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SERMON DLXXXIV.

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ALL IS YOURS.

"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." 1 Cor. 3 : 21—23.

Our troubles arise, in great measure, from our ignorance of what God intends for us. He means that his church shall be greater, purer, and happier, than it has ever conceived. And all our discontent, repinings, and griefs, would be at once suppressed, if the Spirit were to reveal to us the things which God has prepared for them that love him. Especially would contentions among brethren vanish, if they could only see the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. This is the train of thought which gives occasion to the passage now before us.

The apostle Paul had founded a church at Corinth, and remained with them eighteen months. When he had been some time absent he heard bad news from the beloved Corinthians. There were contentions among them, as he heard from some of the house of Chloe. They were setting up one teacher or apostle against another. The banners of their factions bore the names of these leaders. Their cries were: 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.' The apostle was astonished and afflicted. 'Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?' In his grief, he is constrained to address them as yet 'carnal.' "For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal?" He reminds them of

the true place of ministers. "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

The plain truth is, there is a tendency in fallen men, even in the church, to pervert their own blessings, and to make the ministry itself an occasion of rivalry and strife. God has marked this with his displeasure. He has never given countenance in his word to any undue exaltation of his servants; and when such extravagant fondness is coupled with pride and schismatic separation, it is offensive in his sight.

The wisdom of the apostle is manifested in his mode of correcting this error. He draws away their attention from the servants to the Master, and from instruments to the infinite mercies which they convey. He seems amazed at their perverse disputings. It is as if, in a desert, a company who had come upon a fountain of overflowing living water, should sit down by the brink, and neglect the refreshing spring, and spend their strength in contending about the comparative value of the poor earthen vessels. As though he had said: We who minister are indeed your servants for Jesus' sake. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. We bring you a treasure; but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Learn not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. Look from the frail vessel to the treasure. Consider your vast inheritance, and rise above these insignificant incidents. "Therefore, let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas." Such is the connection of ideas in this interesting context.

DOCTRINE: The highest privileges, hopes, and blessings are given to believers, because of their union with Christ, and God the Father by him. We may follow the stream into the place of the stream, or we may trace up the stream to the spring: it is the latter method which I now propose, inviting you to consider these propositions: I. Christ is God's; II. Ye are Christ's; III. All things are yours. And how would our hearts leap for joy, if we could comprehend all the glorious reality of these truths!

I. *Christ is God's.* Here you behold the first golden link, taking hold of the throne of God and of the Lamb. This is the sacred and eternal fount of all our mercies. "Salvation is of God." The Godhead, without immediate respect to persons, may be intended; and then the Mediator as God-man,

standing between divinity and our fallen race is distinguished from God, as absolutely considered. Or the Almighty Father may be intended; and then the Second Person of the adorable Trinity is held up to our view, as uniting himself with manhood, and covenanting with our race. In either view, we behold Jesus our Redeemer standing before us, and laying his hands on us for good, and pointing with gracious invitation to the august summit, namely, to the inaccessible throne of Jehovah. This he may well do; for 'Christ is God's.' The name of *Christ* is a term of office, being the Greek rendering of the Hebrew Messiah; the corresponding English word being Anointed. In undertaking for us, Jesus receives the holy oil, in a prophetic anointing, a priestly anointing, and a kingly anointing. He discharges the functions of all three, in accomplishing redemption; and his name as Mediator is Christ. But none of these things could he do, unless he were possessed of a divine title. He would never bring us nigh, if he were not eternally nigh himself. But this work he can fully carry on, for 'Christ is God's.'

He is the Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father; a relation which we cannot comprehend, but which is positively revealed. The filial name is one of nearness and tenderness, even on earth; and we know not but that God has made it so that we might by this type the better understand the connection of the heavenly Persons. Christ is the First Begotten, and (in strictness of speech) the Only Begotten. Earthly love, when it mounts highest, is a poor, weak, flickering, half-quenched flame; but O who shall tell us what is meant by heavenly love—divine love—love before all ages—love without all bounds—everlasting, infinite, incomprehensible, of the Father to the Son—of God to God! a love moving on the scale of divine immensity, and acting itself forth in harmony with the divine bliss of the ever-blessed Potentate! Who shall tell us of the waves of infinite complacency and affection, each of which is an ocean, flowing and re-flowing through the unknown ages about the throne of God and the Lamb! Then should we understand the dimensions of the saying, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only *begotten* Son." Christ is the "beloved Son," in whom the adorable Father is evermore "well-pleased." "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." Nay, his will is, "that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." "He that hath seen Him, hath seen the Father; for he and the Father are one."

But this Son of the Highest, in the prosecution of his work, emptied himself of his manifested glory, and bound himself to the yoke, for our sakes. It is impossible to get a glimpse of

him *as Christ*, as anointed mediator, without looking at this. It was not merely God coming down to man : this he did in paradise. It was not merely God anointing man : this he did in the prophets. It was not merely God indwelling : this he did in the holy of holies. But it was God becoming man. It was divinity incarnate. If there is a sentence worthy of being sounded with all the harmonies of earth and all the music of the heavens, and of being sweetly and sublimely chanted, with all the pathos and all the triumph of celestial voices, it is that sentence, *The Word was made Flesh !*

He dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Herein is the love of God manifested, that he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. For our sakes indeed it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to shame, and to accumulate our guilt, and to lay our chastisement and curse : yet never was he more pleasing unto God, than when he was obeying unto death. And at that moment, when the earth trembled and the heavens moaned, and the Son of the Highest, having undergone hours of ignominy and torture, was hanging between heaven and earth, a ghastly, bloody corpse, the depth of humiliation and the extreme of curse, at that moment (if ever) might the word be taken up in heaven, and carried from chorus to chorus of all the angelic people, Christ is God's !

But death could not hold him. Heaven was longing for him. He burst the stony obstacles of the sepulchre. He ascended on high, leading captivity captive. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet ; sing praises to God, sing praises." "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels : the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." The gates, the everlasting doors, have lifted up their heads, and the king of glory hath gone in. He sitteth at the right hand of God ; he ever liveth to make intercession for us. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name. There he sits, expecting till all his enemies be made his footstool. It is Messiah, it is Christ, it is our Redeemer that there sits. And what he asks, he hath. He cannot ask amiss, he cannot ask in vain. His lightest wish were enough to rend the universe. His breath of intercession is mighty as that which formed all worlds. From that right hand of majesty, he says, as he extends the golden sceptre, "Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me." "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." If on earth, then surely in heaven, he may say, "I know that thou hearest me always." Thus contemplating the first link of this connexion we may say with Paul, Christ is God's. The great problem which vexes man, is,

how to approach God. Now it is solved. We have no conception of such love, but it has accomplished this ineffable union.

II. *Ye are Christ's.* This is the second particular in the golden chain that binds us to God. You have seen what God is to Christ; now see what Christ is to you. As near as God is to Christ, so near is Christ to his people. We shall know this better one day; as he has said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Ye are Christ's! This is enough, if you fully reach its meaning, and comprehend who and what Christ is. Ye are his, because God made you over unto him, in a covenant before all worlds. The record of your names is in the book of life; and it is called His book, and it is the Lamb's "book of life from the foundation of the world." "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me:" "of all that he hath given me shall I lose nothing." If you have in you the marks of his people, then were you his before you were in being; as contemplated in the everlasting covenant. Nay, not one step could be taken towards the restoration of sinners, until they were contemplated in Christ as their covenanting-head and surety and representative.

Ye are Christ's because he has purchased you. Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; and what a price! the sufferings and blood and sin-bearing of a Divine Mediator. If any thing can, this makes you his property. Every drop from those sacred veins marks you out as belonging to him forever. Every commemoration of it, at the Lord's table, renews your sense of the glorious connexion. We love that which has cost us much; we are most tenderly attached to those for whom we have suffered, and Christ never looks on his people without the remembrance that he has died for them. What can be a better foundation of a claim to property in any, than dying for them? Ye are Christ's, then, by the depth of his agonies, and the price of his atonement. And since He remembers it, for your sake, O be persuaded, on your part, to remember it for his sake. Say therefore, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Ye are Christ's, because he has taken you into union with himself. This is not a fabulous or a metaphorical union. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." What the head and the heart is to the body, that is Christ to you. The trunk of the vine is not more united to the branches, nor the root and fatness of the olive tree to the leaves and fruit, than Christ is to you. Your nature is now made to partake of his nature; your life is a product of his

life. Your life is hid with Christ in God. You are crucified with Christ, nevertheless you live, yet not ye, but Christ liveth in you. All this is true, just so surely as you have believed. Faith opens the vital communication, and provides the channel, whereby the life of Christ flows into and merges one life, just as the juices of the graft and the stock become inseparably mingled. This union is maintained by the Holy Spirit, who dwells in believers, as the Spirit of Christ; and it is often delightfully felt by believers, when the soul is graciously persuaded that it is Christ's; saying "My Beloved is mine, and I am his."

The problem, (we may say again) is now solved: we have learnt how man may approach unto God. Christ is God's, and we are Christ's; we are therefore not only Christ's but God's; dear not only to the intercessor, but to the Majesty with whom he intercedes. The bond that ties us to the Cross, ties us to the throne. Yes, beloved, Christ's people are God's people. "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." You are now brought nigh to God, even by his well-beloved Son, who introduces you as his own. Hear how he prays, just after the first Eucharist, and just before his last suffering: hear, and understand that ye are Christ's: John xvii. 10, "They are thine, and all thine are mine." "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." Do you doubt whether you are included in that ancient prayer? listen again: "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

If then ye are Christ's, what may you not expect? Standing in this relation to God, and through the intervention of one thus dear to him, you have a foundation for the widest hopes. The Church is safe, and it is sure of unspeakable blessings. Ye are of Christ's own body. Trembling soul! downcast unclean, self-condemned publican! look up to that face that was marred for thee, and believe its glance of unutterable benignity and compassion!

III. *All things are yours.* This seems vast—almost incredible; but what could we expect less? He who has Christ, has all. It is a universe of privilege. If He who gives the greater will give the less, and if he who gives the whole will surely give the part, then He who gives the infinite, will most surely give the subordinate and temporary, yea all things. The argument is one which you may apply to ten thousand

cases of varied want and desire and fear. "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 !"

The apostle begins with the *ministry* ; not because it is the greatest of these good things, but because he happened to be speaking of ministers, and because he was grieved at their overweening and injurious admiration of the earthen vessel, and their jealous contentions for one servant above another. "Do you glory in men ?" says he. O astonishing perverseness of folly ! What ! know you not that the greatest of teachers and apostles are but a part of your inheritance ? Name no longer Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas ; it is a grief to us, and a disparagement to Christ. Did I ever baptize any of you into my own name ; nay, except one family, did I baptize at all ? "for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." And that gospel makes over to you all things, the ministry included. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man." The truth, therefore, which he presses, is this. The ministry is all for your sakes, and a part of that boundless wealth which is included in the covenant between God and your Surety, Christ Jesus the Lord. It is hardly necessary to add, that the very same argument applies to all the means of grace, and all the arrangements of the church. The constitution of God's house, with all its officers ; the holy Scriptures, and all that illustrates and applies them ; the preaching of the Gospel, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the throne of grace, the water of baptism, the table of the Lord ; they are yours, for Christ's sake, and because ye are his.

But holy Paul could not rest here ; having opened such a vista of blessings, he must expatiate ; it is characteristic of his manner. Despising petty rules of unity, he never comes in sight of the great ocean of grace, that he does not launch upon it. Not content to say, 'ministers are yours, I am yours,' he adds, 'and far more also—the *world*, the world is yours !' It is a great name ; to the worldling it is everything, it is his universe ; to you, it is but part. As unsanctified and abused, it is under a curse, it is a temptation and a snare, and he who loves it is the enemy of God ; but to you who are Christ's, the world is subjected, and all its stings are taken away. Your Redeemer did not pray that you should be taken out of the world, but that you should be kept from the evil that is in the world. And more than this, it is yours because it only stands until God's purposes concerning you shall be accomplished. As the theatre of Satan's seeming conquest, it might have sunk down into perdition at the fall ; but it was reserved to be the theatre of the great restoring action ; to be

sanctified by the incarnation, to be trodden by the blessed feet of Jesus, to be bedewed by divine blood, to entomb in its embrace the body which never saw corruption, and to witness the triumphs of the latter glory. It is yours, with all it contains, its treasures, realms, dominions, monarchies and resources ; the world is yours.

But he rises ; there is yet more : *life and death !* words of great import ; they are yours. Whether you live, you live unto the Lord, and whether you die, you die unto the Lord ; living and dying ye are the Lord's, are Christ's, and Christ is God's. All the powers of life—your birth, progress, and term of continuance—all the acts and events of this pilgrimage are included in the gracious plan. And even Death, which you so much dread, instead of being excepted, is expressly named and included ; it shall come as God chooses, and when he chooses ; it shall come as a friend ; it shall come as a deliverer, to unlock your prison, and restore the keys to him who governs death and the unseen world. It is included in the covenant arrangement, and carries not one legitimate terror to such as are Christ's ; for he hath destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and hath delivered them who were all their life-time subject to bondage through fear of death. By naming at one and the same utterance, both life and death, the apostle teaches us to regard them with a holy indifference, himself setting us the example when he says, “ Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death : for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain ; what to choose I wot not. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.” Observe how the name of Christ sweetens every successive mention of dying, to one who is Christ's ! Yea, death itself is yours !

What is it possible for an apostle to add to the inventory of covenant blessings, after this exhaustive statement ? To cut off all misgiving, and cause the cup of salvation to run over the brim, he adds one comprehensive and concluding phrase, ‘ *or things present, or things to come.*’ This life and the other. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. The present life is yours, because it is Christ's, and he gives it to you. All that can be gained and enjoyed of real good in this life, is yours. All things work together for good to them that love God. Your very pains, wants, vexations, weaknesses, fears, temptations, enemies—all are yours. Can you dare to be discontented or disheartened under such a grant ? It must be because you do not understand the covenant. If God be for us, who can be against us ! Are you poor ? I tell you,

you are rich ; “ for he hath said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Are you sorrowful ? Your light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Ah, brethren, attend to the expression “ a moment ;” things present are but for a moment ; and therefore it is that the apostle hastens on to say, not merely things present, but things to come. Human existence on this earth is but the first momentary infant breath of life. See ! all heaven is before you ! Things to come ! What things, he durst not, he could not say. True, he had been caught up into paradise, and had heard somewhat, but they were words ‘ unspeakable,’ which it is neither possible nor lawful for man to utter. “ Things to come are yours : *heaven is yours ;*” and no wonder, for ye are Christ’s, and he is the centre of heaven. Where he is, his people shall be. Revert to his sacramental prayer. He lifts his eyes and prays : “ Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me (i. e. who are Christ’s) be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (i. e. Christ is God’s.) Eternity, in all its inconceivable heights, depths, lengths, breadths, is yours ! What then can befall you, to your injury or loss ? Nothing, unless it can make you cease to be Christ’s. And would you know the security of your tenure ? “ 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.” How admirable the coincidence with our text ! Which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. God, who loves Christ, loves us in him : “ ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Well may he sum up the series, all is yours ! All that you need, all that you could desire, all that your capacity can enjoy, while eternity remains, while the soul expands, while the developements of infinite love in all worlds go onward ; and unspeakably and immeasurably more than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart of man permitted to enter. Fear not, little flock ; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Fear not the messenger who shall come with cold hand to untwine the silver cord, even though with sudden stroke he break the golden bowl. Death is yours. By his means, all the prayers of a long life shall be answered at once, and when he has done you this office, and you see him departing, you bid adieu to the only remaining evil, for he dies himself ; “ and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death !”

Let us stand for a little on this height, and look back upon

the goodly scene. Methinks these are the Delectable Mountains, where the pilgrim sojourned ; and these ordinances, the perspective glass through which we may descry our inheritance. But who shall suffice to describe, or even to discern, "the unspeakable riches of Christ !" To be brought into union with Christ, is to be united to God, and to be made an heir of no less than "all things." True believers are as a body solemnly offered up, and consecrated unto God, and thereby made partakers of his infinite fulness.

1. Such being the glorious fruit of union with Christ, be exhorted, brethren, to contemplate this union. The cord which binds you to him, binds you to all this world of blessing. If you approach the Lord's table, muse upon the holy connexion. Why do you sit there ? Why do you gather around those emblems ? It is to show forth the Lord's death—that death by which you are Christ's, are the Father's, are the heirs of so great a promise. Not only know, but feel your oneness with the Lord. Prepare to participate in a feast upon the sacrifice, a feast which marks this union. By this nourishment, this manna, this 'angel's food,' grow up into Him, who is the head. His strength, his wisdom, his righteousness are here offered to you ; put into your very hands ; extended to your very lips. At this table your "Father giveth you the true bread from heaven ; for the bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." The life he gives you was bought by death. Say, with more faith than those of old, "Lord evermore give us this bread !" Listen to Him, whose you are, and whom you serve, and who by promise is in his house and at his table, when he says, "I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Come to him ; believe on him. When your faith, even feebly, receives him, you are brought nigh to God. "As the Father hath loved us, so love I you ; continue ye in my love." "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." Feel then, that you belong this day, not only to Christ, but to the Father. It is a banquet of fellowship : "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Take then the sacramental bread and wine, as pledges of this gracious union.

2. Contemplate the union of believers with one another. The same bond unites you to the Head and to the members. "All are yours." To whom is this spoken ? To believers. Then, most clearly, believers are joint-heirs with Christ, and

sharers in common of a universal blessing. Children of the same parentage and members of the same family, should love one another. It was his sacramental command re-enacted; Jo. 13: 34, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." There can be no tie more close or tender than our common union to Christ. Ye are Christ's. There are ye knit one to another.

Children of one Father—members of one Head—lovers of one dying Saviour—heirs of one blessing which comprises 'all things;' here, I beseech you, be not estranged one from another. Belie not by cold hearts and evil surmisings the profession of the most tender attachment which is known among men. The same lips which grew pale and cold on the cross, utter the request, 'Little children, love one another.' Perhaps you have doubted of your acceptance: here is a test: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Corinthian disciples contended about ministers. The apostle rebukes them by reminding them, all is yours: The same argument rebukes contention about any thing else. "All things are for your sakes;" being thus enriched, and having a blessing so large that as in regard to the manna every one is sure of having enough and to spare, desist from all heart-burnings and jealousies, and look to your common inheritance. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren; be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Pet. 3: 8, 9.

How unspeakably great the privilege of Christ's Church! What a favor to be brought into it! What could your souls ask more than "all things"? You are come to "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," and through him to "God the Judge of all." You are joined to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Christ is yours, and all is yours. Christ has become to you all in all. You are safe; you are rich. Be firmly settled here, and you may bid the world rage. It is a blessed company. Even such portions of it as are here met are blessed. But most blessed shall it be when all the distinct communions shall be made one; when all separated assemblies shall be convened; when all successive generations of Christians shall sit down together; when we shall see them all, and hear the story of grace recounted by all, from Abel downwards, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, men of great tribulations, and men of great and marvellous pardon;

and when we shall see Him of whom we have heard so much, and believed, alas, so little !

3. Finally, Consider the peculiar and tender relation in which this Scripture shows Christ's ministers, both to Christ's people, and to Christ himself. Ye beloved but unwise and contending Corinthians, see your covenant, according to which life and death are yours, things present and future are yours, but still more specially, Paul is yours, Apollos is yours, Cephas is yours, because ye are Christ's. That is, if there be logic in Paul, Paul, Apollos and Cephas are part of Christ's inheritance and possession. Christ makes them and gives them. It is no unmeaning phrase we read, when it is said of the ascending Christ, "he gave gifts unto men," "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers." It was no accident, as to time and season, that just as he was ascending he said, "Go ye and teach all nations." It is no empty metaphor, when he who appears in the midst of the golden candlesticks, clothed to the feet with a priestly garment, girt with a golden girdle, with eyes like flame, and voice like many waters, and a sharp two-edged sword issuing from his mouth, and whose countenance is as the sun shining in his strength ; when he, at whose feet the beloved disciple falls as dead, says, "I am he who hold the seven stars in my right hand ;" "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." No, my brethren, all these things have a significancy, and show that the ministers of the gospel are yours, because they first are Christ's. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Paul was "free from all," yet for the sake of gaining the more, he made himself "servant unto all." Do not mistake me, as if I held that the power of the ministry is derived from the beloved people, and not from the Lord Jesus Christ, for their sakes. The body of Christ's people have the prerogative of choosing the church-officers who shall rule over them ; but these officers receive all power of authority from the Lord Jesus Christ, through the orderly acts of those who are already in office. These officers are distinctly set forth in the word and recognised in our churches. They are denominated rulers, guides, governors, ensamples, pastors ; and their beloved people are styled the flock. To them belong these ministers and elders, with all their gifts and graces. They are not priests ; they are not, in the Christian sense prophets ; they are not lords over God's heritage ; but they are the voice of Christ to his people. When ordained, they are by that act made ministers of the church at large ; when separated to a particular work, or translated to a particular charge, they are made ministers of that particular church. It is a so-

lemn and heart-touching connexion which is then formed ; one which may well draw upon the deep affections of both parties ; and one which would stretch these cords even to anguish, were it not for the reflection, that the people are the minister's, the minister is the people's ; the people are Christ's, the minister is Christ's ; all things are his—all things are theirs—all things are Christ's—all—all together are God's. Here are foreshadowings of fulfilment for that mysterious promise : " I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

S E R M O N DLXXXV.

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THE IMMORTALITY OF CHARACTER.

" He that is unjust let him be unjust still ; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy let him be holy still." REV. xxii. 11.

THESE words were uttered in anticipation of scenes which are yet to be realized. They evidently refer to that solemn period, so often spoken of in Scripture, when Christ shall come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and to be admired in all them that believe. They intimate, and that most clearly, that whatever *then* the complexion of the soul shall be, it shall continue to be forever. Beyond that day and hour there shall be no change. The separating line when drawn shall be unalterably fixed.

The Bible uniformly represents mankind as made up of two great classes. " The unjust" and " the filthy" are the representatives of one class ; " the righteous" and " the holy," of the other. Our sins or our virtues may differ in their developments, and may be exercised with respect to different objects ; we may not be equally sinful nor equally righteous, yet to the one or the other of these grand divisions, do we individually belong. We are either for God or we are against