from the sympathy it feels.

But the benevolent heart is not driven to this alternative. This world is not *wholly filled* with misery. There may be a dreary spot just here; a dearth of piety, the absence of all holiness, and the presence of stormy passions; but beyond this scene, there is fertility and life. God there appears in his glory, men are sanctified, and are made happy, and there is joy and gladness. The benevolent Howard spent much of his life in the prison, but he was comforted to know that this world was not all a prison. He carried with him into the recesses and the infection of the dungeon

the recollection, that the sufferers about him were not the whole of this world's population. There were those at a little remove from him, who did not wear a chain, nor want for bread, nor sigh for liberty. There *were* dwellings into which the light of heaven might shine, where reigned health, affection, and joy. Upon these, when he could look at misery no longer, he could cast his eye and find relief. So the man in this age, or in any age, whose heart expands with benevolence, but who may chance to see misery all around him, has only to widen the circumference of his vision, and it embraces objects that can give him joy. If the case require he can look beyond this world to heaven. There every object will gratify the benevolence of his heart. All its inhabitants are holy and happy, beyond what hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. There is not one object in all its happy realms, on which, while the benevolent heart lingers, it feels not the most exquisite delight. Thus the good man, if the misery about him gives him pain which he can hardly endure, having that faith which gives him the power of flight, can wing himself to some happier clime, and inhale refreshment from scenes more adapted to his taste.

And there is one other thought from which we discern, clearly, the advantage of the benevolent man above all others, notwithstanding the pain he endures at the sight of misery. The heart that is not benevolent, is, of course, the seat of passions far more corroding and painful than the keenest sympathy. Pride, and envy, and ambition, and covetousness, with other kindred tormentors, hold the entire ascendancy, where the heart has not been melted into love. And who that has been the prey of these devourers, and has any conviction of their power to destroy, would not rather feel a philanthropy so pure, and be surrounded with miseries so multiplied as to keep the heart bleeding with sympathy, rather than be committed to their merciless and arbitrary supremacy? He who looks upon poverty, and famine, and nakedness, in their most appalling attitude, and *would give relief* but *cannot*, must indeed suffer intensely; but still he enjoys a heaven, compared with him who sees others too happy, and envies them. The one in the midst of all his tears, can be tranquil and submissive, while in the bosom of the other there burns a fire that consumes him. Howard found his joy diminished, because he looked upon plagues which he had not the power and the skill to cure; but compare the state of his mind, with his who has coveted, but

cannot possess the enjoyments of others, and, as you live, the one savors of heaven, and the other of hell.

If the objection had any weight, it would prove that God must be unhappy. His benevolence is infinite, and there lies, under his full inspection, the whole aggregate of pollution and misery that have found their way into his dominions. Even hell has no covering. He sees all the anguish and despair, hears every groan and sigh that escapes the lips of the lost. Still God is infinitely happy, and will be when every incorrigible rebel shall have made his bed in the pit, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.

And the more we are like God the more happy. Import into this world that same benevolence that led God to make his Son a sacrifice for sin, and you would fill it with piety and joy. And those who are losing the Sabbath at home, as they saw you pass, would half believe that you were angels. You would then apply yourselves to make this section of the apostacy more happy. You would heal every quarrel, would soothe every wicked passion, if you might, would check every prevailing vice, and relieve every want. You would go home and purge your house, and your neighborhood, from whatever would breed pollution and misery, and we should soon all forget that we had ever been unhappy. Life would steal away like the pleasant sceneries of a dream, and death would lose its terrors. We should almost forget that this world was not the rest that God had promised us. We should imagine ourselves suddenly transplanted into the midst of angels, should see in every face the countenance of a brother, and hear in every accent and in every song, the symphony of a heavenly friendship.

Do you say that I now tell you of heaven. Nay, *heaven*, one from that world must describe it. I tell you exactly what a little spot of earth might be, and what we might make it, were it not for those accursed passions, which we industriously cultivate, and which collect us joy from another's misery. Only let us feel that none about us can be too wealthy, too respectable, or too happy, to give us pleasure, and half the curse of the apostacy is removed. Let us feel that every wo another suffers is as much our own, as his, every tear he weeps and every song he sings our own, and this world would cease to be a wilderness, and would become like the garden of God.

Let us then retire with this reflection,

*Men are their own tormentors!* Would they exercise benevolence, and exert themselves to make each other happy, much of the misery of this world would soon disappear, and the remainder would be so divided and subdivided as scarcely to be felt. And we should make our way on to heaven, forgetful that we were the inhabitants of a world that God has cursed. But if, instead of this, we employ ourselves in the work of mutual crimination and torture, we have none to blame but ourselves, if we wade to the grave in tears, and find it an avenue to the bottomless pit.

## SERMON LVI.

### HEAVEN'S CURE FOR THE PLAGUES OF SIN.—No. II.

ROMANS XIII. 8.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.

I HAVE sometimes thought with myself, what must be the sensations of the heathen, on observing the conduct of this world's population. They have no Bible to tell them the story of the apostacy, or to teach them the way of recovery. They see about them beings wholly depraved, exerting themselves to deceive, betray, and ruin each other. And they know not of any other life where the wrongs of the present can be rectified. The grave is to them an eternal sleep. And whether there be any God to witness the events that pass, must demand a doubt. How deplorable, to beings thus benighted, must be the condition of the human family, and how often must they give utterance to the wish, that they had died the first hour they came into life.

Even with the Bible in our hands, and all these mysteries explained, we sometimes wonder that God would build a world and then suffer it to become so ruined. And still we can have no fear but that it will appear at last that God has done all things well. It is not his purpose that this world shall always exhibit the same gloomy and forbidding view as at present. During the period of millennial glory there will be, if not a universal holiness, at least such a prevalence of piety as will give this world a regenerated aspect. To this day God's people have looked by faith these many thousand years. But is it not to be feared that we have considered it too remote, and have exerted too little agency in hastening its coming? We have *believed* and *prayed*, and have considered this the whole of our duty, while it should be our care to cultivate a little spot in the wastes of sin, and as soon as possible remove from that spot the whole of the curse. Let there prevail the benevolence enjoined in the text, and the face of the moral world will immediately be changed. Let the contest be which will do the most to render others happy, and the millennial year has come. I attempted in a previous discourse to explain the nature

of benevolence, to show how it will operate, and urge the duty. I observed that we are obligated to feel kindly to all men by the *example* of God, by his *command*, and by the *happiness* which the *exercise affords* to its possessors. I notice,

IV. The *happiness it communicates to others*. I am aware that there must be in the heart, a wish to communicate joy to others; in other words, there must be some portion of the very benevolence recommended, in order that the motive now presented should operate. But this is true of all motives, except such as address themselves to the selfish feelings. The man who is wholly un-sanctified will not regard the example or the authority of God. But we always address the motives of the gospel to affections that do not exist till God produces them, and still we hope that God will give the word success. I would then urge all the believers and the unbelievers to love their fellow-men, from the fact that by putting forth this affection you can create a world of happiness.

In the first place, look about you and see what need there is of more happiness than at present exists, what abundant opportunity there is for your exertion. You cannot be ignorant that you live in a ruined world, where, if you are disposed to be kind, you can find abundant employment. You can find misery in almost every shape and shade. You meet with the poor, the ignorant, and the vicious. Some have no bread, some no Bible, and others, I had almost said, no Sabbath, no gospel, and no conscience. There are some who pay no regard to Divine institutions, and seldom or never visit the sanctuary. There are feuds and contentions and alienations and enmity. There are families where there is no domestic happiness, where there are neither smiles nor songs, nor pleasant words, nor kind affections. The husband and the wife, whom God has constituted one flesh, live in a state of utter alienation. The children are rude and ignorant, and the parents perhaps intemperate and harsh, and profane and false.

And you can find families who are at war with each other, who are stationed side by side, but through all the year have no interchange of kind offices. There, too, are the rich who have become poor, the respectable who have lost their character, the decent who have become intemperate, the civil who have become profane, and the pure who have become lewd. You can easily meet with the captious, the rude, the passionate, the deceitful, the false, the idle, the covetous, the extortionate, the insubordinate, and the quarrelsome. Ask one man his opinion of his neighbors, and he

will bring a charge against some of them, ask another and he will accuse the first, and a third the second, and a fourth the third, and finally, if you believe nothing, you will say with David, that all men are liars, and if you believe it all, you will fancy yourself associated with a community of convicts. How common are contentions, quarrels, law-suits, and disappointments, and vexations. How few men will you find who know of none of whom they wish to speak unkindly, none who have wronged them, none who defame them, none who hate them, none who envy them.

But I presume enough has been said to remind you that you live in a world where there is need enough of your benevolence. Nor will you presume that this picture is darker than the truth. The fact is, it would fill a volume to tell the whole. I have only glanced at the subject with a view to show you a little section of the field which your benevolence should cultivate. Would it not be desirable to apply a remedy if you might to this complicated malady. Be willing, then, to practice the benevolence required, and the remedy is applied and the cure effected. I cannot fix my eye upon any item in this catalogue of miseries, but I instinctively recur to the men who could reach a cure to the very case. If I think of the suffering poor, there are those at hand who have all the wealth necessary for their relief. Nor is there any quarrel, but there are those who could still it; or litigation, but there are those who could stop it; or mistake, but there are those who could rectify it; or injury, but there are those who could repair it. The profane man has some who countenance, and, if they were disposed, could silence him; the intemperate have such about them who aid and encourage them, and there are those who, exerting their influence, could reform them. Let us look at this case a moment. Once suppose that every mind, but that of the drunkard himself, was suitably impressed with the danger and the misery of his course, and that no one would put the cup in his hand any sooner than he would present him the knife with which he intended to slay himself, tell me if it is at all probable that he would ever be again intoxicated? No, when decent men shall know their duty and do it, when they shall watch the drunkard as they would the man who was meditating suicide, and stand between the one and the cup, as they would between the other and the knife, and risk their very limbs to save him, this dreadful avenue of death is closed, and there is not a single drunkard to curse society. And there would thus disappear in an hour, at least half the plagues that prey upon the world's guilty and infatuated popu-

lation. And the benevolence which the text enjoins, let it once prevail, would accomplish this with promptness and with ease. The idle, are all within the reach of an influence that could render them industrious; the Sabbath-breaker, of an influence that could bring him to the sanctuary; the covetous, of an influence that could render them generous; the indecent, of an influence that could civilize them; and the captious, and refractory, of an influence that could render them manageable and civil. If you doubt this bring to yourself the case, and survey the circumstances. First name the evil,—then the two, or the four, or the ten, as it may be, who support it. Let these become good men, and the plague is cured. I know that if we were all holy we should be but men, and should be subject to many weaknesses, mistakes, and dangers. But cure once the miseries that sin produces, and God would remove the residue. Let him see from his holy throne the population of one town, bending every effort to cure its own calamities, and he would act as he never yet has, if he did not render the effort successful.

And does not the motive now presented, wear an enchanting aspect. I am urging you, my dear friends, to love your fellow-men from the consideration of the good you could then do them. I look around me and see in varied forms a vast amount of misery. The view creates distress, and I urge you to attempt its cure.

Are you willing it should remain? Can you think of leaving your children to spend their life in the midst of it? Can you quit the world peaceably till what you can do has been done, to fertilize the moral waste, over which you expect so soon to cast a lingering, dying look. The miseries we contemplate are contagious, and may when we have done with life, enter our habitations, and prey these twenty generations, upon our children's children. If you leave one infidel, one profane man, one who is intemperate, one Sabbath-breaker, one scoffer, one disorganizer, unreformed, he may find access to the bosom of your son, may carry the pestilence into your house, may spread the plagues we contemplate through all the ranks of your posterity till they come down in a mass to perdition.

Would it not render you happy to die assured that you had been useful. If you could transport yourself to some isle of the Pacific, and by your influence and your prayers tame and evangelize its whole population, would it not seem a very desirable exploit? You may do all this good at home, and feel as joyous at last as if it had been done in the other hemisphere, and for another people

We have none about us who worship a block of wood, but we have no doubt many who are as real idolaters as can be found in the recesses of Tartary or on the banks of the Ganges. We have none who lacerate their bodies to fit themselves for heaven, but there are many who inflict upon their consciences and their peace, wounds deep and wide and incurable. We have none who *may not have* the word of God, but many who trample its precepts under their feet; none without a Sabbath, but many who do not sanctify the day of rest; none who never heard the gospel, but many who never obeyed it; none without the bread that perisheth, but many who have no relish for that bread which endureth to everlasting life. Here then, on the hither side of every ocean, is a field where benevolence may operate in the cure of distress, and where it may achieve a conquest as valuable and as splendid, as can be won in any land or any clime.

V. I urge you to benevolence by one other motive, *the dying love of Christ*. It was in the cure of this very same distress, that he came in the flesh and died on the tree. He was rich, but for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. He came to seek and to save them that were lost. His heart bled, it would seem, over the miseries of the apostacy. He felt a benevolence which to gratify, he let go all the honors of the upper world. He saw us cast out in the day that we were born, polluted, and in our blood; and as he passed by us, he bid us live. But he could only redeem us with his own blood. If he would be our friend, all the wrath which it became us to feel he must endure.

Now the same world that he pitied so much, we are inviting you to compassionate. And he declared himself our friend, while we were all his enemies. Probably some of the very court that condemned him, and the band that took him, and the guard that watched him, purged their iniquities in his blood. Hence, if men hate you it affords no reason why you should not love them. While we were yet enemies, Christ died for us.

Enter then upon the work of making your fellow-men happy, and you are in the very vineyard where the Lord Jesus labored. He has already rescued from the ruins of the apostacy, a great multitude that no man can number. The work is going on, and he invites your co-operation. To be employed with him will be honorable, and will secure to you a share with him in the same victory, and the same awards. "He that overcometh will I grant

to sit with me on my throne even as I overcame and am sat down with my father on his throne." It would seem that no one could resist the motive thus presented. By all that Christ has done, by every tear he shed, and every prayer he uttered, and every pang he bore, you are urged to spend your strength, and utter your prayers, and weep your tears, in the cause of the same miserable multitude. And they are *your* brethren, they were not *his*. I urge you, in the name of my Master, to love your own mother's children, those who are flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bone. You can meet no man but a brother, you can hate no man but a brother, you are invited to do good to none else.

And in the Lord Jesus you are not only presented with a motive to become benevolent, but you have a pattern by which that principle should operate. It is said of him, that he went about doing good. When the disciples of John came to inquire who he was, they were sent away with this history of him, "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Thus all kinds of benefits that he could bestow upon a miserable world he did. His main object was to save the soul, and here he bent his mightiest efforts, because here could be applied the most effectual remedy to the maladies he came to exterminate.

But he could see misery in no shape and feel indifferent. He took our sorrows and bore our sicknesses. His path was lined with the couches of the palsied, the decrepit, the miserable; and every where there saluted him the cry of some blind Bartimeus, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me." And he could suffer no such cry to be suppressed till the sufferer had come near and was healed. When there came to him the ten lepers, nine of whom he knew would never return to thank him, he healed the whole. The multitude who had gone into a desert place to attend upon his ministry, although they rejected the overtures he brought them, still must not be sent away till he had fed them. If any mother wished him to bless her children, they must open her an avenue to his presence. If one petitioned for the life of his servant, he must live. If even a Sidonian would ask his help, although it was not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs, and although he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, still the veriest outcast must not go away from his presence without a blessing. Even the famishing and heretical Samaritan must drink the living water that springeth up to everlasting life. The very man who had come to take him must not leave his presence

wounded; and the thief, who in the dying hour solicited his aid, must go with him to paradise. Into every ear to which he had access he poured instruction; every house he entered he blessed; and in every village, and every street, where were the impress of his feet, were left behind him the fruits of his benevolence. Tell me the single case where he withheld the blessing that was asked, and you may go and do likewise. If he would not grant to James and John the distinction they craved in his kingdom, that being the appropriate appointment of the Father, still he would suffer them to drink of the cup that he drank of, and be baptized with his baptism. Thus there dropped from his hand, upon the beings that came about him, every variety of blessings. Who has not been impressed with the fact, that the very first miracle done in Cana of Galilee had respect to the conveniences of a marriage feast. He knew that if he should turn their water into wine, it would supply the deficiencies of poverty, render the host respected, and the occasion more pleasant.

Thus have we the very example we need. The benevolence which we are called to exercise must take the same track, must flow in the same channel. It will lead us, as we have the ability, to do every kind of good to all men; to supply their wants, heal their sicknesses, enlighten their ignorance, relieve their anxieties, awaken their consciences, and render smooth, and safe, and pleasant, their passage through this desert world. It will lead us to feel another's wo, and weep for another's misery. When the Lord Jesus approached Jerusalem, saw them about to reject him, and exclaimed, weeping, "O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thine eyes," how strongly and how strikingly does he pour out the benevolence of his soul. Thus we are to look over a world of beings that sin has rendered miserable, and weep as he did for the calamities that are coming upon them. And there is no man so poor or insignificant but he may communicate happiness. Let him add his weight, if it be but a grain, to the accumulating mass of public sentiment that is now attempting to put down sin and misery in every form and attitude, and he will not die till he has achieved something that will tell to his credit in the day of retribution. Some field of labor will always open to the industrious if they will enter and toil.

## REMARKS.

1. In the *want* of this benevolence, how strong is the proof we

have that men are wholly depraved. It is common to find men who are willing to do good to their families and friends, to wish them prosperity and advancement, but if their kindness goes no farther, all is selfish. How few cast a look of sympathy over the whole surface of misery. This none do but believers, else others too would fulfil the law, and would be safe. Now men that cannot love their fellow-men, their brethren whom they have seen, how can they love God whom they have not seen? How can that heart be possessed of holiness that aches not at the miseries which sully this otherwise beautiful world? And how can the heart ache over woes which the hands are not employed in lessening or annihilating? Thus the second table of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," will be as swift a witness in the great day against the human family as the first. A totally selfish heart will find it as much impossible to put forth a benevolent affection toward man as toward God. In either case, it sadly interferes with our native self-supremacy.

2. We see the necessity that men should be renewed. Here lies our only hope that they will exercise the benevolence of the gospel. Till then they will fight and rage, and rave, will render themselves unhappy, and all others with whom they come in contact. Till then the war will continue in the family, the neighborhood, the town, the state, and the world. It is a cheering thought, that God has continued to us the means of curing that deadliest evil of the apostacy, a selfish heart. Without this nothing could have ever cradled the corrupt passions on a larger scale or smaller, and this poor world could have hoped for no respite from the plagues that waste its treasures and its health, and darkens, to the blackness of midnight, its immortal prospects. O, come that day, when the chief physician shall ply his skill, and change the hearts of men, and thus cure at one wondrous touch their thousand plagues. In any world a selfish heart, the opposite of love, would render men unhappy. Place selfish hearts in heaven, and they would there be as fruitful as elsewhere in misery.

3. How pleasant is the prospect of a millennium. Then the benevolence we contemplate will become general. Men will be employed in rendering each other happy. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole

of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den." If by that promise that all shall know the Lord from the least even to the greatest, we are not to understand that every individual heart shall be made holy, still so many hearts will be sanctified that the prevailing influence on earth shall be a religious influence, and the paramount affection love. How easily then will all bad habits be corrected, how useless be bolts and bars, and criminal laws, and fortifications; and how done for ever litigations, and scandal, and alienations, and broken hearts, and ruined character, and bankruptey, and imprisonment. Then this world, so long a raging ocean, will become at length a peaceful pool, reflecting the image of its Maker. Then God will delight in us, and angels love to watch over us.

4. The subject will lead us to think with pleasure of heaven. How pleasant is the thought of being removed from all this misery, and of being where there will reign a universal benevolence. Every angel, and every redeemed spirit will be willing that other angels, and other spirits should be as happy as himself. And the grand employment of heaven will be to communicate happiness. God they will love supremely, but as God is infinitely happy, and will not need their service, they will no doubt be employed everlastingly in making other beings happy. Thus they will be workers together with God: for it is thus that God is employed, and thus angels. See them at Sodom, see them at Babylon with Daniel, see them at Bethlehem, with the shepherds, and in the garden with the agonizing Redeemer. O, it is pleasant in this dark and perturbed world, to have a heaven to think of, and a heaven to hope for, where there will reign for ever an unqualified friendship, and our prayer, and our song, and our employ be the prayer, and the song, and the employ of all.

5. The subject renders a place of misery desirable. O, let these discordant passions one day find a world where they may live alone! If it does not comport with the purpose of God to eradicate them all, by sanctifying the hearts in which they predominate, let them be all congregated together, and no more disturb the peace and the quiet of those in whose hearts they do not reign. It is verily believed that when the whole design of digging a bottomless pit, and kindling a quenchless fire shall be known, and the beings judged who are there congregated, it will be seen that the universe could not have been perfect without a hell any more than a town or county could have done without a prison and a gallows. And all the people shall say amen.

## SERMON LVII.

### CHRIST CONDUCTS TO HEAVEN A HOLY PEOPLE.

TITUS II. 14.

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

MORE than eighteen hundred years since, we were visited by a stranger from a foreign world. Two questions were immediately agitated. Who is he? and What his errand? He settled them both; but they have come up, again and again, to the present day. A previous discourse had a bearing upon the *first* of these questions, and the text now before us will require us to attend to the *second*. It is selected, you will remember, from that very book which he left with us, on purpose to answer every inquiry that men would need to make respecting himself and his mission. We learn in the context, who it was that thus gave himself for us: "The great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ."

My readers are aware, that the same men, who deny that our Savior Jesus Christ is the great God, differ as widely from the apostle, relative to the part he acted for us. They would allow that he was commissioned to make known to us the will of God, especially the fact of a resurrection, which nature did not reveal, and establish Christian ordinances, and set us an example of virtue. That his death was vicarious, or a substitute for our condemnation, they would generally, and I presume universally deny.

Now, if we need a Savior to do more for us than this, then we need, not the one they offer, but whom the apostle exhibits to our view in the text. If my sins must be atoned for, if an evil heart of unbelief must be removed, and when sanctified, I must still be accepted through the merits and the righteousness of another, then I need a Savior to do more for me than teach me truth, and give me ordinances, and be my pattern in virtue.

Had my ruin consisted merely in having lost a knowledge of God and duty, an angel might have become my instructor, and his example would have answered me the same purpose, as that of the Son of God. It would have seemed in that case wholly unne-

cessary, that God should be manifest in the flesh. But if the whole *heart* was faint, as well as the whole *head* sick; if there hung over us the curse of a broken law, and we were so alienated from God as to be content in perpetual exile from his service and his fellowship; then both instruction and example, if nothing more were done, would be wholly lost upon me.

What can it avail to present truth or exhibit purity, before a mind that disrelishes moral beauty, unless provision is made to subdue the aversion of the heart? And even then, how could I be happy with the curse of a broken commandment pendent over my head! O, give me such a Savior as Paul describes, or when all is done, there is left undone the main thing requisite to my obedience and my blessedness. If the Lord Jesus Christ came merely to instruct me, so did the prophets and the apostles; and their example, had their hearts been perfectly holy, would have been all I needed on this point; and thus either of them might have been my Savior as really as he who is now frequently exhibited as the only Redeemer.

If I must be content with a Savior who is merely my school-master, I am led to ask, Why so much said of him previously to his advent! Did prophets anticipate his approach many thousand years; and martyrs hang their hopes on him so long; and angels announce his ingress, soon as the time was out; and spent the night by his manger; and a voice from heaven name him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; and was this mighty personage, who so long held a world in agonized suspense, merely some teacher coming to do for us what any man, if commissioned, could have done as well? Is Jehovah accustomed thus to pour honor upon a creature, sent on an errand no more grand than this?

“Is ocean into tempest wrought,  
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly?”

No man can have a very deep sense of sin, and not feel his need of having done for him more than all this. He who owes ten thousand talents, and has nothing to pay, will need a Savior who can take that debt upon him. He who has drawn upon himself the denunciations of his Maker's law, will need a Savior to bear that burden for him. He who has a carnal mind, that is enmity against God, is not subject to his law nor can be, will wish a Savior who can subdue that heart to loyalty and duty. And he who, after all this is done, dare not hope for heaven, unless taken by

the hand by some mighty Prince, and led every inch of the way till he is within its threshold, will inquire if no such Captain of his salvation is provided? And he will open his Bible, and read a single sentence, and there, the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ, for whose appearing to judge the world his people are looking, is the very protector and friend he needs; "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The text furnishes a natural division of thought, and will need the aid of no numerical distinctions.

*Who gave himself for us.* His presentation at the altar of justice, as our victim, was his own act. He is not seized and bound, as the barbarous nations secure their victims, willing or unwilling; nor comes to the altar as Isaac did, not knowing where the lamb was for a burnt offering. He had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again. *Not merely was he given*, although this was true, but *he gave himself*. And it was not merely his *time*, and *strength*, and *patience*, that he gave, as instructors do, but his life. How easily could he have blighted all our hopes in that dark hour. Had he sent Judas to his own place, or rendered him an honest man, when he came to steal the betraying kiss; or had he struck lifeless that midnight band, that came to apprehend him; or had he let down into hell that senate chamber, with its mass of hypocrisy; and paralyzed the sinews of that soldiery that crucified him; then had there been none to betray, arrest, or murder the Lamb of God. And he had all this power in himself, else he did not *give himself*. He who goes to death without his choice, by a power, human or divine, that he cannot control, cannot be said to lay down his life: his life is taken from him.

But the Sufferer of Calvary, when he left the bosom of the Father, had his eye fixed, and through his whole life kept it fixed upon the scene of the cross, as the finishing act of his humiliation, and felt not that his work was done till he yielded his life. Hence, while it is true that the *Father gave his Son*, it is equally true that the *Son gave himself*. He was as voluntary in *redeeming* the world, as in the act that *built it*.

*Who gave himself for us.* Here each word has meaning. Who are we to understand by *us*? Not Paul himself and the good brother in the gospel to whom he wrote, merely. If another apostle may decide, the Lord Jesus Christ was "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." I have no wish now to enter the list in that controversy,

which never should have been among brethren who hold the Head, whether the atonement, as distinguished from redemption, is *general* or *limited*. Those who do not distinguish atonement from redemption, must limit it, or avow the salvation of all men; and those who do thus distinguish, may with propriety make atonement general, and still are not accountable for a consequence, which is made to follow, not on their principles, but that of their opponents.

Is there not a common ground, where those who love the truth can and must meet? Neither of the parties to whom I now refer, assert, that God has purposed or will accomplish the salvation of all men, through the atonement of Christ; nor on the other hand, will deny, that the atonement places the human family at large, in circumstances happily differing from that of devils. To men there go out overtures of mercy, to devils none. But does it not follow, that if mercy is offered, and the offer sincere, salvation is possible; that is, the obstructions are removed on the part of God, that would have kept men from heaven, even had they repented! and this is precisely what I understand those to mean, who make the atonement general. The death of Christ rendered it possible for God to save, without dishonoring his law, or weakening his government, as many as it should please him to sanctify.

And what is the force of the preposition, *for* us? Can it mean less or more, than that the death of Christ was a substitute for our condemnation? This idea is certainly consonant with the whole drift of revelation. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed:—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all:—for the transgressions of my people was he stricken." Thus the griefs, and the sorrows, and the wounds, and the bruises, the chastisements, and the stripes, all fell on him by substitution, and were borne instead of the everlasting miseries of hell, which we must have borne, had he not offered himself as our ransom.

The apostle proceeds to make known to us the design with which the Savior gave himself for us, "*That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us.*" There are here included pardon and sanctification.

*First, pardon.* The sinner can neither be considered as redeemed from iniquity, or purified, while his conscience is polluted with unpardoned sin. He is still under the curse of the law, has

the brand of infamy upon him, and the badges of death around him. Hence, when he believes, and pardon can be administered, without injury to the Divine government, his cleansing from the defilement of sin is begun. There is a text in one of the minor prophets, which though spoken with reference to the Church, is beautifully expressive of this first act of God's mercy to sinners. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighted in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." And in another text it reads, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." And we have the delightful idea of forgiveness in this text, "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." The very first act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, secures this blessing, and we stand, though not on the same footing as if we had never sinned, yet the same as relates to our exposedness to the penalties of the law. The transgressions of the law, that had been minuted against us in the record of the Divine mind, are blotted out. God even speaks as if he would forget them, and never suffer them to come into his mind again.

But pardon, as rich a blessing as it is, to a sinner made sensible of his gross and dreadful departure from God, holds a place second in importance to that of sanctification. Hence to *purify us*, was an important part of the work which the Lord Jesus Christ came to do for us; by which I understand, delivering us from the power of sinful affections. This is done through the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, and is ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch as the Spirit acts a part in the economy of redemption, subordinate to that of the Mediator, and is spoken of as sent by him. He takes away the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh, and creates us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. Christ is formed in his people the hope of glory; his image is impressed on the heart; and the lineaments of that image are drawn out to view in deeds of loyalty and duty.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ brings his people to feel like him, to love his character, his law, his government, and kingdom, and all the duties of piety, and benevolence. And his purpose and promise is, that where he has begun a good work he will carry it

on, till all moral pollution is eradicated. Thus the character of man, under the transforming influence spoken of in the text, is changed, till, in a moral point of view, he is no longer the same man. From being a child of wrath fitting for destruction, he becomes an heir of God, and a candidate for glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. The desire to be holy, and so like his Master, becomes his ruling passion. In his estimation conformity to God, in the whole temper of his mind, is the greatest good; and no hope gives him such a joy, as when he can say with confidence, "Then shall I be satisfied when I wake with thy likeness."

While the followers of the Lord Jesus are thus under a process of sanctification, they become, as a matter of course in a world like this, a *peculiar people*. They have desires, and hopes, and enjoyments, and fears, and aversions, such as are found in no other people. They have another employment, and form other habits, and sustain new relationships, and enter new society, and in their speech and demeanor, embracing a thousand nameless things, become a peculiar people. Whatever pains they may take to conceal their peculiarities, they become and continue like no other people on the face of the whole earth. And the more they act in character; the nearer they live to their Master, the more sure are they to widen the contrast between themselves, and the world of the ungodly. Hence the world will soon know them, and break from their fellowship, and cast out their names as evil; and Christ will receive them, and be a God unto them, and they shall be his people.

They are *zealous of good works*. Here perhaps more than at any other point is seen their peculiarity. The promptness, the pains, and the sacrifices manifested in doing good, render them the perfect contrast of anything seen in the habits of unsanctified men. Hence the fact is not to be disputed, that the personal efforts, and charities that have been expended upon human misery, degradation, and contempt, have been the efforts and the charities of this peculiar people. On the list of this world's benefactors their names are arranged alone, and the catalogue will tell to their advantage in that day when the Savior shall be heard to say, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

The ungodly may have fits of charitable feeling, when provision is to be made exclusively for the life that now is; but their chari-

ties do not usually extend in their effects beyond the grave. When urged to enlighten those that know not God, or snatch from death those that have not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; they lack the faith that can give importance to these religious and spiritual realities. And yet here, where the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, is the very spot where the godly display their warmest zeal, and make their best, their mightiest efforts. The zeal of God's people is uniform and extensive, and does not, like "crackling thorns and burning coals, make a great blaze and die." It grows out of the combined influence of the Christian affections, or rather *is* the Christian affections concentrated, and pouring out their energies upon the object of their commiseration or praise.

Christian zeal aims to render this world what God would have it; to draw it back, from alienation and misery, to subjection and enjoyment. It would cure every species of plague and suffering, and render holy, respected, and happy every child of the fall. And when *men* need not its aid, would compassionate the animal creation, till not a worm should suffer. Thus will operate the zeal that piety begets, and thus the redeemed of Jesus Christ, will be rendered, in a world cold and friendless like this, a peculiar people.

There is still another thought in this text, which though *last* is not *least*. These redeemed, and peculiar, and zealous beings, Jesus Christ is said to purify *unto himself*. I see a very precious thought here: they belong finally to him. They were given him in the covenant of redemption. Hence we hear him say, in that remarkable prayer just before he suffered, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." And lest any should draw a wrong inference from the fact that as Mediator he was a recipient, he addresses the Father again, and says, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." His people are to be his associates for ever; his family; his friends; his admirers, and his worshipers. "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

There is something in this thought which to me bespeaks the Savior Divine. Were he a mere servant, were he less than the very builder and proprietor of this world, he could not have been given a commission of such a nature, as to entitle him to possess, and call his own, the beings he should save: else it would not be true, that the Eternal cannot give his glory to another. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ came to redeem to himself, by his death, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. I close with a few paragraphs of

## EXPOSTULATION,

With such as cannot relish this mortifying gospel. I am fully aware, and lament it, that every position taken in this discourse is controverted; and my apology for the view I have given, is, that I could in honesty give no other.

Man's lost and desperate condition, requiring an atonement, is found in one shape and another, on almost every page of the Bible, and his safety depends on knowing it, and the gospel was sent to acquaint him with it; hence this must be a radical truth in every message which we carry from God to man. Moreover, we see men exhibit that temper, and form those habits, which would teach us their ruin, if we had not been taught it from heaven. Now a truth that comes to us so confirmed, we must receive, and must proclaim; and if men will not believe it, or if they do not choose to lay it to heart, we can only say with the prophet, "If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." If you can keep your apostacy a secret from your fellow-men, or from angels, or from devils, do; and if you can hide the shame of it, do; and if by such a course you can escape the dire consequences of that apostacy, do. We wish you safe, and wish you happy, and if you know of a *safer* or *happier* course than this gospel presents, you have but to make the experiment. But then remember, if your experiment fails, and you do not find out your ruin till death, you must not calculate that your mistake can then be corrected.

If you are conscious of some depravity, and still cannot make up your mind to owe your redemption to the death of Christ, then you must reject the Bible or explain it as you can. The text says he gave *himself* for us. And we hear him say, "I lay down my life for the sheep." And many scriptures that have been quoted, and more that might, seem evidently to put his blood in the place of ours, and heal us, if we are ever healed by his stripes.

Why object to the idea that he died for us. Does it too much degrade and blacken the human character, that we must thus come as it were to the place of execution, and have the halter about our neck, and there stand and see another take our place, and hang upon the tree in our stead? I know it will be the everlasting disgrace of our world, that we should have so conducted as to render it necessary that Christ should die for us. But it will deepen our disgrace, if we deny the fact, and assign some other reason, not the true one, why the Lord of glory was hanged on a tree. We shall crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

If *his* was not a vicarious death, why did he die? Do you answer, "Death hath passed upon all men for that all have sinned." Then it seems you make him a sinner? But the good Book assures me, that there was no guile found in his mouth. Satan came and found nothing in him. He was a Lamb without spot. Do you say that he died to finish out his obedience? Obedience to *what law*? Does the law of God require that his perfectly obedient subjects should die? or is death there made the wages of sin? I see no demand for his death, unless he died *for us*, or was a sinner. If you are not driven to the same alternative and can invent a third reason, more satisfactory, you must adopt it, and make the Bible bear you out in it if you can.

Do you object to this gospel because it requires that you be *purified*? Then it seems you doubt whether sin has polluted you? And if so why have any gospel? or do you choose to carry all your moral deformity with you into the grave, and into eternity? and if so, then we understand you. You have only to let the gospel alone then, and let others, who would not choose to die in their sins, have the benefit of its overtures.

A gospel that shall not render men holy, can be worth nothing. It may gather, and baptize, and cast the enclosures of a covenant, about a congregation of worldlings, but if it have no purifying effect, it will leave them still the children of their father the devil. They will be as fair candidates for perdition, when such a gospel shall have exerted upon them its mightiest influence, as when its first accent broke upon their ear. But a gospel like that which Paul preached, must urge the claims of the Divine law, and press men to break off their sins by righteousness, and turn their feet to God's testimonies. It will gather motives to holiness from all worlds, from the fear of hell, from the hope of heaven, from the comfort of the present life, and especially from the love of Christ; for it will "thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Now let us be prudent enough to have this very gospel, or none. If we wish merely to be amused, let us not employ a gospel to do it, but the pipe, the timbrel, and the dance. If we care not how much pollution adheres to us when we are judged, then let us cast the gospel and the whole Bible from us, and enter into a covenant with death, and make an agreement with hell, and eat and drink, for to-morrow we die

But you dislike the *peculiarity* urged upon believers in the gos-

pel. You wish not to be singular, and be cast out of the world while you remain in it. Well, we simply say, that there can be no gospel gathered from the Bible, that does not urge it, nor Christian character without it. If the truth must render men holy, it must, in a world like ours, render them *peculiar*. In two respects the good man, from the moment he is born of God, becomes unlike the men of this world. All the features of depravity that are cast from his character, and the features of holiness ingrafted on it, will tend to render him peculiar. Thus in two directions will the difference widen, and will go on extending through time and through eternity. To produce this peculiarity is the very design of the gospel; for men by nature are unlike God, and the gospel, when it produces its legitimate effect, renders men like God. Hence, unless it sanctify all men, or the regenerate are taken immediately to heaven, it must introduce into society a peculiar people. If you are offended with this peculiarity, then you need not put it on. You can live in this world without it, and you can die without it, but you can not live in heaven without it.

That *zeal* begotten in his people by the grace of God, constitutes I know the most offensive feature of their peculiarity. But God's people cannot be without it, and please him. And he has never promised to render his people what the world can admire. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore shall the world hate you." You need have nothing to do with his people, or imbibe their zeal if it offends you. There is current a gospel, and you can attend upon it, that pours out against this zeal the whole torrent of its invective. It would nourish a cold philosophical religion, that shall never reach or warm the heart, that will have but little to do with prayer, or praise, or holy feeling, or heavenly aspiration, or effort to save souls; or take away, in any shape, the curse that has lighted upon this dark world. You can take your pew under such a gospel and never be urged to zeal and engagedness. But where it will conduct you, may demand a doubt. Not to heaven surely, where they cease not day nor night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." There must be great zeal where there is such perpetual worship. *Day and night!* O, how such zeal as this would be lashed and scouted in this cold and cheerless world!

But the gospel of Jesus Christ aims to make this world as much like heaven as possible; would beget all the zeal they have there,

and all the industry, and all the celestial fire. We hide not our wish, to render men in this world as much in earnest in serving God, and blessing his creatures, as they are in heaven. And, sure as you breath, you have never seen a zeal like that in heaven. It was not in Paul, nor Peter, nor Brainard, nor Whitefield, nor Mar-  
 ÿn. And if you have ever once seen enough any where to offend you, depend upon it you could not stay in heaven an hour.

Finally, it offends you, that the Savior should be the proprietor of the Church he purchased with his blood. You would have him an agent, a prophet, a messenger; you would not allow him to own his sheep; you would make him an insignificant subject of that kingdom he purchased with his blood. And why this *zeal* to degrade him? Did he not earn the kingdom with his stripes, and his wounds, and his sweat, and his dying agonies? And did he not build the very world in which he has set up this kingdom? The apostle thought proper to speak of his purifying *to himself* a peculiar people.

And why not let them *be his*? Are *you* afraid to be his? Would it grieve you to be a member of his family, and have a seat at the supper of the Lamb? Well, dear friend, there will come a day when you will be afraid, if you are *not* his. When he shall come in the clouds of heaven, and all his holy angels with him, and the last trumpet shall have waked you from the sleep of the grave, then "he that believeth shall not make haste," but all others,—oh, with what hurry and confusion will they quit their sepulchres! and with what untold anguish will they call upon the rocks and mountains, to fall on them and hide them from the face that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! Will you not then wish that you were his?

Ye disciples of the Lord Jesus, did it ever occur to you how precious a thought this is. You belong to this very Lord Jesus. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." How safe and how happy, if he can make you so! and you have no fear but he can. Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you. You will see him come directly to gather you, and you will hail him as he comes, "My Lord, and my God." My soul casts in her lot with you. We glory in belonging to Christ, and look wishfully toward that hour, when we shall see him as he is and be like him. Then, almighty Redeemer, then shall I be satisfied when I wal-  
 with thy likeness. Amen.

## SERMON LVIII.

### GOSPEL TRUTH DISTINGUISHED.

JOHN XVIII. 38.

What is truth ?

THIS question was put to our Lord by the miserable time-serving Pilate, who had no heart to love what he inquired after. He, and the whole multitude of the ungodly in all ages, would have the reputation of being the friends of truth. But when they have inquired what truth is, they are careful to turn away their ear from the answer. This one fatal error characterizes the whole human family, till the Spirit of God sanctifies the heart. Till then, they will not candidly examine the Bible, nor put themselves under the guidance of the Spirit of God, nor will love the truth when they know it. Hence to know and love the truth, is characteristic of a heavenly mind.

But the question still comes up, What is that truth which I must know and love, in order to have evidence that I am born of God ? The text would furnish a field too large for a single sermon, and must be diminished. *It will be my object to give you a few general characteristics of gospel truth.* In doing this, I shall name the particular doctrines no farther than may be necessary, to illustrate some leading feature of revealed truth generally.

I should choose to say in answer to the question in the text What is truth ?

1. *Truth is that which is consistent with the main scope of God's word.* An insulated text or two, may seem to support what is not truth. By such means almost any sentiment may be drawn from the Bible, or from any other book. We could thus prove that "There is no God ;" "Thou shalt not surely die ;" "Thou shalt hate thine enemy ;" "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." Now you may fill a book with such insulated texts, but it would be all false: a lie couched in Bible language, but not the less a lie.

All the false doctrines, that have spread their plagues through

this ill-fated world, has thus originated, and been thus sustained. To him who is willing to understand it, the Bible is plain ; but to one who prefers delusion, and wishes to believe a lie, because he has no sure pleasure in the truth, the Bible presents it in that disconnected form, that he may wrest it, if he please, to his own destruction.

Still it will prove true, that when a tortured text has been made the basis of a false doctrine, that doctrine will not be sustained by the main drift of inspiration. It cannot be supported by other texts, without giving them a false and forced construction, and the whole system when thus built will be a baseless fabric. There will be many texts in the very face of the false doctrine, and in a greater number still its falsehood will be implied. But it will not be thus with truth. When you have fairly gathered any doctrine that God meant to teach, from any part of his word, you will find it asserted in other parts, implied in others, and in none contradicted.

Now apply this rule to any one doctrine, or system of doctrines and it will assuredly assist you in discovering what is truth. The saint's perseverance, for instance, is clearly taught in this text, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way ; though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand ;" and in this, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ;" and in this, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ ;" and in this, "The righteous shall hold on his way."

Now the doctrine thus taught in a number of texts of which I have quoted but few, has implied support in a far more numerous class still. All those texts which speak of heaven, as the final home of believers, imply the doctrine ; all those which make regenerated men the Savior's reward ; the promises made to believers, of help in the time of need, of victory in the hour of conflict, of escape from temptation, of light in darkness, of strength equal to their day, of guidance through life, and of hope in death. It is implied in that assurance of salvation which Paul had, and which every believer may have ; in the terms of the covenant, which is said to be *everlasting, well ordered in all things and sure* ; and in the

very nature of holiness, which immediately on taking existence in the heart, seizes heavenly objects as its own inheritance. And the doctrine thus supported *directly*, and by *extensive implication*, is nowhere contradicted.

Now bring any doctrine to this test, and if thus supported it is true. Upon the truth, light will shine from almost every page of inspiration. But we must be *candid* and *diligent*, or we may not hope to be enlightened. If men go to the Bible, determined to support a scheme of their own, it is by no means certain, that there is any lie, so obvious to detection, that it may not be thus sustained: for it is threatened, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." If you still ask, What is truth? I answer again,

II. *Truth is that, after which men inquire humbly and prayerfully.* That was a good ejaculation of the Psalmist, "Open thou mine eyes, and I shall behold wondrous things out of thy law." All Bible truth is in its very nature humiliating to a sinner; hence there must be humility, or there can be here no possible evidence of that candor, which is necessary in researches after truth of any kind. And we shall pray while endeavoring to acquaint ourselves with God's word, because a desire to know the truth implies a heart to love it, and this implies a spirit of prayer.

All those men who have searched the most profoundly, after the mind of God, have been men of prayer. They made ample proficiency in their inquiries, because in the outset they imbued their souls with the spirit of the gospel. In answer to their prayers they had the teachings of the Spirit of God. It is only a mind opened by the Sanctifier for the reception of truth, joined to a heart softened and subdued by him, that can have any very exalted pleasure in becoming acquainted with those holy objects which the truths of God present. He will have a low opinion of his own wisdom, and will feel his need of Divine aid at every stage of his progress.

It is recorded of one good man, who is known to have made uncommon proficiency in his researches after truth, that he studied his Bible every day upon his knees. And of every good man it must be true, from the nature of the case, that he studies the word of God with his eyes directed toward heaven for Divine teaching. Between truth, and a humble prayerful spirit, there

is that indissoluble connection, that will justify the inference, that where the one is, there we may with great probability look for the other.

But the search for error requires no humility, and no prayer. He who forms his system out of his own heart, and goes to the Bible to have it sustained, will be too proud to let the testimony of inspiration alter it. He feels no need of light and asks none: would be afraid to pray, lest God should convince him that his favorite system is a lie. Hence inquire, would you know what truth is, what are the doctrines that men learn on their knees; feeling themselves ignorant, and poor, and blind, and naked, and in need of all things. And would you know what is not truth, inquire what doctrines are brought to the Bible to be compared with it, with a pride and a self-sufficiency, that scruple not to hew down any section of that book that will not quadrate with the favorite system; and prepared to proscribe the whole, if it assume any authority over the decisions of human reason. Do you still ask, "What is truth?" I answer,

III. *Truth is that which produces changes of character for the better.* God has told us plainly what is the design of his word. It was given to teach us, "that denying ungodliness, and every worldly lust, we should live soberly and righteously, and godly in this present evil world." Such then is the effect, that it is to be expected truth will have upon the human character; hence that which has this effect is truth. It was the prayer of our Lord for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." And who will deny, that men are fitted for heaven, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. This fact admitted, if we can ascertain what doctrines have been the means of making men better, we shall have learned what the truth is.

Where then do we look for the most frequent conversions? under what system? and under what men? The question amounts to this, What doctrines have been preached, and believed, where the Spirit of God has the most frequently and the most powerfully operated, in producing revivals? The men who have been the most favored, in seeing the work of God prosper under their ministrations, and have turned many to righteousness, what is their creed? Do they deny the atonement? or do they place it at the foundation of all human hopes? Do they acknowledge the Divine nature of Jesus Christ? Do they consider man so depraved, that his sacrifices are an abomination to the Lord; and his obsti

nacy such, that God must take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, or there will be no repentance, and no obedience? Do they believe, or not, that God is a Sovereign, and worketh all things after the counsel of his own will? Do they credit the fact that God has prepared a quenchless fire, and a never-dying worm, for the punishment of the finally impenitent?

We do not deny that in some instances congregations have become acquainted with the truth, by other means than through the ministry placed over them, and that the truth thus acquired has produced awakenings; nor yet, that the *Bible alone* has been the means of saving men, notwithstanding the opposing influence of a false gospel. We ask what are the doctrines that have generated alarm, and have induced men to fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel!

Will it be denied that these revivals, so called, have made men better. It will be admitted, that they have made some men worse, that the truth long and daringly resisted, has produced not a few of the most hard and desperate men, that have ever lived. There *have been* sore and alarming instances of relapse, that have cast whole Churches into deep distress.

But, this admitted, have not revivals produced very noted and numerous cases of reform? Have not the profane, the intemperate, the proud, and the false, been rendered virtuous, by some power that operated at these seasons? Now if it was God who wrought, it was truth he used: and whether you own or not, that the power of God produced the changes witnessed, you will hardly deny that the truth was the means: for it is not more unscriptural, than unphilosophical, to believe that falsehood will generate virtue.

Ascertain then whether the reception or the rejection of any given doctrine, or system of doctrines, is more generally attended by a change of character for the better, producing sobriety, morality, and benevolence, and the fact will aid you in your search after truth. I know there is much boast of morality, where doctrines are current, that are plainly at war with what the Bible seems very clearly to teach, but I know too that such boast is vain. The virtue that thrives under error is proud, and selfish, and cold, and often very malignant, and cruel; makes but few and small sacrifices, and is at the best a mere polished and civilized idolatry. It may drop a tear over the sufferings of the *body*, and be prompt to cure temporary distress; but can look with the indifference of a statue at the ruins of the *moral world*, and feels not a pang nor utters a groan, at the sight of six hundred millions

of souls sinking to perdition, and degraded and miserable al. the way thither. It cares not who suffers through ignorance of God, nor is miserable through the lack of vision. We do not deny, if they like this picture, that such a morality *does prevail* where men have turned the truth of God into a lie.

But let us make a *high regard to the best interests of men*, the leading feature of morality, and then inquire where we find it. Does such a morality thrive under what is termed evangelical truth, or where this system is scouted, and libelled, and proscribed? If we see men, on embracing these doctrines become *better*, then believe them true, but if *worse*, then you may believe them a lie. Do you ask me still, "What is truth?" I answer,

IV. *Truth is that which distresses, and often offends ungodly men.* The character of God, and his people as far as they are like him, is built on the truth. But unholy beings, men and devils, have a character bottomed upon falsehood. They feel and act as they do, because in their esteem a lie is the truth. Hence the truth is at war with their character, their conscience, their pleasures, and their hopes. It holds before them a mirror in which they appear ugly to themselves, and see their need of a better character, in order to be accepted of God. It shows them that their stronghold is a house of straw. It exhibits them as playing the fool with their own best interests. A mad man, who in a paroxysm of his disease has butchered his family, and half dispatched himself, and has waked to consciousness in the very act of suicide, is scarcely a sorer picture of wretchedness and ruin, than a sinner upon whose conscience there has been poured suddenly the light of truth. It shows him that he is laboring hard to fit himself for irrecoverable ruin; and is heaping treasure together for the last days. His character must be altered, or the light shut out that shows him its deformity.

Now assure yourselves what doctrines bring ungodly men into his condition of distress, and you learn what is truth. On the other hand, if you will ascertain what doctrines offend and grieve the *good man*, you will learn what is *not* truth. Let me appeal to that part of my audience, who have yet no hope that they are born of God, but who have frequently felt alarm. On that night when you went home so unhappy from the place of worship, and wet your couch with tears, and roared, and was in anguish all night, what doctrine had been exhibited! Was it the entire depravity of the heart? or was it an attempt to prove that you are not that

most and ruined being, which this pitiless orthodoxy would render you? Was it Divine sovereignty? or a discourse that went to show, that when God had built the world he placed it without the limits of his empire, and left it to govern and watch over itself? Was it the doctrine of decrees? or an attempt to show that a sparrow may fall to the ground, and God *not* know it, and that the hairs of our head are *not* numbered? Was it election? or was it an effort to prove that the Father has not given any of our race to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that if he has, they may not come to him, and that many who do come to him may be cast out? Was it the doctrine of ever-during future punishment? or a train of reasonings that went to prove that the great gulf had been bridged over?

Go on, my audience, and apply this rule to other doctrines, to whatever extent you please, it will help you greatly in determining what is truth. Let us suppose a case, or rather state one that *has* happened. A sinner lies on the dying bed. There goes to him one in the character of a minister of Jesus Christ. But he tells the dying man, that he has no occasion to be much alarmed, that his heart is not *radically* polluted, that he must receive baptism, and forgive his enemies, and be willing to die, and all will be well. He is baptized!! The minister goes on; God is merciful, and Christ has died for sinners: there can be no doubt but the dying man will be soon in Abraham's bosom.—He retires, and another man, with far other views, takes his chair by the dying bed. He assures the poor man, that he has probably come to his last hours with a heart of enmity with God, and so obstinate in its enmity, that none but a power divine can subdue it; and that it must be sanctified very soon, or he perishes for ever. Still God has made no promise that lays him under obligation to effect this change, hence the man's eternal life hangs upon uncovenanted mercy. True a Savior has died for sinners, and God is merciful, infinitely merciful, but that atonement and that mercy, have conditions annexed, which must be complied with, or they avail nothing. The sinner must repent and believe in Jesus Christ; and God will give repentance unto life to whom he will, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

I have thus given the *substance* of the instruction administered by the two legates. The dying man continues impenitent. Now *who* of the two gives him comfort, and *who* alarms and distresses him? He who gives comfort to one who is out of Christ, must deal in lies; he who distresses him, though he may not use the

mildest, best language, has the presumption in his favor, that he pours in truth upon an ungodly mind. God requires that we say to the wicked, that it shall be ill with them, and a message like this will not give them comfort, unless it prove the means of their conversion. Hence the irresistible presumption is, that he who gives *pain* to the dying sinner, and not he who gives *comfort*, makes use of *truth*.

And what thus gives *pain*, is very liable to give *offence*. Men are proud, and when the truth, from the necessity of the case, bears against their character and conduct, they scowl. You cannot offer them mercy in the style of Scripture, but you convey to them a threatening, if they believe not. The gospel intrudes upon the sinner's pleasures, and pours unwelcome light upon his conscience, and, as he esteems it, degrades his character; tells him of a judgment he is loth to think of, and predicts a doom he hates to anticipate, a hell whose fires he would gladly put out, where there await him weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Ah, the truth tears from the sinner all his hopes of heaven, pulls down about his head his refuge of lies, breaks his covenant with death, and annuls his agreement with hell, and leaves him the prey of despair, till he raises one believing look to the hills whence his help cometh; and sure as life, all this, if it does not save him, will *offend* him.

If, then, you would test the truth of a doctrine, propose it to ungodly men, and watch if it gives offence. What effect has divine sovereignty, decrees, and election, upon such men? If they offend, the presumption is that they are true. Go to that man standing in the door of that grog-shop, reeling and cursing, with a glass in his hand, and name one of these doctrines; will it please or offend him? will it calm or enrage him?

Let me take another view. Christians have been much of their life ungodly. Did they generally love these hard doctrines before conversion or since? The doctrine of universal salvation; do men more generally believe this doctrine before they are regenerated, or afterward? You may thus bring to the test any doctrine or system of doctrines. That individual truth, or system of truths, which pleases more generally unsanctified men, is more likely to be false than otherwise. Error loves its child, *lepravity*, and the child its mother.

I know that to make this experiment fairly, you must arrest attention. Men may be too stupid to be distressed by the truth, and may hold the truth in unrighteousness. The mass of impen-

tent sinners in our orthodox congregations, and who could not be persuaded to receive and support a loose and ungodly ministry, are on the side of truth, because they are thoughtless, or consider it disreputable to renounce the creed of their fathers. But every period of awakening draws out enmity, more or less, because it brings men to think. I doubt not but there is sufficient hatred to truth, in New England, to explode the gospel, and its ministry, and the Bible, and seal up the doors of every sanctuary, if God should remove restraint, and wicked men be generally aroused to thought, and see how at war truth is with their heart and their life.

There may be a kind of general acknowledgment of the truth, where it would be most cordially hated, were it so brought home to the conscience as to be strongly felt. Then it becomes manifest that the truth had previously floated merely upon the surface of the mind, and had not been opposed, because it had not been felt. Do you still inquire, "What is truth?" I answer,

V. *Truth is that which is consistent with itself, and inconsistent with all error.* Should two men appear in a court of justice, to bear witness to the truth, their testimony would agree, without any previous consultation. There might be many apparent discrepancies, but they could all be explained satisfactorily. Say it is a case of assault, that happened several months since. One affirms that the attack commenced in a house, on the evening of such a day; at the hour of eleven; the other places the scene of attack without the doors of that house, at the hour of twelve, and names another day of the week, another day of the month, and even another month. But the court perceives in a moment, that the attack might commence in the house, and be renewed without and that one of the witnesses might mistake wholly the time. Hence, finally, their testimony may substantially agree.

Now, although we would not place the seeming discrepancies of the Bible on the same footing, for here there could be no mistake, yet there *are many apparent discrepancies.* One apostle testifies that the *thieves*, implicating both, reproached the suffering Redeemer; another fixes the charge upon *one only*; while the truth probably is, that at the first both reviled, and finally but one; the other being sanctified; and the evangelists record what they saw and heard at different times. So when Saul was addressed by the Savior on his way to Damascus; one account is, that those who journeyed with him, heard the voice but saw no man; while another asserts that they heard not the voice of him that spake

The truth no doubt is, that they heard a sound, but did not distinguish what was spoken. Many such apparent discrepancies are found in the sacred volume, serving, however, to corroborate its testimony. If men had agreed to lie, they would have been careful to have a perfect harmony in their statements, especially when their testimony was voluntary and deliberate. Truth is consistent with itself.

Now let us make application of the rule. If it be correct, then an entire change of heart is necessary only on the supposition that the heart is totally depraved; if regeneration be entirely the work of God, then man does none of it; no promise could insure heaven to the believer, and still he be lost; if God foreknows an event, that event is certain; sin requires an infinite atonement, if, in its nature, it tends to infinite mischief: thus one truth is consistent with another.

But between truth and error there is no such harmony. No court can reconcile a true and false witness. Error thwarts the track of truth, and its own track. It is a body opaque, that cannot light its own way, while truth surrounds itself with the light necessary to guide its course.

Let us look at one case. I take this position; God is the implacable enemy of sin; now reconcile this with the idea that there is neither a judgment nor a hell. It then follows, that the vilest men are often taken to heaven first: the people of the old world were at rest in the bosom of the Lamb, while Noah and his family had yet to weather many a dark and dreary night upon a shoreless ocean; the Sodomites went all up to heaven, while Lot was left to wander upon the mountains; Judas was glorified before John; and all those who shorten their lives by debauchery are sooner at rest than the virtuous. To such results are we driven when we would reconcile truth with error.

Take another case. The heart till renewed in regeneration is void of moral goodness. Now reconcile this with the idea that the unsanctified do any thing pleasing to God. The heart gives every moral action its character. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Hence a bad heart will give every moral act a bad character: the motives by which we act are in the heart, but if the heart of the sons of men be full of evil, then every motive is bad; hence every deed instigated by such motive is bad. How then can sinners do any thing pleasing to God? Thus truth and error at open war. They must not mingle in the same system, nor unite in governing the same heart; cannot have a place in the

same Bible, can have no fellowship, no harmony. They are the two contending powers that have so long distracted this fallen world, and the war will continue, without truce or treaty, till one or the other is exterminated; and which must perish, it is not difficult to decide.

And I might add, that error is equally inconsistent with itself. There is no such thing as a system of error. I could as soon conceive of harmony made up of a combination of discords. Hence we need not wonder that those who depart from the simplicity of the gospel, are driven about with every wind of doctrine. It *must* be so. They can never so mend up their system, that it shall suit them; but will alter it, and alter it, till all truth is excluded, and it has become a scheme of infidel morality. So we conceive of some comet that will not be governed by the laws of gravitation, and wanders from system to system, till no other world can be safe in its vicinity, and no sun will lighten it, and finally it goes out beyond the reach of suns, and there is in reserve for it the blackness of darkness forever. Ah, how infatuated men have been when they gave up one doctrine of the Bible, and supposed it would not essentially alter their creed! By that act they cast themselves off from their anchorage, after which there was no guessing before what storm they would be driven, into what latitude borne, or upon what cliff be dashed, and broken, and destroyed. O that men would be wise *sooner*, and fall on their knees, the moment they have taken up their pen to blot and interline their creed. It is only in the edifice of truth, that there can be a perfect unity from the foundation to the topstone. Do you still inquire, "What is truth?" I answer,

VI. *Truth is that which will stand the test of a close examination.* A man reports to you a fact which he witnessed. You have some doubt, and demand particulars. He goes on to state when, and where, and how the event transpired. He tells you why he was there; who else were present; the hour of the day; how long he was there; how many were concerned in the matter;—in a word, he will readily answer any question you put to him. And makes every statement fearless of contradiction.

Now a lie will not stand this pressure. Ask the man who comes to you with a *false report* all these particulars, and you will soon perceive that although he has marked out several steps, yet beyond these he moves with hesitancy. He has the particulars of

the lie to fabricate. Now all this will apply to gospel truth. Take an example.

Total depravity is proved by this text, "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and this, "There is none that doeth good, no not one;" and this, "Every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, only evil continually;" and this, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil."

Now let us see if this doctrine will stand the test of a close examination. If it be true, men will be seen to act very basely; and this we see. If it be true men will need restraint, and will act the worse, the less restrained; and this is fact: "Thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst." If it be true, nothing that the sinner does will please God: "Without faith it is impossible to please him." If it be true, God must renew the heart: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If it be true, the change will be great: "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." If it be true, God must hate our native character: "He is angry with the wicked every day." If it be true, they will not relish it; and such is generally the fact. You may go on and press the doctrine as much as you please, or any other doctrine in the system of truth, and it will stand. Not the surf-beaten rock, that lines the shore of ocean, stands half so firmly as the truth. It will live and flourish, and will still be truth, when all its opposers have perished, and every rock is rolled from its bed.

And the truth will stand firmly without the aid of sophistry. It is when you attempt to establish a lie, that you must use false arguments. Hence there never was an orator, who could ably support the side of an argument, that is opposite to truth and righteousness. Take an example. He tries to prove that no plan guides the Divine operations. But there are a thousand facts, and the whole Bible, and the best conclusions of reason, all confronting him. Hence he makes no advances, till he affixes to the doctrine he would oppose, some odious name, calls it election, and suggests some mischievous consequences if it prove true, and casts about the hated doctrine a cloud of darkness and mysticism, and then, when his hearers are highly impassioned, and so blinded by rage, as not to see the weakness and wickedness of the orator, he plies his false and worthless arguments. It would destroy man's free agency. It would render the invitations of the gospel insincere. It would excuse every violation of the Divine law. Now there is not one of these arguments worth a straw, if he had

a candid auditory to enlighten. But one may as well attempt to convince a rock that it is hard, as to pour truth upon a mad congregation. The ear that should hear it is deaf, and the eye that should see it is blind, and what is worse than all, the heart that should feel it is biased.

But let one attempt to prove that God *has* a plan, and guides all his movements by it, and he may use solid and honest arguments. He may appeal to the unequivocal testimony of inspiration: to the attributes of God; to the impossibility of a wise intelligence operating without a plan; or to matters of fact, which show, unequivocally, that such a plan exists, and is going into rapid and successful operation. And when he has exhausted his substantial arguments, he need proceed no farther, for the truth is proved, and will stand without the prop of sophistry. And the same is true relative to any and every doctrine of the Bible. A mere school-boy can reason better in support of truth, than the wisest philosopher, when he would prove the truth of a falsehood. The very father of lies himself could never defend, successfully, any one doctrine of his creed. You still ask me, "What is truth?" I answer,

VII. *Truth is that against which all opposition is weak.* It must have opposers, in every world where there is depravity. But the Patron of truth is the mighty God; hence all opposition is insignificant. Truth could never be checked in its progress, by all the terrors of the dungeon, or the agonies of the stake and the cross. Every heretic that was executed during the reign of intolerance, promoted the triumph, and widened the spread of truth. At every scene of persecution, other hearts were sanctified, and other witnesses rose, as it were from the ashes of the martyred, to erect again, higher and still higher, the standard of the cross, and vindicate, more and more triumphantly, the honor of truth, and the glory of God. Opposition to truth warms its advocates, and produces a reaction, that carries the war back into the territories of the foe, eclipses the brilliancy, and humbles the triumph of his boasted victories.

Were it not for the reluctance we feel that men should undo themselves for ever, it could be wished, that error might ever have warm and able advocates, to call into action the friends of truth, and show the world that it has a light of its own, that can eclipse and consume every wandering star that would thwart its track. In its very nature truth is invulnerable and eternal. Its author is

God, whose character and whose throne is built on it, and who has pledged all in him that is sacred, that it shall exist and flourish commensurate with himself.

O, that its enemies did but know their destiny. When they shall have done their best, and cried aloud to their gods, and leaped upon their altars, and wounded themselves till they are covered with their own gore; then God will speak, and fire will come from heaven to testify to his truth, and devour its adversaries. No warfare has ever been so unpromising as theirs. The victory has never hung in doubt an hour. When the foe has been intrenching himself, and was proud of his forces, and sure of the victory; and the friends of truth lay on their faces between the porch and the altar, and could only say, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach;" even then, angels were not afraid, nor God afraid, nor, nor should faith have been afraid, that the truth might suffer. Do you still ask me, "What is truth?" I answer,

VIII. *Truth is that which never becomes obsolete, but is rendered the more illustrious by use.* It may at times seem obscured, and likely to become extinct, in some limited territory of this world, but it will come into credit again, and will pervade the very ground from which it seemed excluded. The human heart does not love it, and would destroy it, and has been making efforts to this effect ever since the apostacy; but the conscience, to whatever extent it has light, is on the side of truth, and often exerts an influence to give it countenance and currency, where it would otherwise be without a friend. Its light may be eclipsed, but cannot be extinguished. So the sun may suffer some little world to roll athwart its beams, and cut off a few fragments of its light from some other world, but the sun, when eclipsed, is not extinguished. While the ignorant multitude stand appalled at the brooding darkness, he emerges from behind the screen, and rolls and shines with unbroken velocity and undiminished lustre.

Some have believed, and many have hoped, that the Scriptures would one day become obsolete, and men be released from its obligations and its terrors. Poor souls, they think it a great grievance that there should be any sun to light the moral world. They would it were one unbroken night through all the territories of intellect. So we have known when the thief and the robber cursed the opening day as a nuisance, and were not ashamed to wish that the sun might cease to shine, and the moon and stars

withhold their light. But the prayer of the thief will not put the sun out, nor will the enemies of truth live to see the Scriptures perish. No, the *men* will perish, and the *arguments* that have stood in martial array against that book, while the book itself is destined to outlive all the nations, and will be in the hands, and deeply impressed upon the heart, of that last believer who shall rise to meet the Lord in the air. This great luminary of the moral world, will hold its station, and shine on in all its glory, and lighten and warm the beings it was sent to cherish, till the elect are all gathered in. Every doctrine of that book will outlive its foes, and will be embraced and loved by every believer that shall be sanctified through the truth. Wisdom is justified of her children. There is no danger, nor has there ever been, that any one doctrine of the Bible should be lost. No power but that which can build a world can stop truth in its course, and that power *will not*. Bury in one common grave every Bible that has ever been published, and let them lie till their mortal parts perish, still their doctrines, like so many imperishable gems, shall resist corruption, and emerge unhurt from the embers of the last conflagration.

By being controverted, truth increases its lustre. The attacks made upon the doctrines of the reformation, gave them currency. Men would risk their lives to see that book which was so much the dread of some of the ruling powers, especially the powers spiritual. Thus the eyes of a blinded world were opened the more effectually upon the glorious gospel of the blessed God. And all the efforts that have been made since then, or that may be made against the truth hereafter, have had, and will have but this one effect, to establish its friends in the more perfect belief, and the more full enjoyment of the precious Bible.

Truth is in most danger when its foes are asleep, for then its friends sleep too. "While the bridegroom tarried *they all* slumbered and slept." To drive his people to their post, God sometimes gives their enemies a temporary triumph; never, however, leaving it doubtful in the eye of faith where victory will rest. When infidelity threatened to deluge the world, God raised up a standard. And when it crept within the pale of the Churches,

"As when a prowling wolf,  
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,  
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,  
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,  
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;  
Or as a thief bent to unhoard the cash

Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,  
 Cross-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault,  
 In at the window elimbs, or o'er the tiles :  
 So elomb this first grand thief into God's fold ;  
 So since into his church lewd hirelings elimb,"

an eye Divine watched all its movements. And its defeat is now as certain, as when it libelled the entrance of the grave-yard, and daringly proscribed the Nazarine. God can recognize his enemies under whatever vestments they may conceal themselves. It requires only common faith to predict, that the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ will not long harbor in their communion errors that dethrone their Master. In the present, and in every future conflict, the result will be as in the past. God will not suffer a flood of error to pour in, mightier than the standard he will lift up against it. He will continue for ever to be the friend and advocate of truth, and should the time again come when he must blot out a world to recover its influence, he has all his stores of wrath ready. Do you still ask me, "What is truth?" I answer,

FINALLY, *Truth is that against which an impenitent world is armed with objections.* I mention this characteristic of truth, because many conceive that nothing can be truth that meets with opposition. They act on the false supposition, that the world is friendly to truth, will readily embrace it when distinctly seen, and will object to nothing that is truth. Hence if they hear a doctrine objected to, in the belief of which they have been ever so well established, they feel it to be their duty to doubt its truth. And yet there is no doctrine against which there may not be brought a variety of objections. In the affairs of common life it would not answer to act on this principle, else we should believe nothing. There stands a tree by your door, and you affirm that it grew there. I object to your position, first, that such a mass of timber could never rise to such a height without hands; secondly, that earth cannot produce wood, as every effect must have the nature of its cause; and thirdly, the tree was never seen to grow. But do you doubt whether the tree grew there, because I have offered three objections to your faith? And if I could offer thirty, instead of three, would it shake your confidence? Then why are the precious doctrines of the gospel to be yielded on the first attack?

The fact is, and it is a fact that we ought to know, the truth is far more likely to be assailed with objections than error. There are more who are engaged in opposing *truth* than *error*, perhaps

ten to one. None but the true believer finds a real interest and a real pleasure in supporting the truth, while the great mass of ungodly men are strongly in the opposition. Hence all those whose hearts are at enmity with truth, are engaged, and have been ever since the apostacy, in fabricating objection to truth, while very few have endeavored to meet these objections with a proper answer.

And moreover when objections to truth have been invented, there are *ten* who will circulate them, where *one* will make the same sacrifice to disseminate the truth. Hence when a book or pamphlet full of error leaves the press, many, because they hate the truth, will purchase it, and give it circulation; but if there follow it an able answer, there will be few, perhaps none, who will make a similar sacrifice. Christians *should not be so remiss*, but it was long since declared, that "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The fact then must be that *ten* will become familiar with objections to truth, where *one* will hear those objections answered. Against the truth then there will stand more objections than against error, hence a doctrine strongly and frequently objected to by unbelievers, has presumptive evidence of its truth. And perhaps, in a world like ours, truth has no test more infallible.

We shall be sadly mistaken, however, if we suppose that a mere profession will make men the friends of truth, and that all is error to which those who make profession are opposed. It not unfrequently happens that truth finds its bitterest enemies within the pale of the communion, and even in the sacred ministry. As there was a Judas in the apostleship, so in the gospel ministry there are men, O that it were not so, who bend all their energies to betray the design and to pollute the honors of their Lord.

But let us apply the rule. What doctrines are constantly assailed by unsanctified men? What doctrines are the drunkard, the liar, the profane, the swindler, and the Sabbath-breaker, ever prepared to repel? What doctrines has it been considered improper to preach, because of the numerous objections that stand against them, and which are supposed to destroy their usefulness? Ascertain those facts, and you learn what is truth. I close with

#### REMARKS.

1. *We see why the Bible in all its parts is so entirely harmonious, and has so long continued in use.* Writers so numerous, and so separated as to time, place, education, and habit, could not have written so harmoniously, but from the fact that they all wrote

truth, and nothing else, and truth is consistent with itself. And if the sacred volume by Divine direction should be continued, and an additional prophecy or epistle be written in every future age down to the last day, they would all agree. Each under the guidance of the Holy Ghost would write only unadulterated truth, and truth is consistent with itself. Hence the word of God, unlike every other book, can never thwart its own track, and can never become obsolete.

2. *We see why no other book can outlive a few short generations.* All others, although containing some truth, contain also error sufficient to bring them soon into disuse. Error is ever transitory. Let a book have been written if you please in the first age of the world, be it inspired or not, and let it contain nothing but truth, and that truth important, and it shall be fit for use till the funeral of the world, and shall be new and interesting to every succeeding generation of men. The character of God is pledged for the security of truth, and nothing else. It is as old as God, and will have a being commensurate with his. Its very nature is eternal. Truth is the reflected image of being and of fact. Hence ever since there was any being or any fact, and while these endure, truth must live. But error has attached to it no such immortality. Perhaps it would not be saying too much to assert that every uninspired volume, has attached to it error sufficient to sink it sooner or later into the grave.

3. *We are now prepared to say, that one cannot reject the truth and be innocent.* The marks of truth are so visible, that one cannot mistake it but from choice. Its features are all prominent and visible, and must be familiar to every man who has made a proper use of his eyes and his understanding. Hence, to not know the truth, or embrace error, is sin, and argues a heart unsanctified. He who loves God must wish to know and love the truth. Christ viewed the truth of such importance, that he came into the world to declare the truth, and will now frown upon the man who diminishes its value.

It is absurd to suppose that truth has a character so doubtful that it cannot be known. If God has placed his statute-book in our hands, he will expect us to be familiar with the laws of his kingdom. He has not furnished us an unintelligible code. He has not suspended our destiny on a belief of the truth, and yet left it so uncertain *what we should believe*, that it is no crime to believe a lie. The Holy Ghost would not inspire for us a volume which we cannot understand. If God sanctifies his people through the

truth, there is not the same hope that those are bound for heaven who believe a lie, as those who believe the truth. We cannot be sanctified through that truth which we do not embrace. Hence it would seem that it must be fatally criminal to reject the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel

4. If the definitions which I have given of truth be correct, sinners ought to wish to hear those doctrines which they do not relish, and which fill them with distress, for none else are true. It would be easy to preach so as never to distress or offend impenitent men, but it would not be the gospel, and the preaching would be useless. They would sleep under it till they waked in perdition. They would neither quarrel nor repent. There are such preachers, and the effect of their labors is exactly what we should expect. Their "burden of the Lord" is a mere heathen morality and the best effect a mere reform of some grosser vice, leaving the moral character unbleached, and the heart unchanged.

But it should be the wish of perishing men to hear another gospel, one that will alarm their fears, cut off their false hopes, arouse their consciences, and renew their hearts. It is pleasant to find that men are *pleased*, but far more important to find that they are *sanctified*. And those act a very weak part, who are conscious of impenitence, and yet prefer a gospel that is not truth, and can never point them to heaven.

*Finally, the subject will help us to account for the stability of the Christian character.* It has its foundation in truth, the same that is the basis of the Divine character, and of the throne itself of God. So the character of angels, and of all holy beings, is built on the truth. Hence a holy character will differ as to its permanency, from the character of the sinner, as much as the truth differs from falsehood. Every Christian principle is some truth of God, every grace some impress of truth upon the heart. Hence we expect the Christian character, and no other, to have permanency, unless that truth could become mutable on which it is founded. Christ styles himself *the truth*, and is that rock on which his people build their character and their hopes: "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Hence the believer, though "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," has a permanency of character, from the fact, that God sanctifies him through the truth. He grows in grace and in the knowledge of the truth; and to whatever moral stature he attains, truth secures his standing, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a

perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Thus it is made certain that the saints shall never fall.

But we do not wonder that those who have no such idea of the permanency of truth, doubt whether the believer will assuredly persevere. Those who suppose him to build his house upon the sand, must fear, lest when the floods come and the winds blow, its foundations be removed, and it fall. But he builds upon a rock, firm as heaven itself, and we shall see him safe, when every other rock, but that which he makes his foundation, is melted down; and when those who have not built on Christ and on truth, "shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

May God bless his truth, to the sanctification of his people; and make them zealous to learn it, and to propagate it. May he give us a high esteem for our Bibles, and Sabbaths and sanctuaries, and a preached gospel, by the aid of which we learn truth. And may he sanctify his ministers, and leave none of them to "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." And may he through the truth glorify his own name, and prepare a great multitude, that no man can number, to worship about his throne for ever and ever Amen.

## SERMON LIX.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S BEST FRIEND AGGRIEVED

EPHESIANS IV. 30.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

IF I must doubt whether there be a trinity of persons in the Godhead, I should question the inspiration of the Scriptures. The distinct personality of the three that bear record in heaven, seems to me as plain a truth as any other in the whole Bible, and cannot be rejected without the danger of going into infidelity. In the mysterious division of the work of redemption, it became the business of the Holy Ghost, to make the sinner willing, in the day of God's power, to renew and sanctify the heart, and quicken to spiritual life and action, the dead in sin. And after he has begun eternal life in his people, he dwells in their hearts, and is there a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

The Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles under the title of the Comforter, and has exerted his agency in every conversion since there was a Church, and been the guide to heaven of every child of the apostacy, who has gone and took his seat at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If there is in any mind a heavenly thought, or in any heart a holy volition, it is all the work of that Divine agent. Hence his favor is life. One had better grieve every friend he has, and wander homeless, and die deserted, with none to watch him or to pray for him, or bury him, than to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and be abandoned of him.

I have supposed that grieving the Spirit of God, was a deed that none but Christians can do. The enemies of God may *resist* his Spirit, and may *quench* his Spirit, but his people only can grieve him. So it is, you know, in human affairs; an enemy may insult us and offend us, a *friend* it is that grieves us.

It will be my object to show how the people of God may grieve his Spirit, and what the consequences that must follow.

I. *How may the people of God grieve his Spirit?*

1. When they *limit his ability* or his *willingness* to bless them.

The Spirit of God has done so much for them already, that all cause of fear, as to what he can do, and will do, if they are ready, is out of place. It was a great sin in Israel, after they had witnessed the wonders done in Egypt, and has seen the water of the Red Sea divide, to make them a passage, to have any doubt whether he could enable them to subdue the Anakims, and whether he would give them water to drink and flesh to eat.

But that people, when they limited the Holy One of Israel, had not seen more illustrious displays of the might and the mercy of their Deliverer, than have the people of God in these days of the amazing power and grace of the Holy Ghost. He who could subdue your hearts, ye disciples of the Lord Jesus, what can he not do for you? He who could awaken you, when you was purposed in your heart that you would never see the danger you were in; who could uncover to you the destruction that way-laid you; who could convict you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, when you had carefully barred every avenue that would admit the light; could bring out to a Savior's feet, and make you his willing captives; what is there now he cannot do for you? What lust can he not conquer, and what foe of yours can he not bring to the ground and lay low at your feet? How can you doubt a moment of his ability and his mercy, to guide you, and keep you unto everlasting life?

And after the precious instances of revival that you have witnessed, and the power displayed by the Holy Ghost, in subduing to love and obedience the basest of men, and bringing scores of the ungodly to yield to the force of truth, and become willing in the day of God's power; how can you doubt but he can give you other precious revivals, and renew to you the scenes you have witnessed, and more yet? What other proofs can he give but that which he has given, that you have only to be ready and he will do his wonders before your eyes, till you are satisfied? And there is no sinner you pray for but he can be melted and subdued, and moulded over into a humble and devoted and heavenly-minded Christian? And his willingness to operate is commensurate with his ability. If he would help *you* when you felt that you could not do without him, and give those tokens of his mercy that you felt you must have or die, why will he not do the same again? If you have sinned, and do not deserve his interposing mercy, so you had when he did interpose the last time. When you prayed for that child that he did save, you went to him as a poor sinner, not deserving at all the mercy you asked, and why not expect that the

Spirit of God will as readily operate now as then? Why then should we limit, and thus grieve the Holy One? If such has been the power and the mercy of the Divine operations in days past, that the highest faith is due, and there is the broadest foundation for confidence that the Spirit will operate as soon as we are ready, why should Christians grieve him by limiting his power and his mercy.

2. They grieve him *when they expect their comforts from any other source*. The people of God often try to be happy without him. There are so many channels through which joy is communicated to the heart, that we are prone to forget its source. We may, by this means, be guilty of an idolatry, though not as gross, yet as offensive to the Spirit of God as the temporary worship of Mammon or Moloch. This is the case when even means of grace are trusted in as sure to communicate comfort. We may idolize the ministry of reconciliation, the Sabbath, the ordinances, the place of prayer, and even the closet. In young converts nothing is more common than the deep assurance, that the same place, the same practice, and the same pew, will produce the same blessedness. And often it is not till after many a sore disappointment, that they are taught to repair immediately to him whose influence is life and peace. God would have us estimate the means, and set a price as high as he has upon every medium of holy joy. But when we forget, as we are prone to forget, that we must go a little beyond the watchman, before we shall find him whom our soul loveth; must pass through the means and *there* is joy, and *there* is God, then is the Spirit grieved. His Divine agency is undervalued, and the joy he would communicate is withheld, till we are made to feel that the Spirit of God must operate, or every means must lose its influence.

3. It is equally true that we grieve the Spirit of God, *when we neglect the means of grace*. There is an established process, by which the Holy Spirit of God ordinarily comforts his people. *Almost all his joys*, and probably, did we know more fully the way of the Spirit, we should say *all his joys*, are bestowed as a blessing on the means of grace. Here he exerts his Divine influence. He lifts the soul toward heaven, when the soul makes an effort to rise in prayer. He pours in truth upon the mind, when the mind is laboring to know the truth. He generates holy affections, when he discovers in his people grief for sin, and ardent desires to be more holy. Hence the house of God, rather than any other place, has been the scene of his most frequent and his mightiest opera-

tions. Here he has fed his people, has cheered their despondencies, has raised their hopes, has strengthened their faith, has enabled them to mount on wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Here, with a preached gospel, the word of his grace, that truth through which it was the prayer of the Savior that the Father would sanctify his people, he has, in every age, since there was a Christian Church, shed forth his richest, sweetest comforts. Here, too, he has awakened and renewed the sinner; has begun in the heart that eternal life which it is his promise, and his oath, shall be carried on till the day of complete redemption. Here all our precious revivals have begun, and have been carried on, by what has been termed the foolishness of preaching.

And God has greatly blessed the place of *prayer* and *conference*. These unnoticed retreats have been, in thousands of instances, the scenes of such Divine display as have made angels glad, and have multiplied the number of the saved. Christians have dated their very best comforts in some of these consecrated retreats. In answer to prayer, every comfort has dropped from heaven. The heart has been warmed in the concert of prayer, beyond almost any other place. Those hours nearest akin to heaven, and the most deeply engraved upon the memory and the heart, to be the subject of everlasting recollection, and of delightful mention in the anthems of heaven, have been those where pious hearts met, and were melted together at the foot of the cross—unless it be those seasons when the soul was alone with God, while there were none to disturb and none to share the sacred joy. Perhaps no comforts can outweigh these. Hence the closet is that most sacred and most lovely place which the believer is the last to quit, where he would live and die. There the heart discloses its most secret concerns, delivers its most confidential message, and waits for forgiveness and for peace, with a hope that takes hold of the horns of the altar with the iron grasp of death.

If, then, God has thus blessed the means of grace, and they are rendered by his appointment so essential to the soul's transformation into the image of God, the Spirit must be grieved when they are neglected. Their neglect develops unbelief, and, what is more, contempt. If the Spirit operate, he must choose his own way. We must throw ourselves within the probable reach of his influence, where he has blest others, and where he has promised to bless us. And not only be there *occasionally*, but as often as we feel our need of his special influences. David resolved to pry

seven times a day, and Daniel three *times* in the day, even when he knew that it would be likely to cost him his life. Christians cannot lightly dispense with any means of grace, and not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption.

4. Christians grieve the Spirit of God *when they neglect to make use of the promises*. These were given for the comfort of God's covenant people, were indited by the Holy Ghost, and are the principal medium through which he communicates to the heart the richest blessings of his agency. Here the Christian must apply when he needs support, and he will find the promises wonderfully adapted to his circumstances. If he feels himself to be a great sinner, here is a promise of forgiveness; "I will blot out thine iniquities, and remember thy sins no more." If he feels himself to be weak and defenceless, the promise reads, "Fear not thou worm, Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth: and thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. One shall slay a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight." If darkness come over his mind, and it ever becomes at length tangible, like the night of Egypt, still the promise reads, "He that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." If he fears that he may perish amid the dangers that surround him, he may read and be comforted, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." If there come an hour when temptations seem too sharp and frequent for his strength, he can read and feel safe. No temptation has happened to you, but such as is common to men. And God will, with the temptation, make also a way of escape. Now the child of God offends the Divine Comforter, when he does not thus apply in the hour of distress to the promises he inspired.

5. The Spirit of God is grieved *when the promises are misapplied*. When the promise of forgiveness, for instance, is used before we have repented; when the promise of perseverance is made to comfort a backsliding believer, when anything that God has said engenders a hope of heaven, while the affections are earthly, sensual and grovelling. When the *unbeliever* takes sanctuary in the mercy of God; and when the Christian hopes to be comforted any

where but on the way of life, there is offered equally an insult to the Spirit of grace. The gracious things said in the book of God are all *appropriated* in their promulgation. The meek only will he guide in the way and cause to inherit the earth. To the poor in spirit belongs the kingdom of heaven. They that mourn shall be comforted. To those only who keep his covenant and his testimonies, are all the ways of the Lord, righteousness and peace. Those only who trust in the Lord and do good shall inherit the land, and shall verily be fed. Those shall know the Lord who follow on to know him. Those shall find him who seek him with all their heart.

After the same manner are all the promises appropriated, and may neither be neglected nor misapplied. Hence every man who would not grieve the Spirit of God, should make it his *first* question, What is my character? and his *second*, What kind thing has God said to me? or his *first* question, What is my condition? and his *second*, What promise reaches such a condition? Then, to use the emphatical language of Scripture, the dogs do not eat the children's bread. There are times, I apprehend, when the real believer may not apply to the refreshment of his soul a single promise, but must let the Bible lie by him, as the offending child, faint and hungry, may take no refreshment from his father's table. He must suffer and fast till he is humbled. The promise is ready for him, and God will refresh him with it, when he has brought him to feel that he must die without it. To this spot God delights to bring his people, when they sin. His kindness is thus the more timely and the more welcome.

II. I am next to notice the *consequences of grieving the Spirit*. These will appear,

1. *In the absence of Christian consolations*. When we have grieved the Comforter, how can we hope that he will bestow his comforts? When he has brought his blessings to our doors, and we treat him with contempt or neglect, he will leave us to pore over our miseries, and perhaps, to howl upon our beds. How striking a feature is this in the history of God's people, recorded in his word! David grieved the holy Spirit of God, and we hear him complain at the noise of the water-spouts. Deep calleth unto deep. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over my soul. He wet his couch with tears. All his bones were out of joint. God broke him with his tempest. He was made to bear the iniquities of his youth.

And how well has all this accorded with the experience of God's people in all ages since, when they have grieved the Spirit. He withdrew his consolation. They fasted, and prayed, and wept, and God hid, as it were, his face from them. Wearisome nights were appointed unto them. They looked toward death with gloominess. Toward heaven they cast the fearful glance of abandonment. They clinged to the covenant as a drowning man to the plank floating by him.

2. When the Spirit has been grieved, it appears *in the withering of the Christian graces*. The Spirit of God is the grand agent, by whose influence every holy affection is nourished. Hence his influence upon the heart compared to the rain, on which nature is dependant for all its beauty, and all its fertility. Let the showers be withholden, and how soon will every field and every garden wither! How soon will the sterility of death cover the face of creation, and the veriest Eden be converted into a desert! How will the plant wither, and the landscape fade, and culture become useless when there no longer falls the timely and refreshing shower! So faith, and love, and hope, all fail, when the Spirit of God has been grieved. There can neither be seen the humility, nor the heavenly-mindedness, nor the spirit of prayer, nor the watchfulness, nor the meekness, nor any of the other graces which stand out to view, when the Spirit of God is operating. The life-giving breeze does not blow upon the garden, causing the spices to flow out. The Christian, when he has grieved away the Spirit of God, becomes, for the time being, merely a decent worldling, rising but one small degree above the man who was never born of God. His lamp, if it may not be said to have gone out, dies away till it casts hardly a ray of light into the darkness of this revolted world.

3. When the Spirit is grieved, one of the effects is *the loosening of the bonds of Christian affection*. This affection originates in love to Christ; hence, if that love decays, all the affections that depend upon it, suffer a correspondent decay. Christ is the head by which all the limbs are united, and live and act in unison. He is the vine. Amputate the branch from the vine, and it immediately loses its connection with all the other branches. What is the *believer to me*, when I have no longer any interest in him who is the believer's life? Now if there be not, and this is not pretended, a final abandonment of the covenant, still if covenant engagements are disregarded, and he whose agency is to see the covenant ratified, withhold his influence, why expect any union among those whom it was intended to bind! Sink the believer down into the

the man he once was, and why expect he will wish any other than ungodly men for his associates? The union of God's people to each other will ever bear an exact proportion to the growth and vigor of their piety. Hence, in the absence of the Spirit's sanctifying influence, there decays, with the other graces, love to the brethren, and the ligature is sundered that holds together the family of the the faithful. Hence all the discords, the divisions, and the broils; the hard names and the angry feelings, that have sundered believers.

4. *When the Spirit is grieved the Christian becomes a worldling.* Losing his heavenly hopes and his celestial comforts, there remain none but earthly hopes and creature comforts. The Christian is not only made to differ from the man of the world at the first, by the agency of the Spirit, but this difference is continued by the same agency. Just like a weight suspended in the air, he sinks the moment he is not supported. The graces which the Spirit generates makes the difference; these suspended and the resemblance returns. Clip the wings of the dove, and what is she but a reptile! She must tread upon earth, and gather her food in the dust. The man is not willing to be destitute of comforts. If he may not eat the bread of heaven, he hankers after the leeks and onions of Egypt. When the first king of Israel found that the Lord did not answer him as aforetime, he sought to the witch of Endor for the guidance he needed. The Lord's people are a miserable set of beings, when the Spirit has departed from them. They will need, to make them happy, all the worldly prosperity they had before, and more yet, and will covet it as eagerly as the man who has never risen with Christ, nor has ever learned to seek those things that are above.

5. *When God's people have grieved the Spirit, he ceases to multiply their numbers by the conversion of sinners.* He has so honored them as to operate in answer to their prayers. I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to bless them. When Zion travails she brings forth children. God works by means; and when the people of God become backsliders, the means cease, and the work of God is stayed. He thus puts honor upon his people; makes them the instruments of doing him service, and has himself the pleasure of rewarding them. They would be less happy if God had given them no opportunity to labor in his service. Hence, when they have grieved the Holy Spirit of God, and he has withdrawn his influence, and as a sure result, they have lost their relish for his service, he suffers sinners to sleep on and perish. It is considered

an established matter of fact, that God *does not*, and the presumption is that he *will not*, revive his work, till *his people* are revived, and are ready to be workers together with God. Believers then are urged not to grieve away the Divine influence, by all that a soul is worth, and by all that a multitude of souls are worth. And if, in an evil hour, the Spirit has been grieved, they are urged to repent, and humble themselves at his feet, by all the importance that could possibly attach itself to a precious and extensive work of God, among the ungodly around them.

## REMARKS.

1. *Believers can do nothing that is at the same time so great a calamity and so great a crime as to grieve the Holy Spirit.* They feel the injury first themselves, in their languishing graces, and their loss of comforts; in their beclouded prospects, and their diminished hopes. Nor would it be a conjecture wholly groundless, that they may be affected in their interests for ever, by every season of relapse. They may be thus rendered lesser stars in the firmament of God for ever. And how many souls may perish by the deed, we cannot know, till the season of action is past, and the character of all around us formed and finished, and their destiny about to be fixed.

2. Let me say that *God's people may easily know when they have grieved away the Divine Spirit.* He will carry away all his comforts with him. They will be happy in none of those things that once contributed to their joy. There will be no communion kept up with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. All intercourse with the throne of grace will be interrupted, and darkness will come upon the believer as soon as he begins to pray. No matter when he attempts the duty, the place will be dark. There will fall neither rain nor dew. The heavens will be brass, and the earth iron under his feet. And the circulation of a heavenly influence between him and the family of believers will be interrupted, and there will be a suspension of Christian fellowship. And there will be no visions of heaven. There will cover the sun of righteousness a cloud, dark and black as midnight. The believer will now grope his way as the blind do, and stumble at noonday as in the night. Those horrid falls, that have crippled and half destroyed the children of God in all ages, have happened when the Spirit had been grieved away. David and Peter had grieved the Spirit when he left them to stand in that critical hour alone. The spouse in

the song had grieved him away, when she went about the streets inquiring, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"

There is but one source whence come all the believer's comforts, *from* the influence of the Divine Spirit. Hence, if he is grieved, the spring of his consolations is dried up, and he must assuredly famish, if this fountain is not again opened, as the word of God is true. Hence it would seem that the believer can easily know if he has done this disastrous work; can know by the poverty, and misery, and desolation of his soul; by the total absence of all those consolations that used to be brought to him by the operations of the Holy Ghost.

3. *On the conduct of believers depends the welfare of the world.* If on them it depends under God, whether the multitudes of the ungodly continue to throng the way of death, then it cannot be denied that they can withhold, or can put forth an agency that affects the weal or the wo of a world. While then you sleep—ye redeemed of the Lord—while you sleep, and your graces droop, and your character suffers, and your lamp goes out, there lies around you a depraved and prayerless multitude, who are forming a character for the pit, and pursuing their way down to the prison of hell, to the blackness of darkness for ever.

4. *It should then be the wish of the men of the world, that God's people live near to him.* They sometimes imagine that it is better with them when believers let down their watch and become like themselves. Then their consciences do not reproach them, and they have not such fearful alarms, as when the people of God come out from them, and are separate. Still they never make a more fearful mistake, than when slumbering on the brink of ruin themselves, they wish all around them to sleep also. If it is their horrid purpose to keep their stand on the brink of death eternal, they should be as wise as the Macedonian, and appoint *one at least* to stand at the door of their dormitory, and cry, day by day, Wake, O sleeper!

5. *Hence the propriety that Christians should often inquire of themselves, whether they are acting a kind part toward the ungodly.* What was said in Israel, in a time of national calamity, may apply, in a time of the withdrawment of the Divine influence. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." I have frequently thought of this text with pleasure, and have styled it a recipe for a revival. I have thought it

a pity that any Christian should live without a knowledge of this precious part of the word of God, it is found in 2d Chronicles, vii chapter and 14 verse. Not only is the Minister of Christ set to watch for souls, but, in a very important sense, *every believer* is a watchman, and cannot sleep, but he endangers the souls of men. Instead of this, it should be his object to keep every conscience around him alarmed, till the lost are all seen flying for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. They may not sleep while there is one lost sinner within the sound of their voice. If believers would not bring blood-guiltiness upon themselves, and calculate by and by to complain to God, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over my soul," then they should not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober. There hangs in the vigilance of God's people an amount of interest that outweighs the wealth of a city, and the wealth of a world. Their responsibility is greater than the out-guards of a camp of soldiery, when, if one sentinel should fall to sleep, it might cause a whole army to perish.

6. But in these circumstances, *what can the Christian do to recover his former condition?* Why, just what he did when he first found himself a lost sinner—repent. "But," says the poor benighted and comfortless soul, "How can I repent without the influences of the Holy Ghost? and I have grieved him away." Then here you are my brother, at the mercy of God. Lie down and determine to die, if you must, full in this conviction. The Churches' hope of you is wholly in the provisions of the covenant. I will turn you to a leaf or two of that covenant: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Here it reads, you see, "*I will be their God and they shall be my people.*" He does not intend to let his people go. They would, if he would let them, and perish every soul of them, even after he has forgiven them, and they have been permitted to gaze upon the glories of the Lamb. Let me turn you to another leaf of that compact. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, *that they shall not depart from me.*" On another page of this covenant, it reads, "My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." And there is one other page, if possible still more precious, "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." I will read you one other line of that

wondrous compact, which God has made with his people, and leave you to read and ponder on the residue: "If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Thus are you shut up to the covenant mercy of God, and here is the safest place to leave you. If you have been his children, and have grieved away his Spirit, still his unbounded mercy can reach you. He can restore to you the joy of his salvation, and then uphold you with his free spirit.

## SERMON LX.

### TERMS OF DIVINE ACCEPTANCE.

ACTS XVI. 30.

Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

PAUL and Silas, in the faithful discharge of their duty, found themselves at length immured in the dungeons of Philippi. There they lifted up their voices in prayer and praise; and the prisoners heard them; and what was to them of far higher importance, God heard them, and sent his angels to deliver them. The bars of their prison were sundered, their doors flew open, and their bands were loosed. The result was, a deep alarm fastened upon the mind of the prison-keeper, venting itself in the language of the text, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Now the gospel aims to bring *every man* to the very spot where that man was brought, and then direct him to a Savior and to heaven. There must be alarm, because there is danger, unless in those, perhaps very rare cases, when a Savior is embraced, or rather the heart prepared to receive him, before the danger is fully discovered. Unless we see our danger we shall make no effort to escape from the wrath to come. And men will have so soon slept the sleep of death, and alarm be of no avail, that humanity requires every possible effort to wake them.

Hence, no curse can be greater, than a ministry calculated to keep men secure in their sins. At no other point does there await you so much danger. Your servant may be idle, and your steward defraud you, and your best friend betray you, and still you may suffer but a temporary loss; but if he who is the mouth of God to you, deceive you, put darkness for light and light for darkness, your loss may be irreparable.

In the report of that gospel which the Lord Jesus Christ will approve at his coming, the text must be fully and correctly answered. The sinner must know exactly the terms on which God will accept him. One may have some general notion that he is a sinner, that a Savior is provided, and that possibly he may have life through that Savior; and still be so much in the dark relative

to the terms of acceptance, as to miss of eternal life. The mere fact that a Savior died, if fully known, is not sufficient to secure salvation. The bare atonement, if there be no application of it to the soul, will avail nothing. Christ fulfilled the demands of the law in behalf of all who, in the appointed way, shall become interested in his blood. But if this atonement be neglected; if we listen to a gospel that on this point misdirects us; and we do not become qualified to enjoy salvation, it will no otherwise affect us, than as an aggravation of our condemnation. My plan will be, to show *what is not adequate instruction* on this subject, and *what is*.

I. I am to show *what is not adequate instruction on this subject*.

1. When men are urged to a *reformation*, as what will put them into the way of life, the instruction is inadequate. If men quit their grosser iniquities, and become decent and civil, still no promise of heaven reaches them on this condition merely. Where in the gospel are any such terms stated? I know that men are obligated to break off their sins by righteousness, forthwith. John directed some bad men who came to him, to cease from violence and become honest, and contented: but John did not mean to leave them here: hence he did not say, that on these terms Christ would receive them. These were rather the conditions on which they could be prepared to receive his instruction to advantage. If I should meet with a drunkard, or a thief, and they should ask me about the gospel, the first lessons I should give them, would be on the subjects of sobriety and honesty. Men are sometimes too far gone in the by-paths of death, to give the gospel a candid hearing, and learn what the terms of salvation are; and then the first lesson given them may have respect to their waywardness; and when the gospel has gained this footing, then you may tell them of salvation to advantage.

But there may be this external reformation, and there often has been, while yet there was no preparation of heart to receive the Savior, but sin was loved, and rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue. Men may quit their sins from motives of interest or ambition. Gross iniquities are scandalous and expensive, and may be abandoned from the supreme love of something else beside Christ.

The fear of the wrath to come, while yet there is a prompt and a total alienation of the heart from God, may induce men to break off some habit, that threatens their sure and speedy perdition. But there is not a text in one of the pages of inspiration, that ex

hibits this superficial reformation, as the condition of pardon and acceptance through a Savior. The young man that would know what good thing he must do to inherit eternal life, was civil and decent, and still was unfit for the kingdom of God, and was sent away very sorrowful. It will not be denied but that he had become a moral man, but he still loved supremely the good things of this life.

2. When men are directed, not merely to break off some of the grosser iniquities, but *to perform some of the mere external duties of piety*, the instruction given them is still inadequate. The very same motives that led to the one, will often lead to the other. The very same man, who would cease his profaneness, and his Sabbath-breaking, and his lewd song-singing, and his drunkenness, and his midnight revelings, because he had become ashamed of their vulgarity; will have prayer sometimes in his family, and will attend upon a preached gospel, and have a Bible in his house, and read it occasionally, because all this is civil and decent.

And sometimes this cheap and superficial religion is the high way to preferment. Men will be to some extent religious, if they can obtain character by it, and can make it a stairway to office, and influence, and wealth too. They will bow and cringe to men, and God too, if they may obtain suffrages by it. Men will consent to be anything, if it will make them great in the life that now is.

And they will perform duties, in hopes to gain heaven by this means. If God will excuse them for hating his law, and character, and government, they will attend upon his ordinances, and pay an outward respect to his Sabbaths, and repeat their creed, and rehearse their prayers; and account it a cheap salvation. And this it will be found is not an unusual resort of ungodly men. In every period of alarm, away they fly to Christian ordinances. So, in the darker times of Israel, they would steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and then come and stand before God in his house. And it is declared, in that case, that they trusted in lying words that could not profit.

God has never spoken of this external attention to religious things, as the terms of acceptance with him: for there may be still an evil heart of unbelief. The prayers uttered by the lips, may neither have their source in the heart, nor throw back upon it the least impulse to piety. They may not even engross the thinking powers, but may be in the ears of Jehovah like the prating of the parrot. Men have no doubt uttered prayers, while the hostility of

their hearts, could they have been conscious of it, to the God invoked, and the Savior whose name was used, would have driven them from their knees, and sealed up their lips in the sullenness of perdition. And the Scriptures have been read, while the heart quarrelled with every doctrine and duty they enforced. And ordinances have been attended, and Sabbaths kept, and charities given, and confessions made, while there was the deadliest hostility to all that is holy in God, or purifying in truth.

3. If you add to all this *a profession of godliness*, the instruction given is still inadequate. In professing godliness, men often add perjury to their other deeds of wrong. A profession is not unfrequently the very climax of their impudence, and their daring. Ah, how mistaken have ministers and churches been, in supposing that when they had persuaded the ungodly to enter professedly into covenant with God, they had secured to some extent the object of the gospel institutions. They have not unfrequently lived to see their convert a more daring sinner than previously to his hypocritical adoption of the covenant; and have been grieved that they had not left him without the enclosures of the fold. They brought him up to sealing ordinances, sprinkled clean water upon him, and made his lips touch the consecrated symbols of a dying Christ, but the heart remained a mass of moral putrefaction; and the sacrifice offered was but a smoke and a stench in the nostrils of an insulted Savior. They painted and varnished the sepulchre, while within it was full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. It is many a time obvious, that so far from there having been any thing gained, by thrusting the worldling into this religious atmosphere, you have but the more effectually blocked up the last avenue to his conscience, and thus placed him, perhaps, beyond the reach of hope and of heaven.

But suppose, if you please, the very best case, and tell me, if in this visible transformation, the Lord Jesus Christ will see any thing that he will consider a compliance with the terms of life and salvation which he offers? And I have left out of view the question whether it *be right* to do so? Whether, without the bidding of Jesus Christ, we may thus administer his holy ordinances to unsanctified men? Are we, in such a procedure, honest to souls? is now the question. May we encourage them thus to compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, and walk in the light of their own fires? Are *they* safe, or *we* honest, while we watch no better the gates of the sheepfold? The press that men make toward sealing ordinances, is a proof that they are

uneasy and unhappy ; and if we grant their wish, do we answer honestly and fairly the question thus silently put to us, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Do we not rather seal them up to a perpetual stupidity, and shall we not have to answer for their blood, in the day that inquisition shall be made for it?

II. Having thus endeavored to show, what *is not* adequate instruction on this subject, I proceed to inquire, *what is?* In stating the terms on which the sinner can become interested in the Lord Jesus Christ, I should choose to say :

1. *He must explicitly avow his approbation of the law he has broken.* Here begins, under every government, where there has been revolt, the exercise of a right temper. Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it. This declaration is found on the very title page of his gospel. Repent, said he, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And what is repentance, more or less, than a cordial approbation of the precept that has been violated?

Hence the language of penitence in all ages has been the same. "The law is good, its penalties just, and its whole design benevolent. God had not been kind, had he given us any other law, or been willing that it should be broken with impunity, or had affixed any lower penalty, or accepted any meaner sacrifice than his own Son, as the atoning Lamb. O, I am a wretch for having broken this law, and can offer no possible plea that shall excuse or palliate the smallest deviation from its precepts. If God should cast me off for ever, he would but treat me as I deserve to be treated, and expect to be." Thus the sinner takes to himself the punishment of his sins, and thus places himself in an attitude, where Christ can begin to notice him, and still be the friend and patron of the Divine law.

With this principle we are all familiar. The child sees you pouring your frowns upon his disobedience, and would be glad if you would agree with him in reprobating the precept he has violated. But your authority is lost, and your child ruined, if you cease to frown, till he confesses that he has broken *a good law*. Then, and not till then, can you relax the sternness of that countenance which frowns upon his disobedience. The teacher places the rebellious child at his feet, and he must be there till he confesses the precept just, that he violated. And the same principle is acted upon in all governments that admit of pardon.

So the Lord Jesus Christ, if he would not do a rebellious world incalculable mischief, must suffer the sinner to make no approach

to him, till he is grieved for his transgressions, or has avowed his full approbation of the law he has broken. Then he can be saved and the law of God be sustained.

Now the whole of repentance may be summed up, as I suppose, in this retrospect of a humbled sinner, upon his guilty and inexcusable violations of a good law; including, however, his abandonment of the transgressions which he disapproves. Thus is performed one of the conditions, on which the Lord Jesus Christ will receive us to his favor, and wash away our sins in his blood.

2. *The sinner must become willing to owe his escape from the curse of the law to Jesus Christ.* One may know that he has broken the law of God, and that the law he has broken is a good law, and still be too proud to receive pardon on the terms of the gospel. We have known cases when men have starved and perished rather than receive alms. The pride of their hearts would not suffer them to eat the bread they had not purchased. And men have gone down to hell, because they would not cast themselves upon that Savior, whose help was seen to be necessary, in order to their escape from the wrath to come. Not merely must the sinner see that he is perishing, and that there is no help out of Christ, but he must become pleased with Christ, else he will not feel himself secure in his hands, nor apply to him for life.

It is believed that many a soul has perished, hesitating whether it would be prudent or safe to cast himself upon the Savior. To do this is faith, and implies that already the temper of the heart is changed: but all men have not faith. It is by no means certain that awakened sinners have faith. Some may have; for none can say how early in the process of alarm God may renew the heart. But of this we are sure, that when renewed, it is prepared to believe, soon after the character of Jesus Christ is presented.

Sinners often wonder, and sometimes quarrel, that on making the inquiry of the text, the answer we give them implies a new heart; whereas the inquiry they intended to make was, how they should *obtain* a new heart. They wish to know how they must operate, with their evil hearts of unbelief, so as to have them renewed. Now to this question we can give no answer. We know of no process by which an ungodly man may work himself into the kingdom of God, but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. We can tell them to do nothing, that does not imply holiness; and if we should, they might do as we direct them, and *still be lost*; whereas they ask us, what they must *do to be saved*. If to this question they wish an honest answer that

will do them any good, we must assure them, that having been brought to approve of the law they have broken, they must also approve of the remedy provided, must commit their souls to Jesus Christ. These conditions can never be altered.

3. When faith has accepted the atonement, and sin is forgiven, *there must be a life of obedience*, as that which can alone express the soul's continued approbation of the law that has been violated, and the remedy that has been provided. Repentance for sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, are not exercises belonging merely to the first stages of piety, and to be then done with for ever. The man who is born of God continues to hate sin, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ till he dies. He does not give the law one approving look, and the Savior one welcome to his heart, and then relapse into his former impenitence and unbelief. He renews his repentance day by day, and as often makes fresh application to the blood of sprinkling, for pardon and acceptance. His whole life, if he honor the religion he professes to embrace, is filled up with obedience to the law, with sorrow and tears for having broken it, and with the testimonials of a cordial approbation of the atonement made upon the cross.

We know nothing of that religion, which, after taking root in the heart, can lie dormant for years, and produce no transforming influence upon the man, conforming him to the truth, or moulding him into the image of Jesus Christ. God will not forgive sin, and take away the curse, and enter into an everlasting covenant with the transgressor; and then permit him to go into exile from his presence, and be again an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise; and live without hope and without God in the world.

He calls in his elect, only in time, however early, to fit them for his presence in glory. And the work of grace goes on from that time till death. They aim at a perfect obedience to the Divine law, and go from strength to strength, till every one of them appeareth in Zion before God. They forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those things which are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Hence there cannot be any very long suspension of those exercises, which are essential at the beginning of a course of piety. The heart continues to be penitent, and believing, and obedient, till all sin is removed, and grace is perfected in glory. . . .  
close with

## REMARKS.

1. *Let us compare all this with what is sometimes termed the gospel.* How wrong and how ruinous is the advice, that not unfrequently is given to the unregenerate.

We have known when pains was taken to prevent men from becoming alarmed, so as to put the question of the text with earnestness. They must not hear that the heart is desperately wicked, lest they should fear that in all their deeds they had broken the law of God. They must have no suspicion that their prayers are deficient, lest they should see their need of a Savior. They must be told nothing of hell, lest they should be afraid of its torments; nor hear of election, lest they learn that men will not accept of mercy, till they are made willing in the day of God's power.

And thus every doctrine, calculated to pour honor upon the Divine law, and reflect correspondent shame and reproach upon the transgressor, must be disproved, or concealed, or neutralized; and that perhaps by the very men who have been sent as the heralds of salvation to a lost world. We have seen them afraid, lest without design they should effect some alarm among the foes of God. Hence the monstrous abuse of that text, when any hard truth had leaked out; "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Ten thousand consciences, that had been pierced with truth, have thus been healed slightly, by a text which God inspired for far other purposes. But when no soothing opiate would answer, and the sinner could not be prevented from alarm, we have known advice to be given that was the most ruinous possible.

We have known when awakened sinners have had suggested to them a train of thought calculated to chase away all alarm, by lessening their respect for the violated law. It is pleaded that they have misapprehended their guilt; that the law is not so severe as they imagine, and moreover, that the mercy of God will not allow him to punish sinners for ever. What parent, say these tender-hearted instructors, would cast his child into a quenchless fire? Will God punish eternally the errors of a few years? God will be moved by their tears, and will pardon them, if indeed their grief has not *already* done away their guilt. Thus their anguish of heart is all soothed, while yet there is no repentance.

We have known when the awakened were told, that they were in a fair way to obtain religion, that they must persevere, and hold out, and they would do well. But unhappily their way was the

way to death, and they did persevere, perhaps, and their alarms were soon gone, and they are seen in the broad way, or are gone to know the full weight of that curse of the law which once hung over them. Had they been told that there was nothing holy in their terrors, and that they were still insecure, till they applied by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, they might have obtained eternal life. They should have known, that they had *not overrated* their danger, nor half estimated their guilt; that God *was* angry, as they supposed, that there *was* a perdition, as deep, and dark, and hopeless as they feared. Then there might have been a prospect that they would flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel.

The case is said to have happened when they have been directed to a novel, or a party, to chase away their glooms. A journey in the country, or a visit to their friends, the song and the dance, have been considered a better specific for their pains, than the atoning Lamb of God. Let it be, that these are extreme cases, still means like these have often been resorted to, in order to do away alarm, and soothe the waking conscience. But it will wake again in the day of death, and gnaw with a still keener appetite from the day of judgment onward.

Finally, any instruction given awakened sinners, that they may comply with and still perish, is cruel and treacherous. Say to them as Paul did, and you are safe, and they too, if they follow your advice. And they will be as likely to do their whole duty, as any part of it. Christ will bless only that instruction, which comes up to the standard he has given us. O, let not the lips, that should pour out only truth, that should help the sinner to a full acquaintance with his sins, and press his conscience, till he shall feel that he cannot do an hour without Christ, be employed to stop the progress of conviction, and through a mistaken tenderness, bind up the rankling wound, ere the probe has reached its centre, or it has disorged its putrescence. When the sinner, under the management of the Holy Ghost, is in a fair way to become thoroughly convinced of his misery and his ruin, let not the work be arrested in its progress, and the ear be assailed with the sound of peace, till heaven is once made sure.

The prodigal is alarmed for his life, and grieved almost to distraction for his baseness of conduct, and has his face turned homeward, but a being meets him, pretending to be his father's friend, and sent to guide him in the way to his house, and bears him into

a hopeless and returnless exile! He casts a veil over the filth and rags of the vagabond, tells him of his native virtues, admonishes him to make one more effort to live without his father, and the wretch believes, and turns his face from home, and perishes in his profligacy. So many a sinner, just at the moment when he began to think on his ways, when his sins were staring him in the face, when there was seen distinctly the countenance of an offended God, and when there began to be some thought of repairing to a Savior, has been misdirected and destroyed.

Instead of saying, as St. Paul did, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," we set about making him happy in some other way. He must mend his life, and send up some prayer, and wait at the pool, and hold on his way:—Yes, all this would be well, were he now a believer. But the misery of the case is, he is yet unsanctified, his heart is set in him to do evil, and the controversy between him and God is yet at its height. He must stop and turn back, or lose heaven. He yet knows not enough about his sins to render a Savior welcome. He still dares to stand on the margin of perdition, and has a disgust for holiness and heaven so implacable, that he will risk all the danger he is in a little longer, rather than give his heart to Jesus Christ.

Tell him now of waiting God's time, and attending on the means; when God's time has gone by these thirty, forty, sixty years, and means have had no effect all that time! Ah, I am afraid you will amuse him till his day of mercy has gone by, and he perishes in his bondage. The manslayer is fleeing from the avenger of blood, the road before him parts, a post is erected, and a board on it, on which is written, in large capitals,

### REFUGE

while the finger of a man's hand points to his course. He can only read a single word, and must run while he reads. If he stops to breathe he perishes.

Now such is the office of the gospel ministry, when it comes in contact with a sinner anxious to flee from the wrath to come. It can lose no time in directing him to the Lamb that was slain. It must urge him to a place of safety, and when the danger is over, then tell him of means, and urge him to prayer, and press a reform, and build him up for heaven. I proceed to a

2. Remark. *We may gather from this subject a reason, why revivals of religion in some instances, add so little to the strength of the*

*Churches.* The lax instruction sometimes given to awakened sinners at such a time, even by well meaning men, who aim to be faithful, tends to nourish a growth of piety, that is sickly and effeminate, and will finally add but little to the vigor and beauty of Zion. I know that if souls are converted they will get to heaven, and blessed be God, if he will convert them, but their usefulness in this life, much depends on their early instruction.

Let the doctrines be kept hid from those who are coming into the kingdom, and let there be detailed only that soothing, indistinct, and sickly instruction, which has been noticed, and the converts, when made, will go halting along to heaven, and the Church and its ministry have very little comfort in them, or help from them.

They will scarcely know *what* converted them, whether truth or error. It was truth, I know, for God sanctifies through the truth; but there was so much error mingled with it as to render it, in their own view, doubtful which produced the effect. And having associated the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals, with so much indistinctness of doctrine, they will be likely ever after, to court this same darkened exhibition of the gospel, and finally die, before they shall have learned what truth is. And while they live, they will be liable to be driven about with every wind of doctrine, and vex the Church, and embarrass the ministry, and pass perhaps from one denomination to another, and finally be saved though as by fire.

They will be doubtful *who* converted them. They were told when under alarm, to do many things toward their own conversion, and they did them, and they were finally converted; but whether they did it themselves, or whether God did it, they find it hard to tell. And they will give others the same darkened counsel that was given them. Thus God is robbed of the glory due to his name, and the Churches filled up with members, who will hang a dead weight upon every revival that shall happen in the Church, till they are taken up to heaven, and taught there what they should have learned that same week in which they were born of God.

And they may never find out in this world, what they were converted *for*. Men will be active in duty, only as they are rooted and grounded in the truth. In all men, truth, or what they think is truth, is the spring of action. Hence some whole Churches, in this day of Christian enterprise, can be brought to do nothing; and the reason is, because they know nothing *distinctly*. If you

could enlighten them, they would act, but they will not be enlightened. The secret is, they were born in a dark, misty, and debilitating atmosphere, and they choose to live and die in the same. Let some good man who knows and loves the truth, go into one corner of such a society, and there be active and faithful a few years, till the Christians know what they were born again for, and that corner of the Church shall be, from that time, worth all the rest, in any labors to which God shall call his people.

I know not but that we have here *one*, and that not a very inefficient cause, why so many ministers have been quarrelled away from their people, immediately after some great revival. The faithful and laborious servant of God had gathered into the Church a multitude of converts, and expected much from them, but had not prepared them to be useful; and when at length he urged them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, they contended with him. If any should consider this a bold suggestion then I hope they will make a happier one, and take away this reproach from the Churches. I cannot believe, that a revival of religion, effected by the Spirit of God, under a distinguishing gospel, will tend to unsettle its ministry. But I can easily believe, that one who knows and loves the truth, may hold it back in a time of awakening, to the incalculable injury of those who are born again, and at the risk of his own sudden removal from his flock. He is afraid to give them strong meat, and feeds them with what he terms milk, but which proves to be poison, and they wither under it, and he is punished for administering it. Thus is fulfilled that inspired adage, "He that will save his life shall lose it; but he that will lose his life, for my sake, and the gospel, the same shall save it."

*Finally*, let me say to lost men, haste your escape to Jesus Christ. You stand in imminent danger of perdition every moment. Your ruin is nearer, and your guilt, far greater, than you ever conceived. That sinner that has been the most afraid, has never been half enough afraid, of the wrath of God. It burns to the lowest hell, and when you fall beneath it, your courage will all be gone in a moment. "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hand be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?"

You see what the terms are, and God will never alter them, on which you can be accepted of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the best, and the only terms that could be offered. They secure the honor of the Divine law, the glory of Christ, and the eternal

life of the sinner. They are humbling terms, and to reach the case they must be.

Now will you stand quarrelling with the truth till you perish? Is this the right course for a sinner? You thus harden your heart, and sear your conscience, and provoke your doom. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." May God bless his own truth, and make it a fire and hammer to break in pieces the flinty rock. Amen.

## SERMON LXI.

### SALVATION MADE SURE.

JOHN VII. 37.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

PERHAPS of all the excuses that men have offered, as designed to account for their impenitence, none has in it more infidelity or more impudence, than that which fastens their ruin upon the purposes of God. If he has any decree respecting their future state, no matter whether he has resolved they shall die or live, no matter whether his decree deprives them of agency or not—if there is any such decree they resolve to leave the whole matter with him, and to give the concerns of the soul no attention. Hence many who have believed the doctrine have still felt that it should be seldom or never exhibited before ungodly men lest it should keep them away from Christ.

Against a sentiment like this I feel it my duty for one to enter my strong and decided protest. And for the following reasons:

In the *first* place it is a doctrine as plainly revealed in the Bible as any other, and the Bible is a revelation of the mind of God to sinners, hence God must have known that the doctrine has not the tendency that men have attributed to it. He would not have revealed a doctrine, whose tendency would be to thwart the purposes of his mercy.

In the *second* place I believe it a doctrine calculated above most others to awaken sinners. It exhibits the depravity of the heart in its most glaring colors. God will compel some to come in because all are unwilling, and because that but for this interference of his mercy all must be lost.

In the *third* place it exalts the Lord. Let the gospel scheme be such as men would have it, and God would make no calculations respecting the magnitude of his kingdom. Christ would not be able to know whether he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied or not. But God has done himself honor in fixing eternally the boundaries of his kingdom.

Finally, it is to the minister of Christ and the people of God

generally their only source of hope that a preached gospel will have its desired effect. No one would be willing to go out and preach the gospel to men totally depraved unless the unalterable purpose and promise of God secured success.

The atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only foundation of hope to a perishing sinner. Hence the Savior represented himself as the bread of God that cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world. And he added, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But said he to those about him, "Ye also have seen me and believed not."

But our Lord assures them that if *they* would not believe on him and follow him, still he should not be without disciples. There were some whose faith in him, and whose perseverance to eternal life were made sure. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Let us now give this text a candid and prayerful examination. We may sometimes suppose ourselves interested in evading the force of Scripture, but our true interest demands that we endeavor to understand it as God intended it should be understood. I cannot wish, nor can any other man who will feel and act rationally, that this text or any other should be made to speak a language which the Spirit of inspiration did not intend to teach. The text naturally divides itself, and opens to the mind three leading thoughts.

- I. Some of our race God the Father gives to God the Son
- II. All these shall infallibly come to him.
- III. None that come to him shall be rejected, or cast out.

1. Some of our race are given of the Father to the Son. It reads, you will remember, "All that the Father giveth me shall com to me: and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

If the New Testament had not made us familiar with this language, it would seem strange that one person in the Godhead should present to another that to which the other had an equal right with himself. But in the economy of redemption each person acts a part somewhat distinct. Christ as Mediator acts an inferior part, is delegated and rewarded by the Father. What then are we to understand by the Father giving some of our race to the Lord Jesus Christ? There is a passage very much like this in the 10th chapter of this same gospel. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto

them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." We read again in the 17th chapter, "That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Again, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me, out of the world: thine they were and thou gavest them me." Again, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." Again, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me."

I think these quotations, without proceeding farther, show clearly that the word *giveth*, in the text, has the same meaning as *given*, in the text which I have quoted. The meaning then is, that in some wondrous transaction between the Father and the Son, a part of our race was given to Christ, to be in some peculiar sense his property. Nor do I see how any honest man, who is willing to let the Scripture explain itself, can come to any other conclusion.

A writer of the Episcopal communion,\* for whom I love to express my high respect, gives us this explanation: "All whom the Father *had given* to him, in his foreknowledge and choice of them, and by the covenant of redemption made with him as their surety, would come to him." Another for whom I feel a similar respect,† says: "All that the Father has graciously chosen to himself, and whom he giveth to me in consequence of a peculiar covenant, to be sanctified and saved by me, will certainly at length come unto me." Permit me to quote another no less respectable.‡ He says: "From the gratuitous election in Christ by the Father, flows the gift of faith, which eternal life necessarily follows. Therefore, faith in Christ is a certain testimony of our election, and consequently of our future glorification."

Thus are we, by the covenant testimony of Scripture, and by the advice of able and pious commentators, driven to the conclusion, that a part of our race are given to Christ previously to their conversion, and are his in a sense in which the residue are not his. And if one other text may add its testimony, we shall learn that they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him, in love.

If any should persist in denying this doctrine, it will be recollected that the texts I have quoted, are but a few of the many that go to establish the same point. And I know not what explanation

\* Scott.

† Doddridge.

‡ Beza.

they can give the text. Will they say that the Father, in converting them, gives them to Christ? Then, I ask, What is meant by their *coming to him* after all this? May a man be born again, and be received into the family of God, who has not come to Christ? Will it be said that they are given to Christ, not from the foundation of the world, but immediately before their conversion, then I ask, Why at that time rather than years sooner, or an eternity sooner? Beside, nothing is gained by this mode of exposition. All the objections that lie against an eternal choice, and more too, lie against the idea of their being chosen one hour before their conversion. The fact of their coming to Christ depending on their being given to him, is the idea so much hated and so much controverted.

And it cannot be said that all are given to Christ in the sense of the text, for this would convert the Scriptures into nonsense, and would really contradict the testimony of Christ: for all do not come to him, but all that are given to him shall come to him. I do not see but we must all acknowledge, whatever be our prejudices, that there is a sense in which some of our race, to the exclusion of others are, previously to their conversion, given to Christ. We are not authorized to say who they are, nor what the number. Till by their conversion and subsequent holiness of life, they have made their calling and election sure, there is no one can guess with regard to any individual, whether he is or is not one of the number given to Christ. The plan is fixed and unalterable, but secret, till developed in the conversion of souls.

II. All who are thus given to Christ shall come to him. The context decides that to come to him is the same as to believe on him. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." The fact, then, is certain, that all who are given to Christ will believe on him. And if none can believe on him of whom they have not heard, and if none can hear without a preacher, it is equally certain that all who are given to Christ will be furnished with a preached gospel, and will thus be brought to know and obey the truth. God has made his plan perfect; he has not determined the end, and left the means unappointed. He has chosen men to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

The idea is certainly interesting, that nothing will prevent the Lord Jesus Christ from having a Church. It was predicted of him, "He shall see his seed—and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper

in his hands." To secure the redemption of all those who were given to Christ, nothing more is necessary than that he know who they are, and have power to make them willing to be his disciples. And he assures us, "I know my sheep, and they follow me." "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

It is wonderful to see through what obstacles the blessed Redeemer has pressed his way, in gathering in his chosen people. They have been scattered through all the periods of time, and probably more or less through all the nations of the earth. In the old world, at the time of the deluge, there was but one family that belonged to Christ, and but one in Sodom. By some impulse, felt, but indescribable, all the chosen of God are induced to come within the reach of truth, and thus are sanctified. One is born in the bosom of Africa, but is kidnapped and brought to a Christian land, and wanders to the doors of the sanctuary, hears the truth, believes, and is saved. Another, from the western forest, comes, he knows not why, to a land enlightened by the rays of gospel truth, and in some happy hour is sanctified through its influence. Another, as if God was resolved that his Church should be composed of some from every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, and people, is born on some distant isle of the Pacific, is bred a pagan, lives a liar and a thief, till some favored vessel transports him to this Christian land, where he hears the gospel, and is saved. Another and another, by a combination of circumstances that none but infinite wisdom could plan, and omnipotence execute, are rescued from the deserts of moral desolation, brought to the light, and made willing to follow the Lamb.

One is sanctified in his mother's arms, another arrested amidst the follies of youth, and another snatched from the verge of hell when he had quarreled with God a whole century. One is sanctified on a throne, and another carried to heaven from the veriest retreat of poverty and ignominy. The servant and his master, the princess and her handmaid, are made joint partakers of the same grace. One is awakened in the sanctuary, another in the ball chamber, and another at a funeral. The truth has been heard, and some event, occasionally the most unlikely, brings it to remembrance, and presses it upon the conscience. The unseen agent is the Holy Ghost, and the work is done, perhaps, before any human eye takes cognizance, or the very individual himself knows the meaning of the change he feels. When the good work is begun, it goes on until finished in heaven. Thus the Lord Jesus, traveling in the greatness of his strength, has been employed ever since

the time of the first promise, in bringing home to himself those that the Father giveth him. He has passed down through the vast tract of ages, and has searched the recesses of every kingdom, to discover and bring to holiness, happiness, and heaven, his elect. No ages of darkness, no dungeon of despotism, no labyrinth of error, has ever hidden from his eye one of his elect. His voice says to the north, "Give up; and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him." All the future periods of time, and the various districts of the earth, will continue to hold their respective portions of the elect at the disposal of the Redeemer, till the last pilgrim has traversed the desert, and all the mansions in glory are filled. Then will appear, to the joy of his people, but the shame and confusion of all beside, the truth of the text, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

III. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." In the original scriptures, the double negative used in this clause of the text, renders the assertion the strongest possible. The Lord Jesus, without an oath, could not have associated more strongly his resolve to save all those that come to him. The assertion embraces two things—he will not reject them when they first apply to him for mercy, nor will he afterward spurn them from his presence.

1. He will receive them. Beside the text there are abundant assurances to this point, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;" and there can no fact be stated, that contradicts the truth of these assurances of heaven. There never has a sinner come, and been rejected. In no age, in no land, under no circumstances, did the Lord of glory ever spurn from him the sinner who had become humble, and was fallen at his feet, to implore forgiveness. "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

2. Those whom he once receives, he never abandons. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." If there was not another promise, this one would effectually secure every sinner, who has entered into a covenant of peace with the Re-

deemer. But the Bible is full of promises to the same point. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"

But there arises here a very interesting question. Does the last clause of this text extend beyond the first? Having made it sure that all those whom the Father has given to the Son, shall come to him, is there left any hope for those not thus given? There is no doubt but the latter clause, which has no reserve, may be understood in its most unlimited sense. When the Redeemer exclaims, "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," it cannot be questioned but that if any should come who were *not* given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, still they shall be accepted. I consider the text as making it certain that the elect shall believe, and as opening the widest possible door of hope to the nonelect.

They would hardly desire more than that the Savior should be willing to receive them, if they come to him. They cannot wish him to receive them while they are unwilling to come, the thing implies an impossibility. The gate of heaven then is as wide as the most depraved could desire. It will admit them as soon as they are willing to enter, and, till they are willing to enter, they cannot be considered as wishing to be admitted.

But if the question be asked, Will any ever be willing to come to Christ, but those who are given him of the Father? the answer is, They will not. But the fault is all their own. The fact that God will make some willing, determines nothing with regard to the residue. Mercy is as free, and its reception as practicable, to the non-elect, as if none were elected. If heaven and glory were barred against the rest, if they could not be received on the same terms, if greater obstacles impeded their conversion, or if the atonement was not sufficient for them, as well as others, then the case would be hard. But if God does for his people what he is under no obligation to do, if *he* produces the repentance and the faith which *they* ought to exercise without his agency, and removes the obstacles which their own iniquities interpose, and which they are under obligation to remove; then there can be nothing hard or unmerciful in his dealings with them, who voluntarily reject his mercy, and are lost.

To all then, elect or not, we are certainly authorized to say that their salvation is possible. If Christ had limited the last clause of the text, and other texts like it, then we must have limited the invitations of the gospel. If he had said that *of those whom the Father giveth me*, none of them on coming to me shall be

cast out, then we could not have opened our lips to the non-effect. As things are, they may come and claim the promise of the text. "No degree of previous guilt, no inveterate habits of vice, no slavery to Satan, no secret decree of God, no involuntary mistake, would induce him to reject a single person." The invitation implied in the last clause of the text, is one of the broadest possible. The old, the hardened, the obstinate, the most hopeless sinner, is as sure to be accepted as any other, if he do but come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

An able writer on this passage observes, "These two views of the Divine will, his *secret will* concerning those whom he has chosen to salvation, and his *revealed will* concerning the actual salvation of every believer, are perfectly coincident; for no one will come till Divine grace has subdued, and—in part—changed his heart, and therefore no one who comes will ever be cast out."

If a doubt should remain let the trial be made. If a neighbor of yours had prepared a feast, and had sent out a general invitation to all about him to come and partake, and yet by some means or other you had imbibed the doubt whether there would be any seat at his table for you, it would be easy to go and test the sincerity of his invitations. Appear at the feast with your neighbors, take your seat with them, and act as if you too was welcome, and then if the host expel you the truth of his hypocrisy will be established. Let the unbeliever go and do likewise. Let him repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and if rejected then the case is settled. Till then, in the face of so many, so broad, and unqualified invitations it is impious to doubt. If with the slothful servant you suspect that God is a hard master, do *your* duty and then know. Use the talents entrusted to you as he directs, and wait till the time of his coming. Then if you find no room for you in the kingdom of heaven, the Bible will prove a lie, and you will carry with you to perdition the consoling reflection that you are imprisoned and punished through breach of faith: and a cordial like this would cool the fires of the pit.

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. The subject may well impress us with respect for the character and ways of God. How sovereign, and how mysterious are the operations of his grace. One man he has given to Christ, while his brother, a man no more depraved, is passed by.

2. The subject should inspire the believer with gratitude. What mercy can be so great as to be given to Christ! And there

was in us no goodness to mark us out as the vessels of mercy. And shall not God now receive all our services? Shall we not devote to him all we have and all we are? Shall we not cast our influence, our wealth and all that we have into the scale with him? Shall we not come forward to labor and suffer, and if it be necessary to die in the service of him who died for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify us unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works? Can we otherwise than by a complete surrender testify an adequate gratitude and affection for our election and adoption?

3. The subject reads an awful alarm to all the impenitent. As yet they exhibit no promise of their election in Christ. And the same Egyptian cloud will hang over their future prospects till their character is changed. When they are seen at the foot of the cross, then will dawn upon them the first hope that their names were written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Till they have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ they have reason to fear, for they have no evidence of the contrary, that they are not of the number given to Christ in the covenant of redemption. If they are going into old age in unbelief, their apprehension on this subject ought to strengthen with every year and day and hour of their impiety. I have not the smallest fear that the condition of a stupid sinner would be made worse, by having strong apprehensions that he was not of the number who were eternally given to Christ. The contrary impression would doubtless be calculated to keep him stupid. Let him finally believe that he shall live, that heaven is made sure to him by the eternal purpose of God, and that without the possibility of failure he shall at last be made a subject of grace, and we cannot conceive of an impression more calculated to suppress all alarm. His cry will then be a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep: so shall his poverty come as one that travaileth, and their want as an armed man. On the other hand, let them fear that they shall be lost, let them have strong apprehensions of the wrath to come, and those very alarms may bring them to think of their ways, and turn their feet to God's testimonies. Let them fear, that God has not chosen them to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, and these very fears may lead them to attend to the truth, and bring them within the reach of that Divine influence which was sent to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.

## SERMON LXII.

### THE DESIRES OF THE WICKED INADMISSIBLE.

PSALM CXL. 8.

Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked.

IN our unhappy world there are two grand interests. God has a kingdom, and intends to exert his power to make it prosper. Leagued with him are all holy beings. They are workers together with God. In this kingdom he governs with unlimited sway. All his dispensations are calculated to make his friends happy. Within this kingdom there is set up a distinct and opposite interest. It is managed by wicked men and devils. In their sad enterprise they spare no exertions. Many who belong to this kingdom seem not to know their own characters. They would fain believe themselves the children of God, and engaged in promoting the welfare of his kingdom. The subjects of each of these kingdoms may be considered as praying for their own prosperity. Of course their prayers must clash. If one kingdom flourish the other suffers. Hence the subjects of the one must pray that the prayers of their opponents may not be granted. In this surprising contest, one thing must not be forgotten—there are no intelligent beings that stand neuter. It is a universal doctrine, “He that is not for me is against me.” Those who are engaged with God in promoting the good of his kingdom, are denominated righteous; all others are called wicked. David, in the text, entreats the Lord to favor his own cause, and reject the prayer of those who have set themselves against him. “Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked.”

In pursuing the subject, I shall bring into view some of the desires of the wicked, and show as I pass on, that it must be the wish and the prayer of the pious that their desires should not be granted. And while we pursue the subject, may the eternal God grant us his gracious presence and smiles.

1. One desire of the wicked is, *That there is no God.* This we learn from the Scriptures, and may easily learn the same from observation. “Wherefore dost the wicked contemn God? he hath

said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The genuine meaning of this text is, That the fool, which is the Old Testament term for sinner, wishes in his heart that there were no God. The pride of their hearts renders them unwilling that any being should be above them. "Who is the Lord that I should serve him?" They manifest their wish that there were no God, by leaving him out of mind, by refusing to obey him, by finding fault with his dealings, and by quarrelling with his plans. They dare not submit their conduct to Divine inspiration, and would be glad if there were no being to inspect. We learn from all this that they desire earnestly that there were no God.

But against this desire the godly oppose their prayers. It ever has been and must be their wish, that the wicked may not be gratified in their desires. And there are good reasons why they thus feel. If there were no God, every thing must immediately be thrown into a state of confusion. Chaos would return; universal disorder would prevail, and the issue would be that every thing would immediately verge toward destruction. War, and in its train, death, tears, and despair would fill every corner of creation.

Indeed, were there no God, no being would wish to live. Anarchy, complete, would desolate every world where there were found intelligences. The very men who had desired a creation without a God, would immediately recall their wish, and if possible, have again an omnipotent Creator on the throne of the world.

But why do we speak of a nation without a God? Let God cease to be, and nothing can exist. He constantly gives to all beings life, and breath, and all things. He is the great fountain of existence. He constantly animates anew his own creation. Well then may the godly pray, that the desires of the wicked who wish that there were no God, may not be granted. They consider their being a blessing. They are not willing to see creation ruined. They will constantly elect anew, as their supreme Lord and master, the Jehovah of the universe. They are pleased with his government, and are willing to leave him to manage their concerns. They wish that there may be a universal empire, and in all their prayers extol him who rideth upon the heavens by his name, Jehovah, and rejoice before him. Thus do Christians oppose the prayers of the wicked.

2. If a God do and must exist, sinners wish him to be a mere spectator of the affairs of the world. The grand objection they have to his existence is, that if he exist he must have the reins

of government. If he will allow men to do as they please, and call them to no account, they can then be willing that he should live. Like idle children they can be pleased with a father who will not concern himself in their affairs, but cannot love him if he restrain them. Our tongues are our own, and who shall be Lord over us! "Who is the Lord that we should obey his voice?" Wicked men have made it manifest that they desire God to be a mere spectator in his own world, by the exertions they have made to have this doctrine believed and received among men. If they have allowed that he governs the larger affairs of his kingdoms, they have still refused to acknowledge that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, and that the very hairs of our head are all numbered. If he may dethrone a king, and aid in the councils of state, here his government must cease; he must not regard the prayer of the peasant, nor hear the cry of the dying slave. These things are too small for the notice of the infinite God. Thus have men taken pains to save God from the care of governing the world; and in all this have made it manifest that they earnestly desire God not to concern himself in the affairs of men. But their request cannot be granted. It is the earnest prayer of all the saints that God would not grant them the thing they wish. They not only desire God to reign, but they wish him to manage all the affairs of creation. They cannot be willing that a breeze blow without permission, or that an atom fly without direction.

They wish God to be thus minute in his government, because they consider their own safety and the safety of others to depend on this special care of God. If a mote may wander undirected, it may put a period to their lives before their sanctification be complete. If the meanest prayer of the humble may not be heard, all their hopes are destroyed. They dare not live in a world where one event is regulated by chance, or there is one creature without control. Instead of wishing to save God the care of managing the lesser affairs of creation, they delight to give him the honor of having a universal kingdom. They think it an honor to the eternal Jehovah, that while he furnishes the sun with light and heat, and martial the stars, he can, without burdening his infinite mind, direct the course of every floating atom. Thus the honor of God, as well as the safety of his creatures, invite him to universal empire, and form two grand motives why the children of God pray that the wicked may not have their desires granted. They delight to sing with David, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."

3. If God must exist, and must be an active agent in governing the world, the wicked are desirous that he should work without any plan. They are afraid of Divine decrees. They fear that these decrees do not favor them. They know that infinite purity must hate sin and sinners, and if it decree any thing respecting them, must decree their ruin. Knowing this, they are afraid that God should have any plan by which to work in future. In this case they can have some comfort. They intend to reform their lives, and they hope that God will then show them favor, unless some dreadful decree prevent. They have so mean an opinion of God as to suppose that his views may alter, and that in some old decree he may have resolved to do what he now would not wish to do.

Be the cause what it may, we learn, from every day's observation, that sinners hate to hear of God's decrees. They quarrel with this doctrine as soon as they begin to think, and the quarrel never ceases till they become Christians, or imbibe some false hope that the decrees will favor them. In their own little concerns they have their plans, and bend all their efforts to carry them into effect; but they are unwilling that God should exhibit the same wisdom.

In this matter the prayer of the godly must be that their desires may not be granted. The friends of God wish him to have his plan. They suppose infinite goodness can act with more energy if it set up an object and then pursue that object. If all the operations of Deity may be without design, they may also be without effort. No benevolent purpose may be accomplished; misery and sin may counterbalance happiness and goodness. The righteous found all their hopes of salvation, both as it regards themselves and others, on the purposes of God. Remove God's electing love, and you destroy all their hopes. This being the fact, they must pray that God would have his plan, and would pursue it in his eternal operations. They must, of course, pray that God would not grant the desires of the wicked.

4. Sinners desire happiness and heaven without holiness. Between these two God has established an indissoluble connection. He has decreed that holiness shall be the only path to happiness. But this connection sinners wish to destroy. They hate holiness wherever it appears, and yet they intend to be happy. That they hate holiness, is manifest by their opposition to the fruits of holiness. We are assured, and every day's experience teaches us, that they do not choose the fear of the Lord. They do not delight in his ordinances, nor love his word, nor offer to him any humble

prayers. They take no delight in the people of God, nor in the character of God. By all this they make it manifest that they are at war with holiness. "An unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked."

But the same cannot be said as it regards happiness. This object they pursue with all their powers. "Who will show me any good?" is their constant prayer. But the good they seek is worldly good. They intend to be happy without God. They think the creature sufficient to fill the mind.

Beyond the grave they hope and wish to live in the Christian's heaven. Yet they have no idea of any great change necessary in order to enjoy their bliss. They are often afraid that God has decreed that none but the holy shall enter heaven.

To these views of the sinner the pious are decidedly opposed. Their prayer is that God would not grant the desires of the wicked. There is nothing they love so much as holiness. Should the connection between this and happiness be broken, it would give them pain. To be holy is the grand object of all the saints. They have all their lives mourned the want of holiness. Nothing else so much assimilates the creature to God—and all the saints wish to be like God. It is therefore their ardent desire, that themselves and all they love may be holy. It is also their wish that none but the holy may reach heaven. It would pain them to have any there but such as are perfect in holiness. In every prayer, then, which they make, they oppose the desires of the wicked. When they pray for the spread of religion, when they pray for a holy heart, when they thirst after God, and when they look forward and hope for a holy heaven, they oppose the views of the sinner, and vent their ardent supplications that his prayers and his desires may not be granted.

5. Sinners desire that Christians may walk disorderly, and so dishonor the religion of Jesus. The Scriptures and daily experience establish this point. Sinners have ever been watching for the haltings of God's people. Nothing seems to give them more refined pleasure. Says the prophet Hosea, "They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity." No figure can be more striking than the one here used. The sin of God's people is the food of sinners: it is their meat and their drink. They must starve, if God's people were perfectly holy. "Mine enemies," says the Psalmist, "speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together." If sinners thus

lay wait for the saints, they must desire them to fall. And that this is the fact is proved by every day's experience. They seem delighted when they hear of the failings of those who profess religion. It is without difficulty that their minds are impressed unfavorably with respect to the pious. Small evidence has great weight in this cause. Hardly is any evidence required to substantiate the vilest charge against the friends of God and of truth. In all this sinners make known their desires; we are assured that they wish the downfall of the Christian.

But in this matter, their views are opposed by all the saints. These pray that they may not be gratified. Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked. To all who love God, nothing is more undesirable than that Christians should dishonor their profession. The holiness of the saints constitutes the beauty of Zion. This beauty must not be tarnished, yet tarnished it is, whenever the saints stray from the path of life. In every such case, the grand cause which engages the heart of God, and of the saints, suffers injury. Against these falls the saints pray, and are grieved when they take place. They love their fellow-saints. Every spot that appears in their garments grieves their hearts. They feel some of the same distress on such occasions, as is felt when they go astray themselves. Thus do we see a reason why the saints should pray in direct opposition to the desires of the wicked.

6. The wicked desire to remain ignorant of their own characters. This is an undisputed fact. We see them bar their minds against conviction. They dare not look into their hearts, lest they should become acquainted with themselves. They often oppose such preaching as brings the truth to light, and neglect to read those parts of the Scriptures which are most calculated to bring conviction to the conscience. They dare not look into their hearts; "They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." They dare not come to the light lest their deeds should be reprov'd. Thus the ancient Israelites shut their eyes, and requested their prophets to prophesy smooth things, to prophesy deceit. We are not to suppose that those Israelites differed from other unbelievers. Their desires were such as are natural to every unsanctified heart. Ministers of the gospel are urged to the same thing as were the prophets. It is wished that they should so preach as to leave the conscience undisturbed. Sinners wish to retain their good opinion of themselves.

These desires of the wicked, the people of God pray, may not be granted. To them it is a very desirable object, that men be

come acquainted with their own hearts. It is their daily prayer that they may enjoy the favor of being acquainted with themselves. And they wish the ambassadors of truth to deliver their message plainly. They wish that the wounds which sin has made may be probed to the bottom. On this depends the safety of the soul. A flattering ministry they consider the greatest curse with which God can afflict a people. Such a ministry seems to stop up the avenues of life. Men are usually first deluded, and then damned. God even speaks of sending them strong delusions, that they may believe a lie, and be damned. Men who wish to be deluded, and who shut their eyes against the light, are granted their request, and are so circumstanced that their delusions become riveted, and their destruction sure. In the view of benevolence, what can be more undesirable than such a state of things? How can Christians fail to pray that God would not grant these desires of the wicked!

7. Wicked men are very desirous that there may be no day of judgment. They do not wish the final inspection of Omniscience. They dare not have their conduct brought to a test. They know that if justice and truth fill the throne their cause cannot be plead. There can be no plea offered in their favor. Their conduct as it regards God has been base, as it regards their fellow-creatures, deceitful and often unjust. They have broken the law, in all its precepts, they have treated Christ with neglect, they have violated the rights of conscience, have resisted the influences of the Holy Spirit, and have rejected eternal life. For these crimes against God, and truth, and duty, they have no excuse to offer, and they dare not attempt to urge a plea. They anticipate the confusion of such an hour as shall bring all their deeds to light. They dare not be judged. And they sincerely desire that no day of judgment may approach.

In such desires the righteous cannot unite. It is their ardent wish that there may be a day that shall bring every deed to light, and pass an impartial judgment on all the actions of men. They do not expect to answer for their conduct, any more than sinners can for theirs. They expect, if dealt with according to their sins, eternal condemnation. They intend to plead guilty. But they hope that in that great day of dread decision and despair they shall find a friend in Christ. His blood will be their only plea. They will have nothing else to say but that they are sinners and that Christ died in their stead. But it is not simply the hope of safety that reconciles them to the approach of a day of judgment. They

wish such a day to come in order that the whole truth may come to light. They are willing that all their sins should be known, but they are also willing that every false accusation which has been laid against them should be removed. If their sins are all known they know that they shall appear great sinners, but this will reflect more honor upon Christ if he save them. But to have their character cleared from every false aspersion will be for the honor of our holy religion.

A full investigation of the character of the sinner is considered by them of vast importance. The honor of God will require this. They are to be doomed to eternal despair, and that God may appear just while he inflicts such an awful punishment it is important their sins should all appear in all their aggravations. Then will the world see and confess that God is just in all he does. Their sentence will be approved by their own consciences and by all other intelligent beings. The character of God will shine conspicuous. The character of the Savior will be elucidated, and heaven will be for ever the more happy for the investigations of the judgment day. These things make it very desirable in view of the saints that there should be such a day. Hence they constantly pray that the desires of the wicked in this matter may not be granted.

8. The wicked are very desirous to be left to act without restraint. Nothing do they desire more. Job represents the wicked as saying, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" In the second Psalm the kings and great men of the earth are represented as saying of Jehovah, and his anointed, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." James represents the sinner as saying, "Our tongues are our own, and who shall be Lord over them." These scriptures join with many others, and with a thousand facts, to make it manifest that they are impatient of God's restraints. Indeed the great quarrel between God and sinners is this, that God will restrain them. If he would leave them to act their own pleasure, they would have no objections to his government, that is, each would be willing that he should govern others and restrain others, but are unwilling themselves to be under his control. He may reign in hell, he may restrain devils, but not me. Were sinners willing to be under God's restraints, they would manifest it by obeying his laws. His laws they constantly disregard, and by so doing, say, as plainly as it can be said, that they desire to be without restraint.

In this particular the children of God, and all holy beings, oppose their wishes. It would ruin the world to have them gratified. Free the wicked from restraint and there would be but little difference between earth and hell. None could enjoy themselves. The wicked could not be happy themselves, and they would not allow the righteous to be happy. We are certain that they could not be happy themselves; for allow the unholy passions to reign, and they uniformly render their possessor miserable. They decompose the mind and torture the soul. Let any one passion govern and the man is ruined. Let envy predominate and there can never be any joy in the soul. It poisons every stream of comfort. Let the other passions unite with this; let pride, and anger, and revenge, and lust—let these have the reins, and there is at once a very hell began in the bosom.

And these passions breaking out, for they must break out, will uniformly render others unhappy. Let a man be intoxicated, either with passion or with spirituous liquor, and the happiness of all around him is gone. One might as soon be happy in the front of battle. We have all had experience on this point. Can we then wonder that the saints should pray against the desires of the wicked? Must it not be the desire of all, who wish to be happy, that God would restrain the wicked? Ought not the text to be one universal prayer, Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked.

#### INFERENCES.

1. Our subject shows us the monstrous wickedness of the heart. Perhaps some have doubted as I have passed on whether human nature is so depraved. That very doubt proves the truth in question. God represents the heart as deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. If, then, men are ignorant of their depravity, their ignorance proves the text to be true, and establishes the doctrine. Since it is the very nature of a sinful heart, to hide its own depravity, ignorance of what is in the heart proves it depraved.

Some of the things we have said seem too much to say of all sinners; but the Scriptures support, amply, every charge. Every heart in the fallen sons of men, possesses naturally the same character. As face answers to face in the mirror, so does the heart of man to man. He hath fashioned their hearts alike. If any difference is supposed, those who make the supposition must prove the fact. In order to know what is in the heart, we must place it where its feelings will be called into action. We have seen many

who seemed not far from the kingdom of heaven, who possessed, apparently, every amiable virtue, and seemed to be friendly to religion, who in an hour of clear conviction, manifested the temper of Satan. Then the character of the heart was brought into view. The Holy Spirit brought those objects before the mind which were opposite to the feelings of the heart. This brought the heart into action and displayed its character. Ordinarily men have such indefinite ideas of God, and of religion, that they know not whether they hate or love them. The experience of all who have been born again, and their confessions, join with Scripture, to make it certain that the heart, while unrenewed, is enmity against God and religion. It hates every thing that is holy. It hates every thing that opposes its selfish views. Such a heart, it is to be expected, *a priori*, will break out in such desires as I have in this discourse brought into view. It will wish there were no God, and that its passions had no restraints laid upon them—even if universal ruin ensue. If, then, any heart does not seem to be so depraved, it is because its nature has not been brought into view. It only waits an opportunity, and its nature will appear.

2. We may learn from our subject the nature of that change, which we term regeneration. It is not a mere outward reformation. It is a universal change in the desires of the heart, in the affections of the soul. The man may reform very much without being regenerated. The corrupt principles of the heart may for a time lie inoperative without being destroyed. Regeneration begins, and ensures their destruction. In order to hope that we are regenerated, we must feel that we have a set of new desires, not only distinct from, but opposite to those desires which we before entertained.

3. Our subject shows us the great difference between the righteous and the wicked. They have directly opposite desires. The wishes and the prayers of the one are directly opposed to the wishes and the prayers of the other. If one is gratified the other mourns. If one is exalted the other sinks. If one is happy the other weeps. Hence there is an absolute necessity, if they depend on God for happiness, that one or the other be for ever miserable.

4. Our subject shows us why sinners do not desire or relish the society of the righteous. They have opposing desires. They pursue distinct interests. Of course their language and their employment must be distinct and opposite. This being the case, how can they associate? While one remains the friend of God, and

the other his enemy, one pursues the interests of his kingdom, the other pulls down—while this remains the case they must dwell apart, or if together must be unhappy.

5. We learn from our subject that there must be hereafter two worlds, one for the righteous, the other for the wicked. No doubt there will be the same difference in their characters hereafter that there is in this world. They will continue to have opposite interests. They cannot then dwell together in peace in the same world. As the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness are entirely distinct here, so they must be hereafter. Christ will say to the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

6. We may infer from our subject, the necessity of ministers preaching doctrines which the impenitent will be unwilling to hear. We have seen that they are desirous not to become acquainted with their own hearts, but the design of preaching the gospel is, to make men acquainted with themselves, that they may be brought to repentance. Our labor, then, would all be lost if we left out of view those doctrines which sinners are more generally unwilling to hear. Instead of passing these doctrines by, these are the very doctrines which, above all others, we must preach. They object to these doctrines because they alarm their consciences. They cannot rest easy, they cannot feel satisfied with themselves while these doctrines are preached, hence they complain. Their complaints cannot be heard. The very doctrines they oppose must often be preached.

## SERMON LXIII

### THE CHRISTIAN'S REVIEW.

ROMANS VI. 21.

What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is death.

THE apostle inquires of the converts of his time, what fruit they had in those things of which they are now ashamed, things, the end of which is death. Hence three questions proper to be put now to those who were once in the gall of bitterness and under the bonds of iniquity : What fruit had you then in the works of sin ? why have you become ashamed of them ? and how is their end death ?

I. What part had you in the works of sin ? The question amounts to this. What *enjoyments* had you ? Did the service of the prince of darkness make you happy ? Or are the Scriptures true, and was the way of transgressors hard ? Let me say, and if I fail to prove my positions, let them be rejected, that the pleasures of a life of ungodliness, are neither *innocent*, nor *rational*, nor *satisfying*, nor *elevating*, nor *abiding*, nor *safe*.

1. They are not *innocent*. Men who refuse to be happy in the way that God appoints, cannot be innocently happy *in any way*. He directs that we be happy in serving him ; that we make it our meat and drink to do his will and pleasure. " Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." We are to walk in the ways of wisdom, and have the promise that we shall find them ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. Now if men do not love God, and will not take pleasure in obeying him, it must be that they are not innocently happy. Made as we are, we shall either love God supremely, and then shall be happy in serving him, or shall set up some idol in his place, and put our trust, and draw our enjoyment, from some forbidden source. It matters not as it regards the innocence of our enjoyments, whether they are derived from one created object or another, if we do not joy in God, we cannot be innocent. If we permit the noblest object he ever built, to take the place of himself in our esteem,

and every unregenerate man *does*, God must feel himself robbed and insulted.

2. The pleasures of ungodly men, not being innocent, are not *rational*. I know that many may think this a high and unwarranted charge against the whole family of the unsanctified, and still it is easily supported. It surely is *most reasonable* that men put themselves under the guidance of their Maker, and obey him in all things, and on him place supremely their affections. But none of these is true of the ungodly. They are not willingly under the Divine guidance, else they would have the best possible evidence that they are the children of God. His law they do not make their guide, nor his word the man of their counsel, else they would have the testimony of this text among others that they are his children, "Then are ye my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you." And the charge against them is, that they love the world and the things of the world, and that the love of the Father is not in them: and all this cannot be *reasonable*. Hence the pleasures of ungodly men are not *reasonable* pleasures, in other words they are not rationally happy. If we inquire in what their pleasures consist, we shall gain additional evidence that they are not rational. They consist in the gratification of their appetites and passions, not in those pursuits that elevate the mind and mend the heart.

3. The pleasures of unregenerate men are *not satisfying*. That which is neither innocent nor rational, we should not expect would be satisfying; we should promptly declare it *impossible*. God has made the brute creation, but not man, to be satisfied with the gratifications of appetite. This is their noblest power, the highest happiness they are capable of. Of them God has not required a higher aim, nor even this; he requires nothing. Of man he requires, that we give him our hearts, and man he has made capable of a higher enjoyment through the medium of the moral affections, than through the gratifications of appetite. And he requires us to be happy through this higher medium. He will not be satisfied that our noblest powers lie dormant; and while *he* is not so, neither shall we be. If we are capable of ten degrees of happiness, five will not satisfy us. Feed the appetites to the full, and we have only the five degrees, and are not satisfied. Men have made the trial. We have an instance exactly in point in Solomon. He built houses, and planted vineyards, and made gardens, and orchards, and pools of water, and got him men and maid servants, and cattle, and silver and gold, and musicians, and every thing that his

heart could desire. And when done, he declares them all vanity and vexation of spirit; they did not satisfy him. And if such is the experience of one who had the means of gratifying his senses to the full, and spared no pains to do so, what must be the sure experience of all other men, when they shall have made their highest efforts. They know their own comforts to be poor and unsatisfying, but are so unhappy as to doubt whether religion would furnish them any *better* comforts. Hence they press on, and still hope that some object may lie ahead, not yet overtaken, that will yield them the very blessedness they covet.

4. The pleasures of ungodly men are not calculated to elevate, but to *depress* their nature. They take pleasure in objects beneath the dignity of their being. If they would uniformly pursue *science*, and aim to elevate their minds, and take some mighty grasp of the works of God, then would less be said; though still, till they should give him their hearts, they would find themselves meanly employed. But, unhappily, they do not care, ordinarily, to attend at all to the elevation of their being. The things they might easily know, they do not care to know; the books they might read, and that lie in their way, they will not read; the very hours they have to spare, and that hang heavy on their hands, they would rather occupy in trifles than in the acquisition of solid science. The Sabbaths, for instance, that are not spent in the sanctuary, how seldom are they employed in the acquisition of science, though to thus employ them would be wrong. And the evenings, and other hours of relaxation, how belittling is more generally the employment with which they are filled up—the most useless conversation, or the merest indolence. O, how much these hours might do for the *mind*—suppose it of no importance that the *heart* be made better. How might all our young men acquire a knowledge of history, and enter more or less profoundly into science, and rise to the ability of reasoning ably, and speaking eloquently, and wielding an honest and masterly influence in any great matter of interest that should come before them. What a pity it would seem to be, that the noble mind, made in the image of God, and, for ought we know, capable of soaring in company of angels, in flights of sublime conception, should be held down by a depraved taste, and by sordid appetites, to daily converse with the merest trifles of time and sense. I remember the disgust it gave me, when I read of one of the emperors of antiquity, that most of his time was spent in catching flies. Though a mere child, when I met with this historical fact, I involuntarily inquired, why his *crown*, and *throne*, and

*sceptre*? A beggar boy might succeed as well as he, in his sordid occupation. But why did he appear meanly occupied, but as I compared his employment with some nobler business that might have occupied him? Go, then, with me to some place of idle con-course, and I will show you many a mind occupied as meanly, compared with its powers, and perhaps with its ultimate destiny, as in the case named. It is more than possible that the youth who is wasting his evenings in noisy laughter and trifling, if not lewd and profane conversation, might soon render himself capable of the noblest excursions of science, and follow Newton in his track among the stars.

Ah! who does not see, that if men had *minds* only, no *conscience*, no *powers of affection*, nor *hopes of immortality*, the belittling occupations of sin disgrace their intellectual character, and fix reproach upon them. But when we consider man in his nobler parts, capable of loving and honoring his Maker, capable of being employed as angels are, in executing the noblest designs of infinite love, how can we fail to see, in the ordinary enterprises of depraved men, danger that they will let down their nature; danger that they will find, when life is done, that they have *degraded their being*, as well as lost their souls. Suppose that Newton, after he made his noble excursions in science, could have remembered that he was once a menial, occupied with the merest drudgeries of life—would it not have seemed to him a pity that he had not begun his excursions earlier, and not employed his noble mind in what must have tended to cramp and contract its powers. And should those hereafter become Christians, who now are quite content with the little play things of time and sense, how would they mourn at the retrospect. And be it otherwise, it alters not the fact, that ungodly men are employed in a manner beneath the dignity of their nature.

5. I remark again, that the pleasures of the wicked are *not abiding*. What joy they have, and it is far beneath what they might have, is fleeting and transitory. There is no steady light of day shining upon their path; they walk by the glimmerings of a taper, or at the best, by the lightning's glare, or the twinkling of some distant star. If somewhat happy, they often know not why, or if they know why, dare not dwell on the cause of their joy, knowing it to be such that a single hour may make them wretched. Would they tell the reason why they are happy, it would be seen to be merely a reason why they should be afflicted and mourn, and convert their laughter into mourning, and their joy into heaviness. Every object on which their joy depends is perishing—is a dying

and a transitory object. They were not created to be the permanent food of an immortal mind. They answer as the mere playthings of men that have no richer treasures, no "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens." In the dying hour, at the farthest, and often long before, the treasures of the ungodly take to themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle toward heaven. Just when they calculated that their joy would be perfect, it proves a dream. What they grasped at was a mere shadow, and shrunk away from their grasp. Their hope perished, when God took away the soul. To expect permanent bliss, and base the hope of it on that which worms can devour, and thieves break through and steal, is to expect grapes of thorns and figs of thistles; is to sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind; is to pierce ourselves through with many sorrows.

6. The ungodly are conversant only with *dangerous* pleasures. Their pleasures are constantly the means of their undoing, being guilty and forbidden. That a nature capable of loving his Maker, should fix his supreme attachment elsewhere, is offering God a perpetual insult, and exposing the offender to the indignation and wrath of the holy and jealous Jehovah. The stronger our affections, and of course the higher our pleasure, the more imminent our danger. The best chance of safety consists in not allowing ourselves to be very happy, if our joy is not in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I know that common opinion, and dangerous as it is common, that men should feel it their duty to be happy, but I see no warrant for it in the Scriptures. If to be very happy we must love idolatrously what God has forbidden us to love, then is nothing plainer than that our guilt must increase with our happiness, and God be the more offended. In such objects, then, if we be asked whether it is our duty to try to be happy, the answer is in the negative. God would see his creatures happy, if they will joy in him, but has said in his word that delight is not seemly for a fool, and has bid the ungodly to be afflicted and mourn. Hence all those amusements where ungodly men find their highest delight, are but cunningly devised means *of doing without God*, and are dangerous, in proportion as they are fascinating. Nor is it kind to wish them the undisturbed enjoyment of these high and absorbing idolatries. Were I in India, I would oppose the worship of the pagoda, because there is worshiped in these little sanctuaries, the images which God has forbidden both the making of, and bowing down to; but I would oppose more yet the feasts of Jugernaut, because an artful priesthood has thrown more

fascinations about the sacred ear of that idol. At the worship of the latter, an Indian would be the most exhilarated, or if you please, the most happy, but for this very reason the most guilty. Then he would devote his whole heart to the false god, and then offend his Maker most. It is thus, precisely, with unregenerate men. There are some of their pleasures which, perhaps, they could be persuaded to abandon, but others they would risk their lives to defend. But the whole are unsafe pleasures, and those the most loved the most dangerous. Let the man sit down thus deliberately, and make out the full catalogue of those objects that hold his heart away from God, placing at the top of that list his highest, dearest idol, where his heart clings with the grasp of death, and he may rest assured that the most beloved object is the most dangerous, and that the residue are dangerous in proportion to the strength of affection. Till we have given God the supreme place in our hearts it is dangerous to love any object, as one the most trifling may become, before we are aware, our supreme idol. How has the game at cards weaned away a man from his family, and become dearer to him than his beloved wife and his flock of children? And the guilty carouse, and the forbidden cup, how have they a thousand times torn asunder every ligature that held the husband and the father to his home, and his fireside? What pleasure, then, is not a dangerous one, if our supreme delight is not in God?

Thus the Christian can look back to the time when his heart went after forbidden pleasures, but when he had no fruit in those things of which he is now ashamed, and the end of which is death. They were neither *innocent*, nor *rational*, nor *satisfying*, nor *elevated*, nor *abiding*, nor *safe*.

How wonderful, that he should have made his escape from such a labyrinth of danger! It will be to the good man a source of wonder for ever, that sin did not prove his ruin. And the grace of God, which snatched him as a brand from the burning, will be in the future world the subject of his elevated and eternal praise.

Having noticed how entirely without any fruit or enjoyment was the good man in his unconverted state, in those things which he once tried to enjoy, we shall

II. View him under the operation of that shame and regret to which his past conduct has subjected him. Unregenerate men have no idea that they are now putting forth those affections and betraying that character that they shall hereafter be ashamed of.

They have usually very high-minded notions of their own demeanour as honest, and upright, and dignified, and above all censure. But this pride is the result of their ignorance of their own hearts, of the law of God, and of that spirit and temper which the gospel requires. The man has only to know himself, to become ashamed. And this would never be but for the agency of the Holy Ghost. He would continue till he dies in all the pride of unbelief, if not enlightened from above. But we have our eye on the man whom it was the Divine purpose to bring to a timely repentance, and to do this would first render him ashamed of the very things which he once sought as his supreme delight.

He is brought to see that God is worthy of his whole heart, and that he has withheld it, and has worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is over all, God blessed for ever. He becomes conscious of a quarrel with his Maker, but for no reason that he dare now assign. Every attribute of his nature is glorious, and every act of his government holy, and just, and good.

And still the sinner has placed his supreme love on some idol, and refused to love and worship his Maker and his Redeemer. Years and years he persevered in this course of downright revolt, breaking every law of his rightful Sovereign, and suffering his heart to be governed in all its affections by some worthless object, that did not deserve his love. And all this time, as he now sees, God was his kind and gracious benefactor. This thought fills him with the deepest shame. As if one should discover, late in life, that some good man, that he had always hated, and ten thousand times abused, privately and publicly, had been his kind and constant benefactor; had fed his family, and provided covertly for all his wants; how covered with shame, in that case, would he be, on discovering that he had his best friend in one that he had ever treated contemptuously, and hated and abused most cordially.

Thus the good man, when he waked to a sense of his condition, was filled with confusion. "Then shalt thou be ashamed," says the prophet, in the name of the Lord, "and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done." And the Psalmist says, "Thou makest me to bear the iniquities of my youth." His shame is greatly enhanced by the consideration that he must now be indebted, as he always has been, for all his benefits to one whom he has always expelled from his affections.

He sees, too, that the ground of his preference for idols was a depraved and base heart, that would prefer any thing to God,

would love a stock or a stone more than the infinitely adorable and kind Creator; and in the mean time, would not be convinced that the course he took ruined him, that his misplaced affections polluted and belittled his mind, and that he was ensnared, and impoverished, and destroyed by the works of his own hands. Now it is that the man becomes filled with shame and confusion of face. I proceed,

III. To show that the end of these things would naturally have been, to the now regenerate man, and *must* be to all men who do not repent, death: the end of these things is death. This will be seen, when we consider, *That a course of sin leads to bad society, absorbs precious time, engenders an erroneous creed, benumbs the right affections, nourishes the wicked passions, and provokes the Spirit of God.*

1. A course of sin *leads to bad society.* If men will be transgressors, they must of necessity associate with men of similar pursuit. The gregarious nature of man prompts him to seek society, and renders him unhappy when alone, or when insulated from his fellows. Hence men that do not love the Lord, must mingle with that portion of the human family that have on the same general character. And those who have gone the greatest lengths in vice, have thus opportunity to approach and pollute all the residue. Suppose, then, that some unrenewed man should determine not to be polluted by those who are worse in temper and habits than himself, how shall he prevent it? Suppose him not profane, how shall he be a social man if he will not associate with the godly, and not come in contact and be injured by those who lift their mouth against the heavens? Suppose him not accustomed to speak lightly of Divine institutions, or of good men, or those measures that promote the prosperity of the Church; still how shall he be social with the ungodly, and not come into constant fellowship with men of this character? Make the attempt to collect a company of sober, serious, thoughtful, *ungodly* men, and if you do not soon discover that no such society can be formed, then have we very much mistaken the true state of the world. Where will you assemble them? Not at the sanctuary—not at the place of conference and prayer—not by the fireside of the man of God:—there the godly meet. You must keep your serious unregenerate man at home, or you must carry him to the place where sinners love to meet, and then you bring him in contact with profanity, and lewdness, and evil speaking; and, first or last

with all that is coarse and vulgar in vice. He must walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and he must stand in the way of sinners, and must at length sit down in the seat of the scornful. Thus, the fact of his being unregenerate, if he mingle with men at all, brings him naturally into bad society, and into contact gross and dangerous with all that is polluting in moral character. There are but two societies, the godly and the ungodly. I know some pains may be taken to exclude from some of these circles somewhat of the low and vulgar in character; but I know, too, that such efforts are but to a very small extent successful. There may be excluded the sot, who has been seen by every one in his most disgusting fits of inebriation; but I never knew the exclusion to extend to the more decent inebriate, who will have his wine after dinner, and drink himself senseless at the midnight card table. There may be excluded, perhaps, some more vulgar of the profane, but never the men who can sneer decently, and shape their oaths a little to the time, and place, and company. There may be excluded some species of the lewd and the profligate, but never wholly the men that practice that iniquity according to the maxims of high and polished life. Thus is it vain to hope that the society of the ungodly can be purged, so that it shall not be the high road to all the grosser vices, and to death itself.

2. A course of sin *absorbs precious time*. Unregenerate men throw away very many years of their probation. All that time that the Christian must spend in his closet, in the study of the Bible, and in the duties of domestic worship, the ungodly have to spare. Hence time often hangs heavily on their hands, and hence the *pastimes*, properly so called, are means invented to murder all those precious hours that are not filled up in the acquisition of wealth. Now, if men must associate with those who have time to spare, they must, of course, form the habit of wasting time. This shortens life, and begets the habit of not thinking—the habit of placing the mind in an attitude of listlessness and inattention, than which no habit can be more ruinous to one whose happiness in this life and in the life to come depends so much on prompt and vigorous action. If we are to reach heaven, and would be prepared for it, we must form soon the very opposite habit, and must learn to husband well every hour that lies between us and the grave.

If there were no oaths heard, and no evil bias of the affections generated, still no price should tempt the man who hopes to come to heaven, to waste his mornings and his evenings, and his leisure days, in the places of lounging indolence. The mere habit of let-

ting time pass unoccupied, has a fatal influence upon the welfare of the soul. We have known it to draw back from the path of life many a man, who, but for having formed this one habit, bid fair to reach the kingdom of God. His apostacy from a fair profession, and the hopes of glory, began in his return to the habit of chatting and laughing away leisure hours. The Christian has no leisure hours. There are no little nooks of time that he cannot fill up to the best advantage; and he may as soon return to any other vicious course, as to the habit of wasting his precious hours. Should we find he had returned to his oaths, or to his Sabbath-breaking, or to his cups, though it might shock us more, it would not be more ominous of his future entire apostacy, than a return to his idle amusements.

3. A course of sin is death, as it leads to the *adoption of bad sentiments*, and engenders an erroneous creed. There is a whole system of infidelity taught and believed in the promiscuous associations of the ungodly. It may not be styled infidelity, and lectures may not be given in the formal didactic mode, but the result may be the same. Let the child hear it said to-day at the tavern door, that there is no harm in the milder forms of profanity, and he imbibes the idea that there is no obligation in that terrible law, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" and this is infidelity. Let him hear it said in the same place or some other, that these Christians are a set of the most profound hypocrites, and he learns to doubt whether God requires his people to be a chosen generation, a peculiar people, and this is infidelity. Let him hear it said the next day, that Jesus Christ was the mere child of Joseph, and not as he pretended, God manifest in the flesh; and this again is infidelity. Let him hear again that probably the Bible has been wrongfully translated, and much corrupted by designing men, so that we cannot know how much of it is the testimony of God; and this is a still more open and barefaced infidelity. Thus our children, if they may spend their evenings and their play-days about the place of idle concourse, are taught intelligibly and fatally to reject the whole counsel of God. Thus many of our young men, while perhaps they have attended morning and evening upon a father's prayers, have been put into the school of infidelity, and the parent has discovered just when he hoped they would become a comfort to him, that their sentiments had been ruined, and the broad foundation laid for their final perdition.

I have proceeded on the principle that sentiment is the foundation of character, and character the ground of salvation. Hence

the end of these things is death. No man can without danger im-  
bibe one wrong sentiment. It will assuredly bias, wrong his heart,  
and be acted out in conduct that will offend the Lord. Thus the  
end of these things is death.

4. A course of sin *benumbs the right affections*. It tends to des-  
troy filial confidence, and fraternal, and parental, and conjugal af-  
fection. Devotion to some idol easily becomes stronger than any  
of the natural relationships, and thus neutralizes many a restraint,  
that the God of nature, as the infidel would name Jehovah, has im-  
posed. But when we pass these and speak of the religious affec-  
tions, it hardly need be said that all these are suppressed and  
quenched by a course of sin. How many children that have been  
taught the fear of God, a respect for his word, a reverence for his  
Sabbath, regard for his people and his house, and his ordinance,  
have had them all eradicated as they rose in life, and mingled with  
men versed in the art of undermining virtue. I have seen the lad  
of promise at the family altar, ready to believe a father's testimony,  
and listen to a mother's instruction, and giving high hope that as  
he rose in life he would fill respectably his father's place; and I  
have seen the same lad proud and stout-hearted, and far from  
righteousness; the advocate of infidel sentiment and vicious habits,  
and profligate manners, pressing his way down to that death  
spoken of in the text as the end of these things. And I have seen  
his parent's heart more grieved at some act of his conduct than  
he would have been to be called to follow his corpse to the grave.  
O it is awfully foreboding to see disappearing all the good impres-  
sions of an early religious education; and substituted in their  
place the revelling, and the doubt, and the indifference to holy  
things that so often marks the downward course to death.

5. A course of sin ends in death as it *nourishes the unhallowea  
passions*. We totally and fatally mistake man when we forget that  
he is born depraved. We are not to suppose, and shall be fatally  
disappointed if we do, that our children are in point of character  
that clean white paper on which any impression we please can be  
made with equal ease and certainty. No they have a bad moral  
character before we can well reach them. Hence our early busi-  
ness is to eradicate the wrong, as well as implant the right. If  
this is not early done, and we cannot do it without God, these evil  
passions are already to be nurtured and matured. Hence a life of  
unregeneracy is the whole of it a nursery in which these vile  
plants are watered and reared, and bring forth their evil fruits, the  
ripening of which is death. Men grow worse day by day while

they remain in the gall of bitterness and under the bonds of iniquity. Their position is never stationary, but their course downward, downward, downward toward the blackness of darkness for ever.

*Finally* a course of sin tends to death as it offers constant *provocation of the Spirit of God*. On the operations of his Spirit we are dependent for life and salvation. There is no amount of means, or force of human eloquence, or impetus of natural resolution that can arrest the course of sin. Men will not try to stop themselves, nor allow themselves to be stayed in their course by any human power. Hence our only hope is that God will make them willing in the day of his power. But every act of sin is resistance made to the efforts of his mercy and the influences of his Spirit. God strives with men. He did so in the old world, and does so still. And as then, so now, there will come a time when he will strive no longer. And when he shall so determine with regard to any soul, that soul is lost. The decree of heaven is, "He is joined to idols, let him alone."

Thus we see the danger that all God's people have been in, and that which still awaits all the ungodly. Their course is down to death. The end of these things is death. I close with a single

## REMARK.

Have any of us reason to hope that we have been arrested in our mad career? then what *gratitude* and what *holy obedience* do we owe our gracious deliverer, and how kind and faithful should we be to those who are still in all the danger that we once were. And as was the case with us they are ignorant of their danger, and are not willing to be alarmed, and esteem it unkind that we concern ourselves with them. But all this alters not our duty. If we saw one asleep in a burning building, and he knew not his danger, and did not wish to know, and would esteem it unkind should we try to wake him, still we should not stop, but snatch him if possible from his perilous condition. And all to save his life only. Should we not then take greater pains still to save the soul, and do it at more hazard, and more expense, and inward assurance that our kindness would be repaid with wrath.

## SERMON LXIV.

### THE INFALLIBLE COMPARISON

PROVERBS XII. 26.

The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor.

WHILE the term righteous is so frequently used in the Bible, to designate the good man, we infer, without the danger of mistake, that the good man will be honest. A false or fraudulent believer, is a character not recognized in the volume of inspiration. That religion which saves the soul, is sure to render us good and useful citizens of the present world, and any expectation of eternal life, when this first effect of piety is not produced, is vain. The text implies a fact which we have all observed, that the righteous are scarce. When you find a good man, it is almost certain that his neighbor is wicked. This would not be the case, were the pious as numerous as the men of opposite character. While a comparison is drawn between the righteous and the wicked, the favorable conclusion is not built upon any thing that relates to birth, or blood, or wealth. In the esteem of God, there is no value in these external things. Man looketh on these outward appearances, but God looketh on the heart. That superior excellence which he esteems, has its origin in the temper of the heart. Hence the comparison should neither render the one proud, nor mortify the other. It should make the believer humble and thankful, and produce awakening and conviction in the mind of the sinner. If God has made us willing in the day of his power, it becomes us to remember for ever the rock from whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit from whence we were digged. If we are associated with the righteous, the praise of changing our state, and altering our condition, belongs to Him who produced the change. By nature men are all the degenerate plants of a strange vine, born the enemies of God, and the heirs of perdition, and left to act out our own temper, we should all carry with us to the grave the same odious character, and die the heirs of the same fearful destiny as others. Hoping then, neither to awaken pride or envy, but gratitude and conviction, I proceed to compare the pious man, with the man unsanctified. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor :"

I. *As he is possessed of a better temper, adopts better maxims, and acts from better motives.* By the temper of the heart, we mean that disposition, taste, or views, which generates all its moral actions, and gives them their character. We are born with evil tempers, and retain till the moment of the new birth, a taste, a relish, a bias, a propensity, to what is morally wrong, to what God hates and forbids. While this temper remains, disobedience is more pleasant than duty. A selfish, contracted, un pitying, unforgiving, and unrelenting disposition is drawn out in every moral action. The temper that lives within, reigns without, colors every deed, writes approved or disapproved upon every exertion that partakes of a moral character.

The work of grace begins with a change in this native bias of the soul. It becomes essentially altered so as to be pleased with that which displeased before, and disgusted with that which before gave pleasure. Hence the heart of the good man is inclined to order, mercy, justice, truth, honesty, holiness, and happiness. The feelings now generated are in unison with God, and with all holy beings.

Hence originate a set of principles or maxims, diametrically opposite to those which govern the unrenewed man. Good men will naturally pursue a course that will gratify the temper of the heart. Hence the maxims or principles by which the life shall be governed, will correspond to the temper which the grace of God has generated. It was the maxim of the unregenerate man, that the promotion of his own interest, was a good to be pursued, although it might greatly injure the Church or the world; now, a smaller private good must yield to a greater public interest. Revenge was sweeter than forgiveness; now, forgiveness is an exercise that gives pleasure, while revenge gives pain. Retaliation appeared righteous and desirable, but is now a principle to the last degree odious and abominable. A deed of wrong, not discovered, was viewed as comparatively innocent, but a holy temper sees in sin, however secretly done, all the hatefulness that could attach to it when made public. It was felt that the things unseen are worthless, and that the present world has charms that belong to no other; but when sanctified, faith discovers better treasures in the heavens than earth can afford. And thus every maxim that governed the life was inverted, when the heart was sanctified.

And this change in the temper, and in the principles of action, have led to an entire new set of motives. The good man loves God and his kingdom, and loves his fellow-men, and now often

acts against his own interest, when he can promote the glory of God, and the good of others. The things that used to move him in opposition to his own conscience, have now lost their influence. He considers it more important to act so as to approve of himself, than to promote his own interest. To be poor, and low, and of little credit, is of smaller moment than to be miserable when he retires to think.

Hence we can place in the man of piety more confidence, can feel a greater security that he will not, if occasion require, injure and betray us, than in his neighbor. If we need his aid, and have nothing to pay, if we are in his power, and have no escape, if our property or life is in his hand, there is smaller danger than when there is none but an unsanctified temper and selfish motives. Hence "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbor."

II. *He sets a better example, and exerts a better influence.* Every man's life will correspond to the temper of his heart, and the maxims and motives that govern him. Hence, by their fruits ye shall know them. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. It never happened that there was one principle in the heart, and another acted out in the life. When the whole conduct is minutely examined, every man is what he appears to be. The good man not only sets an example of industry, sobriety, honesty, and generosity, which perhaps he did before his heart was sanctified, but is conscientious, humble, watchful, prayerful, benevolent, and heavenly-minded. Whatever property of nature was excellent in him before his conversion, is now still more conspicuous, while many things in him are entirely new.

Grace improves the properties which it does not regenerate. If naturally honest, he will now be more scrupulous; if hospitable, or liberal, or modest, or industrious, he will now exhibit advancement in all these valuable endowments. His example in many points will be new and valuable, and worthy of imitation. Hence said the Savior, "Ye are the light of the world; a city set on a hill cannot be hid." And again, "Ye are the salt of the earth." To the full extent of his circle, his conduct has a salutary influence on all around him, restrains vice, enlightens the ignorant, and gives countenance to virtue.

Hence the influence he exerts is salutary, and deservedly enrolls him among the world's benefactors, among the friends of God and of men. The poisoning influence of sin, whose tendency is to pollute and destroy, finds an antidote in the example of God's peo-

ple, else this world would verge rapidly to ruin. Show me a district where there is no piety, and I will show you the effects of vice, in the prostration of every thing that is excellent.

And the good man exerts an influence, when he neither speaks nor acts. If his conversation is such as becomes godliness, the world takes knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. And men of very loose morals, and whose consciences are fearfully diseased, will act differently, in any given circumstances, from what otherwise they would, because they know how the good man in similar circumstances, would act. Thus the man of godliness, the profession of whose lips, and the tenor of whose life are coincident, will exert a salutary influence even when he rests upon his bed. He may be as retired as he pleases, but a pattern will be taken of his life, and it will be handed round as a model after which men may form their characters, and shape the tenor of their life. But his ungodly neighbor exerts no such influence. At the best he can boast of nothing more than a scanty morality, whose highest motive is self-love, and his most splendid actions honesty, sobriety, hospitality, and generosity.

III. *He is more excellent, inasmuch as he is the subject of more honorable alliances.* As there exists, between all the parts of God's holy kingdom, a close and endearing relationship, so each individual believer is united to God and to all holy beings by the best of all ties, that of a kindred affection. Every believer is permitted to address God as his father, and to approach him with the confidence which that title implies, while Christ is spoken of as his elder brother. He is attached to the family of heaven, to angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and will ever find a friend and brother in every holy being. And the covenant that binds the believer to God is everlasting. He never will be permitted to act so as to forget the privileges of that holy alliance that binds him to the whole family of pure beings.

Now as among men it uniformly attaches respectability and worth to one who can boast of high and honorable alliances, so the believer is entitled to whatever excellence may accrue to him from his union to the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier, and to the members of that holy family who shall at last gather about the throne and be seated at the supper of the Lamb. It is impossible not to derive worth, and honor, and beauty, from an intercourse so free, and a sympathy so endearing as that which is the happy destiny of the believer.

Now the unbeliever, however high may be his views of himself, and however shielded he may be in his own self-importance, and self-esteem, and self-respect, can boast of no such high and holy alliances. Said our Lord to a company of unbelievers, and through them to all others, Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning. Thus the sinner may claim his descent or rather may avow his adoption by a father who has lost his character with heaven, and has sunk to unspeakable ignominy, and must own as his brethren none but the outcasts of the moral world.

True, God was his Creator, and will ever have a right to his service, but he has sold himself to commit iniquity, and has become the servant of sin; has forfeited all relationship to heaven and to all holy beings, and can derive no honor from any single alliance by which he is bound. The only covenant that holds him is a covenant with death, and from this union there attaches nothing to him but disgrace and infamy.

IV. *He is more excellent, inasmuch as he has better enjoyments.* He has a relish for higher pleasures. The unsanctified man extends his views to no objects but such as are seen and temporal. His best treasures are all perishable objects, objects which moths can eat, and rust corrupt, and thieves plunder. There is not an object on which he has set his heart that will be within his reach the first moment when he has quit the body, not one that will survive the ruins of the last day. And the objects he loves are as *poor* as they are *perishing*. While they abide they can furnish to their adorer but a poor, and scanty, and mean, and dying pleasure. He feels amid their highest enjoyments a distressing deficiency of happiness, and is a stranger to what deserves the name of enjoyment.

But the good man sets his heart on objects which are, in their nature, grand and imperishable. These objects are God and his kingdom. And the joy they yield him is solid and substantial. They lie beyond the influence of vicissitude, are of an unchanging nature, and will be equally within his reach when he is dead a while living. Hence he is said to have a joy with which the stranger intermeddled not. As neither moth, nor rust, nor robber can touch his treasures, so nothing can diminish the joy they yield him. Hence he is prepared to meet, without horror or despair, those calamities which ruin, for ever, the man who has deposited all his treasures on earth. He can say: "Although the fig tree

shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "When flesh and heart fail him, God is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever." And what a worth do such rich enjoyments attach to their possessor! His vast capacity of happiness is partially filled. He not only lasts, but lives—and the life he lives bears some relation to the blessedness of heaven. Hence the righteous is more excellent than his neighbor.

V. *He entertains richer hopes.* Give the impenitent all they hope for, and their enjoyments would be poor. They can hope for no enjoyments, entirely distinct in their nature, from any they have ever felt. Hence their richest hopes, even the heaven they hope for, extends to no other than perishing and unsatisfying pleasures. Give them even the full extent of their wishes, give them the *best* objects, and *all* the objects they have ever loved, and let the possession be permanent, and still they would necessarily be poor. Their affections have never extended to any but material objects, and of course to none but dying objects.

But the good man, while he enjoys at present better pleasures than any other, entertains also richer hopes. The things unseen attract his gaze, and he counts among his choicest treasures the blessings that are in reserve for him beyond the grave. He would feel himself to be poor if he could fear that he were enjoying his best things now. He believes, and his "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." He is so comforted by the expectation of future good, that he can endure the loss of all those good things on which the impenitent place their supreme affections. Hence, in the present world, he becomes a pilgrim and a stranger, and seeks a city to come, which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God. He is not dependant on this poor world for his enjoyments, nor will be ruined when all its treasures shall be consumed in the conflagration of the last day. His hopes, even in the darkest hour, enter within the veil, and he there discovers resources of blessedness that can never be exhausted.

VI. *The righteous is better than his neighbor, inasmuch as he is the heir of a better destiny.* The heirs of glory and the children of wrath resemble each other more now than they ever will hereaf

ter. When grace is first implanted, the difference between the good man and the man unrenewed, is seemingly very small. From that moment they diverge for ever. Still, in the present life, the difference will always be comparatively small. But when the Christian shall heir his crown of glory, and shall be made a king and a priest to God and to the Lamb for ever, the difference between him and the lost sinner will be infinitely widened. *One*, it is said, shall come forth to everlasting life, and the *other* to shame and everlasting contempt. The one is to have his part with devils, and the other is to live, and reign, and rejoice with angels. One is to display in his eternal ruin the justice of a sin-avenging God, while the other is to stand in heaven an imperishable monument of redeeming grace. On the one God will frown for ever, while on the other he will for ever smile. The one will be removed from his presence, and must have his everlasting abode in perdition, while the other will be permitted to see his face without a veil, and beholding as in a glass his glory, will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

If, then, the good man does not at present appear to any very great advantage, there comes a day when he will. If his present deformities conceal his noble birth, and his present rags and poverty hide his high and holy destiny, still he will one day break from this disguise, and will be clothed with the honor and the attire of a prince, and live and reign with Christ for ever.

If at present the righteous is more excellent than his neighbor, there will come a day when his superior excellence will be seen and acknowledged by all beings, in all worlds. There will come a moment when every deformity will forsake him, when every blemish will be bleached, when every excellence of character will be illustrated, when he will awake in the likeness of his Lord, and wear his beauties for ever. A moment will arrive when such will be his character, and such his condition, that angels will respect him, and heaven do him honor.

#### REMARKS.

1. *If this subject should render the believer proud, he has entirely mistaken its design.* If he has any excellence of character, it is the gift of God; or if he has reached any state of joy, entertains any exalted hopes, sustains any honorable relationship, or is the heir of any high and holy destiny, it is all of grace. When heaven undertook to save him, he was a beggar and a wretch. And he is still the degenerate plant of a strange vine, and should for ever

remember the rock from whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit from whence he was digged. If we are believers, the subject should make us thankful, but can never render us proud. We are conscious of having been totally deformed, and must know that there remains still in the heart a mass of moral pollution, exposing us to ruin, and rendering us worthy to be sent into eternal exile from the family of God. And, if one is finally saved, he is to be saved as a rebel, and is to be made an eternal monument of the power and grace of God, which can make a beggar rich, and a wretch happy. And the believer, although one day he shall be like his master, will carry with him, through all the years of heaven, a deep and humiliating sense of his own native defilements, and will owe his redemption to the pardoning mercy of God.

2. *If this subject should render the sinner envious, and dispose him to censoriousness and detraction toward the character which thus outshines his own, this, too, is the very opposite of the effect it should produce.* It should alarm him to find that he possesses deformity of moral character, but it should be his joy that some of his fellow-men have put off, in a measure, this deformity, and have been minded to favor with God and with heaven. It is a blessing to the world that God has sanctified some of its polluted population, else this world would be in a double and in a fearful sense, the valley of death. God would not hold that sun in its orbit, nor would he water this earth with his showers, did he, in his survey of its inhabitants, see nothing but moral pollution. Believers are the salt of the earth—are an honor to their friends, and a blessing to their enemies. They should be honored because Christ honors them; should be loved because he loves them; and should be treated kindly, because it is the purpose and the promise of God that they shall be happy.

## SERMON LXVI.

### KEPT OF GOD.

DEUTERONOMY XXXIII. 25.

Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

THIS is a part of that blessing which Moses, the servant of the Lord, at the close of life, pronounced upon the tribe of Asher. That tribe had their inheritance in the north-western corner of Palestine, a hilly country, bordering upon the Mediterranean, and received a blessing, as did all the other tribes, suited to the part it was to act, and the station it was to fill among the thousands of Israel.

As the very name signifies a blessing, so Moses predicted to him a numerous increase; "Asher shall be blessed with children;" the permanent friendship of the other tribes. "Let him be acceptable to his brethren;" and, it is added, "Let him dip his foot in oil;" to indicate, probably, that his portion of the land of promise should abound in the oil of olives.

When it is added, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass," some have supposed that Moses had allusion to the vast mines of iron and brass which abounded in this portion of the land of promise, and were thus like shoes under their feet. This allusion, however, seems not so natural, as to suppose the prediction to mean, That as they were to have a mountainous country, were to travel in rough roads, climb the craggy precipice, and stand upon the slippery eminence, so they should be shod accordingly; their shoes should be iron and brass, meaning that they should be fitted for their allotment. If this be the meaning, the same idea is repeated in the last clause, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be;"—as thy days thy strength.

As no Scripture is of private interpretation, the text may be applied generally to the Lord's people, and contains a promise that they shall be fitted for every allotment of Providence; their feet shall be shod with the preparation of the gospel. The text has been thus applied in all ages of the Christian Church. Seldom has the believer been brought into perplexity when he has not giv-

en utterance to this prayer, "As my day is so let my strength be." And the history of the Church abundantly assures us that God has heard that prayer, and has granted his people timely strength. This delightful thought I shall endeavor to illustrate.

1. If God prosper his people he will still keep them humble. Occasionally he prospers them in worldly things. He permits them to gain wealth, and influence, and places them in circumstances of ease and independence. This appears to have been the case with Job, with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, with Joseph, and Solomon, and David, and with others more or less in every age of the Christian Church. It is, however, a small minority of the family of believers who have such an allotment. God does not seem to have viewed it as the safest path to heaven. Most of his people are poor, and many of them despised in the present world, that thus they may have their minds supremely occupied with the concerns of a better life.

But when God prospers his people he provides for their safety. He ever plants some thorn in the flesh, sends some messenger of Satan to buffet them, that thus they may be kept mindful that the present life is not their home, nor the present enjoyments their heaven. Job, lest he should be too much elevated, must come down from his height and lay in ashes, receive the reproaches of his wife and his servants, and must lose all his children. Abraham must have in his family a wild Ishmael, and Isaac a profane Esau. Jacob must mourn the fate of his idolized Joseph, and must be pained by the envy and treachery of his other children. David must witness murder and rebellion in his own family, and must hear it said that war should not depart from his house. He must bury his Absalom, and must be forbidden the honor of building the house of the Lord. Solomon must find a rottenness and a plague in every terrestrial enjoyment, and must write "vanity" on every thing that is done under the sun. And from that day to this, every good man who has been greatly prospered, has also been at some period of his life greatly humbled, or perhaps through the whole course of his elevation has experienced some mortifying and painful alloy, which like a millstone, bore him down from his giddy and dangerous eminence. An unpolished partner, or a vicious son, or a sickly constitution, or some other unpropitious circumstance, has ever preyed upon the spirits of the prosperous believer. And these mixtures of bitter ingredients in his cup of blessings, have kept him from selling his birthright for the perishing and contemptible objects of sense. He was led by these trials to

become sick of comforts so poor and so coarse, and to keep his mind fixed on heavenly things. Thus his strength was made equal to his day. When he came to die, he would quit the world without regret. He had found that every earthly sweet had its poison, and was prepared to cast an eye of faith into that world where its pleasures are unmixed. We have in the history of Lot a striking example of God's faithfulness to his promise. He chose a place of prosperous wickedness as his residence, but God directed that he should come out naked from his guilty retreat. Lot might have been ruined if Sodom had not been burned. But when he saw all his treasures and all his family perishing in the flames, it waked him from his worldly reveries, and brought him back to duty and to God. The whole of this amazing transaction said to Lot, in a language which he could not mistake, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." No worldly prosperity shall be able to subdue the fire of holy love that I have enkindled in your heart, or break the everlasting covenant that binds my heart to your better interests. Thus God's people are humble.

2. If God afflict his people, he will bestow those comforts which will keep them happy, and make them thankful. Hope is a grace which God is as much resolved to cherish in his people as humility. Hence, if he pain them, he is sure to preserve them from despair. While there is the deep conviction that his strokes are fewer than their crimes, and lighter than their guilt, there is too clear discovery of a parental hand which wields the rod, and a parental eye which smiles through every cloud that covers them.

Perhaps their lot is poverty. They are pressed all their days by the iron hand of indigence. At times they know not how their wants are ever to be supplied, how they shall obtain their bread and their raiment. There is consequent upon their poverty a loss of influence, and in the view of men a degradation of character that prevents their usefulness, and contracts their benevolent exertions. But the promise is that their strength shall correspond to their day—hence, in fulfilling this promise, God will keep them from all the moral evils incident to a state of p̄nury. God will make them so afraid of sin as to keep them from coveting the gains of dishonesty. He will adapt their appetite to the coarseness of their provisions. He will give them to see his hand in the supply of their wants. Their faith will be strengthened by their daily experience, and they will find it as pleasant to receive their daily bread at the hand of God, as to be able to draw upon the treasury of their own. They are exonerated from those cares which

would otherwise intrude upon their seasons of devotion, and retard the growth of grace. They will not be permitted to doubt the superintendence of Divine Providence, because God permits his children to be poor. Their estimation of heaven will increase as they find that they are to have but few enjoyments here. At death there will be but few ties to be sundered. Their interest is all above. Thus as their day is so is their strength. And the ease I have now described is not rare. Thus many a child of poverty, while to others he may seem wretched, is passing on to heaven, shod with iron and brass, and strong to pursue his pilgrimage. He will bring to the employments of heaven a nobler mind, and to its enjoyments a more enlarged capacity than many, who may think his lot hard, and his life a burden.

There is often connected with poverty a scene of toil and endurance. The pilgrimage is rough and unpleasant. The spirits are jaded with the fatigue requisite to feed and clothe the dying body. The mind is in such instances often unfitted for its heavenly employment. It seems grievous, that a spirit born from above should be retarded in its homeward course by cares and pains too mean for its powers. But the promise must meet this case too. These toils render rest more sweet, and the hope of an endless rest invaluable rich and sweet. The Sabbath is a welcome day; and the return of evening brings with it a pleasure to which the idle and the voluptuous and independent have no claim. The toils of the body subdue and tame the unhallowed passions; and we have seen often the strongest confidence in God, and the warmest gratitude, where it would seem the prospect must be profoundly dark, and the enjoyments few and small. One who has seen the old pilgrim, covered with a coarse and homely garb, and rising from his scanty meal, to pour forth his praise into the ear of his Maker, will never have a doubt, but that even in his condition, the promise of the text is all fulfilled. He toils hard, and would sometimes faint in his course, were not his feet covered with iron and brass, and his strength equal to his days.

But there is another scene in which it would seem that the promise fails. Some who are on their way to a better land, are afflicted with disease. Weakness, instead of strength, would seem to be their characteristic feature. If any thing escapes them but sighs and complaints, it seems incongruous. Life is filled up with pain and tears. And still in this very case, the promise may be verified. One may be weak in body, and yet strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Patience must have its perfect

work. We rise as high in the scale of Christian character, when we cheerfully suffer the will of God, as when we laboriously do his will. And if God bestow a submissive mind, and a spirit of patient endurance, he renders our strength equal to our day.

When the affliction is not personal, but falls upon our family and friends, we need, as much as in any other case, the support of this promise, and may expect its fulfilment. Believers have often feared that they should not be willing to see their friends die; and have looked forward to the parting scene with a fearful and horrid interest. In prospect, their own dissolution could not awaken a more agonizing sensation. Every fibre of the heart was tortured; and every earthly, and perhaps every heavenly comfort, lost its sweetness. But when the trying hour came, the promise was fulfilled, and the heart yielded its beloved object into the hands of Him who was still more beloved. The language was, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" Parents have parted with an only child, without uttering a single complaint. I recollect a statement like this: A father was watching by the sick bed of an only son. It was seen that his soul was troubled, and that he often retired to pray, but appeared to return to the dying bed in the same state of mental agony as when he retired. At length there was seen upon his face a placid smile, and on being asked the cause, he replied, "O that I had just so dear a son to give up to God every day!" Another, who had experienced one stroke after another, till it was feared he would go into distraction, was at length heard to say, "The Lord intends to have my *whole heart* and he shall." But cases like these are not uncommon. God has only to smile upon his people, and they are too happy in him to mind any other friend. They see in him all that they desire, and are as happy as they could wish. The loss of earthly friends does but disengage the heart, and prepare it to engross all its energies in loving that friend which sticketh closer than a brother. Thus David mourned till his child was dead; he then wiped away his tears, and sat down to eat bread. To the best possible advantage have we seen the Christian through the tears that bedewed the corpse of a beloved friend. It was then that he needed the presence of his Master and his Lord, and then his promised presence was granted. He had no complaint to utter. God had done all things well. He had bestowed immeasurable mercies. The affliction was lighter than had been deserved. God might take what he had given. If a murmur began

to be uttered, this sentiment stilled it: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

And when the good man approaches the period of his own dissolution, he finds that he has trusted in a faithful God, who will permit nothing to fail of all the gracious things he has spoken. He had feared the hour that should close his probation, and had been through much of his life subject to bondage, through fear of death. But as the hour comes, the world which had allured him loses all its enchanting power, and heaven opens him an avenue to its glories, by which he becomes attracted in a new direction, and can without a sigh, let go his grasp of every thing below the sun. He had read, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee," and he now finds the promise true. His whole life had been like one stormy and dismal night, but the clouds break, and the darkness is dispersed, as he approaches the haven of rest. As flesh and heart fail him, God becomes the strength of his heart and his portion for ever. To live was Christ, but to die is gain. The fact is beyond controversy, that most of those who honor Christ in their life, enjoy his presence in death, find their strength equal their conflict in that last and dreadful hour.

But there sometimes comes a trial from men harder to bear than the pains inflicted by the immediate hand of God. And this is a case when the believer needs the fulfilment of the promises. He may not feel that he deserves to suffer at their hands. He may be conscious of wishing to promote their interest, while they injure him; and may feel that he has deserved of them a kinder treatment. Perhaps he has been their benefactor, and has waked their envy by attempts to promote their best interest. Here there is opportunity for the exercise of the best affections, meekness, patience, submission, and a spirit of forgiveness. These affections of the heart, as well as every other fruit of the Spirit, must be cultivated. And it cannot admit a doubt but that God places his people in those circumstances where the Christian character may be matured to the best advantage, in which circumstances should they not be prepared for their trials, they would but dishonor their Lord, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. Hence the triumphant language of the apostles, in an hour of sore and distressing conflict, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus

might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." It is evident that the apostles were happy in the midst of their trials. As their days were, so God made their strength. They were troubled, perplexed, and persecuted; but, they were not distressed, nor forsaken, nor in despair, nor destroyed. They bore in their body the dying of the Lord Jesus, were assimilated to him in his sufferings, his griefs, and his tears; but the life also of Jesus was made manifest in their life. They exhibited not only the wounds and scars by which he was afflicted in the house of his friends, but there shone in their conversation the meekness, the humility, the watchfulness, the heavenly-mindedness, and the prayerfulness of the Lord Jesus. Thus while in the strength of Christ, they were strong, in his image they were lovely.

And what was done for the afflicted apostles, God will do for all his afflicted people. No weapon formed against them will prosper. In every temptation, he will provide a way of escape. He will be with them in six troubles, and in seven he will not forsake them. All things are theirs, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The pledge, which God, in infinite compassion, has given to his redeemed family, that where he has begun a good work, he will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ, implies a regular and constant supply of grace and strength, proportioned to the trials with which we meet, the conflicts in which we engage, and the sufferings we are called to endure. God has undertaken to bring his people to heaven, their growth in grace is a necessary preparation for that state, and that growth depends on a constant Divine influence. Hence he will never leave them, he will never forsake them. The light which has illumined their darkness will shine more and more unto the perfect day. They shall go from strength to strength, every one of them appearing in Zion before God.

#### REMARKS.

1. How safe and happy are the Lord's people. They are not exempt from trials, but are permitted to know that their strength shall be proportioned to their burdens. They are to be tempted, but shall be kept from falling; are to be afflicted, but the fruit of the affliction will be to take away sin; they are to bear a burden, and wear a yoke, but that yoke shall be easy, and that burden light; they are to be scourged, but the strokes will be fewer than their crimes, and lighter than their guilt. Hence they are the

blessed of the Lord. They can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth them. They are dear to his heart, who governs the world, who notices the sparrow and the worm, and will not suffer a hair of their head to perish. They have not yet arrived at heaven, but they are sure to reach that world, and live for ever in the presence of their Lord. And all this blessedness belongs to the meanest disciple of the Lord Jesus. Not one who has ever possessed a heavenly temper, will find his conflict too severe, or come short of that rest that remains for the people of God. They will be able in their dying song to tantalize their last enemy, and say, "O death! where is thy sting? Oh, grave! where is thy victory?"

2. Their present strength and courage do not decide how they shall appear in the hour of conflict, or what shall be their future condition. It is absurd that the believer should yield his hope because he does not find himself prepared for trials which have not yet come. He expects, in this case, a mercy never promised. God will prepare him when he tries him, will give him strength when he calls him to the onset. Our strength is not to be *greater* than our day, but *equal*. Should it be greater, we should become proud; should it be less, we should be discouraged. The interpositions of Divine mercy, will exactly suit the exigencies of our case. Christians may fear that they will not be prepared, should they be called to this and that affliction, and still may do honor to the Lord in the very trial. They may tremble to contemplate that stroke which shall sunder them from some beloved friend, and may be all their life time in bondage, through fear of death, and still may close the eyes of that friend, and their own eyes, with the most entire composure. Tender and delicate females have, when supported by the Divine presence, braved the terrors of a crucifix, and stood undaunted, while the fires were kindling to consume them. I have seen the widowed mother quite happy, while she softly shut the eyelids of a dying son, on whom she had hoped to lean as the prop of her old age, and for whom she felt a peculiar attachment. I have seen the father employed in blessing the Lord, while the object of his earthly hopes, and the only support of his name, lay amid the throes of an agonized death. And it happens with almost all the Lord's people, that they quit the world calm and happy. He whom they serve in life will not forsake them in death.

If, then, we find our strength equal to our present conflicts, we have nothing to fear. Our courage will kindle as the battle

thickens, and our strength increase as we march on to the more desperate onset. If our present strength is sufficient for our present purpose, this is all that God has promised, and is enough. Here is the test by which we are to try our character. Do we submit cheerfully to present disappointments, and exhibit a right temper under all the present little corroding incidents of this conflicting world? He who feels no impatience under the aching of a tooth, nor pines with regret over the loss of a dollar, may hope to exhibit the same submission and the same patience, when he feels the cold chill of death, and parts with all that he had ever loved in this world. We are to live under the same government for ever; and if we can entirely approve of the present Divine ministrations, we may rest assured that the government of God will fill us with joy through all future periods.

# SHORT SERMONS.

OR

## OUTLINES OF DISCOURSES.\*

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### No. I.

#### THE SINNER'S DESPERATE DEPRAVITY.†

JEREMIAH III. 5.

Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.

THIS passage evidently teaches the doctrine, that *men are as depraved as they can be in present circumstances*. The charge is made by the infinitely Holy One, and can be fully substantiated against every member of the unregenerate family. The justice of the charge may appear from a consideration of the following positions

I. That God in his providence has surrounded the sinner with many circumstances operating powerfully to modify human character.

II. That by these circumstances every sinner is actually restrained in his wickedness, and held back in his downward career.

III. That every sinner does make the attempt, and succeeds as far as God will let him, to sunder these ligatures that would hold him fast to reason, hope, and heaven.

Among the circumstances which illustrate the first position, I mention,

1. Education. This makes Christendom differ from the dark

\*The following plans of sermons, contain heads of thought, with partial amplification, prepared and used by the Author in extemporaneous preaching.

†This skeleton was taken by the reporter of the Charleston Observer, when delivered by the author in Charleston, S. C.

places of the earth, which are full of the haotations of cruelty. This makes the same land differ from what it was while a land of idolatry. This makes us to differ from our forefathers when under the superstition and tyranny of the Druids. This occasions the difference between us and the savage of the western wilds. Education, then, operates greatly in modifying character, and in preventing men from being as bad as they would be.

2. Human law has a similar effect. How near right, think you, would men be, if they were not controlled by human laws? Look at some country while in a state of anarchy. Look at some city or village where the influence of law is suspended. Look at France, while under the reign of terror, when law was abrogated, and see one company after another pass under the guillotine; and the executioners of to-day the victims of to-morrow; and, tell us, is not character greatly modified by municipal law?

3. By the law of God. If men have no other belief in it, but that which may be denominated the faith of history, it still greatly modifies human character. Men have been sorry a thousand times that God ever issued his law. They have hated to read, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." They have been sorry to read, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" "Thou shalt not kill;" "Thou shalt not steal," &c. But men have been in a measure restrained by these laws, while they have hated the Lawgiver, and despised his statutes.

4. The troublesome supervision of conscience has greatly modified human character. This everlasting censorship, while it has held men back from sin, has been hated, and warred against, and scowled upon, by the whole human family.

5. The whole Gospel,—the law drawn out into offensive interference with the sinful pleasures and follies of men, has modified human character beyond all calculation. It so commends itself to their reason, and applies such power to their consciences, that it becomes exceedingly difficult to withstand it. It is so tender, majestic, commanding, and reasonable, that it for a time melts and overawes many who ultimately reject its provisions.

6. All the Gospel institutions—the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the church-going bell, the Lord's supper, the ordinance of baptism, every thing associated with Christian worship, operates in modifying human character, and rendering it in appearance, better than it is.

7. The desire of heaven has the same effect. None, perhaps, are so abandoned as not to hope that they may, after all, live and be happy after death. The bare possibility that they shall reach

heaven, and wish to unite in the song of redemption, prevents them from being as wicked as they would be. This operates as a powerful restraint, and helps greatly to modify character.

8. The fear of hell, also, holds back many from the commission of crime. Men are afraid that what they have heard respecting hell is true. Though the subject often excites their unhallowed mirth, it is a mirth which has its misgivings. Their very laughter betrays their fears. And though they trifle with the thought of everlasting burnings, it is with the manifest design of keeping their courage up. The fear of hell thus operates in modifying the character, perhaps even of the most worldly.

9. The expectation of a judgment has the same effect. They have some apprehension that they may be called to answer at the bar of God for their deeds on earth. They have "a fearful looking for" of this dread reality. They think it may be true that God will bring them into judgment, for every work, whether it be good or evil, and apportion his awards accordingly. And hence, this apprehension serves as a wonderful restraint upon their character.

10. Public sentiment is a great preventive of crime. Men are so constituted as to be obliged to respect public sentiment. They cannot endure the indignation of a whole community; and public sentiment in Christian lands favors virtue, and frowns on vice. The assassin is thus disarmed—the thief becomes honest—the swindler pays his debts—because public sentiment compels him. No one has daring enough to be utterly indifferent to the good opinion of all his acquaintance; and character is thus greatly modified.

11. The domestic affection produce the same result. The silken cords which entwine around the family circle, prevent the commission of many a crime. The father, the husband, the mother, the wife, the son, the brother, the daughter, the sister—all the endeared relations which the members of a family sustain to each other, and which are strengthened every day, operate greatly in the formation of character. How many a son has been saved from ruin, through the affection which he bore to his mother? How often has a sister's entreaties tamed the ferocious spirit of a brother, and rendered it yielding and lovely.

Thus we see how curbed men often are, while in their native state. This world, then, is in disguise. God, who only knows the full influence of these modifying circumstances, knows what is in man. Therefore, when he looks down from heaven, he still pronounces "the whole head sick and the whole heart faint,"

“every imagination of the thoughts evil,” specious appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

Thus we have recounted some of the circumstances which modify the human character. These are, indeed, of vast importance. They result in what we term *civility, good morals, &c.*—all bearing kindly upon the present condition of man. They all speak the wisdom and kindness of God,—they are so many golden chains let down to earth, to modify its moral corruptions. God is good in every such ligature, by which he holds men within the reach of that blessed influence, which can sanctify and make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We ought, then, to thank God for these modifying circumstances, and pray that he would put these chains all on, and keep them on, till even the vilest and most obdurate shall yield to his infinite love. We ought to view men in more hopeful circumstances, in proportion as God shall hold them by these moral bonds. For, while a young man respects the Sabbath, and is obedient to his parents, there is more hope of him than afterwards. While he is afraid to swear, we may hope that he will begin to pray. While he dare not avow open infidelity, we may hope, if we do our duty, that he will yet believe revealed truth, to the saving of his soul.

II. By these circumstances every sinner is actually restrained in his wickedness, and held back in his downward career. In proof of which, we observe,

1. Men are *uneasy* under these circumstances, which shows them to be restraints. Let men be unrestrained, and they will be easy. It is only pain of some kind that renders them uneasy, and willing to change their position. Hence they will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.

2. Men are constantly trying to alter their circumstances. But they are too indolent by nature to try to alter their circumstances, unless they are circumstances of restraint.

So, when a raging fever burns,  
They shift from side to side by turns;  
And 'tis a poor relief they gain,  
To change the place, but keep the pain.

3. When men at length alter their circumstances in any of these respects, they often show out a worse character; manifesting what they would have been before, if they might, if these restraints had been sundered and they let loose upon the world.

4. When these restraints are all removed, men are uniformly far more wicked than if they had not been imposed. All will admit this. It is therefore manifest, that these circumstances operate powerfully in restraining men from a career of sin and ruin. Even in the Church itself, there are vast multitudes who become apostates, because their apparent goodness was made up by such restraints: they had really no concern for the glory of God, and were not religious because they loved religion. Beware, then, lest you be left to fall away from your supposed faith, and hurry on to destruction. Not only should professors fear, but the impenitent also should fear and tremble; because God holds them as accountable beings, completely in his power; and in kindness, for a time, lets down ten thousand restraints upon them. God now controls the madness of his enemies. He puts his hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips; binds them with his restraints, and holds them, perhaps, in apparent subjection. In this the character of hypocrites and unbelievers is distinguished from the truly religious. Their wickedness is merely suppressed, not subdued: their amiable appearances are produced by restraining providence, not by converting grace. The heart of the real Christian is not suppressed, but radically changed. The grace of God has transformed the tiger into a lamb, and the wolf into a kid. The Christian abandons sin because he hates it, and follows after holiness because he loves it. This constitutes the beauty of the Christian character, and this the distinguishing glory of heaven. There will be *there* no restraint but love. The whole population will love to do right; and impelled by love alone, will employ, in doing right, their energies for ever. On the other hand, as the character of the wicked is here varied and modified by restraints, God will only need to take off those moral ligatures, and substitute the everlasting chains of darkness, to surround them with the horrors of hell. The exceeding baseness of the wicked appears in this—that all these powerful restraints are required to hold them fast in mercy, and prevent them from doing worse; and the horror of hell in this—that all its population will love to do wrong, and in wrath be let loose to do it, so far as they can amidst fetters which will hold fast only to gall, and chains which will confine only to burn. How amazing, in view of all these considerations, is the operation of these providential circumstances in restraining the career of the wicked! We are thus prepared to consider the remaining position, viz.:

III. That every sinner does make the attempt, and succeeds as far as God will let him, to sunder these ligatures that would hold him fast to reason, hope, and heaven.

One would think that a sinner would not wish to have these kindly ligatures sundered. Where may he wander, or rather where may he not wander, and against what rock may he not dash, and into what bottomless vortex may he not plunge with all his interests, and perish with his all, when he shall have thrown off the fastenings that hold him to the throne of the Eternal? While we go the ground over, and see how he raves, and rages, and flounces like a bull in the net, and would break loose from God, if he might, whatever be the probable result upon himself, and his hopes, and his family, and his character, and whatever the relationship he must sunder, we are amazed at every step of the experiment, and we are amazed at the result, and at the blindness of the immortal being that is in a measure let loose to try his skill in the awful experiment, till God gives him up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind, and leaves him a prey to himself, and he is destroyed in his own waywardness. Let us, then, trace his steps, and see his ravings:

1. See how he breaks over and breaks through the restraints of *education*. He tries to throw off what he knew of God, and all he had learned of the Savior, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit; all he had learned of the operations of the Godhead, in the history of the Church. And when he cannot forget, he raves at his own recollections, and madly reproaches the mind that cannot forget, and will not retrace and throw off what it is now to him a burden and curse to recollect. But the Bible rushes upon his unholy mind with the vividness of a new, and fresh, and hated story. O, that he had never read that book! he cries; that his mother had not furnished him a Bible when he left his home, or had not made him promise to read it every day! But if in his senses he may not forget, perhaps he may induce God to put out his mind, and destroy the powers of recollection. And this is now the only prayer he makes, and the only thing he cares for. In the mean time, he hates the very lessons that he learned in school, and would tread them all down as one does the worthless weeds that are overgrowing his path in a garden. But,

2. When he has tried for a time, but has tried in vain, to retrace the process of education, he finds himself reined in by *human laws*. If he cannot forget God, perhaps he can snap asunder the power of human control. Man cannot be omniscient. He can evade all

humanities. He can rise above the law, and tread it down like the mire of the street. Or he can violate its precepts and despise its regulations, and hold on and hold out in despite of all its sanctions, presuming in his heart that God will not know, neither will the Almighty consider it. If the law does say, "Thou shalt not violate the rest of the Sabbath," he can drink and carouse, or lounge and loiter, and the world will only esteem him the better, especially if he add generosity and liberality to his infidelity and to his deeds of daring and outrage. He may violate any law that lays its restraints on this side of the judgment. Perhaps there may come no day of hated and holy retribution, and then he can have the infernal satisfaction of laughing at the Christians. If the failure of the Divine promise of such a day should ruin the world, it will not, as he conceives, ruin him. He would be willing that no such appointment should be fulfilled, even though the failure should tarnish for ever the character of Jehovah. If the law does say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," if he can violate it, and the crime be hid, and no human tribunal take cognizance of the deed, he cares not for the law. He cares not what misery his iniquities occasion, if his deeds do not break into open daylight. If it break the heart of a mother, and if a father writhe under the agony of a ruined son, he does not care for the tears of that mother, nor the agonies of that father. The deed he has done he does not intend shall come to light, in the present life, and he can easily bring himself to care for nothing beyond. Thus he throws off nearly all the restraints of human law, and contents himself with the purpose never to commit murder, or theft, or any crime that would draw him out to the light. Thus he blesses himself in his own delusion, and trusts for safety in his own righteousness. But he meets with more disturbance yet.

3. From the *law* of God. Impenitent and unbelieving, he has read in that law what, if he cannot put down, he is a ruined man: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Thus is dashed, at the first stroke, the whole fabric of a dark and fatal idolatry. If man worships his money, or his merchandize, or his farm, or his friend, or any thing but God, or gives any thing else his supreme affection, even if he does not professedly worship it, he is condemned of God. And he adds, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." But how unfashionable it would be to care about this commandment, and let the apprehension that God "will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," produce a serious moment, or a pang of distress! It is so noble

not to care about God, or what God can say, or do, and it would be so cowardly, so ungentlemanly, to be afraid to sin, that the offender just breaks this grand and controlling ligature easier than many that would seem to have no such power to bind and to restrain. An effort not so mighty as that which sundered Samson's green withes, puts them all aside. But,

4. Not quite so easily does he dispose of the troublesome supervision of *conscience*. This vicegerent of Heaven stays often many a month after open war is declared. It sometimes will hold close conference with the heart, although the heart may wish to be alone. It is that power that will not die, nor see corruption. It will not go to sleep in the grave: it will watch, even while the wretch is dying, to secure the honor of God, and gather courage for a fresh attack just by the dying pillow. And the agony of its first onset in the unseen world, hard by the place of dying, devils cannot know. For they have never spurned a dying Savior, and they have never died.

But all the embrasures that can be opened upon the soul by this moral avenger must be closed, or its eternal thunders will be heard and felt. Yes, even here the heart sometimes says to conscience, as Satan to the Savior, "Art thou come to torment me before the time?" But it is the conflict of desperation, and, like the murderer who came into close and terrible embrace with the man whose blood he would spill, and was heard to say, "You must die," and with that saying put forth a thrust that forced the dagger to his heart; so in assailing conscience, to put down its spirit of admonition, it must be assailed *desperately*, and if the victory cannot be otherwise secured, it must be drawn to the crater, where the wretch stands to torment himself, and to be hardened by a view of its fires; and here may perhaps end the conflict, till it is renewed again on the other side of time. Now there is but little left for the sinner to do. Conscience has ceased its admonitions. But still he has a slight conflict.

5. With the *institutions of the Gospel*. We noticed in his conflict with the law, which spreads abroad its troublesome interference with his lusts and his pleasures, how readily he could contrive to evade its claims. But the Gospel, like some faithful party in the field of blood, still keeps up the chase, and deeply wounds at every shot. It proves not so easy as was apprehended to still this avenger of justice. It pursues the sinner close through all the narrow lane of life, and even down to the gate of hell, unless sovereign grace effectually interpose, or long injured mercy say, "Let

*him alone.*" But see the ungrateful struggle of the sinner to cast off this fastness of heaven—this Gospel of salvation. Every church-going bell fills his conscience with guilt, and each return of the day of rest reminds him of the quiet of his paternal roof, where a mother's prayers used to be joined with the Sabbath day, in rendering the time of rest too holy to be endured. He must pervert its holy design, or writhe and bleed under the lashes of a guilty conscience. If he can get some scene of iniquity open, to prevent his soul from thinking; if the theatre may be opened, or any other house of death, or he may sport himself with the pleasures of the turf, and thus kill time, and throw off this one additional fastness of heaven, and put himself afloat upon the sea of life, then he can be comparatively happy, boasting like the school boy's kite,—

*See how you crowd of gazing people  
Admire my height above the steeple;  
How would you wonder, did you know,  
But what a kite like I can do?*

It tugged and pulled, while thus it spoke,  
To break the string; at last it broke;  
Deprived at once of all its stay,  
In vain it tried to soar away;  
Unable its own weight to bear,  
It fluttered downward through the air;  
Unable its own course to guide,  
The wind soon plunged it in the tide.

Thus it will not fail to happen to the immortal being who shall try to do without the Gospel. He may go off from God, and despise the power that would pull him back, but he will go to wander amid the blackness of darkness for ever!

Had I time, I would go on through the whole catalogue of restraints, and show how, one by one, the sinner wantonly throws them off. But I can notice only one or two more particulars.

6. The hardened sinner would dislodge himself from all thought of heaven or fear of hell. And yet these are very powerful ligatures, and often the last to be sundered. When men think of relinquishing heaven, they sometimes forget that awakening previous question, "If I abandon the thought of heaven, where shall I then be? What means that worm which never dies? What mean those chains of darkness—and that gnashing of teeth—and that quenchless fire?" Ah! when the sinner is arrested by such questions, and must answer them, and answer them, too, under the operations of the Holy Spirit, he will find it hard work to answer

them, and sin on. The throes produced will be like those of the second death; and whoever has tried, will not need again to ask what is meant by the undying worm. That eternal separation from the society of the good, and that imprisonment with the devil and his angels, if it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder, when only anticipated,—what will the reality be? I am scared at my own question. It will be a death that never dies—a living death! But,

7. There is still another thought. The sinner must have broken through all the restraints of *public sentiment*, before we can know how bad he would be; and this ligature he tries to snap asunder. But he will find that public very populous, before he gets through. After he has gone his round with mortals, and has learned not to care what *men* think of his conduct, he must cease, too, to care what is thought of his deeds, in heaven. Those beings that have kept watch over his pillow by night, that have warded off fire and pestilence, or waked him in time to flee, that have loved his father and mother, and love them still in heaven,—what will they think of the puny worm who has brought himself to despise them, and sport with their opinion. But even this is not all; for devils, too, have their opinion. And he must cease to care what they think of him in hell. And their judgment, remember, is not depraved like their hearts. One might almost as well attempt to silence the opinion of heaven as of hell. The murmurs of that dark world against the man who casts its burning sentiments behind his back, will be like the distant roar of a thousand cataracts, or like the dashing of as many icebergs conflicting with each other in some boundless polar sea. And,

*Finally*: there yet remains to be noticed one of the most powerful motives of restraint, *the domestic affections*. It is impossible to guess what men would be, till they throw off the hold, for instance, that a mother has upon a profligate son. We must recollect how John Newton managed, and how miserable he was, while a mother lived to hold the cord entwined about his heart. When every other tie had been sundered, the mother kept hold of him by this; when his character was gone, when he had descended to the meanness of serving a black mistress, and of eating his morsel from her leavings; when her favor was life to him, and her frown filled him with despair, and he had no other friend, then he remembered a mother's counsels and a mother's prayers; and then and there gave his heart to his Savior. There, from Africa's dark soil, and from a condition and character darker still, he first

lifted his eyes to heaven, and began to breathe eternal life; and he lives now, and sings redeeming grace in heaven, and tells in every song, how hard it is for a sinner to conflict with the restraints of infinite love.

But all these are a part only of the circumstances, the restraints, that go to modify human character; all of which the sinner deliberately strives to neutralize. And if in nothing else has he shown a character bad as language can describe, or actions prove, he has given a climax of the whole in his attempts to sunder all such ties, and cut himself loose from God, and from the whole family of kindly influences that would save his soul from death.

Such is the obstinacy, the rebelliousness, the ingratitude of the sinner: must he not, then, be born again, have a new heart and a new spirit, or never enter into the kingdom of God?

## No. 11.

### RECIPE FOR A REVIVAL.

#### 2 CHRONICLES VII. 14.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their evil ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and heal their land.

THE manner of the approach of God's people to him, so as to secure his blessing, and draw down covenant mercies on the Church and the world, is the grand secret of being useful and happy. I consider this thought amply and beautifully illustrated in the text, leaving scarcely any important point untouched. In illustrating this subject, my plan will be purely textual.

1. The Lord has in this world a precious people. They are "called by his name." They are "dear to him as the apple of his eye." He has "engraven them on the palms of his hands." They are more precious to him than any other portion of the creation. Hence we hear it said, the "Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

2. They are called by his name.

In great condescension to his people, God thus lets them bear his name. Jacob was so named when he wrestled with the angel

of the covenant at Peniel. And the Christians are so called, because they partake of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we care not whether this name was given them by way of reproach or otherwise. It honors them, and if they honor it, they will promote their own best interests. In Eastern countries, it is a common fact for kings and princes to give their own name to strangers whom they would honor. And I suppose God has, for the same reason, and in reference to this custom, permitted his people to wear his name, while they stay in this distant world, away from his palace and their house.

3. If they shall humble *themselves*.

God seems to have put it into the power of his people to make *themselves* what he would have them. He shapes them, through their own agency, to be instruments of usefulness to the Church, and to be blessings to the world at large. There are many things brought to their view which are calculated to humble them. God may give them a distinct view of their own hearts, or of the spirituality and extent of his law. Thus permitting them to look to the rock whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged, they are prepared to walk softly before the Lord, and take the very place he would have them take in his temple, and do the very things he would have them do for his honor.

4. And pray.

But what can this mean? Are not the Lord's people a praying people? and has it not been characteristic of them, "Behold he prayeth?" True as this may be, his people become cold in prayer, and virtually neglect to pray in the manner that God dictates. They often lose sight of God, and their prayers do not come up into his ear, nor reach his heart, nor draw forth those kindred emotions of his soul, which is the very design of prayer, and which, more than anything besides, secures the blessing of Heaven, as we shall see in the next particular.

5. And seek my face.

But what can this mean? Can the people of God pray, without seeking the face of God? I suppose there may be this defect in their prayers, that they do not seek his face. God will not have his people approach him in that manner, which is characteristic of a mere slave, who may not open his mouth in the presence of his master, but who stands in the outer apartment of his house, and sends in his petitions by proxy. He would have us come immediately to his face. And there is one sweet text that encourages us to do so—"O, my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in

the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." I do not believe that God ever intended his people should pray to him in that distant manner, which exhibits them as strangers.

6. And turn from their evil ways.

This is a condition in the hypothesis very important. If Christians do not turn from their wicked ways, they will not honor God, and God will not hear their prayer. He does not here define what are the wicked ways we are to turn from, but leaves the Christian's mind to operate under the influence of the Spirit. I am led to believe that any wicked ways, persevered in, will effectually shut out our prayers.

And now the promise—

1. Then will I hear from heaven.

The way is prepared now for the Christian to offer any prayer he pleases, that is dictated by the Holy Ghost. To be a worker together with God in rendering the Church holy and the world happy. We have heard a great deal about the prayer of faith, but it strikes me there is too little account made of the preparation of faith which we here see carried out. "Then will I hear from heaven." I will hear any prayer my people shall choose to offer. I will hear them whenever they have this preparation. When Daniel would carry before God the case of the captive tribes, he began to pray at the time of offering up of the evening sacrifice. A council seemed to be called in heaven, and the decree went out, that his prayer should be heard and his request granted, and an angel came to whisper it in his ear while yet on his knees. And when Peter, sleeping between the two soldiers, cast his eyes up to heaven, the time of his deliverance came, his chains fell off from him, the gates of his prison flew open, and he was free. Thus God seems to have fixed the time when he will answer the prayers of his people, and has made it depend on their preparation to offer the prayer, when their requests shall be granted. There are two distinct blessings, which God is ready to pour out on his people, when they have thus prepared themselves to offer the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous, that availeth much.

In the first place, God will *forgive their sins*. As often as the Holy Ghost thus leads them to prepare themselves, he forgives them. Thus the people of God may be pardoned in the morning, again at noon, and in the evening ; they may be pardoned

on the Sabbath, and through the week ; and thus pardons be strung, like precious gems, along the whole course to heaven.

In the second place, he will *heal their land*. This includes the removal of any calamity that may have come upon them—whether war desolates, or pestilence lays waste, or mildew blights, or any other woe be upon them, every evil is removed, when they thus come prepared to the throne of grace. (Thus there is dependent on the prayers of God's people the removal of all those calamities which are preying on the life-blood of the world. The same may be said with respect to the bestowment of all those positive blessings, of which his people, or the world, stand in perishing need. They may all be summed up in a precious revival of his work, by which he gladdens his Churches, blesses his ministers, and loves his people, and by which he holds back the world from those strides in iniquity which would carry them beyond the reach of grace and of glory.)

#### REMARKS.

1. If any say, that this makes a revival depend too much on human contrivance ; I can only say, it is God's own contrivance. It is the plan he contrived for his ancient people, and the plan he still pursues with his Church under the gospel, and probably ever will, to all future ages. He makes his people glad in his house of prayer for ever.

2. Thus the Church, like the ladder which Jacob saw, becomes a medium of communication between God and the world, presenting to him its wants, and communicating to it his favors.

3. If this be so, how important and responsible a situation the Christian fills ! and how important that he should perform the duties incumbent on him !

## No. 111.

### JEREMIAH X. 5.

They weary themselves to commit iniquity.

THIS is a suffering world in more senses than one. We are subject to toil and labor in consequence of the apostacy, and to perpetual vexation of mind, in consequence of our opposition to the Divine will. The sinner, therefore, is compelled, if he will *continue in sin*, to maintain a mental war which devours and exterminates from his breast all the elements of vital joy. Determined not to repent—yet anxious for happiness—compelled by the necessities of his nature to cry out for peace of mind, yet averse to holiness, its necessary means, he toils hard, and travails in pain, and ripens in agony here, for the *agony eternal*, which lies before him. To delineate the particulars of this mental war, I remark,

I. *The sinner must sustain morality without piety.* He must be moral or miserable. The vices are so many demons, resolved into their original elements. They torment a man before his time. Disgrace; loss of property; of all real friendship; of domestic affection; of the health and life; of self-respect and elevated companionship; all wait around a course of vice. The vicious man sinks deeper and deeper in the mire. The reptiles of the slough, in which he journeys, grow more and more venomous and malignant. He must be moral or miserable. It is hard work, however, to maintain morality without religion. The passions are strong; the world is full of temptation; the soul is liable to be beat off from its hold on morality, unless recovered by grace; its course will be tremendous, the progress of its depravity vehement, and great the fall of it.

II. *He must feel secure without a promise.* No man can realize the final wreck of the soul, and feel happy in the prospect. The mind, in the ordinary stages of depravity, shudders and recoils, and hides itself from the prospect. Even the hardest incrustations of sin cannot prepare the soul to look fully at eternal wailing un-

daunted. There it stands, that never ceasing view; that vivid painting of the future; that dark, shadowy, but distinct, and fearful representation of utter ruin; it is hung out before the soul by the stern truth of God, from behind every scene of guilt, and along every winding of the soul's weary path. How can he feel secure? Yet how can he bear to face that vision? If he looks to nature, it warns him; to his companions, they are falling into the arms of the monster. He is warned in the family circle, in the scene of futurity, in the haunts of dissipation, around the grave; every where a compassionate eternity weeps about him; angels of grace draw aside the veil of the pit, and with earnest countenance cry, "Escape for thy life!" If he looks to the Bible, he has no promise. If he thinks of mercy, no promise. If he looks to the end, there is the falling flood and its dreadful roar; and its fearful spray, and its havoc of apostate mind, in the boiling depths below, but no rainbow of promise. He reads all around him the startling inscription, "*The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him.*"

III. *He must hope for heaven, while forming a character for perdition.* He must hope, and will hope, even if he knows his hope will do no good. Heaven is the only place of final rest; if he miss it he is lost, undone for ever. Holy as it is, and much as he hates holiness, he must enter there, or eternally be an undone man. No man can bear the idea of confessed, manifest, public, and hopeless, irrecoverable disgrace. Every man, therefore, clings to the idea of a final heaven, as long as he can. But here the sinner has a hard task. His supreme selfishness leads him to hold on upon the idea of rest after this life, but that very selfishness is making his failure sure. The cords of habit are twined all about his character; they are not threads of flax, except when the Spirit rends them. They are *strong* cords to the wearied sinner, and he shall be holden by them, if he will continue to sin, and all the joints and departments of his character will be fitly compacted together, to make it the meet habitation of eternal life. It is hard work while these formations of character are going on, for a soul to be shut up to the necessity of keeping alive a hope of heaven, yet this the sinner must perform.

IV. *He must resist Christ without a cause.* He is supposed impenitent and determined on continued sin. Exposed to endless death, he has an offer of Christ and salvation. The claims of Christ are not only just, but compassionate and benevolent. If he

will sin, he must contend against the Savior in the very interpositions of his astonishing, overwhelming, agonizing mercy. This is hard work for the conscience; the wheels of probation drag heavily; their voice grates fearfully; their cry of retribution waxes loud.

V. *He must try to be happy while guilty.* This he cannot accomplish, yet he must try. He will fail in every attempt, yet he must renew the trial. If he will not repent and obtain pardon in the blood of Christ, then he must retain his guilt, and feel it on his conscience, and groan under it as it continually grows heavier, while he must struggle for peace. The nature of happiness renders his efforts necessary. He will make them, and will always fail. He will choose a thousand phantoms; he will grasp after every shadow; he will be stung a thousand times, yet will he renew the toil, till wearied, hopeless, and sullen, he lies down to die. It is hard toil to do what a guilty, unbelieving sinner is compelled to do in trying to be happy.

VI. *He must have enough of the world to supply the place of God in his heart.* The heart must have a supreme object; God is able to fill it. On him the intellect may dwell, and around the ever-expanding developments of his character, the affections, like generous vines, may climb, and gather, and blossom, and hang the ripe cluster of joy for ever; but the sinner shuts out God, every vision of his character is torment, and he turns away to fill the demands of his heart with the world. He has commenced a thankless task; he has enlisted in a severe service. The whole world, if gained, would infinitely fail, yet he can gain but little of it, and that little is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yet painful and hopeless as this may be, the sinner must toil at it till he dies.

VII. *He must arrange matters for death, while he is afraid to think of dying.* He must work to get property for his children *when he is gone.* He must put his business in a train, so that it may be settled advantageously *when he is gone.* He must do all this on the strength and under the impulse of an idea at which he *trembles.*

VIII. *He must read the Bible, whilst he is afraid to think or pray.* This is especially true of the worldly-minded professor. If he keeps up the form of family worship, or attends at the house of God, the Bible, the holy and accusing book, is in his way. Its

truths lie across his path. He cannot turn aside, he must trample over them, while he beholds them under his feet. He knows that his footsteps are heard around the *retributive* throne. If driven to console himself by the promises of error, the sinner has to pervert and wrestle with the Bible. Its denunciations catch his eye, and burn him while he tries to explain them away. Its promises turn into curses within his soul, as he attempts to incorporate them in his hopes.

#### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.

1. Have we no compassion for a suffering world? How little, Christian brethren, do we feel for the wretched, toiling, dying sinner, with whom we associate; for the fond relative with whom we mingle affections; for the multitudinous mass of mind, ruined, undone, and miserable, that are ripening all around us for endless woe?

2. Can we do nothing to relieve this miserable condition of our fellow-men? We can do much if we will only feel its nature and tendencies, and bear it before a compassionate God. If we will but take the gospel, and lead its giant motives forth, and lean upon the Spirit's power, the work of renovation, of redemption, and of joy will roll on. Every day cries aloud, and all around us, for our awakening to duty. The time for God's people to pray, and awake, and endeavor mightily, is now—and with most of us, *now or never*

No. IV.

LUKE x. 11.

Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

I. What is meant by the kingdom of God! Sometimes the kingdom of God means the place of the blessed in heaven. Sometimes it means merely the visible church. Sometimes it seems to mean the church *invisible*, or the collection of real believers. Sometimes, as in the text, it signifies the gospel merely—which describes the king, and gives us the laws and regulations of the kingdom, and permits us to look in upon the very seat of his holy empire.

II. *When may the gospel, which, as we see, means the kingdom of God, be said to come nigh to an individual or a people?*

A material object, we know, may come within a greater or less distance—may come within a mile, or two, or ten. It may come within the sight of the eye, or the hearing of the ear, or the reach of the arm.

1. So the gospel may come to a near or a more remote proximity. It may come within the hearing of the ear. To many, in heathen lands, it has never made this approach: they have only heard *of* the gospel, but have never heard *the* gospel. They have heard that the missionaries have come to other portions of their dark territory, but have never seen them, or listened themselves to its glad accents. No messenger of eternal life has ever stood in their presence, and sounded the good news. They have never been told the conditions upon which salvation is offered them, or been invited to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

To all, in gospel lands, it has made a nearer approach; they have heard the conditions upon which mercy is offered them, and have had described to them the kingdom of God in all its fascination and in all its glory.

2. It makes a still nearer approach, when it reaches the understanding. Men not only hear the gospel, but think about it, and perhaps become speculative believers; and possibly even professors of religion; and it may be, even sustain a good Christian character, when, after all, the gospel may never have approached

them but to this second degree of nearness. It has passed through the ear, and lit upon the understanding, and floats upon the surface of the mind, as oil upon the ocean, without exhibiting any propensity to amalgamate.

3. The gospel, or kingdom of God makes a still nearer approach, when it passes through the understanding, and reaches the conscience; and there it holds its position, and preys upon the conscience, which may be subjected to a more or less severe pressure, according to circumstances.

If a husband or wife is subjected to the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, or a child is made to submit to the power that renders him a new creature; then it is that the truth presses upon the conscience with a force unequalled in any other circumstances,

But we must stop to inquire,

4. Why the gospel is brought thus nigh to some who are finally lost? This is the nearest approach it ever makes to a soul that does not submit to its overtures. If the gospel stays here long, the sinner must become, under its corroding influence, a *cunning sinner*. He must thus parry every point of truth presented in the book of God, until finally, he becomes a *hardened sinner*, and browbeats the anathemas of the gospel with a hardness that is veteran and desperate. Soon it will render him a *caviling sinner*, and adroit at parrying every thrust it makes at his heart. It will not be long in rendering him a *wretched sinner*, hardened to the greatest degree of obduracy—as when one is represented as exposed to the lightnings of heaven, until his flesh is hardened to the intensity of a rock.

But several important points are now in a process of being settled, while the sinner is held in this condition, and truth is beating upon his naked soul.

1. It settles the question, How depraved the heart is. It has been doubted whether the heart be totally depraved, and whether the character of God might not be so exhibited that it would love him without being regenerated.

But when the gospel is brought thus nigh, and falls upon the ear, and passes through the understanding, and presses upon the conscience, and is held there for a time, then it is that a man sees what he is, and others see what he is; and that important question is settled, that men have spoken and done evil things as they could.

In the meantime, we learn—

2. Whether all men are *equally depraved*. It has been acknow-

ledged that *some men are totally depraved*, but has been denied that *all are so*. It has been asserted that some only need to be subjected to the bleaching influence of the gospel to be made white again.

But here the question is for ever settled, for the mildest of men, and even females of lovely character, have needed the same powerful regeneration to make them new creatures, and bring them to duty, holiness, and heaven. And in many of our revivals of religion, we can find cases in which individuals of the mildest temperament have been waked up to a kind of madness, by the convicting influence of the Holy Ghost, until their friends have even been afraid to enter their apartments while they were raving under this full blaze of Gospel light, as one would loathe to enter a den mad wolves. Thus the question is settled, that however mild and amiable a man may be by nature, he needs the same renovating influence of the Holy Spirit to make him a new creature.

Another very important question is now settled—

3. That GOD must change the heart, and that it cannot be done by the influence of mere moral suasion. For all kinds of means have been used, and motives presented to the sinner without effect, till the time came when God would make him willing in the day of his power. But it seems easy when God undertakes, for although he seems to draw the sinner as if he would not come, he seems now to run as if he had not been drawn.

Another question is now settled—

4. That God is sincere in offering mercy. That has always been more or less doubted by the sinner, till at last the question is settled, that as soon as he is made willing, he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away, and all things become new.

## No. V.

EZEKIEL XXXIII. 11.

Why will ye die ?

THE doctrine of this text seems to be, that man is bent on his own destruction ; that he is determined on a course of sin, which, according to his own conviction, must end in his everlasting ruin.

We may premise on this subject, that the death here intended, cannot mean *natural* death ; for to this men are averse by nature. No man will die till he must. All that a man has will he give for his life. Nor can it mean *spiritual* death ; for all men love to be spiritually dead. Nor would God ask the question respecting this death.

It must therefore mean *eternal* death. It is strange that such a sentence as this should ever have dropped from the lips of the Savior ; for the doctrine means to imply, that man has entered upon a course that must end in his everlasting ruin, and this knowingly and designedly, for,

I. Men break the law of God, knowing that the penalty of breaking this law is their everlasting ruin. If a man should pass through the streets, plunging a dagger into the heart of every one he met with, if we had evidence that he had his reason, we should say that he meant to tempt the law to do its best for his destruction. Nor would men say that we reasoned hardly on this subject. Death would lie so immediately in the train of his misdeeds, that it would seem impossible that any mind should disassociate them. We should all look forward with horror to the day of his execution, and say that he approaches that period as certainly as any one thing can follow another.

II. We should say the same truth is manifest from the fact that sinners reject Jesus Christ, the only medium of their pardon and their salvation. If one had broken the law of man, and should refuse to receive pardon from the hands of his chief magistrate, although he should go daily to his prison, and offer that pardon, and solicit his acceptance, we should say that he intends to die. If the conditions were that he should receive that pardon at the

hands of the chief magistrate, with due acknowledgments, and without any necessary degradation, we should say that he not only intends, but deserves to die.

III. From other facts, it is evident that sinners are determined to die, inasmuch as they reject the influences of the Holy Ghost, the only power that can make them clean, and take their feet out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and set them upon a rock. If one had fallen into a deep cavern, and there was but one ear that could hear, and but one arm that could save, and he should refuse to be aided by that arm, we should say that he certainly means his own destruction.

IV. The same truth is evident from the fact that men are going on to form a character for perdition, when they know that a totally different character is requisite to fit them for heaven.

Now what man is not convinced that the wicked are forming such a character, and thus courting such a destiny? To hope that they may be congregated with the blessed in heaven, while yet they are making rapid strides towards perdition, and drawing sin with cords of vanity and iniquity, as it were with a cart rope, is to exhibit an absurdity that belongs only to the wayward and the lost. Their whole character contains a high promise of the blackness of darkness for ever.

I proceed to the second inquiry, why will ye die? There must be some secret reason why men pursue a course like this. Perhaps the preacher may have permission to look into the matter, and know what these reasons are; and to help you to judge whether they will stand the test at the last day, I

#### REMARK,

1. Will it prove you *brave* to dare the Eternal to his face?—to rush upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler, and browbeat the sacred and terrible anathemas of the whole law and the whole gospel? Would a man rush into the mouth of a cannon or leap into the crater of Vesuvius, to show himself brave? Would he not thus evince himself a natural fool?

2. Will it prove you *wise* to place so small a value upon the soul, and expose it to endless ruin? Would it not place you too by the side of him who sold all the honors of his birthright for a mess of pottage? To thus forfeit your seat in heaven, and your part in the song of redeeming grace which will be sung eternally in heaven, will it prove you wise at whatever price you do it?

3. Let me inquire whether it will prove you good? O, can a good being place so little value upon the glory of the Eternal, and put so low a value upon the blood of Christ! Then let it not be told in Gath, nor published in the streets of Askelon! How dreadful will it prove that sinners have heard such a gospel! Will not the shade of every Sabbath, and the remembered offer of mercy, prick up your conscience to everlasting recollection, and pain, and misery, at the remembrance of all this! Will this not rush upon the stillness and darkness of the pit, like the ghosts of night, and haunt your soul for ever with painful and corroding recollections? Other beings as well as you will have a great interest in your future reputation, and the bliss that shall hang upon that reputation, through everlasting ages. You ought to know, that when your character shall be developed in the last day, it should be such as not to shame your parentage, and oblige them to hide in a corner, while you pass in review before assembled worlds. I remember to have been very much affected, when the British Government began to banish their convicts to the island of New Holland, with the fact that they were ashamed to carry with them the same name in which they had committed their felonies, and done the deed, that put them out of the civilized world for ever. Hence they universally changed their names, that they might, if possible, not suffer under the same name they had borne before. O, how dreadful, that we should thus oblige ourselves and our friends to change our names, in which we committed our crimes, and fell under the condemnation of the law! Will it not stand out to view for ever, that the very name is tainted under which we committed our outrages against the law and the gospel, and made it a curse that we would gladly be rid of? Why, devils will be ashamed of you, when they shall know that you were brought up to all this mercy, and then sunk to this marked degradation in the caverns of despair!

No. VI

FOR THE MONTHLY CONCERT

PSALM L. 21.

Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes

IN the form that men give their idols, they show what should be the character of the Supreme God, if they might shape him to their own likeness. The thing that God here complains of is this, that his creatures *would* think him just such an one as themselves. But he assures them that he would set their sin in this matter before their eyes, and teach them to judge more correctly, and value more highly their Supreme Deity. The attributes with which they invest him, are the attributes with which they would invest the object of their supreme worship, if he would shape himself to their image. If they have given him angels' form, they would exalt him to the rank of angels. And if mere human being, they would invest him only with human intelligence. If, on the other hand, they have given their idol the form of a beast that eateth grass; if they have made him an ox or a calf, or if they have made him a serpent or a reptile, this shows that they would confer upon the object of their devotion no intelligence. And to go one step further, if they have given him the form of a Satan, we thus desecrate that they would have their God sunk to a level with this grade of being. And if they have thrown off all reserve, and made him a devil, how natural is it to suppose that they would shape the God they now worship "to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom we all had our conversation in times past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and being by nature children of wrath, even as others." Thus men will ever shape their god to their liking; and if we can discover what errors the heathen have made on this subject, we can know precisely what would be the shape of the deity they would place upon the throne. And

I. We know that they have excluded God from his own world. They are uniformly idolaters, in every kingdom and nation found under the heavens. If one nation could have been found that

were worshipers of the true God, we should have doubted whether they had not escaped the fall.

II. We should gather from their story, as far as it has reached our ear, that the gods they worship are a set of senseless beings—mere wood and stone. We have collected some of their gods from heathen territory, who are as uncouth and unsightly and disproportioned a set of senseless beings as the human mind can conceive of. We know they have worshiped mere leeks and onions, and the crocodile of the Nile has long been an object of supreme adoration. “They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molten image.”

III. When they did give their gods any moral intelligence at all, they made them debauched and profligate to the last degree. They had their revels and cabals in their factious heaven. On one occasion, I remember, one of their gods is famed to have been thrown to the earth, and to have employed his time afterwards, in forging thunderbolts for Jupiter. Now what could we expect of a people who would thus degrade their supreme deities, and render them altogether such beings as themselves, entering into folly, lust, and drunkenness, and every species of crime ?

IV. They went *still further*, and made them devils. There are a number of the African tribes who worship the very devil himself. Thus the supreme object of their worship is the very spirit that now “worketh in the children of disobedience”

#### REMARKS.

1. Shall we not pity a race of beings so deluded and spoiled and ensnared by their own philosophy ?

2. Shall we esteem any sacrifices too great to be made, if we can buy them off from such delusion, and cause them to look upward, and lay hold on eternal life ?

3. Should the business of building a world loom up before us with more mightiness of enterprise than the redemption of a world, already built, from the deadly plagues of sin ? I would not fly as swiftly, nor labor as industriously to extinguish the flames of a burning world, as to rescue from a calamity so much more disastrous to the heathen millions that are going down in one unbroken mass to the blackness of darkness for ever. I would not cry as loudly to wake up a sleeping village to danger of being swept

away by a stream of lava, at the foot a glowing Etna, or a laboring Vesuvius.

4. Will not the pious youth have their farms sold, and pawn their merchandise, that promised them merely temporal blessings, that they may enter upon a mightier enterprise of rescuing from the slavery of sin a world that has ruined itself?

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No. VII.

JEREMIAH VIII. 22.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

A PENSIVE and distressed father, that had just left the sick bed of a beloved daughter, and was wandering through the streets in all the dejection of grief, and all the solitude which is not easily thrown off, in the hour of her agony, may easily be supposed to have uttered himself in the language of the text.

And if we may suppose that she had been long subjected to the want of a physician and a nurse, while death must now ensue as a consequence of that neglect, while there *was* a remedy at hand, and a physician hard by; but there was none at hand to call in that physician, or to apply that balm, by the application of which she might have been restored to health, joy, and life.

One would grieve to hear the solitary moan of such a father, and haste to know if it is altogether too late to call in the kind and timely physician.

It is probably true that Gilead abounded with a balm that, in a great many cases, proved a sovereign remedy to some diseases that prevailed in Jerusalem, called here, and elsewhere, the daughter of Zion. Here, it may be, is asked a question which has relation to the whole human family, and bearing upon the natural disease of the soul, and is equivalent to asking, *Are not the means ample and ready for the healing of the plague of sin in the human family? Why then are they not applied, and spiritual health universally recovered?*

Of course, the subject divides itself into two heads. I shall be led to speak first of the disease, and then of the remedy.

I. In the first place, I would say of the disease, that it is one of universal application.

There has been no nation found that is not totally depraved. They all practised a gross and God-provoking idolatry. They made their idols as stupid and as devilish as they could, practising as gross a perversion of their Supreme Deity as possible, and then they practised upon man all the outrages that a perverted intellect could contrive. The false religion of the world was a bloody, and adulterous, and cruel, and faithless, and imposing religion, in all its acts.

I now intend the very highest charge that can be brought against the human family, equivalent to that charge brought against us by Him who knows well what is in man—"Thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst."

II. This disease is, of all others, the most contagious. It has been communicated through the wide world, and gone into every little ramification of every kingdom under the whole heaven.

When we find a nation that we have never known before, we find them universally infected with the pillage of sin. Hence, "from the crown of the head, even unto the feet, they are full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores."

The prevailing plague has spread through the human family an amount of misery that cannot be easily calculated. It poisons all the human relations, and mars every human compact; and, first of all, man's covenant with his God. The result of this is, that it has filled and loaded him with misery to the full, and all nature "groans and travails to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and be brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

Nor can it be hoped that this result, devoutly to be wished for, will ever be accomplished, till Christ shall come the second time "without sin unto salvation," and "the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Here we might expatiate largely upon the miseries of sin, but I pass to the question—

III. Why is not the plague healed? "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

In answering this question, I should choose to say,

1. Sinners are not sensible that they are the subjects of this deplorable disease. They say, We "are whole, and have no need

of a physician ;” and “know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” The first object of a preached gospel is to convince them of this fact. They have no experience that can test this question at all. They have never known what health was, having always been in this same deplorable condition ; except that the plague has been gradually becoming worse and worse, till, at length, it has produced a kind of delirium, that has blunted the sensibility of consciousness, and rendered man blind to the spots of the plague that are upon him.

2. If to any extent they are conscious of their condition, they love the very disease that cleaves to them. How then can it be hoped that they will take the least pains to rid themselves of a pestilence that has as yet given them no pain, and they have known no disgrace that has accrued to them from having the plague upon them.

They are not sent to live in a house by themselves, as the children of Israel used to be when they had the leprosy, or as men are now when affected with the plague.

If men are affected with a disposition to do wickedly, it attaches no disgrace to them, not as it will be in the judgment day, not as it is when men become “ashamed and confounded, and never open their mouths any more, because of their shame, when God becomes pacified towards them for all that they have done.”

3. Another reason that men are not healed is, that they do not love the Physician.

He is to them a “root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness.”

It is not to be expected that men will apply to the Savior, however afflicted, till they feel their need of him.

How much pains will parents take to have their children know and love their family physician, lest, when attacked with disease, they should be shy of his approach, and suffer, before they will allow him to come nigh them. But when sinners see the Lord Jesus Christ to be “chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely,” they rush to his arms, and are rather glad to be sick, that they may employ such a royal physician.

4. They do not love the price at which they can be healed. It must be with Christ a mere gratuitous healing.

Men must come to him without money, and then it will be without price. The sinner must just give himself into the hands of Christ, to be healed in his own way. Which leads me to say,

5. Sinners do not relish the manner of the application. They are ready, say they, as one who came in old times to the prophet of Israel. "Are not Abana and Parpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Why may I not wash in them and be clean?" Thus sinners complain of the application.

This deep repentance, and this being healed by faith, destroys all human agency and contrivance, and gives God all the glory

## No. VIII.

### ISAIAH II. 22.

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

MAN can give no good account of himself, nor can his fellows give a good account of him, nor has his Maker any better account to give of him—"The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." We do not wonder at God's account of him—"Thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest."

Man is the most unaccountable creature in all the creation of God—absurd in all his movements

I. He is entirely limited in his powers, "is of yesterday, and knows nothing," and yet is a proud and self-sufficient being, who will not yield to be instructed, of even the Lord of hosts

II. He is a being of so little might, that he is said to be "crushed before the moth," and yet "he lifteth his mouth against the heavens, and his tongue walketh through the earth." "He rushes upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler," and impudently inquires, "Who is the Lord, that I should serve him?"

III. He is the only *accountable creature*, and the only *careless one*. He knows that he must stand before the bar of God, and be judged for all the deeds done here in the body, and yet is heard to say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

IV. He is the only *reasoning creature*, and the yet only one that acts *unreasonably*. He can look at the face of the sky and know the signs of the times, and yet permits the dread concerns of eternity to close in upon him, unheeded, in the twinkling of an eye. He is crying, Peace, peace, till the moment when sudden destruction comes upon him, as travail upon a woman with child

V. He is the only probationer for eternity, and yet the only being prodigal of time. He only needs, and has invented pastimes—things to kill time. And yet when he is considered in connection with the things he is constrained to contemplate, time is to him eternity.

VI. He only is capable of looking at the heavens, and has received from them mercies innumerable, “new every morning, and fresh every evening,” and yet he is the only being of all the creatures of God who is unthankful. He only is proud of what enslaves and degrades him. He only is vain of what is loaned him, covetous of what is not his own, and what he must quit so soon.

## REMARKS.

1. How evidently is man in a state of pain; had his soul retained moral health, he would not have been liable to all this absurdity of moral movement.

2. How lamentably slow is the work of renovation seen to be going on in the believer! When will he ever be what God would have him to be!

3. How mad are men to suppose that any thing, less than regeneration, can make man a correct being.

4. How mad is man who trusteth in his own heart. The scriptures pronounce him a fool.

If men may put no confidence in one another, they put none in themselves. Man may be deceived and ruined while he thinks he has a sure guide.

## NO. IX.

### HEBREWS X. 31.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

WHY will it be so fearful a thing to fall into the hands of the living God?

Not because he is not the kindest being in the universe, and too just to do wrong to any being. "He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth."

But the text does not mean to say, that sinners are not *now* in the hands of the living God, but has allusion to the time when he will make them the subjects of his vindictive wrath; when he will display his hatred of their character in their everlasting destruction.

Why will it be so fearful a thing to fall into the hands of the living God?

I. Because he suffers his wrath to *accumulate*.

*Men* inflict vengeance as soon as they begin to be angry. They punish when their "wrath is kindled but a little," perhaps when but one act of aggression has been committed.

God waits long. The iniquity of the Canaanites was not yet full. He waited in the old world, after the decree to destroy it had gone out, one hundred and twenty years.

II. Because delays to punish do not at all *neutralize his anger*.

*Men* sometimes forget the deed that enraged them, and become quite pacified after having been angry, although they have not taken vengeance.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

III. Because, while he delays to punish, he continues the means of grace, and thus shows himself willing not to inflict *the deserved wrath*.

"O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

IV. While he waits on the sinner, he continues to him the wonted indulgences of his providence. He feeds his enemies while he is waiting the hour of their execution, and he often waits very long.

V. While he waits, he gives no intimation that he *continues angry*.

The sinner would not know by any mere token of divine wrath, that God had marked him out for destruction.

VI. Because he fixes no set bounds to his indulgences.

One he bears with a longer time, another a shorter—condemns one at the age of twenty, another at the age of forty, and another at the age of sixty.

VII. The longer he waits, the less hope there is of forgiveness.

It is otherwise with *men*; if *they* delay vengeance, we hope they have forgotten their wrath—not so with *God*.

VIII. Because he always produces conviction of desert when he punishes.

It is often otherwise with *men*. *They* are sometimes convicted and condemned while innocent.

IX. When *he* punishes, it is always a *final and complete destruction*. Wrath shall come upon them to the uttermost.

X. It will be *jealousy* when *he* punishes, and no wrath is so dreadful. It is the wrath of the *Lamb*. *Jealousy is love soured*.

XI. He is the *living God*!

No idea can be more dreadful. He lives to finish the wrath he began to inflict. He will eternally be alive to punish.

#### REMARKS.

1. How amazing is the supineness of the sinner, who must so soon fall into the hands of the *living God*!

2. How yet more amazing their mirth and jollity—dancing in their chains!

3. How astonishing the indifference of believers! They would feel serious at the prison grates of some convict that must die a *natural death* as soon as many around them must die eternally.

4. If this subject is so solemn and dreadful in its application to sinners *in general*, how much more dreadful must it be in application to those who have set out for heaven, and then drawn back to perdition! Such will be convicted of having “trodden under foot the Son of God,” in a peculiar and terrible sense, “and put him to an open shame.”

## No. X.

### GALATIANS IV. 15.

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?

PAUL had preached the gospel to the Galatians, had been the means of turning many to the Lord Jesus Christ, and drawn toward himself their strong attachment.

If it had been possible, he says, they would have plucked out their own eyes and given to him. But he had now become their enemy because he told them the truth.

But the great calamity was, that while they had become cold in their affections towards their spiritual father, they had also declined in their affections towards Jesus Christ, and there was need that he be formed again in them the hope of glory.

But as no scripture is of private interpretation, the subject will lead me to inquire of believers, "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" What cause has there been, and what excuse can be offered, for a decline of Christian affection, since the time of your espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ?

That there has been a decline in the warmth of feeling and and promptness of action, since the day of your covenant with God, it is presumed no one will require us to prove.

The only inquiry that must be made, is into the cause or ground of this decline.

I. Is not Jehovah the same great and good being he was when you gave him your whole heart, and covenanted to be his for ever? And does he not govern the world on the same principles of grace and mercy by Jesus Christ? And does he not foster the church with the same care and kindness he did when you first took sanctuary in her bowers? Has there been any correspondent cooling of affection in the bosom of the angels, and the "spirits of just men made perfect," towards Jehovah? Is he not as nigh to you, and as necessary, as when you first diccovered that the world was full of God? "Should you ascend up to heaven, is he not there? Should you make your bed in hell, is he not there? Is not his favor life, and his loving kindness better than life?" If plunged into trials, are you not still obliged to say, "The Lord

liveth, and the Lord reigneth, blessed be the name of the Lord" ? Will you not say, " Whom have I in heaven but thee, and who is there on earth I desire beside thee ?" Would you not say in the hour of onset, " If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quickly, when their wrath was kindled against us." Why, then, any change in your affection towards the great God ? " Where is then the blessedness ye spake of ?"

II. And what grand change has there been in your views or affections towards the Lord Jesus Christ ? It is as true now, as then, that he died for you, and still intercedes for you. His blood is still the basis of your pardon and the ground of your acceptance ; and your hope and communion with him is as sweet as ever. The redeemed in heaven have none of them lost their confidence in him. You did not, in the time of your espousals, overrate his merits, or value too highly his love, or confide too firmly in the sureties of the everlasting covenant. Why, then, any change in your affections towards the Lord Jesus Christ ? " Where then is the blessedness ye spake of ?"

III. And the children of God, to whom you seemed so much attached, have the same claim to your regard as they had then. True, you might not then have seen all the faults in them you now see. But have you seen so many that you cannot love them ? If so, then we ask if Christ has seen so many that *he* cannot love them ? And cannot you love when *he* can ? Have you not as much in you to cool their affection as they to cool yours ? And, with all their faults, are they not in covenant with God ? Will they not finally escape to heaven ? You once loved them because they loved Christ, and they love him still, and he them. Where, then, has fled that warm Christian affection which led you to say, with the Moabites, " Where thou goest, I will go, and where thou stayest I will stay ?"

IV. The souls of ungodly men, that claimed your pity, and draw forth your prayers and exhortations and entreaties, are worth no less now, than at the time of your espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ. Those same beings are some of them here yet, in all their unbelief and impenitence, and their condition, it will be acknowledged, is far more deplorable. If many are gone and lost who affected your hearts in the day when you believed, others are here, in the same ruined condition of guilt and wretchedness. Hence, why any less concern for their souls ?

V. And this poor world is the same vanity as when you first

trampled it under your feet. In what new attitude can it possibly have presented itself so as to win again a supreme attachment? It is a perishing good that can be stolen or moth-eaten, or can take wings and fly away. The cry in your ear still is, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest. Or has this cry all died away? Well, it is as true as when you first listened to it. This is a poor world, a temptation, a *mere vanity*.

VI. And the heavenly treasure—how can it have lost its value to a dying man? However highly it may be right to value this world, we must quit it so soon, that wisdom would dictate that we have treasures elsewhere. If heaven implies a freedom from sin, how can the believer not long for it? If in heaven there are more distinct views of Christ than in this life, how can the believer not wish to be in heaven?

VIII. Some of the blessedness of your earliest religious hours consists in the happy seasons of prayer enjoyed; and why has this duty lost any of its sweetness? God is as ready to hear you pray, and as prompt to answer and save, as he then was; and have you not the same occasion to pray? Do not a thousand cares ever press you into a cold, backslidden state? And could you get back to the views and affections you once had, the duty would give you all the pleasure it then did. "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?"

VIII. And so far as your early joys were derived from the Bible, why need there have been any change? It is the same book of God, filled with the same precious promises, the same sanctifying doctrines, and the same delightful exhibition of God and heaven. "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?"

#### REMARKS.

It may be important to inquire, since there would seem to be no cause of the change, of the loss of blessedness to believers from their departure from the spirit of their espousals, what the effect will be?

1. That the believer is greatly injuring his own soul by his departure, there can be no doubt. He backens his heavenly growth.
2. It is equally sure that he injures his brethren. He holds them back with all the influence he has over them, by all the affection they have for him, and all the forms of his example.
3. And in the mean time he is destroying the world of the ungodly. They will not believe, while they see you live as though

you were sorry you had made a profession of religion, that there can be any great sweetness or richness in that religion.

4. He is preparing himself, *probably*, for a wretched dying bed.
5. He will have a lower seat in heaven.

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## No. XI.

### PSALM XLV. 10, 11.

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house: so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.

To render the text applicable to the present occasion, it needs only to be said, that it constitutes a fragment of a beautiful allegory, in which the union of Christ with his people is represented, under the allusion of a marriage. It is hardly necessary to spend a moment in tracing the features of the allegory. The intended bride is expected to listen to the terms of the compact and well consider it, and then to forget her people and her father's house. Her beloved then promises to take delight in her spiritual beauty, and as her Lord, receive her subjection and homage.

The different features of the allegory will furnish the plan of my remarks.

I. The Lord Jesus has made to you kind and gracious overtures. He offers to unite you to himself in an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure. Thus in a parallel passage, he uses the same figure: "I will betroth thee unto me for ever. Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies—I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." For a consummation of this marriage union between Christ and believers, see Rev. xix. 7, 8. "Christ will furnish you with your marriage apparel and ornaments, so that when adorned for the wedding, you will wear his own beauties." See Is. lxi. 10. We see this circumstance noticed in the history of his ancient Church—"Thy renown went forth among the heathen, for thy beauty, for it was perfect, through my comeliness which I had put upon thee."

Under the gospel dispensation—sobriety, gravity, and temperance, a meek and a quiet spirit, are the ornaments the soul is expected to wear, which becomes wedded to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When he has thus made you beautiful, he will love his own image, which he has put upon you, and he will employ you in his service, and will hold you near him, blessing you with his smiles for ever.

II. The Lord Jesus Christ expects that you will hearken and incline your ear. He deals with sinners as rational, intelligent beings, and makes overtures, in language which they understand. The Bible is the plainest book in the world, and the gospel system so plain, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." You must not, however, suppose that in securing your assent to the terms of the covenant, the Holy Spirit deals with you as if you were machines—mere passive recipients of his mercy. No: he does not thus hold out a premium for stupidity and inaction. If you would be saved, you must hearken and incline your ear, and consider when Christ speaks. You must do as David did. "I thought upon my ways; I turned my feet unto thy testimonies; I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Ps. cxix. 59, 60. Mere hearing, without consideration, will not profit you: as says James, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

III. You are required to forget your own people and your father's house. As in marriage, the bride separates herself from her home, so the sinner must disengage himself from every friend, however dear, who would hold him back in the service of Christ. It often happens, that under these circumstances, "a man's foes are they of his own household." Yet, says the Savior, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me." You must consequently divorce yourself from all your gay, idle, fashionable, and irreligious companions. There is no alternative but abandonment. The word of God is explicit: "And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples

a so, he said unto them, whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

IV. When you have equipped yourself for a spiritual union with Christ, he will see in you those beauties that will render you his delight and his glory. They will be his own beauties put upon you, but put upon you so as to be your own.

1. They will adhere to you for ever.

2. They will shine by contrast with your former character. You know how pleasing a thing it is to see what was once deformed made beautiful.

3. They will never tarnish. They do not consist in tinsel, or in jewels which grow old and fade. They do not depend, like the cheek and the sprightliness of youth, on the rapid flow of the life's blood. They do not depend upon the caprices of fashion or custom.

4. They will be beauties which will grow brighter, and shine with more and more brilliancy and glory through all the years of heaven. A full view of the glories of the Lamb will make every face in heaven glow with increasing loveliness for ever.

V. It remains that I speak of your employment in the spiritual house of your Lord. He is thy Lord, and worship thou him.

You are to be employed everlastingly in doing him service—in vindicating his honor and law and government—in contriving new anthems to express your pleasure and confidence and devotion—in urging on the angels to louder and sweeter hosannas—in holding on upon the everlasting covenant. Come, my fellow-sinners, will you be wedded to the Lord Jesus? What do you reply? Do you ask me, shall we not tire in the work? No. Jesus will appear more and more lovely for ever.

But will not the world laugh at me? Let them laugh. Can it interrupt your bliss in heaven? But should you, for fear of the world's ridicule refuse? Can their laughter relieve the agonies

of your dying bed, or extinguish the flames of hell, when you are sinking amidst them ?

Do you say, I am too young, and religion will make me unlovely ? Oh, no. The rose on the cheek of beauty was never half so beautiful or fragrant as when bathed in the tears of repentance, or blushing with the first tints of hope.

“And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me, and if not tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or the left.” Gen. xxiv. 49

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## No. XII.

### JEREMIAH III. 15.

I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

THE prophet is addressing the ten tribes, and promises, in the name of God, that if they will return to him by repentance, he will give them pastors after his own heart, through whose agency he will edify and save them.

But the church is in all ages the same, and what was the richest promise to Israel is the richest that God can now make to his people.

It can then need no apology, if I *make it my object on this occasion to MAGNIFY the pastoral office.*

I would premise, that the pastoral office seems the only ministerial office intended to be permanent.

I. What, then, are the duties of the pastoral office ?

1. To edify the body of Christ ; to mature the Christians for their heavenly state.

The idea is a mistaken one, that the conversion of sinners is a more pressing object than the edification of the Church. God has promised them that he will guide them with his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory.

He has promised his Son, I know, that he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied ; and this promise the Father will fulfil. But the pastoral office has primary reference to the flock that is to be fed. This flock, I know, must be constantly replenished

from the world “Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring in, that there may be one fold and one shepherd.” Hence, while these other sheep are to be gathered in, and gathered through a preached gospel—for by the foolishness of preaching God will save them that believe—it is still true that God has associated with the permanency of the Church, a permanent pastoral office. We might divide the duties of the office into more or less. I should choose to say that the pastor must *lead*, and *feed*, and *guard*, and *heal*.

1. He must *lead*. A pastor may not be ignorant of the leading doctrines of the gospel, and must make plain to the Church the truths she may believe, and the precepts she must practice, to please her Lord.

2. He must *feed* them. The business of feeding the flock of God, over which a bishop is made the overseer, consists very much in so presenting divine truth to the Church as to draw out the holy affections of the heart, and lead on, to a perfect conformity to the will of God, and to the image of Jesus Christ, his sacramental multitude. They must promptly hear the shepherd’s voice, when there is any danger that they may stray.

3. He must *guard*. To guard the flock, implies on the part of the pastor a constant vigilance, that shall espy every approaching danger, and every foe that may lurk in ambush to destroy or injure any interest of the Church.

4. To *heal*, embraces those arduous and difficult duties that grow out of the errors and the general depravity of the people of God.

All these are implied in edifying the Church of the living God; and the whole is to be done, as far as human agency is concerned, through the skilful use of God’s truth. God’s people are spoken of as built up in the most holy faith. They are said to be rooted and grounded in the truth. And the promise is, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

No other means than truth will effectually move the Christians on any point, when we wish them to put forth their energies. A song will not do it, nor a prayer. A healthful and continued action requires solid food.

We can easily see how truth, in the hands of the Holy Ghost, must do the whole work. If he becomes idolatrous—truth shows him God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ. If proud—truth shows him the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged. If he cease to care for sinners—truth shows him the terrors of the Lord: he learns the sinner’s end in

the sanctuary of the Most High. If he becomes worldly, or lustful, or envious, or ambitious, or sluggish—on each and every of these points he must be assailed and put right by the law of the Lord, which is perfect, converting the soul.

And the power that brings the wanderer back, must hold him. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold with thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Not only now, but in heaven, the truth, and the Spirit through the truth, must keep him holding on for ever.

But not cold, speculative or philosophical truth will do this. We have no such in the Bible. It is spiritual, and practical, and experimental truth, that renovates the heart. When David, in the dark hour, encouraged himself in the Lord his God, it was not by a cold, philosophical speculation on the attributes of God; but some practical review of the Divine operations—how God interposed for Abraham, and Jacob, and Moses, and Joshua.

II. Having thus inquired respecting the duties of the pastoral office, and shown that its office is to guide the Church to heaven, *let us now inquire whether the Church can safely dispense with this office?* Why may not evangelists, the only proposed substitute, serve all her interests, and protect her honor, and guide her to the marriage supper? I take the negative of this question, for the following reasons:

1. Evangelists cannot feel the pastoral affections. Their home is the Church at large; and their regards to the Church can have no more locality than their persons.

2. Evangelists cannot have the leisure to study extensively the word of God. They cannot give themselves to reading, and become mighty in the Scriptures. They may gain a kind of knowledge that will render them invaluable ministers of the word of life, and take lessons extensively on human manners and human nature.

3. They cannot become familiar with the business of administering the discipline of the Church, and know how to meet the cases of toil and sorrow which so frequently rend piecemeal the churches of Jesus Christ.

4. They cannot feel the *responsibilities* that are indispensable to the guidance and safe conduct of the churches through this wilderness. Must all matters in the Church of Christ be done accord-

ing to his own laws? they must be done by the men who will remain on the spot to bear the blame if they are done wrong.

5. It is doubtful whether the churches will hold in sufficiently high respect and affection, for their own good, a changing and fluctuating ministry. If there is no portion of the parental relation, there can be but little of that filial respect that begets confidence, and tractableness, and the desirable trust and submission.

#### OBJECTIONS.

1. But it has been said, that the pastoral relation has cradled the Church to sleep; and some wise men have believed that, to unsettle the ministry, and supply the place of the pastors with evangelists, is the remedy.

This, it would seem, is being wise above what is written. God has appointed the office, and could not but know perfectly whether his churches would be safe under his own regulations. As well might we say that none are so unfit to bring up children as their parents, and discard at once all the domestic relations.

2. But a perpetual change in the ministry will furnish the churches a perpetual novelty in the mode of exhibiting the word of life. This is by no means certain—and if certain, not certainly a good.

3. But if we thus hold the lash over ministers, we shall press them up to duty, and make them more faithful. Perhaps not. They may be rendered mercenary; and be driven, some of them, to hypocrisy, by the want of a pice of bread; but will not, we apprehend, be rendered, by this means, more faithful to Jesus Christ or to his flock.

#### REMARKS.

1. Let, then, the churches love their pastors, and tenderly cherish them, and pray for them

2. Let the pastors care supremely for the eternal salvation of their people, that the high and holy office may result in the presenting to Christ, at last, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

3. How dreadful this office, to negotiate between God and man, as God's ambassador!

Too dreadful to be lightly entered upon.

Too dreadful to be entered unprepared.

Too dreadful to be coveted.

And yet, too honorable to be avoided, when the call is plain.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.”

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### No. XIII.

#### I PETER IV. 18.

II the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

ON the truth of God we found a hope that his people will all reach heaven, not to shine with equal light, and not to glow with equal transport in the throne of the blessed. Some of God's people will shine with full-orbed glory, while others will shine with the diminished light of a more distant star. It is promised to the people of God that those who have turned many to righteousness, shall shine in the kingdom of their Father, and as the stars, for ever and ever; and yet the smallest amount of that exalted glory will surpass the highest hopes of every humble believer. His expectation is, he shall be “saved, as though by fire.” He is a brand plucked out of the fire, and if he may reach heaven, at any price, it is the height of his ambition. If he may only stand at the portals of that happy world, and gaze for ever upon one of the glories of that cluster to the name of Jesus, and study out that one rich attribute of the Savior, it will be heaven enough for him; and yet his hope is to reach that “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” when he dares to entertain any hope at all. The fact is, a great deal must be done yet for the people of God to bring them to heaven. But this will be done by the Holy Ghost, “who hath taken their feet out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and put a new song into their mouth.” This first gift of a Savior promises all the rest, “He that spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, how shall he not freely give us all things with him?”

But let us look a little at the process of this work.

I. The people of God will be saved with difficulty.

1. Owing to their strong remaining corruptions. These must

all be subdued by the power of God, or they can never live in heaven. If the work of God is begun in their hearts, it is only the first dawns of eternal light, which will "shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." So the promise is.

2. To their long and inveterate habits of sin. It may be said of them, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye, who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well."

3. To the strong and numerous foes that oppose his march. The Christian, it seems, is destined to be watched and waylaid in every furlong of his route. If finally he can sing, "The desert is all trodden over; not another foe to waylay, not another serpent to bite, or stony morass to cross," with this song he hopes to finish his pilgrimage.

4. A great amount of labor will be requisite to push him forward in his heavenly pilgrimage.

5. There will await him many other dangers, of which he can have yet no conception. He has yet to "wrestle with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places," and will need yet the agility of an angel, to ward off his danger and consummate the victory.

II. But "where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" All the difficulties, and more yet, that obstruct the way of the Christian heavenward, are surely before the man who has not commenced his route thither.

1. The man who is not a Christian has yet to enter upon the way. He has yet to combat the very preliminaries of the journey; and he has yet to suppose they may be even greater than those in the way of the Christian.

2. He may have more yet corruptions. He may have taken a more wayward course, and may have engendered iniquities. His habits of sin may have placed him further from heaven than the believer, and he may have yet many furlongs to go before he reaches the spot where the Christian began his route.

3. But his iniquities must all be uprooted. He has been sowing the very ground he has trodden over with thorns and briars; and there, with his own hand, he must pluck up and plant, instead of them, the rose of Sharon.

4. He has more foes, in addition to those planted in the way of the Christian. With these he must wrestle and strive more; with these he must make a great many efforts, before he will reach the spot from whence the Christian has passed on towards heaven.

5. He must do more labor than if he had set out earlier.

6. The same, and more yet dangers await him than await the Christian.

REMARKS.

1. Would I have the sinner despair, lie down and die? Will not heaven be worth all the efforts he has yet to make, and to avoid hell? Would it not be worth while that he should go through again and again, if it must be, all the pangs of the new birth?

I have heard of three men that were cast upon an island, having no way to live but to wrestle perpetually all night. It was a terrible atmosphere, and the bay was freezing over, and they must stay and wrestle the livelong night, or life must go out by frost. They continued to struggle the next day for life, until the ice bore them, and they went on shore and lived. Now was it not best that they should do all this and live, rather than die?

2. O, then, how anxious should sinners be to commence the great work of their salvation!

3. How anxious, too, should the church be that sinners might live!

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No. XIV

GENESIS XXVIII. 20—22.

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

I HAVE thought for some time it might be peculiarly interesting, if ministers would be in the habit of drawing out the characters of Old Testament saints, through the times and scenes of their conversion, fixing on the time if it *might be*, when they gave up all for Christ, and submitted themselves to the rule and direction of Heaven. I know there might be much said that would be wild and erratic, as in the case of a late writer, who represented David as impenitent up to the time of his illicit intercourse with the wife of Uriah, throwing very great confusion into the history of "that man after God's own heart." I have supposed a careful examination would enable them to do so with a great amount of accuracy

Thus the character of the Christian in one generation might be drawn out to the gaze and review of another generation, and thus as generation after generation should come home to heaven, the believers of one dispensation might gaze upon the full orb'd glory of the Christians of another generation, until they should all come home to "the same far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and thus appear in one united company before the Lamb, where they join to "ascribe to him power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." I know if we should attempt to fix with precision the exact time when a new heart, and a right spirit were given to them, we might be liable to many gross blunders. But still we might elicit by this many interesting thoughts, and be able better to compare the genius and the spirit of the different ages and dispensations, and thus urge on the whole Sacramental host to holy discipline and heavenly soldiery, till we might come where we should see the King in his beauty.

Here we would plant the feet of the Patriarch, and inquire whether this is or *is not* the very spot where he was born again by the Spirit of God, and where commenced that wondrous train of dispensations that ended in his final equipment for glory.

For the following reasons we are of this opinion:—

1. It seems to have been the time he first met with God, and first made a vow to God.

2. This seems to have been a time of peculiar affliction and of peculiar cause to review his life.

3. In the vision of the night he had a very clear demonstration of the Divine care over him in the angels that ascended and descended the ladder, and especially in the exhibition of the Lord of Angels that appeared at the top of the ladder.

4. The fact that then for the first time was awakened against him the inveterate wrath of his brother Esau, which continued to the day that he met him at Peniel, where he wrestled with God. It seems to have been the moment, for the first time, that he came under the wing of the everlasting covenant, "which is well ordered in all things and sure."

5. This seems to have been the first time that he awoke up to the duty of paying his vows.

6. This seems to have been the moment when there was appointed a guard of angels over him to keep him in the way that he went.

7. This seems to have been the time when there commenced

between him and God a train of Divine communications, in which God "led him by his counsel, and gave evidence that he would afterward receive him to glory."

8. It seems to have been the time when he was taken under the Divine escort for heaven, to which he seems to have very tenderly referred, when he said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage."

From this time forward he seems to have acted as one acquainted with God, and seems at all times to care supremely for his honor. This seems to have been the moment *when* "his sin had found him out," and when he was driven from his kindred and friends, and constrained to pass through those trials, which, through the sanctifying influence of the Spirit, were calculated to ripen him for glory.

REMARKS.

1. It was remarked by one of the old fathers, that he that will observe the wonderful events of Divine providence, shall have wonderful events of Divine providence *to observe*.

2. To him who will so converse about God in his history, as to make God great, God will so manage in his providence as to make him great.

Thus what he *gives* us we *gather*. Thus "they that honor God, he will honor."

3. How rich and instructive is it to be conversant with the ancient believers, with the kings and princes of antiquity, the patriarchs, and prophets, and elders of a former Church. It is like walking among the ruins of some rich temple, and marking the stately columns and ornaments of an ancient city, and observing the splendid contour of what excited the wonder, and drew forth the admiration of past generations. Thus would the subject I propose make us ever familiar, and hold us conversant with objects the most truly sublime.

## No. XV.

### MATTHEW XXII. 36, 37, 38.

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, this is the first and great commandment.

I. To love the Lord our God with all our heart is the first and great commandment, because in him are found those excellences which deserve our highest esteem. They are moral beauties. They render God lovely to himself, and all his creatures lovely to one another. Thus there is let down, as with a golden chain, one grand affection, that binds, or would bind together the whole human family. But depravity has sundered that chain—has snapped that ligature.

II. Because in him is found nothing to allay, or neutralize those holy affections.

III. Because our highest blessedness consists in putting forth the affections required in this commandment.

IV. Because, when the heart returns supreme affection towards its Maker, then it is restored from the most direful alienation that ever happened under the government of God. The alienation that occurred in heaven when there was revolt among the angels, did not effect more broadly the sum of human blessedness, did not sunder a tie more sacred.

V. Because the example of all holy beings in every world that God has built, conspires to enforce this law. There would be no being but God to complain, and he will not, if we give him our supreme affection, if we love him while we live, if we love him when we die, if we love him when we are dead.

### REMARKS.

1. The subject shows us the grand defect in the morality of all unregenerate men. They have no supreme object of affection, or at least God is not that object, it is some creature, some vanity of vanities, which cannot afford them any real or permanent enjoyment.

2. We see why it is impossible for unregenerate men to live in heaven.

None can live there who do not make God the object of their concentrated affections.

Discord would prevail in heaven should men be indiscriminately received into that world.

3. Hence the necessity of a separation in the coming world according to character. The *tares* and the *wheat*, the *sheep* and the *goats*, the *clean* and the *unclean*, are terms expressive of the contrariety of character on which this final division will be founded.

4. We see, then, how radical is this change required in regeneration, as great as if the lion should become a lamb, or the vulture should be changed into a dove. It is a change in the object of the supreme affections.

5. We see why unregenerate men are unhappy and must be so. They must dislodge their hearts from its hold upon the world and all that they hold dear; we are required to "put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of our mind; and that" we "put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Children are commanded to love their parents, and parents their children; husbands their wives, and wives their husbands, and in fine we are commanded to love all men "with a pure heart fervently," and to let "love be without dissimulation." That is, the affection we are to feel is to be a sincere, and cordial, and true affection. But in all this there is to be no infringement at all, upon the claims of God. He claims a supreme affection, and all our other affections are to be in subordination to this.

Hence, whatever I set out to love, I engage with the principle that God is to be loved better.

## No. XVI.

### PSALM CII. 1.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.

ONE of the most natural things for a creature, is to know how he may approach acceptably his Maker. Hence that supplication so often in the mouth of God's people, "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord?"

To point out such a prayer, and to show what will be that mode of approach that will draw down blessings upon our heads, will be my object.

I. There must be a holy respect for the character and ways of God. This will prevent us from coming into his presence "as the horse rusheth into the battle," and prevent us from being repulsed at the first attempt, as offering him what is a stench and a nuisance in his sight, instead of an acceptable sacrifice.

When we would pray acceptably, we must come looking at all his attributes. They must there cluster, as the vine-fruits on the vine. They must fill all the eye, and ravish all the heart.

II. And as we are social beings, the mode of our approach must show that we are not praying alone, that we belong to a praying family; and we should wish to get near to his presence, and not pray at a distance—as one expressed it, "with a rope about our neck." The child would choose to come where the father was, if he could speak to him, and not stand at a distance, as if he were praying by proxy to an *absent* father.

And here we shall feel it very important to say,

III. That our prayers must go up with sincerity before him, and with that open frankness that love is accustomed to generate. And we should really desire the blessing we need, and not some other, that we are afraid to ask for, as if we were held in the attitude of foreigners, who were supplicating mercies which we not only did not deserve, but had no reason to expect. God does not love this slavish attitude in those who supplicate favors at his hands.

IV. We must have our eyes filled with the precious Mediator: he must be to us "the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely."

We must be glad and happy that we may approach him through a

name so precious and so prevalent. Thus only can we hope that our prayers may come up before him, and our cry reach even to his ear.

V. We must not fail to approach him with a spirit of submission. This, however, will not imply indifference. The affection that brings us nearest to him will be the farthest possible from indifference—not light differs more from grossest darkness.

There can be no resignation, unless the heart desires earnestly the blessing it supplicates.

It hardly need be said,

VI. We must come with a spirit of humility and penitence. The suppliant, who can for one single moment forget that he is a suppliant will deserve to be repulsed in the very prayer he makes.

Beggars do not come to our doors to make a *demand* upon our charity, and rebel if they are repulsed.

VII. It would be natural and indispensable that we remember that we have received blessings from the same hand before, and there is no part of our plea that is more efficacious than where we tell of the mercies received in days gone by.

We smile propitiously upon the beggar who can call to mind that he had been fed from our table before, and clad from our wardrobe. Then he shows that any favors we bestow, will not be squandered upon him.

Here arise several questions.

1. Ought impenitent men to pray? If it can be shown that there is no part of the prayer that ought not to be in the heart of every sinner, then every sinner ought to pray.

If the view we have taken be correct, then they ought. There is no one of these qualifications that the sinner ought not to possess.

If he ought to respect the divine character; if he ought to sincerely desire divine blessings; if he should come in the only way given among men whereby he can be saved; if he ought to come with a thankful heart; if he ought to have his eye filled with a precious Mediator; if he ought to pray for those blessings that God pleases to give; if he ought to pray with a spirit of humility and penitence; if he ought to pray remembering that he has received blessings from the same hand before;—if thus the sinner should pray, then, surely, every sinner ought to pray.

Thus we see that duty requires a whole world to be prostrate before God in prayer for the blessings he has seen fit to give in *answer* to prayer.

If any plead to dispute their acceptance, and not pray, they may take the responsibility upon themselves. Whatever may have

been the opinion of other preachers on this subject, the present preacher chooses to express it as his opinion that every sinner ought to pray.

But here arises another question.

2. How will prayer be accepted without these qualifications? I answer, it will not; and I answer on the authority of God.

And if sinners choose to pray, leaving out of view the qualifications with which they should pray, they must answer to their own consciences.

#### MOTIVES TO PRAYER.

1. It is God's appointed medium of communicating blessings to them.

2. Prayer fits us to receive those blessings.

How futile are the hopes of sinners, when, without any prayer, they hope to receive all those comforts that God has promised through his Son! How important, then, that the house of Israel should be much in prayer for those who are perishing in their sins!

How wonderful the condescension of God, that he will hear a sinner pray!

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### N o . X V I I .

#### L U K E X V I I I . 13 .

God be merciful to me a sinner.

THIS parable was intended to reprove the self-righteous. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God on the heart." Hence our opinions of ourselves differ often very widely from God's opinion of us. Sometimes the matter of the action may be right and yet the heart wrong. The text is the prayer of one who sees all to be wrong. The publican was reviewing his heart and glancing a thought across his miserably dissolute life. The review filled him with pain, and he gave vent to his feelings in the best of prayers. It speaks the language of every true penitent. My plan will be to bring into view the feelings that dictate such a prayer.

U It implies great self-abasement and deep humiliation

1. I have dishonored the eternal God. I have been saying to God all my life time, "Depart from me, I desire not a knowledge of thy ways."

2. I have helped crucify the Lord of glory. I had in his death as direct an agency as if I had been there and drove the nails.

3. I have grieved the Holy Spirit. I have despised his merciful interposition. Have "grieved the Spirit of the Lord whereby I might have been sealed unto the day of redemption."

4. I have grieved the people of the saints of the most high God. I have expelled them from my society and have been willing to be expelled from theirs for ever.

5. I have helped to pollute sinners. As if I had not found the world sufficiently defiled, I have employed my time and talents to make it more vile still. "Thus have I spoken and done evil things as I could."

6. I have polluted my own soul and have provoked God to prepare me a hell, where I shall be shut up in darkness for ever.

II. The prayer implies a deep conviction that none but God can help!

1. Christians cannot help me.

2. Ministers cannot.

3. Means cannot.

4. Angels cannot.

5. I cannot help myself.

It requires an almighty arm to raise me from the pit into which I have fallen.

III. The prayer may imply a conviction that we can be relieved on no principle but that of grace or mercy. Even goodness, in its simple state, cannot favor a rebel.

"A pardoning God is zealous still,  
For his own holiness."

## N o. X V I I I

### “LOOK AND LIVE.”

JOHN III. 14.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

SIN has produced the misery sinners endure, and the approaching everlasting death that they fear. As murmuring at the light food upon which God fed them in the desert brought down the judgment, so the wisdom and goodness of God must provide the remedy. The brazen serpent was of Divine contrivance, and illustrated “him who was to be lifted up upon the cross” and draw all nations unto him.

1. The remedy God provides *is the only one*. The Israelites who were bitten of the fiery flying serpent, perished, every soul of them, unless they looked to him that was lifted up.

2. The remedy bore resemblance to the instrument of the plague So Christ had on the same nature with the race that fell.

3. There must be confidence in the prescription. The serpent healed none but such as expected help from that source. So there must be saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or men will not be healed from the deadly plagues of sin.

4. There was something to be done in proof of that confidence. They must look to the brazen serpent that was put upon the pole, or else the wound rankled, and death ensued.

5. In both cases the remedy was simple: “Look and live.”

6. There seemed no connection between the wondrous look and the restoration procured.

#### REMARKS.

1 The ease with which sinners may have life is no security that they shall live. We are not told of any that looked to the brazen serpent and lived, but are only told that when “they looked they lived.”

2. How wanton must have been the death of any that died. Either they would not look until they were blind, or had not faith enough to look and procure the salvation desired, and must have gone down to the grave the most wanton horde of suicides that perished in the desert.

3. The agency that we should exert to induce sinners to look to Christ, is beautifully illustrated in the case with which they could save their dying friends. There seemed no need that any should die. The serpent was set up for the whole camp and in the sight of *all*.

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No. XIX.

MATTHEW XXV. 41.

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

THERE will yet come a day of righteous retribution. Men may try not to believe it, but still the day rolls on. Every beating pulse brings it nearer. On that dreadful day the Lord Jesus will sit in judgment on the conduct of men.

Then sinners will receive their sentence from his lips. There will be gathered together before him all nations.

1. Let us anticipate and review this sentence—*Depart from me, ye cursed.*

That the sinner will see what must be his sentence in the very first line of that destiny.

He must depart from Christ, and from the very presence of his holiness; it need not be said that this will be away from heaven, and from glory.

There will not be merely the idea of *banishment*, but of banishment from all that is *good and holy*.

There will also be the idea of a wo following, for they are to *depart accursed*. Hence the *finger of scorn* will be pointed at them in whatever world they retire. And this will be the most dreadful ingredient in their everlasting destruction; for if there is any one part of the creation that is more accursed than another, it will be the world of death.

If any kingdom should have occasion to export any considerable portion of its population, there would follow such convicts to the world of their exile, the hard thoughts, and corroding reflections, and the imprecations of all the civil, and decent, and sober portion of that community, to light upon them, and rest upon them, and

be the eternal associates of their exile. And it would write the history of their character and destiny in darker and blacker lines than any other picture of their waywardness.

O! if the sinner could but look back and beckon heaven into sympathy and into tears, it would mitigate the most appalling feature of his exile.

But he must go, accursed of angels and of men; and if even devils do not join in the curse, and the execration, it will be well for his poor soul.

II. They are to go accursed into *everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Here the ruined of the human family must go into a world that was not prepared for them; not for a wo that they did not deserve, for this can never happen under the government of God, but *prepared for the devil and his angels*. As if man could not have been expected, after a Savior was offered, to have so sinned as to deserve this destiny, and come to this ruined and wretched world.

And if angels will have their theme of everlasting sympathy over the wayward and the lost, much of that sympathy will be spent on that very case.

Now if men can have the presumption to say, that there will be no fire connected with their everlasting destruction, they can have their own opinion, as to the means by which a punishment thus expressed shall be inflicted.

III. This sentence will be pronounced with the authority of the Lord Jesus himself, the very Savior that used to weep over sinners, and say, "O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." And this, it seems to me, will be one of the most aggravated circumstances of the lost sinner's wo, that his sentence was pronounced by the very lips of the pardoning Redeemer. But I remark,

IV. This sentence will be publicly issued, in the presence of assembled worlds. It will not be done in the corner. It will not be like those private executions that take place within the walls of a prison. The report will go out and be advertised through the lowest caverns of hell. And it will also be reported amid the throngs of the blessed in heaven, and they will all know how miserable this section of the human family have made themselves.

## REMARKS.

1. The great wo of their condemnation will be, that sinners will go, convinced that their condemnation is just. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant."

2. It is not the worst of sinners only that will be thus condemned, but *the very best of sinners*; men who cannot remember that they have ever treated unkindly the Son of God.

While he will say to them, "I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." "And yet this same Jesus made all the worlds, and is the proprietor of the cattle upon a thousand hills."

And when this truth shall glare upon the worlds, and shall be written upon the disc of every star; and there is opportunity to compare this with the conduct of the sinner, how, in bold relief, will his iniquities stand out to view!

In the mean time, they will not be able to recollect that they ever, in any case, turned a hungry beggar from their door.

Probably many, who will be the subjects of this condemnation were the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and many served at his altar. There will be heard, at least, this murmur, "We have eaten and drunken in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;" but he will add, "I know you not." "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

3. It hardly need be said, that when this sentence is issued, *the culprit will go despairing.*

They will feel as if they had turned their backs upon the whole civilized world, and that the whole civilized world have turned their backs upon them.

O, who that has human feelings can but stop and wail over this wide-spread desolation and ruin! "They were flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone." Many of them, perhaps, went from our families and our firesides down to that unspeakable wo.

Truly the world of death will be a dark spot in the moral creation of God!!

## No. XX.

### MATTHEW VIII. 34.

And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coast.

THE Lord Jesus sometimes retired from the multitude, that he might rest from the fatigue of constant labor. On one occasion, he directed the disciples to carry him over the lake, where on his arrival, he had opportunity to cast out the devils who possessed two men. The devils, having besought him to let them enter a herd of swine, he did so, and they all ran down into the sea and perished. The people, afflicted with their loss, prayed him to depart out of their coast.

The subject will furnish me an occasion to show why a people sometimes suffer the Lord Jesus to depart from them, after he has been present to revive and save them.

Let the question be, why do revivals of religion subside?

I. Because even the people of God have not fully appreciated their value to themselves, or to the world around them, dying in a mass in their iniquities.

Revivals are their watering, their growing seasons. But for them, our Christians would die before they had made much advancement in holiness, and half had failed of heavenly happiness.

II. They are not as much revived as the occasion demands, or as they seem to be, and are held up to unnatural exertions, which are required beyond their feelings. The bow is bent to unnatural intensity. They are tired of the work of gathering in such an abundant harvest.

III. There are sacrifices demanded of them that they are not willing longer to endure; they would fold their hands and lie down and rest; they are tired of the call any longer to perpetual exertion, and would say, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep," forgetting that God has added, "*so shall thy poverty come.*"

IV. They imagine that the work must subside of course. Showers cannot last through the year. Past revivals have all gone over.

V. They persuade themselves that they have done pretty well already. They have worked hard several months.

VI. Because many professed Christians never came up to the work at all, and they will now step out of the harness, to let others labor in their turn. They felt reproached till the work subsided.

VII. Because the Christians each supposed that he would throw off the responsibility of letting the work subside. Ah, how mistaken! The ship's crew are perishing, and a few hundred souls are saved, but scores and thousands are crying out for help. O, send us the life boat!

If any one man in the Church must feel the whole responsibility, he would die.

VIII. Because they often think that more has been accomplished than has been. Some have seemed to yield who are going back. Some have been brought to the house of God, who will turn away. Some have seemed reformed, but are returning again, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

IX. Some let go, because their worldly business pressed them. They had not time to keep on. Their spirit of worldliness complained, they again wanted to take hold of the things of this life.

X. Some let go because they thought they could easily take hold again. But they now find that they have lost a precious advantage, for the god of this world will not be so easily divorced as they imagine.

XI. The people sometimes throw the responsibility on the minister, and he sometimes on them. Whichever way this happens, it is wrong; for the minister must feel that he is at the head of a party which is to save the perishing and lost in the congregation, and his Church are to feel that they are to be workers together with God, in saving the hundreds ready to perish.

XII. Sinners quit the means of grace because the Church begin to let their consciences alone.

#### REMARKS.

1. Revivals should never subside. If the causes of the decline are always wicked, then they should never exist.

If exertions are made that are inconsistent with health and order, they should never have been made, but if correct exertions they should never subside.

If the feelings of God's people have not risen above what was proper, they should never be permitted to ebb. And we have never known a revival where correct feeling exceeded the bounds of propriety.

2. If a people have let a season of revival go by, it becomes them to be humble and inquire how they can ever be forgiven.

3. They should immediately rise to all that feeling and exertion which a state of revival demands.

4. When God's Churches will act right, then will commence a train of revivals that will never subside. They will not only go round *the year*, but will go round the circle of many years.

We shall have an Egyptian harvest where one crop will come in after another, and we shall have the joy of shouting *the harvest home* at the return of every moon. Every spring-tide will hear shouted reports of a correspondent spring-tide in the moral world. The showers of grace will fall so uniformly and abundantly that we shall have only to gather in the fruits of one, and another harvest begins while yet there are abundant fruits of the former harvest safely lodged in the granary to feed and replenish the whole land.

O then, with how much joy will the Churches join to shout the *millennial harvest home!!* till with a glad response, the heavenly arches will gladly and cheerfully respond a long and loud Amen!

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## No. XXI.

### PROVERBS IV. 18.

But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

This is one of those texts that I have always been afraid to use in publishing the word of the Lord. I have had my fears about my use of it. It seems to exhibit the Christian as in happy circumstances. He seems to set out with the morning sun and to travel with its beams meridian, and his path to shine more and more luminous until he comes to the perfect day. But I have been afraid that this view of the Christian character would not comport with matters of fact or with my own experience. I have been afraid to exhibit the Christian as a timid and fearful man, and to be in doubt all the way whether he should reach heaven at

last. And still the contrary view I dare not exhibit, I dare not exhibit the Christian feeling his way along toward heaven like a blind man, lest this gloomy view should not comport with the Scriptures. For "the path of the just," we are told, "is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day." Still one is troubled to explain a passage like this, "Whoso walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the Lord and stay himself upon his God." But unless this text corresponds with that other text, "Clouds and darkness are around about him, judgment and righteousness, are the habitation of his throne," referring the whole to the events of Divine Providence that may for a moment obscure the path of life while yet it is destined to shine out at length in all its brightness and glory, then it will be on the whole difficult to exhibit the Christian course consistently with the plodding, hesitating experience of many believers. But we must "let God be true, though every man a liar." This is a maxim in my exhibition of Divine truth, which I have always endeavored to pursue, hoping so to shape my course that I may come out at last the friend of God.

The Spirit of the Lord is guiding his people to heaven where he will at last see the King in his beauty, and rejoice and be glad in him for ever. All the light therefore that comes from heaven, and shines upon the Christian's path, is calculated to guide him there. The church is represented as conducted on by the Holy Ghost to that happy world where the Redeemer is. *The Light* by which they pass on to that world which shines from the glory of God and the Lamb. We are thus prepared to say, in the

I. Place *where heaven is*. The place where there is a concentration of all that light that shines upon the Christian course.

II. We see how we are to know that our course is toward heaven. If we suppose holy actions to shine more luminously than any other course in this world, and that every exercise of holy affections, was a star thrown out in that place where he puts forth that exercise by those who are treading the path toward heaven; we see how at length that must become a very luminous path.

III. We see how others may know as well as ourselves that our path is directly toward heaven.

IV. Thus we see how we can have evidence that we *are* or *are not* growing in grace. If we are thus growing, our path will become brighter and brighter, and we shall have increased more and

more, the evidence that we are risen with Christ, and seeking those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

V. The evidence is rather against us, if we find our joy diminished, and our lamp go out, for we have abundant Divine assurance to prove that God would make our path more luminous, instead of more dark.

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No. XXII

GENESIS XXVII. 22.

The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

WHEN Jacob was old and had become blind, he one day sent his son Esau into the field to procure venison and prepare him savory meat, that while he ate it and was happy, he might deliver to him the prediction which in those days fathers were accustomed to deliver to their children before their death. This prediction was often a prophecy, especially in the case of the Patriarchs, in the land of Israel. In the case of the pious patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob especially, the prediction delivered over their children told the whole story down to the end of the patriarchal system. But in an evil hour Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage. But the father, either not knowing of the transaction, or not remembering it, was about to counteract the design, and still give the birthright to Esau, and had sent him into the field to procure savory meat with that intent. But Jacob was induced by Rebekah his mother to procure some meat while Esau was in the field, and thus obtain the blessing clandestinely. She so directed him as to carry the deception through, and make his father think he was blessing Esau, while in fact he was blessing Jacob. He was to cover his hands that he might appear hairy as Esau was. But, as nature will be true to herself, he could not assume the *voice* of Esau, although he deceptively covered his hands; and when at length Esau came from the field weary and hungry, and the moment of the transaction had arrived, he stated to his father that he had come to present to him the venison he had gone to procure in the field.

The transaction was very solemn, and very momentous to the whole patriarchal family, as we shall see in the sequel.

And now to make use of the text, we shall draw from it this doctrine. *It illustrates the dissonance between the profession of the lips and the action of the hands.* The lips, you are aware, are used as the organ of profession, and the hands the instrument of action.

This want of agreement or dissonance, I shall attempt to illustrate.

1. We hear many a man pray for a revival, and in long protracted quotations from the Old Testament. He will plead that "the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it." And we hear him plead again "that righteousness may run down our streets like a mighty shower."

2. We hear him pour forth in sweet and delightful strains for the Jews, the ancient people of God, that they may be brought in with the fulness of the Gentile nations."

3. We hear him pray for the slaves, the sable sons of Africa—that "Ethiopia may stretch out her hands to God."

4. We hear him pray for the suffering poor, that "God would feed them, and comfort them, and guide them by his counsel, and afterward bring them to glory."

5. We hear him pray for the heathen, "that the kingdom of Christ may be enlarged from the river to the ends of the earth—that the heathen may come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising." But when we have looked the prayer over and repeated all the quotations which would take an hour, we are anxious to know whether those who thus devoutly pray, *do as well as pray*—whether they have poured in for the conversion of the Jews, their silver and gold; whether they have opened their hearts wide for the poor heathen; whether they have treated the slave more kindly than other men; and whether they are willing to make a sacrifice for them.

#### REMARKS.

1. We see the sure and only way to happiness and glory. We are to see at all times that the language of our lips corresponds with our actions.

2. We see how evidently those are mistaken who appear happy, but do not live uprightly, and do not let their life correspond with their profession.

3. "Honesty is the best policy." If Jacob had acted with per-

fect uprightness, we should never have been interested or troubled with the history of his wrongs, and the outrageous attack of the inhabitants upon his family, and we should never have heard, in his dying benediction, "Cursed be thy wrath, for it was cruel." And Jacob would never had to sleep on the stones at Jordan, and have felt the loneliness and the desertion of that hour.

4. But good often comes out of evil. We never should have had the history of Pennel and the name of Israel, nor have read of that brook where he passed with his staff and had now returned with two bands. Nor have read of the ladder that reached to heaven on which the angels of God ascended and descended, or of the Lord of angels with whom he conversed, who declared himself to be his God, and promised "that in him and in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed."

5. Parents would do well to beware how they lead their children into sin. If his mother Rebekah had not instigated him to sin, and to do that deed that ruined his brother's prospects for ever, she would not have had to lay in sleepless agony, while he slept upon that journey by the side of that stream, and where he afterward wrestled with God and prevailed, and where he built an altar to the Lord who was with him in the way that he went.

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## No. XXIII.

### ECCLESIASTES VIII. 11.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

IN what emphatic lines does the text express the long suffering patience of God? It is here drawn from that very mercy provided, that lets the sinner live; that feeds and clothes him; and comforts him, and heals all his sickness. And all this is from the slowness of the wrath of God to punish iniquity.

Here let it be my object to show,

I. That God is very slow in punishing iniquity.

A cursory view of some scripture facts on this subject, will pour upon it an overwhelming light.

He bore with the old world, we know, after he had resolved on

its destruction, one hundred and twenty years. He let the righteous soul of Lot suffer all this time with their prevailing iniquities.

He bore with the Canaanites, four hundred years after the cry of their crimes had reached his holy ear.

And he bore with Sodom after the cry of its iniquities had gone up to heaven, and been reported through that happy world for several generations.

He bore with Ahab, after he had provoked the Lord God to anger, and after he had sinned more than all the kings that were before him.

And he bore with Jezebel after she had spilled the blood of the prophets, and after she had filled her whole kingdom with *false prophets*, and with lies and blood; and after she had committed iniquities, that ought to have hanged her long before.

And he bore with Voltaire after he had been an infidel beyond the ordinary age of man, and had filled his own land and all other lands within his reach, with his "wrath against the Nazarenes," and his exterminating quarrel with the whole Church of the Living God.

And he has born with drunkards, and the profane, and the debauched, till they have wearied out his patience and filled the whole world with crimes. He bore with Nero, and Alexander, and Bonaparte, till their crimes had gone up to heaven. And we could name others, who were systematic in their crimes, and spilt the best blood in their kingdoms; destined at length to come down blasted and disgraced like old oaks of the wood, that had been withered by the lightnings of heaven, and stood the curse of the forest for a century.

It will be my object to show,

II. That for this very reason, because God endures, men have grown presumptuous in their sins.

In many of the cases referred to, this is too evidently a fact to be denied. How long was God provoked with the iniquities of Pharaoh! until the punishments that God poured upon that land had reached every house, and scattered desolation and death through every family.

But a more important inquiry is,

III. How is it that this long suffering patience of God emboldens men in their iniquities?

1. In the first place, it gives them leisure to sophisticate the truth. It leads them on in the boldest perversions of infidelity;

hence sprang up that proverb, "Since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning."

2. It gives them time to mature their vicious habits. Doubtless the old world was much the more wicked because they lived so long.

3. Men become committed against the truth, and do many deeds of darkness in consequence of those commitments. Jezebel had her false prophets, and her "prophets of the grove," who fed at her table, and lived on her bounty, until the moment came when God would have her thrown from her own window, and her body collected as mere food for dogs.

How amazing is the long suffering patience of God, that he will so permit his rich mercies to be abused!

If there is any one thought that adds to the climax of total depravity, and renders men more desperate still than they would seem to be, it is this very one, that men have abused the goodness of the Lord so as to infer from it liberty to sin.

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## No. XXIV.

### I JOHN III. 3.

And every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

EVERY one who would evince his right to hope that he shall appear before the Lamb in the great last day, should be seeing to it that this hope purifies him, as he is pure.

How does it appear that this hope will so operate? God thus asserts, "And every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

I. It sets up the noblest object of ambition. To see Christ as he is, and be like him, is an object that fires the soul with heavenly ambition. If one might hope to be an angel, how impressing the thought;—but to hope to be like Christ, how much rather.

II. It offers us the pleasantest work. What is so sweet as to be putting on the character of Jesus Christ, and to put off the body of sin and death—the old Adam?

III. It will very soon be done. It is a short enterprise; a few

years of toil, and the hill is ascended, and the height gained; and then, O how sweet to look back upon the wilderness all trodden over!

IV. The work associates us with the best beings that have ever lived. The patriarchs and prophets, and apostles and martyrs, with all the holy men of whom the world was not worthy, and who had all this same work to do; and they did it, and are now in heaven, reaping the rewards of piety. "Though dead, they yet speak;" as remembered holy example ever will.

V. We are blessed as fast as the work is done. To put off sin, how sweet; to be pardoned, how sweet; but how much sweeter to be holy! You saw that family going to the West: how happy, every hill they ascended; but when at last they reached the heights of the Alleghany, and looked down upon the broad valley of the Mississippi, how sweetly they sat down to rest; and they pitied those who had yet the hills to climb.

VI. Hope looks forward and sees the whole journey to the end all through. It is not a journey at a venture; it is not a leap in the dark; it is not a conflict at hazard. It is the very nature of hope to keep the courage up, and bring the final issue into clear view.

VII. The *spectators of the conflict* inspire us. "Seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth easily beset us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

VIII. And then, finally, the crown of glory—the palms of victory!

#### REMARKS.

1. How, then, are we to keep alive this hope? By urging on the work. And is there no other way? No, not any.

2. This hope, of course, then falters when the work stops, when we cease to add grace to grace, and cease the work of pressing on towards the kingdom of God. I can tell every man how much hope of heaven he has, by his earnestness to be holy, by his effort to be clean.

3. But may not frequent pardons keep our hope alive, while yet we are not becoming more holy? No; not if our hope is this *Christian hope*. If it does not purify us, it is the hope of the hypocrite, that shall perish when God taketh away the soul. In the Holy Scriptures we have this blessed assurance, that we are saved by hope.

4. But do not seasons of reviving prove our hope a good one? 1

No; we may compass ourselves about with sparks of our own kindling, and walk by the light of our own fire.

5. How, then, may we be sure, if our hope revives, that it is a good hope, through grace, and "shall prove an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast"? There will revive with it an effort to be more holy. The man who put a twenty dollar note into a letter, the other day, to pay one from whom seven years ago he had taken five dollars, gave evidence that his well-grounded heavenly hopes were reviving. That minister who seemed so much waked up to the interests of the soul that he preached two hours, would have been believed to have revived his heavenly hopes, had he not broken his covenant with his eyes that evening; that Christian that prayed until he swooned, had he not been proud of that prayer, and angry to have its piety brought into question. If we have this hope in us, it must purify us, even as Christ is pure.

6. But must it make us perfect, "even as he is perfect?" A revival hope should keep running as long as life endures.

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## No. XXV.

### NUMBERS XXIII. 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.

In this chapter we have a fine exhibition of a conflict between a conscience that God holds under close restraint, while that conscience is connected with a heart totally depraved.

Balaam was sent to curse Israel previously to a conflict between them and the Canaanites. Balak the king of Moab was to take the lead in that war and hired Balaam the son of Beor to come and curse Israel. He evidently wished to succeed that he might have the wages of unrighteousness. But his conscience forbid and the dumb ass was made to speak and to rebuke the madness of the prophet. Again and again he tried, but God every time he tried forbid him and turned the curse into blessings. He at length blessed them all together and inverted the whole into a curse upon their enemies. Death is not to the good man a surprising event. He has thought on it and prepared for it. It is an event he has prayed over more than any other since the period of his new birth. "And

he took up his parable and said, Balak the King of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying come, curse me Jacob, and come defy me Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the tops of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Thus have we in the closing words of the mercenary prophet, the very language that will burst from the lips of every dying sinner. It is easy to show that the good man dies with a very different set of affections.

I. He can have the happiest reflections. He can look back upon a life of Godliness and forward to heaven as a scene of interminable blessedness.

II. He can take the happiest circumspensive view. He has kept his family and circumstances shaped for the grave, and now comes home, unless his hope deceives him, like a shock of corn fully ripe.

III. He can look forward with pleasure. Heaven lies in his prospect and looms up before him like a ship returning from sea. He often thinks of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

IV. He has made preparation for his departure. His peace is made with God, and he sometimes, when hope prevails, takes hold of the things within the veil.

V. He dies happy. God gives him dying comforts. It is the happiest hour of his life, the hour that introduces him to his King "the Lord of hosts." It is the hour David spoke of when he said "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

VI. Christ is with him as he promised, "I will be with thee in six troubles and in seven I will not forsake thee." Flesh and heart have failed him, but God has become the strength of his heart and portion for ever.

VII. Death finishes his trials. He shall hunger no more neither thirst any more. He is passing through the waters, and the promise is, "they shall not overflow thee." He is walking through the fire, and the promise is, "it shall not kindle upon him."

VIII. Death consummates his hopes. It introduces him to better society and better comforts than he leaves behind. "He traverses the river of the water of life and plucks the fruit fresh from the tree of life."

IX. He applies to his soul the leaves of that tree which it was promised should be "for the healing of the nations."

## REMARKS.

1. We are not surprised that a wicked man should choose such a death.

2. How astonishing that the hope of such a death should not stimulate to a holy life. "But he loves the wages of unrighteousness," and rather risks dying wretched than living holy.

3. Ungodly men do not act according to their conviction. And this is their shame and will be their disgrace for ever.

4. They are then unreasonable beings and God will convict them out of their own mouths.

5. If then Sinners will treat their own souls so unreasonably it is not wonderful they will treat unreasonably the Son of God, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

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 No. XXVI.

## ACTS XVII. 30.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

PAUL was in Athens, and preached there, to a congregation of idolators the doctrine of the text. By the times of this ignorance it is supposed God meant, "the times in which he permitted all nations to walk in their own ways."

Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

When it is said, "the times of this ignorance God winked at," we are taught, that when God has given up a nation, or an individual, to walk in his own ways, he may leave them without those rebukes which he will send after those he has not so given up. Not that he, by winking, may be said to approve of their sins. This he cannot do. He long suffered the Assyrians and Babylonians, and the other nations bordering upon Israel, to be unmolested, but he afterward punished them.

But men that have his word he commands everywhere to repent now. *It will be my object to show the obligations resting upon all men to repent immediately.*

1. The duty is a reasonable one. To know, and confess, and hate, and quit sin, and undo the mischief it has done. *Every part of it is most reasonable.*

2. The being sinned against is doing sinners good. "He does them good, and gives them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons filling their hearts with food and gladness."

3. It has required great forbearance in him to keep them out of hell so long.

4. They cannot tell when this forbearance may cease.

5. This forbearance may cease suddenly. "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." He hath set them in slippery places.

6. They are daily increasing the work, and making it more difficult if they ever should repent.

7. They have now more time to undo the mischief. This is a part of repentance.

8. If sinners would treat God as they feel themselves obliged to treat men, consistency of character would require them to repent.

9. If they would be happy, to repent would set the conscience at rest.

10. If they would have the favor of God, which is eternal life.

11. If they would have the confidence of men; who can trust the man who will not restore what he has robbed from his Maker?

12. It is what we all mean to do; and while we delay the work is becoming harder. As the sinner goes away from God, his path becomes overgrown with thorns and briars; compelling him, *if ever he returned*, to hew a passage back to God and heaven, and the way of life, by dint of excessive labor.

13. It is the command of God. And if God did not command us to do what would do ourselves infinite good, we should still be under unalterable obligations to obey. But when he commands us to do that which will thus make us happy in all the processes, and eternally blessed at the end, our obligations to obedience are amazingly multiplied.

#### REMARKS.

1. Then sinners cannot be convicted too soon.

2. Then ministers cannot preach too plain.

3. Then convicted sinners cannot be too much distressed.

4. Then we should let no stupid sinner alone.
5. We should consider our children ruined till they repent.
6. Thus there is no security for character till men repent.
7. Thus godliness has promise of the "life that now is, as of that which is to come."

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## No. XXVII.

### JEREMIAH XVII. 5.

Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited."

To trust in the Lord, and make flesh our arm, and have our heart depart from the Lord, are three phrases meaning the same thing; and is characteristic of the whole human family by nature. It describes a heart that leans toward the creature in all its operations, and in all its hopes, and in the whole volume of its desires and wishes. Thus have we an inspired description of the nature of man as he came out from the hand of his Creator, and as he goes on to operate in this dying world to form a character in preparation for his eternal state. This condition of man I shall attempt to describe.

I. He relies on his own resources to supply his wants in this world. He trusts in riches, forgetting that they "take themselves wings and fly away, as an eagle toward heaven." No man can tell, whatever his resources are to-day, that he shall not be a beggar to-morrow.

1. The same may be said of the man who depends upon human esteem to establish his character. No one but he who has the whole character in his hand, and has under his entire control all the future circumstances that go to make up that character, can tell what may be the changes that may go to alter his character and form him for an entirely different future destiny than that to which he seems subjected to-day.

2. And the same may be said of the man that founds his hopes of heaven on the opinion that others, in an incautious hour, may

have expressed of his character. On this ground, Judas had a good character, who afterward sold and betrayed his master for thirty pieces of silver. He knew not "what manner of man he was."

3. The man who thus founds his hopes of heaven on the opinion of others, does not much differ from him who depends upon human means to bring him to that eternal life he hopes for. His hope of heaven will not be very likely to prove that "anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil." He will be liable to be driven about by every wind of doctrine, and exhibit a piety too vascillating to take a firm hold of those realities revealed as the objects of faith.

4. The same is the case with the man who intends to meet God *without a Savior*, and lays the foundation of his immortal hopes on any good deeds he has done or may do. He will find, at length, that God is a consuming fire, and after he has walked awhile by the light of his own fire, he will have to lie down in everlasting sorrow.

II. I shall attempt to decipher the illustration given us in the text.

1. "He shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh."

We have here a description of one of those vast tracts of the eastern desert covered with moveable sand, on which nothing will grow, but the meanest stunted heath (so called) or shrub, rising but a few feet from the ground, and where it stands the everlasting curse of the soil that grows it. "He shall not see when good cometh." That is, when another part of the desert may be watered by some fortuitous shower or dew, none will come nigh to it. The condition of the plant described is farther illustrated, when it is said to inhabit the "parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land not inhabited." Thus is added to sterility the idea of saltiness, which proves the source of barrenness through the whole vegetable world; which shows the lonely and desolate condition as well as barrenness of the plant that attempts to grow and bear fruit, and come to any thing like maturity in this woful spot.

## No. XXVIII.

### 2 CORINTHIANS VI. 2.

Behold now is the accepted time ; behold now is the day of salvation.

It is a gross and fatal error in the public creed and conscience, that effects are not looked for at the moment, or are to be expected when the gospel is preached. Ministers have not calculated that God will give his word success *while yet they are speaking*. And Christians have unkindly prayed and calculated that the truth may lodge and do good at some future hour. And sinners have laid up the truth for future use. Thus the gospel receives a go-by for the present moment. And yet,

I. The claims of the gospel forbid all this.

1. It proffers sinners every blessing they need ; pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and eternal life.

2. Its injunctions are from the highest authority ; from God, from Jesus Christ, from the Holy Ghost ; from him who holds in his hands the keys of hell and of death.

3. It proffers blessings that sinners cannot do without. They are undone *now* without them, and without them are lost for ever.

4. It sets the *present time* as the only one for the acceptance of its blessing. They are withdrawn if not now accepted, to be offered again perhaps never !

5. The offer is taken back unless accepted now.

6. The present acceptance of the gospel is more probable now, than at any future time, and the recording angel waits to minute the sinner's refusal. As the sinner glides down the broad smooth way to death, a wilderness of thorns and briars grow up behind him, high as heaven, through which he must hew his way back, if he ever reaches heaven ; hence every furlong he proceeds, increases the improbability of his safe and timely retreat.

II. Why then does the gospel produce no immediate effect ?

1. Because the gospel offers the sinner a salvation he disapproves ; a *holy* salvation, a *gracious* salvation.

2. It requires him to put on a character that he disapproves and hates !

3. It proffers the formation of relationships that are unwelcome; to all the regenerate; a brotherhood and heirship with Jesus Christ; a kind and eternal fraternity with the household of faith.

4. There are pleasures and friendships to be given up, that are greatly beloved. The heart has taken a dying hold of objects that prolong its death.

5. The sinner is too stupid to estimate the value of the offer made. The mind is a vacuum that has been empty till it hates truth, and will not think. It instinctively repels the truth.

6. The offer of the gospel mercy is considered a mere intellectual proposition, that the sinner is to survey, and contemplate, and reason about. But God directs his gospel to the heart, for it to feel and act upon. It is a blaze sent to melt the heart, (the blow pipe). It is a hammer lifted by the hand of God to break the heart. It is a charge meant to be lodged deep in the *heart*, to blow it up, and send it broken and shivered to the skies. It has to do with the understanding and conscience only, as they constitute the pass way to the heart. If the truth lodges in either, and does not travel on to the heart, nothing is done. If when it comes there it meets a rock, it rebounds back to heaven. If the mind and conscience, truth's avenue, be cased over, and thus its passage to the heart be blocked up, the heart remains whole till the world is *burned*.

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## No. XXIX.

### PSALMS CXXXVII. 5, 6.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

JERUSALEM was the centre of worship in Israel, and was the type of the church of God in after ages. The kingdom of Christ is that absorbing interest that should occupy supremely the hearts of God's people.

1. What is the extent of that interest which we may not forget? What does it imply or involve?

1. The divine glory. In no part of the operations of Jehovah has he so fully displayed himself as in the work of redemption

His mighty power and godhead are displayed in the things that are seen. His wisdom can easily be discerned, and his goodness inferred from the visible creation. Still, what the poet says, is true, that—

“God, in the person of his Son,  
Has all his mightiest works outdone.”

Here the whole of the divine character is drawn out to view, as well as his grace, and mercy, and long-suffering, and patience, and endurance, as his *more awful and terrifying attributes*.

May we, then, forget an interest that involves all these; that lets down, as it were, the mighty God to the composed and deliberate contemplation of his creatures, or rather, lifts them into the rank of angels, and to a close and intimate companionship with himself, and with his Son, Jesus Christ? Now, where is an interest so grand as this, or that may a moment come in for so large a share of our affections, and command away our thoughts and our contemplations?

2. The interest of Zion involves the salvation of sinners. The church is composed of redeemed sinners. If it becomes enlarged, sinners are saved; and when stationary, none are added to the number of the saved. A long suspension of the divine influence may harden many, till they shall become incorrigible, and the truth never take hold again of their affections and their hearts. While our children shall see us caring supremely for Zion, they will not forget that they are the children of the covenant and the hope of the Church, and will view themselves as not at liberty to go on in the way of transgressors. Could we properly estimate the worth of the soul, we should never suffer any other interest to come in competition with it. What may I remember—what may I not forget, if Jerusalem has lost its power to interest me, and the eternal salvation of my neighbors and my children has not invaluable importance in my estimation?

3. The interest of Zion must prosper, in order to the present joy and comfort of his people. This can be said of no other concerns. We may be poor and disgraced and diseased, and may see taking their flight from us all the dear objects of time and sense, and yet may be happy; but not happy is the people of God while Zion languishes. The captive Jews could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land; their harps were hung upon the willows, till God should turn again their captivity.

4. Zion's prosperity involves the *growth and maturity* of religior

in the hearts of God's people. It is an interest as dear to them as is their own final redemption from sin, and their complete equipment for the paradise of God. When Zion is in the dust, believers suffer in their own individual spiritual interest.

While I have thus shown what is involved in the prosperity of Jerusalem, I have, I know, offered some reasons why *we may not forget her*. But let us, in the *second place*, look at another class of reasons which cannot so properly be considered as descriptive of the interest involved.

1. Because *God will not forget Jerusalem, we may not*. "He has graven her upon the palms of his hands." Her walls are continually before him. He governs the world for her sake, and will never for a moment turn his eye from her interest. While some other interest may attract us, and we may not forget the Church, and pour out but few prayers for her redemption into the heart of God, she will continue as dear and important as ever. "He will guard her as the apple of his eye."

2. The Lord Jesus will not forget the interest for which he died, because we forget. It is said of him, you know, that "he ever liveth to make intercessions for his people." A perpetual intercessor! what a delightful thought! He will not then forget the church for which he is interceding. His blood will remain the price of her redemption; his righteousness, her covering; his merits, her plea. In the darkest hour, when almost all have fled, Jesus is there; hard by the interest he watches, awake to protect the Church he purchased with his own blood.

3. Zion may not be forgotten by her sons, because her foes will not forget her. The Church has ever been in this world like the bush that Moses saw burning, but not consumed. The world has viewed her existence as its living reproach; her prosperity the object of its envy, and her honors as detracting from its beauty and glory. The report of all her revivals has gone down to hell, and circulated through all its precincts, to the glory of her God and King; and whenever there shall be another revival, it will be quickly reported in that territory of darkness. Hence, a perpetual warfare with her interests. The men of the world suppose themselves to have a high interest in the disgrace and the tears and the backslidings of the Church. They are mistaken: *but this alters not the fact*; and Jerusalem should not be forgotten by her friends while *her foes will not forget her*. If men will watch to do her hurt, believers should watch to do her good.

*Finally*—we may not forget Zion, as the church below is intimately connected with the Church above, and cannot suffer without exciting the interest of all heaven, or prosper, but it gives all heaven joy.

## REMARKS.

1. There can be no dissensions among believers, as the Church is to each a paramount interest.

2. How mistaken are believers, if they imagine they *can suffer or prosper alone!*

3. How this subject enhances the worth of a revival!

4. How strikingly will the world be one in her interest, when the Lord Jesus shall spread the glory of Zion over all her friends, and the whole world be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Ride on, blessed Lord Jesus, conquering and to conquer, until thy kingdom shall conquer all the nations, and cover the wide world, and until the time has come for thee to reign over all lands; and then thy friends will sing, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation;” and will add, “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole world be filled with his glory: amen, and amen!”

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 No. XXX.

## JOHN XVII. 4.

I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

THE character of the Lord Jesus Christ; the work that he would do, and the spirit with which he would enter upon that work, have been pointed out to the world so distinctly that “the way faring though a fool need not err therein.” This work he had to finish when he made this prayer and *was finishing* it in the very prayer *itself*. Hence,

I. He had to finish the work of a *holy apostleship* which he had been doing all his life, but never finished until he closed this prayer, at the close of which he might have said “I am ready to be offered.”

II. He had to finish the work of a *faithful evangelist*; that is had to show the apostles what he required of them in the faithful distribution of his message to a ruined world. We have a beautiful example of the manner in which this work was to be done in the history of the adulteress of Sichar, where he spent several days to promote a blessed work of God, and thus blew the trumpet of the gospel.

III. He had to finish the character of *faithfulness as a professor of Godliness*, thus evincing himself a true disciple of his own school.

IV. He had to exhibit to the full his character as an *amiable, benevolent and good man*. Thus he would prepare his family of disciples to so exhibit the character of their master, as to prepare them to say in their prayers "for me to live is Christ."

V. He had to finish the doing of the will of God, had yet *to die on the Cross* for the sins of a miserable world, and exhibit in his character a faithful high-priest. For this death, he was about to prepare. The associates of his sufferings were making themselves ready. And the Lord Jesus Christ would be careful not to show any reluctance to enter upon this work. Hence there would remain nothing in his case, but to give up the ghost and resign life and say "it is finished." And he went to his death in the vigor of manhood and sprightliness of youth, and bore his own cross up the hill on which he was crucified. This was in fulfillment of the very track that the prophets had pointed out for him, so that he might be said to die in the very centre of the world he came to redeem. And another thing, he died in that spot where it could the most easily be communicated to the rest of the world, not only the history of his suffering, but the *grand design* of his death. Thus, by merely uttering the story of his exit, they would the most effectually convince the world of the truth of this story, and use the most effectual means to bring them to exercise faith in his merits, and in his blood, and in his redemption.

Thus as from a central point, there goes forth the redemption of a world and the history of that redemption, and the only means that God will use in redeeming to his Son that miserable world for which the Savior laid down his life, and thus when he said "look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else," the world would not have far to look, it would only have to glance an eye through a few generations.

#### REMARKS.

1. We learn from this subject the grand secret of being ready to die. This consists in having our work all done ready for that hour

2. The subject leads us to reflect that many men of the world, that have adopted a similar sentiment, would seem to have been inspired in their adoption of this sentiment. It was said of Lord Nelson, in all his appointments in the navy in the British government, that his concluding remark, was *fifteen minutes before the time*, that thus they might save to each other and to him that precious time on which a nation's prosperity might depend. And this by the by, forms one of the best traits of Christian character and is as important in the Church of God, as it was in the British navy.

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No. XXXI.

ROMANS XII. 12.

Continuing instant in prayer.

THE appropriateness and obligation of the duty of prayer, and the reasons why it should be instant, or earnest and incessant.

I. The appropriateness will appear when we consider that religion qualifies the Christian to pray.

1. By giving him a deep knowledge of his heart.
2. By giving him correct views of God.
3. By impressing him with the endured and impending miseries of ungodly men. This pre-eminently enables him to spread their whole case before God, and to plead with him in their behalf.
4. By correcting his motives of action, and thus preparing him to pray acceptably.
5. By rendering him familiar with the promises. He has prepared him to lay his own case and the case of others before a prayer-hearing God.
6. By habituating him to the duty, and rendering it pleasant.
7. By filling his soul with the love of benevolence.

II The obligation arises from

1. The command of God.
2. The interest that the Christian has in the Divine glory.
3. He grows faster when he prays, and that in proportion to the fervidness of his prayers.

4. He has the best evidence of his own piety.
5. He gives the best evidence to others.

III. Reasons why the Christian should be instant, or earnest and incessant.

1. It is only instant prayer that can be evidence of strong Christian affections.

2. Each of the three cases that invite him to prayer are urgent cases. His own sanctification. It is of more importance to the believer that *himself* be saved than any body else. And he sees the importance to *his brethren* in Christ of their salvation, as nobody else can see it. He also sees the importance of the *salvation of sinners*. "Hence knowing the terrors of the law, he persuades men."

3. God has given special promise to incessant, urgent, instant prayer. Hence the cases spoken of in the Scripture.

4. The little time he has to pray and labor for God and his kingdom, and therefore "he must do whatsoever his hands find to do with his might, knowing that there is no wisdom nor device in the grave whither we haste."

5. The rest and reward in heaven.

6. Instant prayer is the best means of his own growth in grace, and comfort, and *hope of blessedness*, here and hereafter.

## No. XXXII.

MATTHEW, v. 5.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

It has been often said all the promises are appropriated. To the poor in spirit God has promised the kingdom of heaven.

What, *meekness* and not *war* gain territory? Meekness is a quietness, mildness and gentleness. It is that spirit of non-resistance enjoined on his disciples by our Lord, when he said, "If any man smite thee on the one cheek turn to him the other also." Some things may seem *like it* but *are not it*. That indecision which has no opinion when those are present who will oppose it, is not meekness but cowardice.

We are directed to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints. We are to be rooted and grounded in the truth. That cowardice which does not defend the truth is not meekness. It is yielding the honor of God because we fear man more than God, because their frown effects more than the threatenings of God.

That tameness which arises from want of talent is not meekness. This differs nothing from what may be found in animals, but meekness is a gospel grace. It implies that the natural temper has been subdued by the power of God so that the Christian spirit operates in the midst of coarse and unhandsome treatment. Paul was not meek by nature but became so by grace. Still his natural temper sometimes broke out—as when the high priest commanded him to be smitten. Meekness implies a sanctified heart. Hence the promise is made to believers that they shall inherit the earth. God will give these good things to those who exhibit the temper that he justifies.

By the earth we are to understand not merely his terrestrial territory but all the good things of the life that now is. Hence the text implies that this world was made for the church of Christ and belongs in the divine estimation to the people of the Saints of the most high God.

I. It was built for the Church. It is said of the Lord Jesus Christ, that “by him were all things created that are in heaven and earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things are created by him and for him.” And it is said of the people of God, “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.

II. The government is committed to a mediator in behalf of the Church. God purposes to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. It was predicted of the child that he should be born, “That the government should be upon his shoulders, his name should be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” We read of a moment when Christ shall deliv

er up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father ; that is, he shall no longer govern the world *as mediator*, having gathered out of it his people and taken them all to heaven with him. Under his government it will be true that though the wicked heap up silver as the dust and prepare raiment as the clay, *he* may prepare it but the just shall put it on and the innocent shall divide the silver.

3. The people of God alone truly enjoy the good things of this life, and they only have the permission of God to use them : they only are blessed of God in their basket and in their store.

They ask and receive the Divine blessing with their meat and drink. They only receive thankfully the Divine bounties, and submit willingly when God afflicts them. To them only is the promise, "all things shall work together for good to them that love God." Hence they only can be cheerful and happy in the possession of the things of time and sense. God requires that the talents he puts into our hands we occupy until he come. He demands the fruit of the vineyard. Every blessing is handed us on the implied condition that we are truly thankful, and use the blessing well. And none do this but the people of God. Hence none have God's leave to *use*, because none can have his leave to *abuse* the bounties of his providence. If men come not with a grateful heart to the table which the Lord, in his providence, spreads for them, I know not in what text they have leave to partake.

4. The promise of the text will be specially fulfilled when the Church shall be spread over the world, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. That day, we know, is coming. Then the text will receive its *literal* accomplishment, and the whole soil be held by those who fear and know the Lord. It is promised the Savior, that "the Father will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. A promise, perhaps, of no good to them ; for it is added, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, and shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Still a promise exactly to the point I would illustrate, that the whole of this world's territory will one day belong to the Church of Christ.

#### REMARKS.

1. The subject illustrates that Divine maxim, "He that will save his life shall lose it." Meekness gives up its right, and God gives it back. In the case reported in the history of Solomon, the true mother gives up her part of the child, rather than have it divided.

2. How anti-evangelical is a spirit of war and of contention

Not to this spirit, but its opposite, God has promised a boundless territory.

3. How alarmed should men be if they are blessed abundantly with the good things of this life, and are not the children of God, and are not using his bounties to the Divine honor.

4. Would we be, in the truest sense, rich, we see where we must begin our efforts; by subduing our native ferocious warlike spirit, and putting on the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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### No. XXXIII.

#### CORINTHIANS XVI. 22.

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.

THE man is anathemized, and *ought* to be, who loveth not our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. There are some who do not love our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. This we know from observation.

They have their place, and keep their standing out of the pale of his Church.

2. From the testimony of all who are regenerate.

They choose to be disassociated with the praying multitude who plead at the Savior's feet. The testimony of all the sacramental host, is, that previously to their enlistment on the side of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were his enemies. They preferred a bubble or a straw, to that glorious being who built all worlds. Their language now is:

“Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,  
And with thee rich take what thou wilt away.”

Nothing less will satisfy an immortal soul but God.

3. From the testimony of Scripture.

They say to God, “Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”

II. They are accursed from the nature of the case.

1. They do not love the highest moral excellence, but love nothing

2. They cannot love a lower moral excellence, when they do not love a higher.

3. They can find nothing else to love that can make them happy.

4. Christ cannot love them, nor can any holy beings love them but must hate them.

III. They *ought* to be accursed.

1. They curse themselves.

2. They are cursed by their own consciences.

3. God has threatened to curse them. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things written in the book of the law to do them. And it will be recollected the law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and it will be recollected that all heaven will add to this delightful injunction their *long and loud Amen*.

4. Their character is such that they are fitted for nothing but the Divine wrath.



## No. XXXIV.

### PSALM LI. 14.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation : and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

THERE is a very important sense in which men may be charged with blood-guiltiness, and not be guilty of murder in the immediate act.

Parents have so abused their children that they may be charged with their death, without imbruing their hands in their blood, by neglecting their eternal interests. Men are guilty of the blood of their fellow-men, in a spiritual point of light, who contribute in any way to their everlasting undoing.

I. Men are chargeable with blood-guiltiness, who *neglect the atonement* of the Lord Jesus Christ, and continue obstinately to persevere in sin until they lose their own souls. There remaineth in their case no more sacrifice for sins, "but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary."

II. By *teaching principles* that lead others to trample upon the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus men imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-men, and what was said of one of old, will be true in their case: "that man perished not alone in his iniquity."

III. By *setting an example* that leads others to disregard religion and die in their sins. If men follow us, and our path leads them down to perdition, we are guilty of their blood.

IV. By *neglecting to do* for others what might *promote their salvation*, we may become guilty of their blood. "We see the sword coming, and blow not the trumpet." Hence their blood will be in our skirts.

V. By *approving of the character* of men when they have not on the character that the Lord Jesus Christ will approve at his coming, we bring upon ourselves the blood of our fellow-men. "We daub, in that case, with untempered mortar, and sew pillows to all arm-holes."

VI. By *neglecting to pray* for our fellow-men while such are the promises, that would we pray aright, God would save them in answer to those prayers, we bring the blood of our fellow-men upon us. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land."

VII. When we see prevailing any iniquities that are destroying the souls of men, and we *hold our peace*, and do not disapprove of those iniquities, we incur blood-guiltiness.

## REMARKS.

1. There are several things respecting this blood-guiltiness I wish to name here. *It stains deep*. The vulgar idea that has been current for so many years, that the blood of murder could not be washed out, has arisen from the impressions of guilt such a deed inflicts upon the conscience; otherwise it never had been the impression that the blood of murder could not be washed out as readily as other blood. Blood-guiltiness will adhere long. We

have heard of many a murderer who could never efface the guilt from his conscience, and died finally through iniquity.

2. *It corrodes fearfully.* It is not a slight paroxysm that removes it, when the conscience is corroded with remembered guilt. It is a guilt that wakes up the soul to a deep and dreadful horror. It led one to say, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

3. Christians that have had frequently to do with the destruction of souls ever since they were regenerated, must experience frequently renewed pardons, in order to have permanent peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

4. How certain, then, that the punishment of the finally impenitent *will be endless*, in order to have any relation at all to the deeds they have done. All sinners have been guilty of this deed of blood-guiltiness, and in order to bear in the punishment any relation to the deeds they have done, it can have no limit. Hence said the Psalmist, "Pangs have taken hold of me."

5. How *endlessly involved* must be the last account of ungodly men! One has been the means of damning another, and he another, and he a third, and thus the deed extends to infinity.

6. The *distress that sinners* feel, when they first discover their guilt, *is not to be wondered at.*

7. *O, what a view* this subject gives us of this world's guilty population! We walk the streets of our city with a multitude of murderers, who will have all this train of blood-guiltiness upon them in the last day.

8. Why, then, are we so surprised that *so few are saved, and so many destroyed?* Who ever expected, that among a gang of murderers, the *real mass* would be pardoned!

## MISCELLANEOUS.

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### THE SYRIAN CAPTIVE, OR TRY THE REMEDY.

IN one of the invasions of Syria upon Israel, there was among the captives a little maid whose brief story has always deeply affected my heart. Of her parentage nothing is said, except that she was a daughter of Abraham, and of course a child of the covenant. Her name is found I hope in the Lamb's book of life, but is recorded on no escutcheon hung out from the battlement of the skies: but her deeds were worthy to be written on an angel's wing. In her hand she bore the first torch that lighted up hope in the palace of an idolatrous monarch.

In the dark hour of her captivity I can well imagine the midnight scene, when the ruffian soldiery perhaps broke in upon the slumbers of the dormitory, and disturbed the repose of the cradle, and pierced the spear deep into the father's heart, and waked to a fit of frenzy the doting mother, whose moan filled every breeze, and was wafted back in echoes from every mountain top. Perhaps she clasped her infant to her breast, and fled in consternation and affright, by the light of her blazing habitation; leaving the residue of her family to make the best provision possible for their escape. Perhaps this little daughter cried, "O stay, my mother! why so fast! I cannot keep pace with thy footsteps," when swooning, it may be, she broke at length from her mother's hand, and waked up to misery in the arms of her captor.

How cruel these wars which have every where marched in the van of the gospel, and made desolate the abodes of man, and feasted savage ears upon the wails of the dying, and the shrieks of infancy! She had perchance that evening come from the paschal sacrifice, where she learnt the prophetic story of the Lamb, that was to be offered for the sin of the world on the altar of God; and with sweeter confidence than ever in the protection of Israel's King,

had closed her eyes in peaceful slumbers. But now how 'sad the change, as she is borne on the way, a helpless captive, to a distant and darkened land. And as she cast a heart-rending look behind,

She wept her father slain; her mother fled;  
 All the endearments of the parental roof  
 Gone, now gone for ever. And most of all  
 The hallowed rites she wept, sweet medium  
 Of intercourse 'twixt heaven and earth—rites  
 Foreshadowing the coming on of Zion's  
 Glorious triumph.  
 ' And must I never see my mother more,  
 Nor thee, thou sweet smiling babe; nor yet thee  
 Dearest brother; nor you, ye hills, and vales,  
 And fields, and floods, scenes of my joyous childhood—  
 Nor yet thee, thou consecrated altar,  
 Where my infant vows to Abraham's God  
 Were paid? I yield submission to thy will,  
 Dark though it be; and when far off my lot  
 From the deep centre where dwells this heart  
 Of mine, still to thy throne O God, will I  
 Direct my prayer.' In lone soliloquy  
 Thus she prayed, while on her soul distilled  
 From heaven the dews of mercy.

In the division of the spoil this captive maid fell to the share of Naaman, captain of the hosts of Syria; and while she waited on his wife, she told the wondrous story of the prophet that was in Israel. *There dwelt the law of kindness upon her lips*, and in her every action there was a charm that bound those she served in confidence and love. Her master held high rank in royal favor; and in the house of Rimmon, an idol god, had sworn, and kept his vow of fealty to his king; and was the more honored because "God by him had given deliverance to Syria."

How grievous that the God of Israel should be unknown to him who ascribes the victories which he has achieved, and which had placed his name high on the tablet of fame, to his special favor. And how yet more grievous that he should wage war with Israel's prosperity, that he might please an enemy of his holy empire.

But the darkness of pagan idolatry shrouded his mind, while the poor casket that contained it was the prey of a loathsome and consuming disease. "He was a leper." This ancient scourge of sin had broken in upon his camp, and had carried despair to his high hopes and his towering ambition, and *perhaps* his profligacy. From this captive maid he had been told something of Israel's God; had received just enough of light to make darkness visible

and had gathered some indistinct impression that relief could be obtained from the prophet of Samaria. Oh how could a heathen die that had intimations of the Lamb to be slain, while he had not taken sanctuary in his blood! "Is there, then, a prophet in Israel: that can heal the leprosy? Can he have compassion on a stranger, an enemy, the worshiper of another than Israel's God! or is there not a limitation of his power to the descendants of Abraham?" "He can," she replied, "recover thee. He *would*, wert thou *with* him. Oh that my lord were now in Samaria with this prophet who has already had compassion upon a Sidonian widow—a stranger to the covenant of promise; and he surely will not pass unheeded the application of my lord." Her deep solicitude for the welfare of her master led her, perhaps, very often to press the necessity of immediate resort to the remedy provided. Her compassion had been awakened by the view of his wretchedness: for "lo, he was a leper," an exile from his family, a burden to himself; and though high in office and in honor, a loathing to all who beheld him. All fled him, as he walked abroad, lest this frightful curse should be transferred to themselves. All excluded him from their habitations, lest his entering them should bring pollution that could not be cleansed. His nearest relatives, and most intimate associates abandoned him to his own solitary dwelling. They who followed him, as he led the armies of Syria, followed him afar off to prevent contagion. And then he was no less an object of loathing to himself than to others. He abhorred his own flesh. It was rottenness upon his bones. It was a putrid carcass, upon which the vultures longed to prey, bound by ligatures to a living soul. And what seems despair complete, it is a disease *without a remedy*. Death alone—a lingering, solitary death—unpityed, unwept, nay, most earnestly desired both by the victim and his nearest friends—was all that could promise the poor leper a dismal shadow of relief. What an emblem this of moral pollution! How shunned the sinner by all holy beings! Excluded from the abode of righteousness; shut out from hope and happiness, and heaven; odious to himself, forlorn and miserable, his is but a living death, and while he lingers upon the borders of eternity there is nothing before him but "the fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

The story of the captive maid was simple because it was true. It touched the heart of her master, and inclined him to seek an interview with the prophet of Israel. The news flew through all the departments of the royal palace. Wonder was excited there, and

hope, and perhaps a council of state was held to deliberate upon this strange intelligence. The king of Syria despatches a letter to Israel's king, and sends Naaman with a retinue and gifts of princely aspect in quest of the promised boon. There was enough of light to inspire confidence; but confidence in dark and blind confusion. The royal favorite hastens with his credentials to the court of Israel's king, who on interpreting the import of the communication—and well he might, it was so strange a suit—attributes it to a wily design on the part of his rival monarch, to involve him in a conflict—a conflict which he dreaded, and which he would gladly shun. He rends his robes in consternation, and the alarm spreads through all his court. And now the prophet's counsel is earnestly implored, as men, in terror for their sins, or in dread of death, apply to some till then unnoticed friend of God, and ask his intercession at the throne of grace on their behalf. The prophet quiets their fears by demanding the Syrian captain to be sent to him; and he would teach him that there was indeed a God in Israel mighty to save. Naaman with his retinue presents himself at the door of the prophet, but chagrined at receiving no personal notice, and vexed with the simple message, "Go wash seven times in Jordan and be clean," turned and went away in a rage. Here like the sinner at the footstool of mercy, all leprons, all defiled; and yet elated with false views of his own consequence in the sight of God, and contemning the simple offer of salvation through the blood of atonement, flies in anger from the only source of relief. But his servants entreated him to try the remedy of the prophet. Perhaps Israel's waters may avail. Haply Abana and Pharpar have no such healing virtues. If he had sent them on a long pilgrimage to some desert land to build a heathen temple and a heathen altar where human foot has never trodden since creation rose, or had he imposed self-inflicted tortures till thou couldst scarcely have borne them, thou couldst have done it all to save thy life. Why not then wash in Jordan? If it do not help, it cannot injure, no harm will follow. He yielded to their wise advice, and went and washed, when lo to his surprise and joy his putrid, loathsome flesh, gave place to that of infant tenderness and purity. In grateful amazement he gazed upon himself and felt life's current careening through his veins as in playful childhood. He had washed the leper off, and swift presents an offering at the prophet's feet. Oh take the price of life and health of thy poor servant, now relieved and happy.

No, thy leprousy cleave for ever to thy enemies. Take with

thee thy gifts. It will buy a lamb to offer on the altar of the living God, who healed thee by a power unseen and made thy flesh all young again. So Abraham's God can operate. Oh there is no God like him in all the earth.

Why, prophet, thou hast made me whole; and wilt thou not receive the price of "a Syrian ready to perish" who came in blindness, led by the direction of a little servant maid, or captive from the land of Israel, and found all, and more than all that he had hoped. Take then the boon I offer, else tell me more of Israel's God, whom I would for ever serve.

But wouldest thou know more of Israel's God? 'Twas he who built the heavens, and spread abroad the sea, when all the sons of God shouted for joy. He throws out his gifts in such profusion, and takes no bribe—receives no offering but an humble and a broken heart, through the atoning sacrifice.

Oh give me then some of Israel's soil to build an altar in Syria's empire, that I may worship only him that built the heavens, and bless the God of Abraham that healed the leper, till I come where Abraham is. And one thing more I ask, when I go into the house of Rimmon *because I must*, and then bow, my master hanging on my arm, Oh! hold thy servant guiltless in this one thing.

"Go in peace," and as thou rearest an altar to the living God, inquire there, what he would have thee do. There lay thy case in humble supplication before his throne, and he will guide thee right.

With gladsome heart Naaman bade the holy prophet a kind farewell, and hasted on his way to spread the wonders wrought in Israel amid the camp and court of Syria.

So it seems a captive maid, was the first missionary to a land of gross idolatry. She bore the first torch of light to the camp of Syria, a light which broke in upon the gloom which overshadowed in dense darkness all its habitations, from the palace of the monarch to the tents of his meanest subject. And what may not a little sabbath school child perform in the moral renovation of the world? How many a child trained up in the knowledge of God, has been instrumental in widely extending the praises of the Redeemer, by touching the chord that vibrated from heart to heart, till multitudes upon multitudes were affected by it, and brought to bow at the foot of the cross.

This little maid was but a servant that waited upon her mistress, and yet behold her sympathy for the affliction of her master. Hear her prayer in his behalf. Witness the urgency with which she press-

es the necessity of his immediate and personal application to the prophet that was in Samaria. And so Christian servants are ever blessings in the families where they dwell, and their pious example may be the means of saving their employers.

What an example of rigid adherence to the principles of early education. All the idolatry of the Syrian camp and court did not move her or cause her to forget the God of Israel. The principles which she had imbibed in her childhood clung to her in her captivity, and no temptation could prevail upon her to swerve from the way of righteousness in which she had been instructed. "If I forget thee, Oh! Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning," was the motto which she had inscribed upon her heart. Let the children of pious parents, when far away from parental instruction, remember the story of this captive maid, and inculcate it in the avoidance of all that is evil and in the practice of all that is good.

Let parents train their children so, that should they be called to leave them to the buffetings of this world, they may have a surer, firmer stay than a mere parent's arm, a wiser counsellor, and a far dearer friend.

Ye who have tried the remedy, tell me, did you not find it all, and more than all you hoped for? Was it not a timely and precious remedy? For what price would you have failed in that tremendous hour? Oh, tell, then, and teach your child to tell, in the lodgment where he dwells, or amid the servitude he serves, of that Fountain opened, in the house of David, for sin and all uncleanness. Make the tale familiar to the infant mind, of Him that bled on Calvary, and healeth every wound with his own vital stream. The theme is sweet. We shall talk of it in heaven, and sing of it in the eternal choir which shall be assembled around the throne of God and the Lamb.

But ah, how many hold the plague imbedded deep till life goes out, and will not reach that place, nor sing that song, nor feel that joy in heaven. And when they knew that the remedy was cheap and easy, and the price a grateful heart, was all that was required, oh, the disappointment, and chagrin, and wretchedness, that will prey upon the damned multitude in everlasting fire. Recollection of the *remedy untried* will eat their flesh as doth a canker.

WORLDS SENT OUT TO ILLUSTRATE THE PATH THAT MINDS  
SHOULD TAKE.

IN imagination I am sometimes thrown back to the period of creation when God spoke and it was done—when he commanded and it stood fast. And as I am stationed near the throne, and as I hear the order issued, Let there be light—let worlds be formed, and let infinite space welcome these monuments of creating power, I cannot wonder, then, angels should gaze upon the scene with untold amazement, and attune their harps to lofty song. Each sun, each planet, each family of worlds, as it sprung into being, received an impulse from the hand of its Creator, and sped its way into the orbit for which it was destined. And there it revolves in its own sphere, and revolves upon its own axis, and again revolves in blessed union with the whole family of systems, by an arrangement how complete, by an order how harmonious; and by a counterpoise of powers, which at once retains and impels it, how perfect! By the one, it would fly from its orbit, and wing its way for ever from the sphere in which it was stationed; and by the other, it would come into speedy collision with its fellow orb, and then with other orbs, till the ruin of the entire universe should be complete, and the chaos perfect. Oh, how amazing the system of creation! What a theme for song! How it displays the wisdom of the power of the incomprehensible Architect! Had the original impulse been greater or less, had it been differently apportioned, without that wondrous counterpoise which now balances the whole, this fair world of ours might have been whirled beyond the solar influence; might have been wafted into blackness and darkness, and been doomed to perpetual sterility, and perhaps to everlasting winter. But now, curbed and restrained, and its pathway marked out by the finger of God, he reserves it as the theatre for the display of his glory. Creation unfolds to us his wisdom and power; but these constitute only a part of his perfections. Would we discern his justice, his mercies, his grace, his love, we are directed to the cross. This is the sun and centre of a system infinitely more glorious than that which inspired the first anthem of the angelic choir. We can sing of creation as the cradle of our

being ; but Redemption lifts our song to nobler strains. Countless myriads, washed in the blood of the Lamb, will participate for ever in those joys which are unalterable and full of glory, and behold, with unceasing and adoring wonder, the ways and the perfections of God, as unfolded in his everlasting covenant.

I now come to the application of these remarks. The impulse which was given to the world, in the original creation, not unaptly represents the effect of those instructions which are received under the parental roof, in the Sabbath school, and by the ministrations of the sanctuary.

Take, for instance, the Sabbath school teacher, and mark his attitude. He stands the director of immortal minds. He fits them for their destined course, and gives the impulse which propels them in their future orbit—not unerringly—because opposing powers, counteracting influences, a multitude of adverse attractions, all contend for the mastery, and form a mighty combination to impede and divert, and throw off those minds into other circles, where they will flash, and redden, and glare for a while, like wandering stars, and then explode, and be lost in the blackness of darkness for ever. Oh, what an attitude, that gives to a planet its impulse, and wafts it in its orbit, and balances the powers, which, while they curb and rein it within prescribed limitations, urge it on in regular and systematic progression. But the course of planets must cease after a few cycles of years. The whole system of worlds, when they shall have run their round, and answered the purposes of their destination, must perish. Nothing is doomed to live, to survive the general wreck, but the immortal mind. And as the impulse which that mind receives affects it throughout all its future being, oh, how mighty the enterprise, how solemn the responsibility, of giving it a direction which it must feel for ever. Better annihilate a world than impress upon mind a false character, and send it whirling in some irregular or eccentric orbit. Better that the brightest planet that shines should be hurled from its sphere, and sent lawless through the heavens, and be sunk in everlasting night, than for an immortal mind to receive such an impulse as would dash it, with maddening and unhallowed energy, against other minds, and mark its own pathway to ruin by the prostration of other spirits, which are also destined to live for ever. It is not the loss merely of a single soul ; this were but a speck in the account ; it may be a ruined generation. And this ruin may spread in a wider and still wider circumference, and roll on, from generation to generation, with an accelerated impulse, till it

is announced that time shall be no more. But whence its origin? It is traced to some unfaithful teacher in a Sabbath school—to some wrong direction there—the result of some unhallowed impulse, which this same teacher had received from some mistaken guide, and stereotyped to live through all the generations of men, down to the funeral of the world. What then is the attitude of the teacher? How can he take his station at the goal, and give the impulse, without spending a thought upon its amazing results? Every one that he sends forth into the world bears some impress which he has imparted, some character which he has given, and is better or worse, will soar higher in the realms of light, or sink deeper in despair, by having participated in his instructions, and received from him an onward impulse. Oh, that all teachers would remember their responsibility, and strive to send forth their entire classes in spheres of usefulness and duty here, that they may shine hereafter like the “brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.” And oh, when the teacher shall be able to trace the history of these immortal minds, which he put upon the track, and to know to what extent they have been shipwrecked and foundered, and sunk and lost, through the agency which he has communicated, I can readily conceive how he might wish that he had been a devil, rather than to have occupied the fearful position of a teacher of a Sabbath school, and there betrayed his trust.

I think this subject susceptible of still further illustration, from the various disposition of the worlds which God has made, the laws by which they are governed, the order in which they move, and the wondrous adjustments by which they are perfectly balanced in all their relative positions, and roll on, each in its course, and each contributing to the interest and harmony of the amazing whole. In imagination I have supposed, perhaps quite presumptuously, the throne of the Eternal to be the very centre of the universe, around which all worlds, and systems of worlds, perpetually revolve. And as my mind ranges from this centre, through the fields of illimitable space, it lights upon an untold multitude of objects that fill it with amazement. The number of these heavenly orbs, their varied magnitudes, their respective distances from each other, and from the common centre, and systems upon systems, beyond the computation of Angelic powers; each with a centre of its own, yet each chained to all the rest with unseen but indissoluble bands, and all obedient to the impulse which first sent them careering in their respective orbits. Oh, what a theme for the most enlarged, and delightful, and profound contemplation!

I love to lose myself in the immensity of the works of God, and unite with the devout Psalmist in singing, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy hand, and the moon and the stars that thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst visit him?"

But there is a grand centre in the *moral* as well as in the *physical* universe. In the revolutions of worlds, you will mark that no one stands in another's way—no one takes another's path—no one envies another its nearness or its remoteness from the throne, and none is displeased that others should have larger dimensions than they, or move in a more extended orbit, or shine with a more refulgent splendor. There is no collision between these heavenly orbs—no interference—no discord. What a lesson to the Church, and to the world! The grand fountain of impulse and attraction to the moral system, is God. The great love wherewith he loved the world, is the central influence which impels to every proper feeling, and every noble action. The love of God is the golden chain which binds together all the heavenly hosts; and as it is let down to earth and embraced by men, it unites the Church Militant, and the Church Triumphant, and the Angelic Choir, in one blessed and harmonious fraternity. The manifestation of the love on the part of God, is in the gift of his Son. He is the centre of the entire system. His Spirit, as in the original creation, first moulded, and then threw into their respective spheres, all who can lay any just claim to the endeared and ennobling appellation of saints. They bear His blessed image. They shine by His light. They move by his power, and, receiving their impulse from Him, they are borne onward with the greater velocity the nearer their approach to the throne. A brighter light also gilds their path, and a more dazzling glory. And oh, that the path of all were that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day!

But some Christians, with very eccentric orbits, will play the comet. Now they approach the centre of attraction, with amazing rapidity. They are the subjects of universal wonder: what a train marks their flight! What apprehensions are exerted lest they should come within the earth's attractions, as they do within its orbit, and burn up the world! And who knows but some comet may be commissioned to fulfil the decree of heaven, respecting the final consummation of all things? But they soon pass away, and as they recede, the light which they emit grows fainter, until they are lost to the vision, and are lost for years and for centuries, ere they return to excite wonder and apprehension afresh. So

with Christians, who dazzle and glitter and carry with them a train for a little season, and then fly off and abscond, and are forgotten. The unequableness of their movements, affords just cause for apprehension, lest they should prove wandering stars, to whom is reserved the mist of darkness. The alternations of intense heat and intense cold, how very uncomfortable! How the one completely unnerves the soul, while the other locks up its energies in the frosts of winter!

Other Christians, like planets, move in eccentric orbits; but in orbits slightly eccentric. They shine brighter, and are borne onward with greater rapidity at one period, than at another; yet not to such an extent as to elicit very marked attention. There is a regularity, and an order, and a harmony in all their movements, beautiful for simplicity, and commanding veneration; and as planets have a centre around which they revolve, so has the Christian; and Christians are moreover centres of influence and attraction to others. No one liveth to himself, and no one dieth to himself. No one is so feeble, or so insignificant, or so isolated, as to render his existence and character of no effect. He is the subject of influence. He exerts an influence, just as the earth attracts the moon, and the moon the earth. The system of nature, how beautiful, how harmonious! But not more so than the Christian system, in which justice and mercy meet together, and righteousness and peace embrace each other. And when Christianity shall be thoroughly established in the hearts of all; when its principles shall be thoroughly understood by all; and when its high and holy motives shall influence all, what a blessed concert there will be of feeling, of heart, and of action. There will be no collision, no strife, no discord—Ephraim will not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim. All will move on in harmony around their respective centres of influence, in larger or more limited spheres; and all will move on around the great sun and centre of the moral system, the Lord Jesus Christ, impelled by one motive—the love of God; and having only one theme for the employment of their harps through all the ages of eternity. And thus the great love wherewith he hath loved us, and given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.

CAN THINE HEART ENDURE AND THINE HANDS BE STRONG.

No one has ever deliberately calculated on the horrors of everlasting abandonment. O! who can endure it? With what dark images does it haunt the soul? No ray of light—no gleam of hope breaks in upon the prison of despair. It is all darkness—all misery—all hopelessness. The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. *The darkness* of perdition, alas! who can bear it? It is so fearful, so intense, so gloomy, so ceaseless. It is the gathering storm which increases in blackness—the total eclipse which shuts out all light for ever: the deep dungeon which immures the soul in eternal midnight. “The mist of darkness”—“The blackness of darkness,” “outer darkness,” are terms denoting the imagery which shadows forth the world of perdition. Oh! who can dwell for ever shut out from light? How appalling that dark abyss, where there is no sun, no moon, no twinkling star, no coming morn, no future day,—that “land of darkness as of darkness itself,” where there is no order, no prospect, no object of vision, nothing but the dense cloud of bottomless gulf! the terror of such darkness how inexpressibly great! And yet it is but a faint image of what the soul in perdition must endure for ever.

*The shame* of being lost, how insupportable! The slow finger of scorn as it points to the guilty outcast from God. Oh, who can bear it? Where will the sinner hide from the shame of his nakedness? Where will he fly from himself or conceal any longer his hidden iniquities, now that the refulgent glory of the eternal throne exposes to the noon day gaze all the abominations which he has ever committed? He gathers up, perhaps his mantle of self-righteousness, and folds it around him, but alas, it is all filthiness and rags. He is ashamed to wear it. He resorts, perhaps to a variety of expedients to preserve some shreds of a reputation, to which he is tenderly alive, but it only renders more signal his exposure, and doubles his shame. He is ashamed of the ruin which he has purchased by his iniquities. He is ashamed of the unholy influence which he has exerted, ashamed of the obliquity which is poured upon him, ashamed of his companions in guilt, of his associates in crime, ashamed to look up to that world of light which he might have inherited—ashamed to see the saints in glory

there: ashamed that he heard not his Father's voice, that he fled not when he might, to the Savior's arms, and thus he yielded not, when the spirit strove to his renewing, and sanctifying and saving grace. The loss of Heaven, how shameful, how unnecessary, criminal, vile, irretrievable; and the greater the shame, because lost in the indulgence of those passions which not only degrade their possessor, but render him an object of universal loathing and contempt. Contempt is then coupled with shame. Oh, who can bear contempt? We shun it as an adder that biteth. But the portion of the wicked will be "shame and everlasting contempt."

The *desertion* of the world of death, how terrible! The solitary cell, how gloomy! But this is the dungeon of dungeons. Alone, shut out from all society and shut up to his own dismal reflections, and there for ever, with none to whom he can unburthen his soul; with none into whose ear he can pour the sad tale of his woe; with none to whom he can confess his crimes, and thus roll off a fraction of that intolerable load of anguish under which he is crushed. What a lonely, deserted state; how unspeakably overwhelming! In that land of shadows and of "darkness as darkness itself," "friend, lover, and acquaintance" is far away; and the sinner strides his despairing track, an eternal stranger to all the sympathies of family, all the endearments of social intercourse, all the fond recollections of home—once sweet home—but now deserted of all its charms; himself deserted, nay, himself the essence of eternal desertion; shunned by his former companions; abandoned by heaven and hope; and left to wend his solitary way in still deeper desertion, through the long track of endless night. The desertion of damnation, how intolerable! It is the bitterest ingredient in his woe.

The *passions developed* and perfected in the lost, how terrible! Who can stand before *envy*? Oh how the sinner will envy the saints in light! Their sweet songs, their golden harps, their joys unutterable and full of glory, their robes of spotless purity, are all materials for the corrosion of his envy, for the gnawings of that worm that never dies. *Jealousy*—the most cruel and unrelenting of all the passions, will there find full scope. All the fires of hell cannot burn it out. The floods of perdition cannot drown it. There will be *malice* and *pride* and *revenge* and *vanity*. All the base passions will be awake, and wrought up to the utmost intensity of action. "Hatred and variance and emulation and strife," sources of discord and vexation and war and carnage, are made to bear it

terrible concentration upon the centre of the heart. Their smoke will be as Sodom, and their stench as Gomorrah.

The *misery* of being lost, how inexpressible! "Who can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can lie down in everlasting burnings?" Who can endure the gnawings of the deathless worm? The sublimest of uninspired poets has said,—

"Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell!  
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep  
Still threatens to devour me; opens wide  
To what the hell I suffer seems a heaven."

It is misery, without relief, without hope, without limits; perpetually increasing, and yet with powers perpetually strengthened to bear accumulated woe. It is a wrath to be revealed, and ever to be without cessation, without abatement. Oh might hope enter into the dark mansion, might its guilty inmates indulge the prospect of annihilation, at any period, ever so remote; might some ponderous rock grind them to powder, or might one drop of water be applied to their parched tongues, what a luxury! How would it mitigate the horrors of despair, and render less intolerable the abode of the damned! But when they cry, How long, and are answered, *Forever*; and when again they raise their cry, How long? and the pit echoes, *Forever*; when rocks and mountains melt down and leave them. Oh how naked, without a covert from the vengeance which they have incurred! And when their perpetual blasphemies provoke even the divine endurance, what have they to anticipate as the reward of their deeds, but indignation and anguish, tribulation and wrath? As the guilt of the lost will for ever increase, so, side by side, their despair. But what a faint image can we have of misery to be endured for ever, to increase for ever, and to be borne as the just demerit of accumulated sins for ever! As I draw near in imagination, and hear the blasphemies of the pit, the accent breaks in upon me, Oh that God would die! But he is the living God; and to be in his hands, will finish the soul's despair!

## A BETTER CHURCH WILL MAKE A BETTER WORLD.

It was predicted of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures that "Prayer also shall be made for him." The world might then have been prepared to see and say, that whatever other means God might use, in reinstating his Son in the empire promised him, extending from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth—whatever other means he might use, he will not dispense with *Prayer*. The very spirit that is to vindicate his rights in this revolted world, is a spirit of prayer and supplication. His people will appeal to himself, after they have made, and while they are making, their appeal to men.

And the Christian has learned the secret of prayer, and loves the duty. If the kingdom would rise and grow without his prayers, he would not be willing. He can go at any hour, with any cause that lies upon his heart, and plead that cause in the court of heaven. The very nature of the new birth, and the relationship it has established between him and his exalted Redeemer, has won his heart for ever to that interest that was paramount in the heart of the dying Lamb of God. Hence all his followers love the same interest, and cannot be willing to be denied the privilege of pushing it forward by their prayers. As was said of the converted Apostle, "Behold he prayeth," and as he thus gave evidence of a new birth, so every Christian loves to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

This is a part of the work in which he will not be willing to be denied a share. It is the very work for which his new birth has prepared him. He could spend his life at the throne, and would die there. And God loves to hear him pray, and may sometimes withhold the blessing he was about to give, till he has drawn out the soul in prayer, "Oh, my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." And when he prays, "Thy kingdom come," he but asks God to do what he has promised, and purposed to do. Hence, how free of access is the throne of mercy! how sweet the privilege and urgent the duty of going to God, burdening the heart with the interests of his own kingdom and glory.

Here the work of erecting the spiritual temple lies open to as many builders as will touch it with their hands, or bear it on their minds. Every heart that has benevolent and holy desires, may urge the work along, the very work for which the world rolls and time endures. And shame on that believer who will not apply his energies, and would be willing to let the temple rise, if it might, without his help.

There is one consideration that it would seem must arouse the most paralyzed to action at this moment. God is shaking the world from the very revolution prayed for, and promised. Numerous signs mark this as the commencement of the age we have been looking for. I hardly know where to begin to enumerate these signs. The bonds of despotism are lessening, that men may be at liberty to put on the yoke of Christ. Almost every arm that ever wielded a sceptre, or controlled a conscience, is unnerved. The oppressed are rising upon their oppressors, and trampling their ensigns in the dust. The miseries of the world have been uncovered to the gaze of the Church. We have sent out, and have taken a guage of the disasters to be alleviated. We know how many millions are without the gospel, and how desolated their territory without heavenly light; and we know too how fearful the wastes of our cities, and in all parts of our lands, and how wide the havoc which the god of this world is spreading among its population. This is no doubt the very age of the world when its people know their own present history; and God is evidently preparing instruments for some mighty change in the world's condition. He has awakened the Church in some measure to a sense of her responsibilities, and she has set her guards on her distant ramparts. There is going on an organization of the Lord's hosts that must soon enlist all their energies, and open every embrasure, and marshal every phalanx that can be mustered for the onset upon the powers of darkness. The child that can carry a tract, or breathe a prayer, or bequeath a penny, can now move some spring that touches the interests of redemption. Some skirt of the wide harvest reaches to our very doors, and, if we can only lift a sickle, we can thrust it in and reap. It is now easy to be useful.

And what is, again, a sign of the times worthy of notice; many ungodly men are convinced that now is the time to secure heaven or it is lost for ever. They are ever bending to listen to the voice of mercy, lest, before they are safe, its voice should die away for ever upon their ear. They are urged by some kind of motive to offer

themselves as candidates for the kingdom of God, and are coming as near as may be, to the line of demarkation between the two kingdoms, hoping, as it would seem, that some extraneous impulse may force them over that line, and they shall live.

And there is another class of ungodly men, who are bracing themselves against any means that may promise their awakening. They fear they shall have to become Christians. They dare not trust themselves where any extra means are used. Thus do we seem to see evident indications that this is the age of merey, long predicted; and if the Christian does not devote himself entirely to the Lord, just when he sees the evident signs of his coming, what will move him? There can be before the mind, but one absorbing interest, that must interest all the energies of the soul. How much afraid, should we then be, if we do not feel for this interest, if we are not ready to bring forward every energy we can summon to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The call is so loud, the field so wide, the reward so glorious, how can any one be idle? As the patriot will plunge in among his country's foes in a favored hour, and sell his life as dear as may be, in doing the foe some signal damage, so must every child of God be willing to carry with him into the field, where he would win souls, the dearest and the entire interests of his heart, his all. If he die in the conflict, or be made poor, or suffer reproach, no matter, if Jesus be honored and souls redeemed. He will have his reward, and his Master the honor. There must be a better Church, or the kingdom of this world can never be given to our Lord according to the promise, by the means specified.

Christ will employ his people in re-possessing himself of the kingdoms he died to redeem. The work befits their relationship to Christ—is the very work which the hope of heaven has qualified them to do; the work most friendly to their sanctification, and for which the Savior will love to reward them—a work that God will not do without his people.

The Lord Jesus, then, must have a Church that will obey him; and he will have, as the latter day glory draws nigh, a Church prepared to live for him, and labor for him, and die for him. There can be no doubt but such will be the character of the Millennial Church. And if any now in the visible kingdom, cannot wake their hearts to this tone of Christian enterprize, they had better die, and commit their interests to another to occupy for the Lord till he come. He manifests himself resolved to have a laborious Church, that through their agency he may push his conquests till

the world is redeemed. And when he has such a Church, the conquest would be easy. As the holy Martyn aroused all Persia, and led a nation of the deceived and destroyed to inquire after the "Man of God," so in every part of the Church, will men arise who will restore her dormant energies, and pour upon her slumbers a note of holy remonstrance that shall quicken every heart that ever beat with spiritual life, and the Church shall slumber no more till her Lord has come. Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

And now, beloved in the Lord, a poor sinner addresses this plea to you, who hopes and will try to pray that God may use it in rendering you a better Christian than you ever have been. You see the broad ground I have taken. I consider you and all that you have, as the Lord's. I have supposed you willing, soon as you know your duty, to do it, and have endeavored to make you acquainted with it. You will show yourself to be a true disciple of your Master, by giving yourself to him—your mind and body. Your power to speak, and reason, and write; and in all the ways wherein you can, you will do him honor. You will give him your influence, your money, your children, and all your house—you will pray for Zion, and weep for her, and toil for her, and live and die for her. You will try to begin the Millenium in your own house, and first of all in your closet; and will never rest while there is an ungodly soul within the reach of your influence, and then you will not rest while there is one in the world. You will not be satisfied with being what you have been, and doing what you have done. You acknowledge that you have never been enough like Christ, and will try and keep trying, till you die to be more like him. Soon as you have read this address, you will fall on your knees and pray that God will bless it to your soul, and then that he will bless it to others. You will renew your covenant with God, and give him all that you have, and all that you are; all that you never have before given him, and all that your heart may even now grudge to give him. From this time onward till you die, you will ever make it your business to save a perishing world! If such is now the purpose of your heart, why not write your name at the bottom of such a resolve, and just consider it the covenant you now make with God, and place it where you can see it every day! And whenever you pray over this covenant, pray for all those who have signed it as you have; that you and they may be *Millenial Christians*, and honor your Master in efforts to save a lost and ruined world.

IF WE HAD A BETTER CHURCH WE SHOULD HAVE A BETTER  
WORLD.

It has sometimes been suggested, by the unbelieving heart, that the Church is too *small* to put forth the mighty influence, and exert the control that God requires of it.—“Ye are the salt of the earth.” But when we have summed up the kingdoms, and nations, and tongues, and people to be settled, and seen the smallness of the Church that is to constitute the salt. When we raise the number of the former to eight, or nine, or ten millions, and dwindle away the count of the other, till it drops to a few hundred thousands, and seems almost to terminate in nothing, it would seem as if God had lain upon this little Church a work such as the taskmasters of Egypt laid upon the little handful of Israelites, when bid to make the bricks that built their mighty pyramids without straw. Must, then, this little Church send out the Bible that must civilize, and the ministry, and the ordinances, and the institutions, that must render obedient, and believing, and dutiful, this mass of total and unqualified moral death? Here unbelief cannot refrain its dissent. Why did God give that little band a fatigue duty, so beyond its powers and its prowess? The answer of faith is, *There is Church enough.*

Her power is not to be computed by her numbers. All her conflicts are secured by that promise, “One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.” Hence her song may be, in the midst of the battle, “The Lord of hosts is with us, the mighty God of Jacob is our refuge.”

It has always been easy for the Lord to save by many or by few, and it is only unbelief that has ever been afraid. When Gideon's thirty thousand were marshalled on the field of conflict, and the captain of the Lord's host reviewed them, his answer was, “They are too many.” When he had reduced them down to three hundred, and they must meet the hosts of Midian, then he permitted them to escape their assault, and the victory was easy. If Gideon had gone up to battle with his thirty thousand, it might have been doubted whether the Lord of hosts was with them, and the victory might have been ascribed to some god of the hills, or to some superior skill in tactics, that Israel must have learned in Egypt, or in the wilderness.

“Ye are the light of the world;” but must the whole mass of Egyptian darkness, that broods upon the fields of the apostacy be illuminated by the little rush-light that was lit up two thousand years ago on Moriah, and has not shot out its light even yet over more than two or three of the nations? And this little Church, it seems, must reflect this little rush-light over all the nations, or the darkness that broods upon them becomes the blackness of darkness for ever. So inquires unbelief; but faith answers, *There is light enough*. Heaven will spread its broad reflector over this rush-light, and it will shine unto all the nations, and will travel on from the rising morning to the west, and be reflected from the river to the ends of the earth. When Luther rose in Germany, who could have believed that his little fly-light would scorch out the Pope, and burn on till it should dazzle into blindness the whole gang of Cardinals that propped his ghostly empire. And this Church, through the multiplying moral reflectors that God has provided, the power of letters, the invention of printing, and the influence of the press, will throw this light in broad and lucid sheets over all the nations, till their salvation shall go forth like a lamp that burneth. Soon as the Church shall be properly organized, and shall know her strength, and shall have counted up her resources, she will find that her strength and resources are sufficient for the enterprise, and the worst work will be done.

And then we must never forget that the Church needs but few leaders, and that few are employed to draw out all her strength. If there be fewer, still she would have no less strength. If they were more numerous, some, who are now conspicuous, would be thrown into the background; and some that are last would be first; but the Church would be no stronger.—There is just Church enough. And, besides, the Church can display more strength as soon as her interest shall require that display. She can fill up the ranks of her ministry as soon as her Leader shall give the command. There are men enough educated already, and can be called in from other fields as soon as the Lord shall have need of them; and we can educate many thousands more at the Lord’s bidding, in a very few years, and pour upon the Church, and upon the world, a host of laborers to reap the whitening harvest. All this can be done in time to have the millennium open during the present century; so that the seven thousandth year of the world shall be its Sabbath, and the kingdoms of this world then become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, moreover, the Church can so increase her energies as to

quadruple her strength in a few weeks. Let God pour out his Spirit upon her sons and her daughters, and produce a revival in every field of her labor! and we see in a moment how her armor shall brighten, and her resources multiply beyond all human computation. And all this can be as soon as the Church is ready to use her strength. When the walls of Jericho must fall, there will not be wanting army enough to begirt her accursed territory. Our fears about the number of the sacramental host are all ill-timed. There will be more when more are wanted. When the Church shall wish to spread out the wings of her host, till they shall begirt the world, a little one shall become a thousand, and a strong one a great nation. When Elisha was pent up in Jothan, and the hosts of Syria spread over all the hills, and covered, with their horses and their chariots, the whole territory of idolatry, and unbelief, cried out, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Faith could easily climb the hills and see them all glaring, with the horses and chariots of fire. And the prophet was as safe as if heaven's Chieftain had sent his whole life-guard to protect the man of God. Well might he sing, as he let the blinded Syrian into Samaria,—The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. And well add, by way of chorus—The Lord is among them.

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"FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE THE TIME."

If there is any one principle to which the formation of my character has been chiefly indebted, it is this motto of a distinguished naval commander. Nobody ever waited for Lord Nelson. He made it an invariable rule to be present at any appointment, and to be ready for every enterprise, at least fifteen minutes before the time, and to wait rather impatiently the arrival of the moment allotted for action. When the hour had fully come, and the delay of others rendered it inexpedient to proceed, he looked upon his own obligation as cancelled, withdrew immediately from the place of rendezvous, and no inducement could ever prevail upon him to return.

The lesson inculcated by this motto, is to be in time for every duty. It should be the standard principle of every man, who has any regard to those with whom he acts, to be truly punctual to all his

engagements. To himself it is a rule of incalculable importance, and applies to every occupation and every pursuit. The ancients represented time under the similitude of an old man, with a single lock upon his forehead, gravely, but steadily approaching an assembled multitude—and whoever seized this lock, and held him by it, was born onward with the most assured pledge that could be given, of future success. But if any suffered him to pass them, he spread the wings, which till then, were concealed behind him and flew away with a rapidity, which rendered pursuit utterly vain. Hence the homely adage, "Take time by the forelock." Better be fifteen minutes too early than one too late. Too late! Alas what a crowd of sensations cluster round that ill-omened phrase! The disappointments how numerous! The disasters how sad! The consequences, Oh! who can trace them, as they reach through all future time, and embosom themselves in the abyss of eternity.

The importance to one's self of being before the time, may perhaps be more closely illustrated by an example. I have in my eye a young man who was my classmate in College. There was nothing in the structure of his mind or in its development peculiarly striking. It seemed to me a mind cast in the ordinary mould, with no stamp upon it of either genius or brilliancy. But I marked the regularity with which he attended upon all the duties of the Institution. He was ever before the time in the chapel, the recitation room, the Society's hall, or whatever else there was a just claim upon his merit and attention. Nor did he ever offer as an excuse, that he was unprepared for any exercise to which he was properly called. He took time by the forelock, and had his lessons all thoroughly digested long before the hour of recitation arrived. His essays were all written, a week in advance of the time when he was expected to read, and as leisure offered, he would frequently after re-model and re-write them. He left nothing to be done at the eleventh hour; but carried out the principle of punctuality into every thing that concerned him.

The result was, he left many of his class lagging behind, while he pressed onward with increasing energy, and making every day a sensible increase to his stock of knowledge. He was at last graduated with a distinction which he had not hoped to attain. And without entering into the minute particulars of his after life, suffice it to say that he became a minister of the everlasting Gospel, where he carried out this same principle in his preparations for the sanctuary—in his family, in his parochial visitations, and in the meetings of Ecclesiastical counsels.

Whoever else was behind the time, with him there was one un-deviating rule. He was never tardy—never unprepared. And by this means he acquired that vigor of thought, and energy of style, and pathos of utterance, so essentially requisite to distinguished usefulness, as a herald of the cross. There was nothing tame, or imbecile, or common-place in any of his efforts. To *himself* then, his habit of punctuality was amazingly useful; and not less so to others, than to himself. This example has had a powerful influence in producing a similar habit among all who were within its range. Nor has he failed to impress the duty by those arguments, which every ingenuous mind will admit to be unanswerable. What right have I to cause a number of men, whom I have engaged to meet at a particular hour, not only to waste their time, but become impatient and fretful by my delay? I rob them of that which I never can restore—the precious hours thus worse than wasted. I set them a pernicious example—I betray an important trust—I tantalize with the sensibility of those whom I am bound to respect and cut off a portion of their usefulness. In an individual case, which I have occasioned, may be small, but in the aggregate the amount exceeds belie.

Let me select another instance of a different character, to illustrate the principle. Our funeral solemnities, it is too well known, are seasons of great and tantalizing delay. When the appointed hour arrives, the undertaker is not there, or the hearse is not there, or the minister is not there—or some of the pall-bearers, or mourners, or attendants, or friends are absent—there is nothing in readiness for the solemnity. And not unfrequently, a single individual keeps hundreds in waiting, not merely minutes, but hours after the allotted period for commencing the solemnities. And who does not know that such delays are calculated, more than any thing else, to unfit the mind for receiving any favorable impression from the spectacle of mortality, whose obsequies are celebrated? How many have wished themselves away before the services began; and how many have fled from the scene, as soon as they could decently do it, in anger that they were thus duped of the time that should have been devoted to other duties? It is on this account that the generality of funerals utterly fail of producing any good effects. Let *punctuality* be observed by those who have the management of these solemnities, and they will oftener prove, what they are intended to be, salutary lessons to the living.

In conclusion, I will only remark, that the period is rapidly approaching, when the feast to which we are all invited, will be ready

and should our preparation be delayed till the door is shut, our exclusion will be final and for ever. My soul shudders at the thought of being an outcast from God—of dragging out an eternal and miserable existence an exile from my Father's house! And I would employ the brief residue of my days in diligent, and active, and persevering efforts to escape from so fearful a result. For none can be too soon or too well prepared, as the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. I would awake, and array myself in the righteousness of Christ, and be ready to meet him at his coming; for he will not tarry beyond the allotted hour. And then it will be said, and finally said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still."

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GOSPEL POLITENESS THE ALLY OF HEAVEN.\*

Do not the forms of politeness interfere with Christian fidelity? I ask this question in consequence of a case known of a minister, who at the first interview, sat down by the conscience of a sinner, and pressed it pungently with divine truth: I know not what was the result, except that it was well received. This interview was made the subject of conversation, when one remarked, that he had known a similar case, when the individual's serious impressions were entirely effaced by the abruptness of manner in which the subject of religion was introduced; and that it was quite certain, in his mind, that much more injury than good was the result of such attacks.—But, after all, I thought it very questionable whether the injury supposed was a reality. The apparently unpropitious interview may yet prove to be propitious; and the individual may, at some future time, be brought into the kingdom of God by that very effort. When the harpoon of the whaleman has taken full effect, the mighty monster of the sea flies and flounders and plunges and struggles, with an energy that nothing but a death wound could have inspired. So the very stab of truth that transfixes the conscience, and brings the sinner to lie tamely as a lamb at the foot of the cross, is often preceded by convulsions and throes that

\* Contributed anonymously to a religious paper.

resemble death itself. I have seen a man quit the sanctuary in a rage, and refuse to bow at the domestic altar, and avow infidelity, and become a bold blasphemer, while the truth was fixing his barbed arrows in his soul. The result of the whole is, the Spirit of God is now constraining him to meet his naked heart alone. "Sharp arrows of the Mighty, with coals of juniper," were drinking up his spirit; and he made himself desperately angry, to keep himself from being terribly afraid. But, in cases of this kind, what is the frequent, and very desirable effect? I remember one who threatened his wife that if she went to make a profession of religion, he would have the oven heated against her return, and throw her in. She went:—he gathered the fuel; he kindled the fire; and while the oven was heating, he became terribly alarmed, and when she came back she found him on his knees in an agony of despair, imploring mercy; and she knelt with him and joined in the prayer. It was his determined resolve to carry his rash threat into fearful execution; but he was overpowered by the Spirit of God, and his paroxysm of rage was exchanged for tears of contrition. All this was but a struggle of his conscience against the truth of God, applied by the agency of the Spirit. Often, the very thing we ought to do must offend, if it does not result in salvation; and if it do thus result, it is a result that arises often from the very offence. Our motto should be that of the orator who was pleading an unpopular measure, and when one came to cut him down, he calmly said, "Strike, but hear me!"

Oh, what a pity, and what a grief, that Christian parents do not keep their families so familiar with this subject, both before and after conversion, that we may approach them without ceremony, and as readily inquire into the health of their souls as their bodies! How much time would thus be saved; and, what is far more, how many a word might be spoken that would reach the conscience and sanctify the heart, which is not said, because the laws of politeness forbid it. "Oh, tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the Philistines rejoice; lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!" Shall we care so much about the rules of politeness as to lose the chance of saving the soul? If your house were in flames at a midnight hour, must we go through all the forms of genteel vexation—ring the bell and wait the tedious process of an announcement—before we communicate to you the alarming intelligence? If your child was drowning, might we not make an abrupt effort to save it from a watery grave or even bid the dog do it? Or if your child was seized

with some fatal disease that required the immediate application of a known remedy, might we not administer it without going through all the forms of painful ceremony? One father, at least, wishes to be understood, that he throws his family open to the approach of the ministers of religion, and fears no ill consequence from the abruptness of manner in which they may approach them with the message of salvation. Oh, seize them! bring the truth into close and burning contact with their consciences; and give them no rest day nor night, till they rest on the sufficiency of the atonement, and are joyful in the presence of the King! He wishes to meet them all in heaven, and that none of them may be missing when the Lord Jesus Christ maketh up his jewels. But he is afraid that in this desire he will fail if the forms of politeness are suffered to interfere with ministers in the discharge of their duty. He remembers with pleasure one city which was visited with a powerful effusion of the Spirit; and then it was, that the word of divine truth was not embarrassed by any such restraints. You could go any where, and speak to any one without ceremony on the concerns of the soul, and he would listen to you with deep and thrilling interest. And the result was, that the work of God pervaded every street, and its influence was seen in many families in that beloved city. And he longs for the return of another season so joyous, so full of interest, and of such unspeakable blessings to multitudes of immortal souls. But he can not look for it when and where and while these impediments stand in the way of reaching the conscience, which should be made of easy access to those who would ply it with truth and fit it for heaven.

## DUPLICITY.

“ O what a goodly outside falsehood hath.”  
To seem to be what one is not, is base.  
Duplicity I can't and wont forgive.  
When man is not sincere with fellow man,  
And would betray him with love's sacred tokens,  
The smile, the warm right hand, th' embrace and kiss,  
O then I hate my species, hate the name  
Of man, and hate myself if this I've done.  
I can most willingly endure rebuke,  
The coarsest. To my face a man may play  
The very boor, and still I can forgive ;  
May call me every name that is uncouth,  
And make me, if he please, the veriest fiend,  
If still ingenuous, if bold and manly ;  
Will let me see, and hear him, all the while ;  
I then know *who* he is, and *what* ; can tell  
Him all my heart, and perchance make him feel,  
That he's the very wretch, and thinks the thoughts,  
And does the deed, he fathers upon me.  
Or one may arm himself with spear and dirk,  
May in the onset act the bloody Turk,  
If he but *show his arms*. I there can meet

NOTE.—These few poetical productions of Mr. Clark are here inserted merely as specimens of his style, and to exhibit his versatility of talent. Most of them have appeared in the periodicals, for which they were originally prepared. He seems not to have written poetry except when deeply impressed with some matter of peculiar interest. Towards the close of his life, when he was unable to write, he frequently dictated to his daughter passages of uncommon strength and beauty. Those productions were seldom finished. His mind would act with great vigor for a little time, and then he would lose sight of his subject, and break off, exhibiting in the most affecting manner his consciousness of his own infirmity.

The following stanza, the last he ever composed, shows the state of his mind, at that period of his life.

“ I long to trace my footsteps back  
And learn the traits of mind I lack,  
And gird my mind for future flight  
In darkness, or in shades of night.”

Him, can present my shield before his thrust,  
 And parry off the stroke that would destroy me.  
 The very pirate dark in bloody deeds,  
 The curse of all lands, may approach my back,  
 And play his game, if he but hoist his flag,  
 And warn me I'm to meet with pirate's play.  
 Yes, I can fearless lay my shield aside,  
 And meet, with bosom bare, the prowess, frank,  
 That dares to show its steel, and give me time  
 To unsheath mine : I am then no coward.  
 But the base wretch that smiles but to betray,  
 Who asks me of my health, would know my cares,  
 Draws out my tale of woe, and proffers sympathy ;  
 Deals off kind language in a tearful dress ;  
 And all the while he hates me cordially,  
 And means but to betray and injure me ;  
 Turns all my doling into basest crime,  
 And leaves me but to circumvent and ruin me !  
 That man I've not the meekness to forgive.  
 Would he not do less harm if all would shun him,  
 Just as we do the viper and the asp ?  
 I want base names to call him ; he's a wretch,  
 A miscreant, a thief, a dark assassin,  
 A dog, a wolf, and bites before he barks.  
 He ought to have a lair with beasts of prey,  
 And growl like them. Yes, in my soul I think  
 That claws, and tusks, and hoofs, and horns, far more  
 Than speech, and tears, and smiles, would well become him.  
 O who can see the gifts of God perverted ?  
 What were tongues made for ? Merely to beguile !  
 Why the face formed for smiles ? To deal deceit !  
 Were tears, as in the sea-maid, and the panther,  
 Bestowed but to be used as a decoy ?  
 Were faces made to wear a thousand forms,  
 And each a lying index of the heart ?  
 Must a creating God be thus insulted ?  
 Why all the kind civilities of life ?  
 That man more easily may seize his prey !—  
 To be the engine of malicious purpose !—  
 That man may not be safe unless alone !—  
 To make our race more wretched than the fall has !—  
 To make the world a desert ! This the purpose ?

O, give me then a lodge in some deep glen,  
 Amid the polar or the Alpine snows,  
 Where shines not sun, nor moon, nor stars, nor torch ;  
 Where reigns eternal frost, and cold, and night ;  
 Where p owls the bear, where screams the owl,  
 And panther ; lives every fowl of prey ;  
 Where frowns the pendant rock, and glaciers wild,  
 Where hang, suspended by a breath, the avalanche ;  
 I would far sooner court the eagle's grasp,  
 Associate with vultures, or the white bear,  
 Could cov'nant with the tempest and the whirlwind,  
 Could be where dwells one long eternal silence,  
 Or wrestle with the blast all day, all night,  
 Than live with men, if men must be such fiends.

In my young boyhood once I read this line,  
 " An honest man's the noblest work of God,"  
 I thought the poet vexed, and blamed his spleen ;  
 (As you perhaps may smile or scowl at mine ;)   
 I called the doctrine infidel, and said,  
 The *Christian* is the noblest work of God.  
 Ah, yes, but how can he be better known,  
 Than by his honesty ? Would God no man  
 Could take the Christian name without the nature ;  
 But truth is, many wear a fair *outside*,  
 While all within is stench and dead men's bones ;  
 To speak out all, I mean but few are frank.  
 They will not say to friends and foes the truth,  
 The whole of truth, and nothing but the truth.  
 How few *before your face* will tell your faults,  
 Yet honesty says loudly *here or no where*.  
 Why hate my faults and will not tell me why ?  
 Why have me tried where none defends my cause ?  
 'Tis only the *whole truth* that gives the fact ;  
 More than the whole, or half, is but a lie.  
 The Christian's great Exemplar was sincere ;  
 At every place and time his lips spoke truth—  
 Said he, and said it to the men themselves,  
 Ye serpents, ye progeny of vipers,  
 How can ye hope to 'scape the Hell ye earn ?  
 Ah, this was heaven-like, was *being honest*.  
 He dared to be the foe of vice *out-right* ;

And shall we fear to copy from the Lord ?  
 We cast reproach upon him when we *dare not*.  
 How can the good man dare deceive his fellows ?  
 Let the ungodly practice their deceit ;  
 They have their sure reward ! Let us speak truth.  
*Be men the foes of God ?* Then tell them so.  
 Say nothing that shall hide from them their state,  
 And make them hope for heaven while lost.  
 Why tell them God is pleased, while conscience lowers,  
 And death draws near, the judgment close at hand.  
 " Hell moves to meet them," all their hopes a dream ?  
 The pit, the outer darkness, and the gnawing worm,  
 Will soon their doom disclose, your treachery prove.  
*Be men the friends of God,* Why injure them ?  
 Why need they on the road to Heaven be betrayed,  
 And grieved, and wounded by a Christian friend ?  
 Lips, that a coal from off the altar touched,  
 How can they lie ? But if all this may be,  
 (O, tell it not in Gath, hush it in Askalon.)  
 Still can they to their very kindred lie  
 Deceive a brother ! undermine a friend !  
 Hope too, to live in heaven with that friend !

The author hopes that he possesses a spirit of forgiveness, though he has thus made use of the poet's license, and expressed in strong language his hatred of duplicity.

HONESTAS.

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LINES SENT AS A "RETURN TOKEN" FOR A VALUABLE PRESENT,  
 JANUARY 1, 1831.

'Twas New Year's day of thirty-one,  
 It dawned on Troy with promise kind ;  
 The Spirit had its work begun ;  
 The dead to raise, the lost to find.

We early sought the house of prayer—  
 'Twas full of feeling, full of God,  
 For scores of throbbing hearts were there  
 To seek his grace and plead his word.

Kind Heaven heard the morning song,  
 And listened to our fervent cry,  
 While angels did the song prolong,  
 And told the story through the sky.

God had shed down some mercy drops,  
 And Troy its sweetest New Year saw,  
 And cheerful smiles and heavenly hopes  
 Graced many a lately anxious brow.

Two forms appeared in kindness dressed—  
 Affection's token in their hands ;  
 The giver shall be doubly blessed,  
 The God of mercy so demands.

May God your kindness quite repay,  
 Your New Year's gift in grace restore,  
 And guide you by a heavenly ray,  
 And on your seed his blessings pour,  
 For ever and for ever more.

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A DIRGE OF THE SANCTUARY.\*

'Twas the third watch of night, and all was still,  
 Save the lone house-dog in his kennel dark,  
 Who gave portentous signs of woe at hand—  
 Then burst the cry of *fire!* on my drowsy ear.  
 I hearkened, and the cry waxed louder still.  
 And louder.

My chamber opened on the north and east,  
 And the shrill piercing cry had waked me—  
 Oh! 'twas the Temple of the living God  
 All lighted up by its own gloomy fires ;  
 Each ornament became a flaming torch,  
 And guided the destroyer in his ruthless march  
 Oh! it seized at length the stubborn frame-work,

\* Written on the night of the burning of St. Philip's (an Episcopal) Church, at Charleston, S. C., in 1835—the oldest church in that city, and one of the most ancient church edifices in the United States.

As savage tiger, from the deep dark wood  
 Seizes the aged pilgrim by the way—  
 Tears the flesh, piecemeal, quivering in his teeth,  
 And bears him to his lair—then stays to rest.  
 A sacred tablet told its wondrous age—  
 How solemn read that *seventeen hundred twenty-three* !  
 But all its work was done, and heaven now called  
 The city to its obsequies. O, why be burned  
 The consecrated house of God ! Fly quick some angel,  
 Dip your wing in life's fair stream and quench the fire,  
 It should not, cannot burn, for God is there.  
 Most cruel storm, to swell thy blast, and rage,  
 And blow, at this sad hour so barb'rously !  
 Ah, must thy pipes all stay their melody,\*  
 And not one gloomy dirge mourn out thy obsequies !  
 Prostrate in dust the pride of Charleston lies :  
 The glory of a century is gone, clean gone for ever ;  
 The watchful clock knew well the wonted hour,  
 And gathered up its strength to strike once more—  
 As if impressed that it could never speak again,  
 't uttered *one ! two !! three !!!* and all was still.†

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A WONDROUS BEGGAR.

ALL hungry from the wilderness he came,  
 Barefoot, and covered with a camel's skin,  
 And girt his loins with thong, and bald.  
 Months had the ravens brought him meat and flesh,  
 And Cherith brought him water, kind Heaven's bounty ;  
 Ah, but the brook had dried. The ravens kept  
 Their duty up, through many a moon unwearied,  
 And called him to his meal, each morn, each night,  
 And when the work was done, stayed by the task.  
 "Elijah, man of God, come to your bread !"  
 How strange the servant, and the server strange,  
 A bird that lives on prey, and loves most loathsome food !

Referring to the organ.

† The tower fell just as the clock struck three.

How came he by the clean and healthful meal ?  
 Did it drop down from heaven ? Or came it whence ?  
 The prophet's Lord owns all the cattle on the hills.

But he had gone to prove a widow's faith,  
 And have her fit betimes for heaven. Famine raged—  
 The earth was iron and the sky was brass—  
 Nor rain nor dew had dropped for many a month—  
 Death stared her in the face. Her meal was low,  
 Her oil sunk in the cruise. What could she do  
 But die ? But lo ! the wondrous beggar came from far !  
 She knew her noble guest. 'Twas not a costly palace,  
 Nor she a queen in gay and rich attire ;  
 No badge could win him to her lonely hut.  
 He asked for water. Ahab's flocks had none ;  
 'Twas famine in the courts of kings and princes.  
 What wondrous streamlet, think ye, fed her spring ?  
 Did it rill down from heaven ? Or came it up  
 From earth's deep fountains, where the famine reached not ?  
 Deep from the nether springs some angel drew it up ;  
 It came most plenteously—it came most timely—  
 The widow and her son were gathering up two sticks,  
 To bake a cake and die—'twas the last morsel.  
 Bake one for me, the wondrous beggar cried,  
 And then for thee and him—*There'll be no want.*  
*There'll be no want !* the little urchin cried ; what can it mean ?  
 The oil and meal are almost gone ;  
 He knows not, said the careful lad, our want ;  
 He did not hear our cry for daily bread,  
 This morning, ere the dawn had broken forth ;  
 He did not see my anxious mother's tears ;  
 I wonder does he know she is a widow ?  
 O mother, let me tell him he has missed the house  
 Where Heaven would have him fed. Hold now thy peace,  
 my son,  
 The stranger is from God.—I heard him pray—  
 His faith took hold of Heaven—'twas the strong grip of death—  
 God will yet make it plain, my son, "*There'll be no want.*"  
 Ah ! what can mother mean ? The beggar's cake  
 Will drain the barrel dry, and spend the oil.  
 She baked the cake—the meal expended not—  
 The oil but multiplied. There seemed far more

Than when they supped last night — Heaven increased it ;  
 Now she well knew her guest — *God's holy prophet* —  
 And many a month she fed him at her board ;  
 Her meal still lasted, and her oil held out.  
 Their holy converse we may know in heaven,  
 When olden times shall pour their story on the ear  
 Of the redeemed. Reader, let you and I be there —  
 We'll have the story from their own sweet lips,  
 In high and holy songs. \* \* \*  
 He'll tell us of his raising up the lad,  
 While lodged 'neath the same roof, and fed by miracle ;  
 And the whole story of the prophets slain ;  
 Of Jezebel, the impious wife of Ahab,  
 Whose heart was set on mischief and on blood,  
 Till the dogs licked her own, at Naboth's vineyard  
 Perchance he'll glance at scenes of later date,  
 And tell the tale of the transfigured Lamb  
 On Tabor, ere he suffered on Moriah's mount ;  
 And then he'll help us to admire His love,  
 Who washed us.

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DIRGE FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1834.

IN a mouldering cave, where her woe sought retreat,  
 Columbia sat wasted with care,  
 For a Washington wept, and lamented her loss,  
 And gave herself up to despair.

The sides of her cell she had sculptured around  
 With th' exploits of her favorite son,  
 And every pathway and every rock,  
 Seemed inscribed with some deed he had done.

The star of her glory rose high in the west,  
 Her Eagle no prowess could daunt ;  
 The cleft of the rock was the place of her rest —  
 The heavens invited her haunt.

But the tears ceased at length to moisten her face,  
 Her commerce filled every sea ;  
 Her glory was sung by the nations afar,  
 'Twas the song of the brave and the free.

But a sigh from her cave broke her joy in the midst,  
 Like the slow dirge of one she begat ;  
 We listened to know who the stranger could be  
 'Twas the loved and the brave LAFAYETTE.

Hail, heroes ! you're gone from the seat of the brave,  
 O ! to know that your sins were forgiven,  
 That your spirits may rise, when you're waked from the grave,  
 To fill some high mansion in heaven ;

And the land that you loved, may it smile in the west,  
 Till moon, and till sun shine no more ;  
 Be the theme of the brave, and the place of their rest,  
 For ever and for ever more.

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THE CHILDREN'S GROVE SONG,\*

FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY.

O tell us, our fathers, the tale of your woe,  
 When ye girt on the sword to conflict the foe,  
 And met them, and slew them, and stained with their blood,  
 The hills where we ramble, the vales, and the wood.

Whence came they, and why, to this far Western world ?  
 Why 'gainst you their banners of death were unfurled ?  
 Did you hate them ? or hurt them ? else why all their wrath ?  
 The soil was your own—'twas the land of your birth.

Say, which of us lost our grandsire in the fight ?  
 Or, who was made poor by the enemy's might ?  
 Tell which of our grandmas were widowed, and wept  
 When the fierce battle raged, and children all slept ?

We would hear the sad tale, and would wipe off your tears,  
 And ply every effort to solace your years ;  
 We'll obey you, and love you, and lift up your name,  
 To be borne on the wings of a far-flying fame.

\* Mr. Clark took great pleasure in open air services. A beautiful maple grove in Bennington, Vt., was made the scene of a Fourth of July Picnic (A. D. 1828), where this song was sung with a joyousness and volume of sound which still linger in the writer's recollection. One of Mr. Clark's boys was at this time seized with a passion to become the owner of that grove. Years rolled on, during which these maple openings and avenues grew more and more sacred in that boy's ambition. He visited them at times, as a hallowed temple, in which holy impressions linger, until at length every tree became transfigured in his imagination. To-day that grove is part of a large estate owned by that son.

We'll catch the same spirit that saved you your home,  
 And sing of your deeds, when you sleep in the tomb ;  
 Our foes, if they come to molest us again,  
 Shall die as your foes died, and bleach the same plain.

To God, when the victory's won, we will sing,  
 And own him our Savior, our Lord, and our King :  
 We'll tell how he helped us, when none else could save,  
 And made us to triumph o'er death and the grave.

Let us march to the vale, then, where Nature is still,  
 Where grow the tall trees, and rolls the soft rill ;  
 We'll listen all breathless, and birds cease their song,  
 While our fathers shall tell us the deeds God has done.

Come sisters, come mothers, we'll hie to the grove,  
 The angels shall join us, and God will approve ;  
 'Tis the birthday of freedom, we'll shout and be glad,  
 'Tis the Sabbath the great God of battles hath made.

Now, up to thy throne, thou victorious King,  
 Our gladdest hosannas we joyfully bring ;  
 But we'll praise thee far better, when thou bid us rise,  
 And tell of thy victories loud in the skies.

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THE INFLUENCE OF A GOOD TASTE UPON THE MORAL AFFEC-  
 TIONS.\*

THE question has been often asked, whether this is a deformed or a beautiful world ; whether it came from the hand of its Maker *in its present aspect*, or has been marred and defaced by some mighty disaster. Men have had on this subject widely different opinions. One has seen nothing in which this world is defective ; no mountain he would have levelled, no valley he would raise, no rock he would bury, no marsh he would drain, no heath he would fertilize, no morass he would redeem. Another has seen, or thought he saw, deformity every where, and has in many a gloomy hour responded to that moan of the poet, uttered in view of the first transgression :

“ Earth felt the wound, and Nature, from her seat  
 Sighing through all her works, gave signs of wo,  
 That all was lost.”

\* Delivered before the Alexandrian Society of Amherst College, August 21, 1827.

To him it has seemed, that in every hill and vale and ocean and lake and heath and river there is some curse to be deplored. Others again have discovered on the face of this world many beauties, which must have been designed as such by its Creator; while yet they see deformities, which indicate, that when Jehovah rested from his work he left this world not as it now is, and which bespeak some convulsion, by which its distortions have been generated, and much of its original beauty lost. Some of its most elevated ridges wear the marks of having risen from the ocean, while the presumption is, that what were once its mountains are now buried in the depths of the sea.

That the earth has been swept over by some deluge passing from north to south, is too obvious to admit of a doubt. But whether the event, happen when or how it might, finally left the surface of the world *deformed* or *beautiful*, may still be a question to be decided, very differently perhaps, by our different tastes. One man will see deformity in some cases where another sees only beauty. It may even be questioned, whether men of equally improved tastes will invariably agree in what is beautiful, and what deformed, in the sceneries of nature. One may have taste only for what is *plain*, and another for what is *splendid*. One may be most gratified when in his landscape there are seen the barren rock, and the broken cliff; while another, who can be pleased only with what is useful, must see every spot fertile, have every rock concealed, and every eminence accessible. Which of these have the best taste, is a question on which ingenuity might employ itself most elegantly, and not without profit.

Whether taste should be denominated an internal sense, or judgment operating without any perceptible process of reasoning, is of small moment; for whatever difficulties there may be in defining, there is none in understanding it. "Taste," says an elegant writer, "is of all nature's gifts the most easily felt, and the most difficult to explain; it would not be what it is, if it could be defined; for it judges of objects beyond the reach of judgment, and serves in a manner as a magnifying glass to reason." I have supposed it not wide from the truth to say, that taste is a sense of the understanding, holding much the same relation to objects of nature and art, that conscience, another sense, holds to moral objects. As one has been defined, "The power of receiving pleasure or pain from the beauties or deformities of nature and of art;" so the other may be termed, the power of receiving pleasure or pain from moral beauty or deformity. Hence, to trace the resemblance

a little further, as there may be a vitiated conscience that shall approve of the most abominable deeds, so there may be a vitiated taste that is pleased with what is beyond doubt a deformity. I am aware that this remark however involves the question, whether there is any standard of taste founded in the principles of the human constitution, or whether casual association is to account for all our notions in matters of taste.

But leaving all these questions to men of more leisure, I propose to inquire, *whether a cultivated taste exerts a favorable influence upon the moral affections.* I have supposed the affirmative of this question capable of the fullest proof, and that the discussion of it would lead to a great variety of practical and important remarks suited to this occasion. I would say, then, in the

*First place, That a cultivated taste tends to soothe and restrain the unruly and turbulent passions.* I venture to assert, that the religion of Jesus Christ excepted, there is no power that can operate more favorably upon the passions than such a taste. The mind that is under its plastic influence will naturally be led to dwell on objects that excite the better emotions, the soft and tender, or the grand and sublime; is withdrawn from vexatious care, and led to retirement and reflection; and the result of all this is tranquility. And the mind thus occupied will not so readily seek enjoyments that are forbidden.

In all parts of creation there are beauties or sublimities by which a good taste is gratified. Above are the hosts of heaven, the sun going forth in his strength, the moon walking in brightness, and the uncounted stars decorating the whole expanse. As we descend to earth, we find it clothed in beauties too permanent to suffer any power but that which spake them into being to erase them. Hence, to a cultivated taste there are every where sources of enjoyment calculated to supplant the rougher affections, and generate and mature those that are kind and lovely; and the mind that is innocently happy is not so easily disturbed by temptations.

What evil passion can rage uncontrolled at a moment when the mind is happy in enjoyments which God has not forbidden: happy in the works of his own hands. The mind thus occupied will be urged to the reflection of the poet:

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty, thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!”

And what power has any forbidden object to attract or control a

mind so employed? *Envy*, for instance, what place can it have? A good taste enjoys what is another's. It cares not whose is the landscape, or the palace, or the tastefully cultivated garden. It waits not to ask what interest accrues to self from the fertility, the order, the convenience, the harmony, or variety which it sees and admires. It covets not to call the stars its own, nor the brook that winds down the valley, nor the fruits and foliage that cover the hills. The *stranger*, no less than the *proprietor*, may inhale the fragrance, and hear the music, and feel the harmony that breathes about him. The man of taste realizes to some extent the rich experience of the child of God:

“He looks abroad into the varied field  
Of nature, and, though poor, perhaps, compared  
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,  
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.  
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
And the resplendent rivers.”

• • • • •

“Yes, ye may fill your garners, ye that reap  
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good,  
In senseless riot.”

But there are men that have “richer use of yours than you.” The man of cultivated taste owns all he sees. The cottage on the hill, and the flocks that feed about it, and the woodbine that creeps it over, and the house-birds that build their nests there, are all the instruments of his gratification. Nature, with all its original scenery, and art, with all its varied improvements, are so much the property and inheritance of a good taste, that envy can hardly find entrance.

*Covetousness*, a kindred passion, will be restrained by the same means. A good taste can leave others in possession of what is theirs, satisfied with the power of enjoying what is *not*, as well as what *is* its own. It is like the lark, which can soar amid the heavens, and may light and drink at any brook, and gather its food on any field, and cares not to call the territory its own.

I even venture to say that the *angry passions* are restrained by the same means. These are more likely to have their abode in minds that have never traveled from home, nor been expanded by cultivation; and are produced by a contractedness and a jealousy, as mean as mischievous; deformities which a good taste, as well as a right temper, reprobates as coarse, unsightly, and repulsive. The harsh language, and the coarse rebuke, and the distorted

countenance, and the whole apparatus of malevolence are, to a good taste, grating beyond endurance.

I have not meant to say, nor have I said, that an improved taste will wholly subdue these passions; but that it may be the ally of piety. We have always seen the rougher passions and an uncultivated taste in the same household, and associated by the same fireside. Can you not know something of a family by the avenue to their habitation? When you see it all deformity without; unsightliness, and disproportion, and inconvenience, can you not trace, many times, a corresponding roughness of moral aspect in its uncultivated tenants? While the mind acts upon every thing about it, there is from every thing about it, a reaction upon the mind. I know there are cases when we discover what is kind in the midst of unsightliness and deformity. We have sometimes found true religion where there is little else. It is not denied that the grace of God may achieve what a cultivated taste could not, and still the latter may be very far from powerless. Go to the tasteful but lowly dwelling, which is approached by a neatly adorned avenue set with many a flower, and stripped of all that is coarse and uncouth, and there will be many chances that its door will be hospitably thrown open, and the stranger welcomed, and his inquiries civilly and kindly answered. The very child that meets you and welcomes you, will exhibit a mind mellowed down by the transforming influence of the scenery around him.

I know that the passions may be *tame*, through deficiency of intellect, or may be, on the other hand, too refractory for a good taste to restrain; and when the latter has operated, even powerfully, it may not have produced the whole effect that piety would.

“None but a power divinely strong  
Can turn the current of the soul.”

We have seen men of polished manners, and improved tastes, under a paroxysm of passion, degraded into all that is coarse and forbidding in the savage. Hence the barbarous habit of duelling, even among our most accomplished men, and hence the coarse and uncourteous style with which eloquent lips, and the pen well disciplined, can sometimes attack a perhaps perfectly innocent rival. How ashamed have we sometimes been, to see issuing from the halls of legislation, a ribaldry that would raise a blush in Newgate. These were instances when a cultivated taste had not power enough to imprison the malignant passions, and showed its infinite inferiority to that grace of God, which can bind the strong man, and

even cast out devils. So the ferocious animal that is charmed by music, retains still his claws and his fangs, does but temporarily forget his habits of prey, and is mild only till the harmony that held him has ceased. The power which cannot convert the lion into a lamb, may lay his fury ; what cannot render the vulture a dove, may turn away his eye from the prey. A cultivated taste may, in the hour of assault, open the mind to conviction, and lay the tumult of passion, till reason and conscience can do their office, and thus the man may be saved through its influence from a headlong plunge into misery and ruin.

We ascribe to a good taste a similar influence over the deformities of surfeiting, inebriation, and lust. In the hall of gluttony, in the haunts of intemperance, and in the dark retreats of pollution, it sees what offends it as certainly as piety is offended. That the appetites should govern reason is a disgusting perversion of all order and decorum. That the fancy, the imagination, the memory, and the whole apparatus of intellect, with the organs of sense and the whole family of kind and useful instincts, should be subjected to the dominion of lust, is as unseemly and incongruous, as it is impious. To see the angel mind suspend its nobler occupations, and descend from the high elevation of reflection and reason, to become conversant with the premises, and the conclusions, and the outlandish dialect of the gaming table, or the vulgarities of the midnight carouse, is to an improved taste pitiable, and disgusting. I would have every man a *Christian*, that I might be sure that he will not descend so low, but, if this may not be, I would have him a man of taste and refinement, that he may not so debase himself. When we have seen the man, who might have been a philosopher, a poet, a statesman or a philanthropist ; who might have vied with Locke and Boyle and Newton and Burke ; might have been classed with Howard and Sharp and Clarkson and Wilberforce ; might have risen in holiness of design and energy of purpose, to an enrolment with Brainard and Swarts and Vanderkemp and Martin and Mills ; might have made themselves greatly useful and very dear to their generations as did Edwards and Dwight and Worcester and Moore ; —to see one who might have thus exalted his nature, and given the highest value to his existence, reeling through the streets, and pouring forth pollution from his impious lips, as he returns from the rendezvous, to distract the order, and break the peace, and extinguish the last lingering hope of his family ; Oh ! this is a sight, with which, religion aside, and humanity aside, a good taste is disgusted to the last degree.

And when concupiscence, in its unhallowed vagrancy, has murdered the peace of some other family, and begins to re-act upon home, withering all the prospects that budded and blossomed there; and the wife becomes ashamed of her husband, and the children of their father, and the happy circle is at length broken up, and cast out the prey of a selfish and unfeeling world, then is a good taste no less than piety itself outraged.—As if the clown should be permitted, with coarse, untutored pencil, to besmear and utterly ruin one of the finest paintings of Raphael, or chisel into uncouthness and distortion one of the noblest statues of Angelo; for no painting or statue, no achievement of art or genius, has ever more highly gratified a refined taste, than the image of a harmonious family, moving on in the sphere of domestic duty and enjoyment, while

“ Each fulfils his part,  
With sympathizing heart,  
In all the cares of life and love.”

Let some cultivated mind compare to the life this drawing, let some statuary lay in bold relief before the eye all the smiling features of such a scene, and then let it be all defaced by the debauched husband and father, and tell me if a good taste would be more disgusted, should a swine from the mire enter a palace, and tear and besmear and destroy every object it could reach. Thus a good taste is at war with the unhallowed passions, and becomes a powerful ally of virtue.

Let me say again, that a cultivated taste is the friend of virtue, as it operates to remove the monuments of our disgrace, and objects of our embarrassment and vexation, that have marred the beauty of the exterior creation. Give it the means, and it obliterates every physical disorder, and brings back the world to its primitive beauty and loveliness, and causes to glow a boundless Eden in the valley of death. It would terrace every hill to its summit, or cast it into the deep ravine; would wall and restrain the wayward current; would drain the morass; would shape to proportion the deformities of the protruding rock; would spread fertility over the heath, and paint every cottage, and eradicate for ever the noxious shrub and plant and tree. Thus would there be destroyed the haunt of the serpent, the lair of the wolf, the retreat of the robber, the pestiferous exhalations that generate disease and death, and the world would become beautiful again as when its Almighty Creator pronounced it all very good. And then who can doubt but its tenants would become more happy and more vir-

tuons. Having fewer fears and fewer vexations, they would indulge less frequently the malignant passions. They might sit then under their vine and their figtree, and there would be none to make them afraid.

Let me say again, that a cultivated taste tends to bring men under the influence of sacred truth, and thus holds them within the reach of resistless reformation and virtue. Reason and judgment confirm the decisions of a good taste, and are employed though imperceptibly in all its operations; hence such a taste is friendly to correct habits of thought; and the man accustomed to think correctly on one subject, is, to say the least, the better prepared to investigate another. Now there is no other system in which such a taste can find the harmony, and the order, and the consistency, and the grandeur, which prevail in the system of divine truth. *There* are positions that no genius can controvert, arguments that no discernment can impeach, illustrations that strike with the vividness of lightning, and conclusions that bear upon an ingenuous mind with the weight of a world. Hence we should decide, *a priori*, that a good taste could not overlook the book of God. And what is there in the whole apparatus of a *practical religion* to which such a taste is not congenial? The Sabbath of the Lord, that stills the tumult of labor, calls man from his drudgery, clothes him in neatness, and wakes the peal of the church going bell, and congregates the multitude, and seats them in the sanctuary, and breaks down all adventitious distinction, and puts a thousand minds upon the track of the same august truth; and spreads a stillness and a composure and a thoughtfulness over the whole region, how *beautiful!* how *sublime!* If we look at *facts*, do they not testify, that a cultivated taste sustains a close relationship to all this? Are the families that are represented in the solemn assembly, the mean, and the uncultivated? And do we find lounging away the hours of holy rest, the neatly clad, and best improved portions of the community? Or do we find this better part of society in the sanctuary, joining in its prayers, and aiding in its praise, and listening to the mysteries of heavenly truth, and bringing to a higher elevation that taste, which aided in assembling them? Go to those districts of Christendom, where no gospel is proclaimed, and no multitudes assemble in the sanctuary, and no general survey of their hamlets will remind you that it is the Lord's day; and sure as life, *religion* is wanting there, and about as sure is the total absence of a cultivated taste. You will see patrolling the streets, their untutored and beggarly offspring, and in most of

their habitations you will discover the sure indication of minds as uncultivated, as their principles and conduct are immoral. A good taste would remove many of the obstacles to keeping a Sabbath, and building a sanctuary, and supporting a ministry, and sustaining a Sabbath school, and erecting a library for the improvement of the public mind.

Do any ask, How is all this consistent with that declaration, that, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which 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 let me say, that men may be wise, and mighty, and noble, in the sense of this passage, and still be as destitute of a good taste as their postillion or their footman. Mere wealth may procure the wisdom and the nobility and the might here spoken of, but it does not follow that there will be the delicate imagination, and the keen sensibility, and the soundness of judgment, and the wise course of reading and of thinking, which indicate a cultivated taste. We have seen a profusion of splendor and of equipage, and a disgusting routine of ceremony, where there was the total absence of the lovely attribute we eulogize. One is virtue's foe, the other its ally. The whole of that display which wealth can purchase and in which pride and vanity and lust vegetate, is the opposite of virtue; but not so that sense of the mind which gives us an eye to see and a power to enjoy the ten thousand beauties that God has spread over the works of his hands. It is not that we can see loveliness *in the sceneries of nature or the productions of art*, that can offend the Lord, but that we can see it in *vice*. It is not that we have the wisdom *that waked in Eden*, that God will disapprove; but that we are wise in our own conceits, wise to do evil. It is not the nobility that is generated by thought and reflection and reasoning, and which is found in angels, that operates to shut heaven's door against us; but the nobility which originates in misapplied wealth and flattery and pride.

But it is asked whether a cultivated taste has not sometimes rendered persons unhappy, as they must often be constrained, in a world like this, to be conversant with what is coarse and disgusting! I will not deny that there is some truth in this. We have seen a delicate woman bred to the most refined enjoyments, and

improved in her taste till she deserved all that the world could have done to make her happy, yoked unequally to a savage; in which case,

“Native rage and native fear rose and forbid delight,”

and we were ready to wish that, to make her condition less unpleasant, her mind had remained rude. And we have seen another picture, a *false taste* connected with no native endowments, or solid improvements of intellect; and it resulted, as we should expect, in pride and passion, and fed its fantasy on ideal beauties, not seen in nature nor known in art; read of, perhaps, in the pages of a novel, or seen in the reveries of an hysteric imagination; and the result was misery, *as it should be*. It was a sickly, feverish taste, adapted only to an ideal world, and not qualified to be conversant with sober realities. But it was a vexation that such *lunacy* should be called taste.

A good taste must be connected with intellect, and must grow with the growth of mind. It is then sane and sensible. If we do fear that, in some few instances, a cultivated taste has diminished happiness, in most cases where this has seemed the fact, there was the total absence of all that deserved the name.

It is said that taste is a costly attribute, and produces poverty, and thus immorality and misery. I promptly assert that it costs far less than the appetites it restrains. Would the sot and the epicure expend in the cultivation of a good taste the fortunes lavished upon their appetites, the latter expense would be saved, and the amount would surround them with ten thousand beauties, conveniences, and comforts. It will generally happen, in this country at least, that if men will forego the pampering of their lusts, they will not lack the means of gratifying a good taste. It makes not *large demands* where there are *small resources*. The lowly cottage, with its little patch of shrubbery, fruits, and flowers, may be quite as tasteful as the palace, with its proud and lofty architecture.

If it be thought that taste consumes time, it may be answered, that it saves more than it consumes. It makes all its drafts upon idleness and vice. Its bed of flowers it cultivates, and has time left, while sloth claims another nap, and while envy slanders a neighbor, and while appetite is gorging its pernicious viands and fatal draughts, and while covetousness is counting up its gains, and while anger is rankling, and wrath is burning, and revenge is plotting in the bosom of fools. I even assert that its tendency is to enrich. A good taste will seek the means of its own gratification.

It will aim first to acquire the necessaries and conveniences of life, and this will lead to enterprise that will nerve the man for duty. Besides the exertions made for these purposes, he will put forth another effort that he may gratify his taste, and, other things equal, will be the more industrious and thriving man. He holds to the men about him the high station of a benefactor, and would make any effort within his power, and endure any privation, rather than lean for subsistence upon their charity. Could you, by some magical process, infuse a good taste into that multitude of paupers which brood, like the incubus, upon the bosom of community, you would exterminate pauperism. When did you ever know a man of taste become a pauper? At least when, except in some rare instances of prolonged disease, saw you a pauper who was not wholly wanting in this inestimable endowment? When I see the new married pair with no object about them tasteful, by a kind of instinct I mark them out for ultimate poverty.

Let it not be thought that a good taste tends to form a fictitious and deceitful character. It is confessed that rustic coarseness, associated with honesty, is preferable to a Chesterfieldian system, founded less on the principles of a good taste than in falsehood and infidelity. A good taste scorns the fellowship of principles so selfish, and contracted, and cowardly. While it favors a polish as fair and rich as Chesterfield's, it associates with it the integrity of a Hale, the philanthropy of a Howard, and the Christian patriotism of a Wilberforce.

We have known the error to creep into colleges, that taste and genius are not likely to be united; and under this impression many silly youths have feigned a carelessness in their personal appearance, and have accustomed themselves to keep their study and their dormitory in a state of disorder and filth, as the best evidence they could give of mental vigor. And not unfrequently has this error cast reproach upon our seats of science, while parents have been grieved to see their sons return from the seminary, having unlearned many a lesson of decency that had been for years very industriously taught them. The age had produced somewhere an eccentric genius, who was totally deficient in common sense and common decency; and the opinion prevailed, that to have his powers one must copy his insufferable negligence. But show me the youth who has finished his education a very clown, and I say, possibly he may be a genius, and yet a beggar and a bear too; but rest assured his clownishness is a prognostic only for the bear and the beggar, not of the accomplished and success

ful scholar; and we always fear there will not be enough of the better part to cover the worse. I know we sometimes see the disgusting contrast of all this, the spruce and booted and fantastical coxcomb; lavishing, conscience and economy not consulted, the earnings of another upon his vanity; the gallant, when he should be the student, the curse of colleges, the stigma of his father's house, and ultimately the scorn alike of both sexes. But I turn from this disgusting image.

As early as possible, then, I would have the taste improved, and would urge its cultivation among the duties of piety. I would have every man lay the world under obligation to him, because he makes the little world about him more fertile and more beautiful. I would have every young man go away from the seat of science feeling strongly, that every deformity of the natural world and the moral, is to be cured, as far as possible, by his influence; that he is to touch nothing, mind or matter, but it must come out of his hands more lovely in the sight of God or man. He must contribute to make the desert bloom around him, and the wilderness to become an Eden. Let him feel, that as wide as the ruins of the apostacy is the field of his labor, the curse that fell on man, and the mischief that, through him, fell on the territory that he occupies.

In every department of life a good taste gives high promise of influence and usefulness. Does the youth intend to excel as a *classical writer*? a good taste will furnish him with language more copious, and figures more striking and appropriate; and a field of illustration more wide and diversified. It will give him a power to persuade and control that he would not have otherwise attained. In Addison, what a powerful instrument of good was his taste. It chastened his wit, and enabled him to shame into disuse many a mistaken maxim of his times, and rendered him the scourge and the dread of proud and polished profligacy. His finished style was the grand means of carrying his strictures upon manners and morals into the parlor and the palace, where they operated in purifying the character of the nation and the world. Not that a good taste should convert every writer into an Addison: this would be neither possible nor desirable. While his writings may be read with profit by every man, they may not be safely imitated by any. Let every man's style be his own. Let him go forth in his own livery, and use his own weapons in whatever cause he would sustain. Be the bent of his genius what it may, a good taste will be one of its most powerful aids. Every excrecence of his genius it will lop off. His wit it will chasten, his rashness it will restrain

his boldness and originality it will regulate, his patriotism it will purify. It will adapt his genius to more nations and ages than one. Hence it is that works of genuine taste never become obsolete. Homer, and Virgil, and Milton, and Cowper, will continue to be read through all generations.

Does the youth aspire to eminent usefulness as a preacher of righteousness! he will need the guidance of a good taste; as there are polished sinners that must be won, and accomplished believers that must be guided home to heaven. In each part of his work he will have need of language soft and chaste as angels use. A good taste need not enervate or secularize his style, but will, if there be genius, invigorate it. It will qualify him to handle profitably those subjects which are in themselves disgusting, and from which delicacy might otherwise shrink. He may descend, accompanied by a good taste as his guardian angel, into the lowest cells of iniquity, and make war with it in all its haunts of filthiness, without offending delicacy. It will give him that address which will bring him into successful conflict with a whole family of vices, that would otherwise lie without his reach, operate beyond his control, and parry every thrust he made. It will teach him how to characterize foul iniquity, and to stamp its shame by an indignation so full of soul, and by illustrations so elevated, as to hold himself a whole atmosphere above the meanness and the turpitude he depicts. Seated on a cloud, he may, unharmed, dart his lightnings down into the dreariest and filthiest abodes of moral putrefaction. As if an angel, with sword pointed and burnished in heaven, and himself shrouded in celestial glory, should be sent to still the tumults and lay the blasphemies of the infernal prison. The better the taste employed, and the more elevated the language in which admonition and rebuke is administered, the deeper may he descend till he has seized iniquity in its profoundest caverns, and laid it naked, and lashed it into agony and into shame.

Would the youth qualify himself to be a *teacher*? he will have great need of a cultivated taste, and that whatever may be the age at which he is to take the rising generation under his instruction. It is a grief and a loss too when our common schools are committed to the care of men void of taste; for the hackneyed proverb is still most true,

“ Just as the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.”

The child of five years old may, through this deficiency of his teacher, receive a bad impression of character that will last till he

dies. It is yet more lamentable when the teacher of our youth is destitute of this endowment, and cannot point out to his pupils the beauties that lie along the track of improvement. This very failure in the teacher has probably damped the ardor of many a young man, and turned back to manual labor one who might have reached eminence in literature. It is a loss not easily estimated when the preceptors in our academies and tutors in our colleges cannot point out to their classes the flowers that bloom, and the sublilities that open to view as they climb the hill of science. And through all the ascending grades of literary instruction, a good taste becomes increasingly important. There may be much in the character of our public teachers to admire; there may be those talents and that good sense that are indispensable, and that amiableness of temper which in their station is above all price, and that piety which we most of all revere, and still if a good taste be wanting the evil will be long and distinctly seen in the deportment of educated men, and be from them spread out and handed down till it affect most unhappily the character of our whole republic through many generations. On them too it must depend to give American genius its polish and elevation and influence in the literary world, and to decide whether in letters, as in correct views of true liberty and enlightened civil government, we are to stand admired and honored as the first nation on the face of the earth.

Would the youth gain distinguished eminence at the bar? his good taste must enable him to chastise fraud and mischief without vulgarity. The ribaldry that has sometimes disgraced the legal profession, must, as society becomes more enlightened, fall into the contempt it merits, and its place be filled with solid and dignified argument and eloquence. The advocate should make himself respected by the judge and the jury, on whose enlightened decision rests the issue of his cause. And he will so often see fraud and crime in a smooth and varnished aspect, concealed behind all that art can do to polish and baptize it into honesty, and all that wealth and influence can do to cover its deformities, and all that pride and impudence can do to confound its opposer, that an improved taste will be requisite to follow it into the parlor and the theatre and the billiard room, and hunt it down, and strip it, and mark it, that no drapery may longer conceal its hideous and accursed form. If his weapons be coarse and blunt, he will give polished vice the vantage ground, and furnish it an unanswerable argument why it should not be willing to perish by his sword. In

the hall of legislation too, and on the bench, and through all the ascending grades of political elevation, a good taste is increasingly necessary.

The physician too, to be respected and useful, must be a man of taste. He is necessarily conversant with the best families and the most delicate diseases, and cannot be coarse without offence. One would not choose to invite the rustic into his sick chamber, or submit himself to his surgical operations. Society is abused, (and the abuse should have been long since corrected,) when the clown is pronounced capable of practising the healing art, and is sent out to learn his first lessons of decency from the gentle manners, the subdued accents, and restrained habits of the sick and dying bed. Chain him to the plow; put a spade into his hand, and not a lancet; keep him from touching the sacred casket of the *materia medica*.

No matter into what department of life and action the youth is entering from the walls of the seminary, he must every where have a good taste or he will bring literature into disrepute.

My motive, then, young gentlemen, in addressing you on this subject, is distinctly seen. God has given us a world in which there are many beauties, but, through the apostacy, many deformities. These beauties I would have you qualified to see and relish, and these deformities to obliterate. I would have you employ all your genius to create other beauties, till every spot about you shall smile, every eminence be comely, and every valley verdant. I would there should be in your views an enlightened graciousness, which, if not religion, is its handmaid; if not born in heaven, was early in Eden; if not possessed of power to subdue the heart, may mould some of its rougher affections into milder forms; and though not a radical cure for the calamities of life, has abundant power to soothe. You would then be more useful and happy while you live, and we should have higher hopes of meeting you in heaven, and joining you in exploring the wonders of that pure and tasteful city, whose walls are jasper, whose gates are of pearl, and whose streets are paved with gold.

Before I conclude, I must be permitted to devote a few words to friendship. I see many faces here that have often lighted up my own with a smile. It is affecting to meet you again in this world of change. It is probably the last time I shall ever see you all until we meet in that country "from whose bourne no traveler returns." I learn that death has made inroads among you. It is a note of admonition to us all to be prepared to die. The past year has been

to us one of peculiar interest. God has deigned to display the power of his grace under my poor ministrations, and has given me often the pleasure of sitting down by the conscience and the heart that his truth and his Spirit had impressed. And I have rejoiced to hear that he has been in very deed with you, begetting everlasting consolation and good hope in many of your hearts. Thus it appears that he who is rich in mercy was with me in the way that I went, and remained with you. May he still be with us, and keep us by his power, and guide our wayward feet to his heavenly rest. There may we another day meet, and with bursting hearts rehearse the mercies that bore with us and brought us safely through, and sustained us in our trials, and managed our spiritual enemies, and covered our heads in the day of battle, and subdued our lusts, and planted our feet at last on the hills of promise. You will let me and my dear people have an interest in your prayers. And may the Lord bless this people and its ministry, and bless these rising schools of science, and all their guardians and teachers, and all who come to seek wisdom at these gates. From age to age let heaven's richest influence come down on these hills, and flow out in streams of salvation through the world, and down through all generations, till all the curse shall be repealed, and God be once more pleased with the world he made.

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EXPOSITION OF 1 JOHN IV. 19.

We love him, because he first loved us.

THIS text has been subjected to various, and, in a measure, contradictory expositions.

Some have supposed, that our love to God, is mere gratitude to him for having loved us. They have gone upon the supposition that naturally we imbibe the impression that God is our enemy, but when at length we discover the mistake, and learn that he loves us, it fills us with gratitude and love to him. To this exposition there are several objections. If it were true, more light would change the heart. The most depraved man, needs only to be convinced that God is not so angry with him as he supposed, and in fact is his friend, and the change is effected. He needs

only to have his mistake corrected, and he is a new man, and to effect this, nothing is necessary but light. Depravity, of course, has its seat only in the understanding. But this will not agree with the testimony of inspiration. Regeneration is spoken of as a change of heart. The stony heart is said to be taken away, and there is given a heart of flesh. The new man has passed from death unto life. But all this is hyperbole, if the change is the mere correction of a mistake.

If this exposition were correct, the gospel could have no agency in the conversion of sinners, for on the principles of the gospel, no man can have any evidence that God loves him, till he loves God. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Constantly do the Scriptures teach us, that our interest in the Divine affections, can be known only by our love to God, our obedience to his commands, and our attachment to his holy family. But if the exposition given be true, none of all this can take place, till God has loved us, and has revealed to us this fact. Hence a voice from heaven, and not the Bible, must make known the truth that effects our sanctification.

The exposition given, supposes also, the TRUTH of a palpable absurdity; that God can love us, while we possess no goodness for him to love. Till we *love* God, we *hate* him, and to hate infinite excellence, is to be totally depraved. This continues to be the character of every man till he loves his Creator. Hence, till then it is impossible that God should be pleased with him. He assures us, "I love them that love me;" implying that all others he does not love. God cannot view with complacency the man who has no pleasure in the contemplation of infinite moral excellence. A being so depraved is not worthy of Divine regard "God is angry with the wicked every day," and hence is continually angry with every man who does not love him. Should an unregenerated man, therefore, hear some supernatural voice proclaim, "beloved of the Lord," he ought to doubt whether the revelation came from heaven. For God will not reveal to him that which the Bible would contradict.

The exposition which we are noticing, exhibits depravity as confined to the understanding, and he surely is not very extensively depraved, who has merely mistaken a matter of fact. The Scriptures, however, exhibit a darker picture. They speak of the unsanctified heart as the seat of malicious passions, as full of all bitterness, as issuing evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. We are told that "every

imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, only evil continually." We are assured that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The errors of the understanding are ascribed to the influence of the heart. "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, or say, Is there not a lie in my right hand." Another objection to this exposition is, that it exhibits a religion purely selfish. He who loves God merely because he conceives that God loves him, can be said only to love himself. But the religion of the Bible is spoken of as a charity that seeketh not her own. It discovers in holiness an intrinsic value, which renders it lovely for its own sake, independently of any relation which it may sustain to us.

This exposition is contrary to all the examples given us in Scripture of apostolic preaching. It was the aim of the apostles to make their hearers see their own vileness, and feel that the wrath of God hung over them. Says an apostle, "by the terrors of the Lord we persuade men." But what can this mean, if there is no other depravity than what consists in a mistake of the understanding? But no apostle preached a doctrine like this, and no man may thus preach without the danger of contradicting the records of eternal truth.

There is *another exposition* of this text which has a higher claim upon our faith. It is this. If God had not viewed us with a benevolent regard, even when we were dead in sins, we should have continued his enemies. Divine compassion originated the man, and provided the means of redemption. The same benevolence led him to awaken, convict, and renew us. We are Christians, because God viewed us with pity, and made us the willing and thankful recipients of his mercy. Thus we love him because he first loved us, because he was led by his good will to change our hearts, to give us holy affections.

The difference in the two expositions is this. The first, which I consider as altogether incorrect, represents the love of God to us as our only motive for loving him. The second, which although perhaps deficient, certainly approximates toward the truth, represents the benevolence of God as that which moved him to prepare the way for our redemption, and bring our hearts to love him.

This exposition accords with the main object of this epistle, which dwells much on the love of God, manifested in providing redemption for our miserable world. We read in the context, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live

through him. Herein was love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation of our sins." In the gospel written by this same apostle, we read, "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

This exposition accords with other portions of Scripture. The Bible everywhere lays the foundation of the Christian Church in the everlasting love of God to our miserable world. In no case would a sinner ever love God, if God had not first loved him. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." And "we also enjoy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Thus the love of God is considered as laying the foundation of our salvation, and it must, of course, be the first cause of our love to him. But

It is thought there is a deficiency in this last exposition. Certainly none will deny but that the great scheme of redemption has its foundation in the eternal love of God; that his grace furnished the atonement, and that his Spirit carries our hearts to love, and finishes our sanctification; hence the love of God is the cause of love to him.

But, on the other hand, it is contended, that God's love to us is a proper motive for loving him; not the only motive, it is true; for if we love him *only* because we apprehend that he loves us, our affections are purely selfish. But why not love him for what he is, and yet our love increases on discovering that he loves us? If the question in controversy be simply this, may God's love to us become a proper motive of our love to him? the question, it would seem, must be answered in the affirmative. Compassion in the heart of God for miserable beings is a lovely trait in his character; and when discovered, is a reason why we should love him: and if we may love him because he felt compassion for other miserable beings, why not because he had pity on us? Hence, when we discover that the God we have hated has always received us with compassion, this discovery should awaken our love.

That God can exercise no other love to impenitent sinners but that of good will, there scarcely needs an argument to prove. No unregenerate man, whose *heart* is at enmity against God, can possibly be to him an object of complacency. If then he wait till he discover that God is pleased with him before he can love his Ma-

ker, he must wait for ever. But the idea that God is a merciful being enters, or ought to enter, into every contemplation of the Divine character. We are no more required to love a God all *justice*, *holiness*, and *truth*, than a God of all *mercy*. Why may it not happen, then, that a sinner, when he first contemplates the God of heaven with seriousness, may think of his good will to our miserable world, and to himself, with others? And while he looks at God, and his heart is changed into love, this very trait in the Divine character may be the first thing discovered, and may become a most powerful attractive to his affections. Thus he loves God, among other reasons, because God first loved him. The text has unquestionable reference to a kind of love felt by the Creator for his creatures while dead in sin; and this would be no other than mere good will. This trait in the Divine character, and there is no other more prominent, the sinner may discover as soon as any. Nor would it be surprising if this should be the first attribute of Jehovah that should attract his gaze. It would be mistaking the true character of God, if one should conceive of him as destitute of compassion for the wretched. Still the good man will love the whole of the Divine character. If his benevolence engrosses the whole of our affections, it needs no argument to prove, that our hearts are not yet right with God. This is the danger to be avoided. Many, all on a sudden, have seemed to be absorbed with a sense of the Divine goodness, who yet manifested an incurable enmity to every view of God as holy, sovereign, and unchangeable. One trait of the Divine character had caught their admiration, and for a time they were filled with love; but when, at length, they were constrained to view God in some other aspect, their love subsided. They could not contemplate, but with a frown, those doctrines which do honor to his severer attributes. We must love the Divine character *as it is*. The God we worship must be holy as well as merciful, else we do not worship the Jehovah of the Bible.

Probably with a view to guard men against a selfish religion, the character of God has been exhibited in false colors. It has been said, "God made man upright, and then exerted a positive agency in making him a rebel. He contrives a plan of redemption, but reprobates some in the outset, fits them for hell, places them in that world, makes the righteous rejoice while the 'smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever,' and may do so because they are all his creatures." Now I very much question whether in this exhibition, we are presented with a correct view

of the Divine character. The Scriptures do not give us this view of God. While he is there exhibited as a sovereign, who does his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, they also describe him as a God of mercy. He bears long with the being he hates, and pities the very wretch he destroys. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim"? Now why should the divine benevolence be undiscovered in those perfections which constitute the object of our worship?

But on the other hand, God has been exhibited as scarcely possessing any other attribute than mercy. This has been spoken of as his darling attribute, while his sovereignty, his purity, and his veracity have been obscured in the dazzling light of the favorite perfection. Perhaps such a view of God is still more dangerous than the other. Give him no desire to guide his operations, no sovereignty to render his throne august, no inflexibility of veracity to ensure the execution of his law, no holiness to render sin hateful, no omniscience to search out the culprit, and no power to make himself respected, and the veriest fiend of perdition will presume on his mercy. No man is too depraved to love a God like this. But no such God exists, and every such hope in his salvation, is without foundation.

"A pardoning God is jealous still  
For his own holiness."

God will own neither of these characters. We must leave him in possession of all his attributes, and still love him. Mercy and truth must meet together. We must adore him as possessed of every holy and gracious attribute, and whichever of these first attracts our gaze should melt us into love.

We see thus why religion in different persons wears a very different aspect. One has viewed too exclusively the mercy of God, and hence his religion, though full of praise, is deficient in solemnity and humility. There attends it a lightness which sometimes begets a doubt of its sincerity. Another has reflected too exclusively on the severer attributes of the Divine character, and has almost forgotten that compassion has any place in the heart of God; hence his religion will be likely to be gloomy. He will be prone to fear and adore his Maker, but will hardly dare to praise. The medium of these extremes is the religion that does honor to the whole of the Divine character. It is a religion, pleasant, cheerful and humble; a religion which will render the soul happy, and which God will approve and honor.

## A PLEA FOR THE SCRIPTURES.

THE Bible professes to be the book of God, inspired by his Spirit, and sent to be the guide to life and salvation of this ruined world. It would seem that there could be but *one* opinion respecting this book; but there are *two*. While some have accepted, others have rejected it, as being a revelation from God. Two questions then arise: "*Why do unbelievers reject it?*" and "*Why do believers receive it?*" These questions, permit me to answer.

*Why do unbelievers reject the Bible?* I shall notice now merely the more common objections.

I would here mention—*First, The exclusiveness of its religion.* All other religions, unless the Mohammedan be excepted, are more catholic than the religion of the Bible. The worshipers of Thor and Jupiter and Moloch would have placed the image of Jesus Christ in their temples and worshiped him, if his disciples would have reciprocated this catholicism, and would have worshiped the images of their gods. If they would have only yielded the point that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, there would have been no quarrel between Christianity and heathenism.

And if this compromise could now be made, and Christianity did not require a belief of the whole Bible history, and all the Bible doctrines and predictions together, with the deity of Jesus Christ, and the practice of all the duties of the Bible, there would be no contest. But all this goes to say that men would not quarrel with the Bible, if they might disbelieve it, and be saved without it, and pour their contempt upon it.

But is it not reasonable to believe that if God give a revelation to this world, he will give it to *the whole world*, and require all men to receive it all, and make it the *only* way to everlasting life! If not thus broad in its application and its claims, it becomes a partial salvation, and thus it must tell how many and who of the human family may feel themselves interested in its contents.

But the objector inquires, why has it not been given to the *whole world*? why has God published a system of salvation, and left three quarters, and in some ages almost the world's entire population, without a knowledge of his will! If this objection could not be satisfactorily answered, it would present no formidable barrier to our

faith. If God pleases to make a written revelation, to a part only of a rebellious world, by what law has either part the right to complain? Or if it claim to be a general revelation, and is partially circulated, what then? Rebels may not demand overtures of pardon. Moreover the whole world, had not the carnal mind been opposed to a divine communication, might have had the bible. Had the world been ready to receive it, as the Gentiles must have had report of it, no province had been without it. The people that God chose, as the depositories of the revelation, were in the very midst of the more enlightened nations, and it is rather difficult to account for the fact, that all nations did not acquire the bible from that central position where it was inspired. How could Greece and Rome and Babylon and Egypt lie so hard by Israel and not have opportunity to receive the Scriptures. Indeed it did go probably among all nations, and they set so light by it that they lost it. And yet we can see wise purposes answered by many nations being long without it. They thus have abundant opportunity to act out the native temper of their hearts, and establish the history of the apostacy. In the meantime those who have the Bible may learn how basely they have neglected and are neglecting their duty in not disseminating it.

But says the objector, I learn from the Bible that those are to perish who have *never enjoyed its light*. Yes, if they sin against the light they have. They perish however, not because they were so unfortunate as not to have the bible, but because the "invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; and because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God; hence they are without excuse." If any assert that God will destroy the heathen for not knowing what they had not the means to know, their controversy is with him direct. And if they reject the bible because they think it so teaches, they may be found to have reasoned falsely, and to have destroyed themselves by their inquisitiveness into a case they do not understand and that does not secure them. If they would contend that God *may not destroy men*, unless he first give them a written revelation of his will, and give them opportunity to reject an offered Savior, they are to see to it that they adopt a sentiment like this, on arguments that God will approve, else they undo themselves by their own vain philosophy.

The *discrepancies of the bible*, constitute a powerful objection to its reception. The fact we do not dispute that there are some detached passages which appear to be contradictory. But a candid mind, acquainted with the bible, and willing to see those discrep-

ancies reconciled, will rather be strengthened than disturbed in his faith by them. Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, yet Jesus baptized not, but his disciples. He did it as Solomon built the temple, i. e. it was done by his sanction. It is appointed to all men once to die, yet if a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death: the one means natural and the other spiritual or eternal death. God will not repent, will not change his mind and counsel as men do from want of foresight; yet it repented the Lord that he had made man, and that he had set up Saul to be king; that is, he changed his course of procedure as men do when they change their minds: all said in condescension to our weak capacities.

The genealogies of Matthew, and Luke differ, without contradiction, because Matthew wrote in Hebrew, principally for the use of the Jews, and therefore traces the pedigree of Jesus Christ, downward from Abraham to David, and through Solomon to Jacob and Joseph the reputed father of Christ. Luke's pedigree was written in Greek for the use of the Gentiles and traced from Heli, the father of Mary, to David through Nathan and Abraham to Adam. As to the order of narrating events in the gospel, we are to remember that Matthew and John were constant companions of our Lord, and would be most likely to narrate things in their order of time, while Luke and Mark followed the order in which things were narrated to them by the apostles, hence many discrepancies in the order of time. One apostle notices one circumstance, and another some other one, in the same narration; here an apparent discrepancy in this story, but no contradiction. For instance, one apostle makes the *two thieves* and another but *one* above the Savior as they hung on the cross; but we see in a moment, that the one stated what he saw at an earlier hour, when both the thieves were impenitent, while the other gives us the state of things after one of the thieves was converted, and the other continued to rail. When Paul was on his way to Damascus and the Savior called him, one Evangelist says that his companion heard not the voice that addressed him, while another says they did hear the voice. But how easy to perceive that they might all hear the sound and Paul only distinguish what was said. We should gather from one Evangelist that Christ's celebrated sermon was delivered on a mountain, and from another on the plain, but who can be ignorant that when a mountain drops gradually into a plain there is a spot which one might attach to the mountain and another to the plain. Two Evangelists say, on a certain occasion, that after *six days*, Jesus taketh Peter and James and John his

brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, another says about an *eight days* after. Now nothing can be plainer than that the last of the three includes in the eight days the day of the discourse and the day of the transfiguration, which, added to the six days between, make the eight. Thus every discrepancy in the Bible can easily be reconciled by a candid mind. Instead of unsettling our faith in the Bible, they constitute in fact, as we shall see directly, a strong corroborative testimony of its authenticity.

Another objection to the bible has been drawn *from its history*, especially the severity of some of the christian dispensations there recorded. The extirpation of the Canaanites for instance. On this subject let me say, that the Canaanites were notoriously wicked, and deserved to be destroyed. The objection lies against Israel being employed to inflict the judgments they deserved. And why not employ men to do it with as much propriety as famine, or pestilence, or earthquake, or wild beasts! Besides it may be doubted whether Israel had not a better right to the soul than the Canaanites, and were not its first proprietors; and if so they had a prior right to the lands, and might demand their right, and if God so directed, used the sword to obtain it. And this answered most others, that infidels have made a handle of, are answered. If men deserved to be destroyed, if nations merit extermination, God may treat them as they deserve, and may employ what instruments he pleases in the execution of his wrath. If he command men to avenge him on his adversaries, it is impeaching his righteousness and his sovereignty to complain of his dealings. "May I not do what I will with mine own," is the only answer in the case, that should satisfy every honest mind.

The *inconsistencies of professors of religion* have ever constituted one of the boldest pleas of infidelity. On this subject there are a few things to be said which it seems must be sufficient to silence every cavil. Do those who complain feel grieved that Christians are not more holy? Do they then practice themselves a better morality than the christian? Are they *more or less* pleased with Christians, the more holy they are? These questions are easily answered. We ask again, do they blame Christians for not coming up to the Bible standard of morality? If so, then it is not the Bible but the Christians they would censure. The Bible thus teaches a good and substantial morality? Or do they wish to be understood that the Bible bears Christians out in their sins, and is of course a bad book, and cannot be from God. If so, and this must be the ground they take, else how have the faults of **pro**

fessors any concern with the authenticity of the Scriptures ; then we ask how does it happen again,

That the *unreasonable strictness* of the Bible morality is also made to constitute an objection to its authenticity ? Perhaps no objection is more common. Christians are the subjects of sneer and contempt, more probably than for any other reason, because of their scrupulous regard for Bible precepts, forbidding them this and that and the other (as the world says) innocent gratification. Now the enemies of divine revelation may not bring it as one charge against the bible that it teaches so loose a morality that the Christians who shape their lives by it are not so moral as other men ; and yet object to the Bible that its morality is immeasurably rigid, forbidding the innocent indulgence of the right affections. One of these theories destroys the other, and men should be more consistent than to hold to them both. Either admit that the Bible teaches a bad morality, and is to be considered as the cause of the sins of God's people ; or it teaches a good morality, and God's people do not regulate their lives by it, and thus the quarrel is not with the Bible but with the hypocrites who pretend to believe it.

Another objection to the Bible is drawn from the *tumults occasioned by its advocates*. The charge brought against the apostles was in the very spirit of this objection : " Those that have turned the world upside down, have come hither also." And our Lord predicted that this would be the effect of his religion. He came not to bring peace but a sword. His gospel would set a man at variance with his son, and the son with his father ; the mother with her daughter, and the daughter with her mother ; the mother-in-law with her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law ; and a man's foes should be, from that time, they of his own household. Now there is one question which every honest man should settle before he uses this argument against the religion of the Gospel. Does religion make war with the peace and happiness of the world, or do the men of the world make war with religion ? The angels went down to Sodom, and their coming excited a tumult, but were the angels the aggressors, or the people of Sodom ? The coming of the apostles to certain places raised a commotion, but was the tumult excited by some attack which the apostles made upon their quietness, or an attack made upon them by their adversaries ? Jesus Christ disturbed the quiet of the world more than any other one that ever dwelt on its surface, but was he a turbulent and warlike spirit, or did the world *without cause* swear its peace against him ? Is his religion pas-

sionate, or proud, or overbearing, or selfish, or turbulent? Did he teach his disciples to resist evil, or to be meek?—to contend for their rights, or take joyfully the spoiling of their goods? To aspire after place, and honor, and office, or to hold themselves the subjects of a kingdom which is not of this world? When they would put him on a throne, did he second their measures, or hide himself from their notice? If the fault is not in this case with the Bible, nor yet with the men of the world who we have supposed waged the quarrel, but with the Christians who do not imbibe the spirit of their Master nor of the Gospel, then why are the faults of professors in this case made an argument against the Bible? The Bible is a good book, and the calamity is that Christians will not imbibe its spirit. And Christians lament this far more than do infidels.

The *hardness of the doctrines* of the Bible constitutes an objection to its authenticity. Entire depravity, which allows not an unregenerate man the credit of having one single right affection in his heart; and the sovereignty of God, which gives him entire control of his creatures; and the necessity of regeneration, which reflects upon men as all wrong in their principles and conduct till they are born anew; the necessity of the Spirit's influence which renders men dependant for the agency that sanctifies them—all the doctrines of the Bible are offensive, and together constitute a creed at war with all the native principles of the heart. And the enemies of revelation hardly know here what ground to take, whether to own that these doctrines are in the Bible, and discard the Bible; or to accuse the Christians of teaching what is not in the Bible, and discard them, and become themselves the professors of its religion. Hence the division of the great family of unbelievers into infidels avowedly, and Unitarians with all their variety of subdivisions.

It is not an unfrequent objection to the Bible, that its sanctions are *unnecessarily severe*. The grand point of attack here is, everlasting misery, threatened for the sins of this short life. Men argue, that it is inconsistent with the Divine goodness, to make sensitive beings, and suffer them so to offend him as to become, by this means, eternally miserable. They do not see, and will not believe, that sin deserves so prolonged a punishment. They do not see why, in every case, God cannot freely pardon the sinner, whether he repent or not, and thus save him from so fearful a doom. But who can say how much punishment sin deserves? and who assert that, that if any less punishment was inflicted than is deserved, it might not do infinite mischief in the Divine government? Who can show, conclusively, that agents would have been erected

without leaving them at liberty to undo themselves for ever? And who dare say that agents had better not have been erected, than to have been placed in such risk? Who dare assert, that it would have comported at all with the Divine government, to harden sinners without an atonement, and without repentance, or pardon them through the atonement, without their voluntary acceptance of it? Who dares assert, that the ruin of a part of our race in hell may not be the grand and the only means that can restrain other worlds from open revolt. Hence, who can be presumptuous enough to affirm, that the ruin eternal of some rational immortal beings may not comport with the infinite benevolence of God?

And the Bible ought not to be rejected on mere negative argument. Men should show, *certainly* and *positively*, that eternal punishment cannot be just, or useful, or consistent with the Divine goodness, before they found any argument upon it against the Bible. And here again, as in the last case, we find the same men embracing both sides of the alternative. They will both argue, that no such doctrine is in the Bible; and also reject the Bible, because *it is there*. There is nothing more common than to find a man a universalist and an infidel too; though inconsistent as it is common. To make the Bible prove some false religion, and embrace that religion, and then deny the Bible, is to industriously lay rocks under one's house, and glory in its stability, and then assert the rocks to be mere clay.

We would name other objections that have been brought against the Bible, but they are all futile, like those that have been noticed. The book has been rejected, because men like not to retain God in their knowledge. The evidences that establish its divinity are satisfactory to every mind that the Holy Ghost has made honest. Let us look at them.

I promised to give the reasons *why believers in Divine revelation receive the Bible as the word of God*.

I offer, as the first reason, the *impossibility of accounting for its existence but on the supposition that it was given by inspiration of God*. Who would write such a book? They could not be good men, unless they were inspired; for they declare that they wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost; hence are found liars, if there is no such thing as inspiration. They profess to have received their communications from heaven, and to declare the word of the Lord. Moreover, good men would have no motive for writing such a book, if not inspired. It offered them no means of gain, or of rising to power or influence in this life; and if false, no prospect of immortality. They must have honors, if they were

men of sense, and their writings declare this, that bonds and imprisonment, instead of honors, would await them, for so condemning the world as they have in the Bible; and it would seem most of them suffered death. Hence good men did not write the Bible, unless they wrote by inspiration of God.

And bad men *would* not, for reasons that are still more unanswerable. They would not write a book condemning themselves, a book that bad men have hated in every age since it was written. They would have no motive. Suppose them convinced that the book would do the world good, such men are not desirous to do good. And they could easily see that they could hope for no reward in this world, and they have no idea of suffering now in order to be happy hereafter.

And beside, we have indubitable evidence that it was written by many different men in very different circumstances of life, and in different ages. Hence the necessity of a great amount of concert, which we cannot suppose to have existed without a miracle, more difficult to believe than anything we are required to believe in the Bible. Bad men cannot be supposed to have written the Bible.

There is perhaps one other supposition, that is, that good men wrote the book, under a mistaken impression that they were inspired by the Holy Ghost: they were self-deceived. This however is incredible; for they surely would know, if they were sane, that they were or were not supernaturally assisted in the work; and the Bible wears no marks of being the effusions of distraction.

Where then did the Bible come from, if it is not what it professes to be, the word of the Lord. This one argument, if there were no other, has always cured my infidelity. To doubt whether the Bible came from God, I must believe what is infinitely more incredible than to believe the Bible inspired by his Spirit, and sent to be the guide and the salvation of ruined man.

The *unparalleled morality of the Bible* is a powerful testimony that it came from God. Search all the uninspired writings of antiquity, and cull out carefully every moral precept, and put them together, and the whole will not contain an amount of sound morality, equal to some insulated precept of the Bible. If a Grecian or Roman poet or orator hit upon some wise saying, resembling even remotely some precept of the Bible, it denominated him *the wise man*. Their writings constituted no sufficient guide to holiness or happiness, suited at all to the exigences of a ruined world. A spirit of benevolence, of forgiveness, of meekness, of humility, were untaught in their writings, and evidently lay beyond their

conceptions. And there were wise men on earth, there was talent, there was the power of discovery, of invention, but there was nothing like a sound morality invented. Hence, how did it happen that all at once there was thrown out upon the world one book, like no other that had ever been heard of, filled with moral precepts, like nothing that had ever been known since the world began. And this not written by a Seneca, a Plato, or a Socrates, the wisest of antiquity, but by a company of men, few, if any of whom had been schooled in the sciences of antiquity. Some of them it is true, were kings; others shepherds; others fishermen, and tent-makers; none of them celebrated for other writings, which had attracted the gaze of a world. They are not heard of as men of science and literature, till they write the Bible, and lo! there was never any book like it. You will find in it ten thousand precepts so grand and finished that the poorest of them all, if we may call a heavenly precept poor, outshines in excellence the richest moral maxim that ever graced the page of any book that the wisest man living had ever written. Now, how can all this happen without a Divine agency? How can such a book be considered of no higher origin than a polluted and benighted man?

And what we may properly notice here, The writers, though born in countries and ages far separated, and without the possibility of concert, and taken from every variety of station and company, all teach the same morality, with not a single discrepancy that is not easily harmonized. Now to believe that all this could happen without a Divine agency, is to exhibit a credulity never displayed in the belief of truth. The infidel must here surmount a barrier that he would not meet with in giving his full assent to every line of the Bible. I notice again,

The *change of character* for the better that the *reading and preaching of the Gospel produces*. We have seen men under its influence putting off the character they had always worn, and changed in their temper and conduct till they were emphatically new men. The drunkard has become sober, the profane civil, the debauched pure, the idle industrious, the quarrelsome meek, the churl liberal; from no other cause that would be seen but the instructions of the Bible. The Bible tells us of an efficient cause, impressing bible truth upon the conscience and the heart, the Spirit of God, using the language of inspiration as his sword by which he divides asunder the soul and spirit, &c. But the Bible, were it not inspired truth, would effect no such change; and the Holy Spirit, were not the Gospel inspired, would not use it as his in-

strument. Hence no account would be given of the astonishing changes which the Gospel produces, should we abandon the idea of its divine original. The Shaster and the Koran, let not the sword go with them, would produce no conversions, and if they did would change men for the worse. And this evidence of inspiration is always at hand. The effects I have noticed are produced every year in all lands where the Gospel is. Thus have we a living testimony, in every conversion, that the Bible came from heaven.

The *discrepancies of the Bible*, while there is a harmony of design and of doctrine running through all its pages, is evidence of its truth. I have noticed some of these discrepancies in the early part of my plea, and now refer to them as I promised, as evidence of the truth of the Bible. They show that there was among the writers no concert, and no design in any of them to deceive. Had the Bible been a mere human fabrication, framed with intention to deceive, more pains had been taken to avoid any appearance of contradiction. One writer would not have made Jacob's family which went down into Egypt to consist of threescore and ten souls, and another of threescore and fifteen; though very easily reconciled. One Evangelist would not have fixed on the *third* hour and another the *sixth*, as the time of the Savior's crucifixion. Care would have been taken lest their apparent discrepancies should have discredited the whole story. When men utter only truths, they have no fear of contradicting themselves, or of contradicting others who utter the same truths or other truths. In courts of law, nothing sooner throws suspicion over the testimony, than a minute circumstantial agreement between two witnesses.

Circumstantial variations are proof that there has been no adjusting of testimony one to the other. And honest men will come to the same conclusion in canvassing the evidences of divine revelation. I once asked a confirmed Deist what was his best evidence against the truth of inspiration. He answered, the contradictions, as he termed them. He stated some of the more prominent, and heard my expositions, and my assurances that my own mind once labored on this very point; but since the trial of a certain cause which I attended, where two witnesses had collated the circumstances of their testimony, intending to make out a lie to be the truth, I had viewed the discrepancies of the Bible as a solid argument of its divinity. He took a day to think on the subject, and then declared that I had sapped the foundation of his infidelity. From that time onward, he espoused the Bible as the book of God.

*The accuracy with which the Bible describes the human heart proves*

its divinity, unanswerably, to every man who has had a knowledge of himself. I know this argument can have force only with such as have been the subjects of conviction—and most men have been, to a greater or less extent. The man who has been merely convicted, but has not repented, would see in the moment of alarm that the Bible, if I may so speak, knew him well. It described the workings of unbelief, the resistance he made to divine truth, the reluctance with which he received, on many subjects, the testimony of God, and the bare assent he gave, when he could withstand no longer, to the truth of the distinguishing doctrines of revelation. It laid naked the self-righteousness of the heart, its mighty effort to be justified by its own doings to the neglect of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It told him all things that ever he had done, and thus established its divinity. It made him, through the Spirit's influence, to bear the iniquities of his youth, to smite upon his thigh, to be ashamed and confounded. It caused his sins to find him out; and if, finally, he did not repent or believe, yet has he not forgotten, nor will he forget, when he is lost, how piercing was the eye of divine truth in that period of his alarm: a reason here, perhaps, why, of all men, none become so enormously wicked, as those who have once been brought very nigh to the kingdom of God. It must require, in one whose heart has been laid naked to his own gaze, a desperate resistance to enable him to overcome the obstacles that block up his way to life and salvation. And if his convictions resulted in his becoming a new creature, he has still more conclusive evidence of the divinity of the Scriptures, as they have portrayed the emotions of piety, and shown their power to melt a heart of stone. The regenerate man, who alone is willing to be searched, has discovered in the Bible a kind of omniscience. The remains of his depravity are there depicted, as with the brilliant sunbeams: the struggle made by the flesh to overcome the emotions of the spirit, and the fierce and wondrous conflict between the old and the new man, all the exercises of his holy nature, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, are there exactly described, fast as his renewed heart puts them forth. Hence both the Christian and the sinner that has been awakened—and those include about the whole of the human family found in Christian lands—have evidence of the divinity of the Scriptures in the wondrous power it has to enter and examine the human heart. And all men, if they would suffer themselves to think, would find themselves so searched out in the Bible, that they would want no other evidence of its divine authority.

The *prophecies* of Scripture which have been in a process of fulfilment, long since the most sceptical will acknowledge the Bible was written, prove its Divine origin. That the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were extant, and extensively read while yet Jerusalem was standing, is a historical fact, which no candid deist will doubt. And who but God could so minutely describe the siege in all its minutiae, even to the picture of one of the Roman standards? "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

The prophecies concerning the Jews, their scattered, and peeled, and persecuted, and homeless, and enslaved, and insulated condition; and which are in fact a history of their present state, is an overwhelming evidence of the Divinity of the Scriptures. What other nation was ever conquered, and did not soon lose themselves among the conquerors, so that in a very few years, they could not be distinguished from the mass of the population around them?

The present exertions to spread the everlasting gospel, the readiness with which many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, evinces that one who *knew* predicted the event. Sabbath schools, and Bible classes, and the progress of the sentiments of freedom, all say that God inspired the Scriptures. "Thy children shall all be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. They shall sit every one under his vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or make them afraid."

O! who can resist the arguments that establish the truth of the Scriptures? How can a sinner stand waiting, before he submits, till other evidence be given that God has spoken to him in his word? Is he not afraid that God will *withdraw* the overture of mercy, instead of giving other and surer tokens that he has authorized that overture to be made? How long does he think God will stretch out his hand to save, if sinners waiting for other assurances that it is his very hand, will not suffer him to pluck them from the wrath to come? Never has there been any case like this under the government of God, a case where mercy was offered, and the perishing, through unbelief of the offer, suffered a total and irretrievable ruin to ensue. Devils had no reprieve offered, had no overture made, and did not put on their chains of darkness through the stubbornness of their infidelity. Had they been offered a return, and a restoration, who can tell but every spirit of them would have come back to loyalty and duty, and God had no opportunity to show his wrath, and make his power known in their signal and fatal discomfiture. And if the inhabitants of any other

world have fallen, none can say that they have not perished as devils have, without the offer of restoration, or if the offer has been made, they have not all put forth a faith in that offer that has secured their entire redemption. But our world is to exhibit, whatever is true of others, the strange spectacle of beings that, having become rebellious, and then, to deepen the darkness of their character, have disputed the validity of the pardon offered, till the overture was withdrawn, and remittance eternally withheld.

And yet the admonitions given from the dying beds of unbelievers have been terrible and repeated in all the ages of infidelity. One would not love to die as did Voltaire and Paine. Principles that yield no support in the dying hour, an immortal being should fear to indulge. A wise man would choose to provide himself a prop against the period when his strength must fail him; would choose to build where no storm could overthrow his habitation.

How horrid to live sustained by the miseries of a dream, and in death wake to the reality that a pardon has been withdrawn, because life was spent in cavilling with the testimony that sustained the validity of the overture! And what other evidence could God have given? Should he have come down himself to read the pardon in our ears? He did. Should he have sent angels down to tell the world that their Lord had come? He did. Should he have made the earth quake to its centre, and put the sun out, that man's attention might be arrested to the proclamation of peace and pardon? He did so. Should he have sent forth an influence strong and mighty as that which shall raise the dead, to subdue to loyalty some millions of those deaf and infatuated rebels? He did so. He sent forth that influence, and called out these millions from their dungeons, and brake off their fetters, and they have stood and plead with others that they would believe and live. And still this remains the same infidel world that it ever has been, carping at the testimony of God, and daring his anger, when they should be wooing his pardoning mercy.

“O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!” And if earth will not hear, may God speedily do his own work, and grant the Spirit's saving influence to mould this rebel world into better form, and cure its plagues of unbelief, and cause those waters to flow out from his sanctuary, that shall carry salvation and joy to the earth's darkest and dreariest and farthest territories. Beneficent God, bless and save them that hitherto would not believe thy word.—AMEN.













