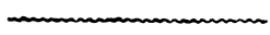


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THE
WORLD REVOLUTIONIZED
BY
THE TRUE RELIGION,
AND
ITS MINISTRY.
AN ORDINATION SERMON.

BY
K
JOHN NIEL M'LEOD, D.D.
Pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, New York.



PHILADELPHIA:
Merrihew & Thompson, Printers,
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The following correspondence indicates the occasion which led to the publication of the present discourse.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 30th, 1843.

DEAR SIR,—We, a Committee of Session of the First Reformed Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, would ask the favor of a copy, for publication, of the excellent sermon, delivered by you on the occasion of the ordination of Mr. Theodorus W. J. Wylie, as joint Pastor with his father, the Rev. Dr. Wylie. A compliance with this request will oblige,

Yours, &c.,

THOMAS McADAM.
GEO. H. STUART.

Rev. Dr. McLeod.

TO MESSRS. THOMAS McADAM and GEORGE H. STUART,

Committee of Session of the First Reformed Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Your letter, requesting a copy of my Sermon preached at the ordination of your junior Pastor, on the 26th October last, for publication, came duly to hand. A request from such a source commands my entire respect, and I comply with it with pleasure. I have taken my earliest leisure, to write it out from my notes and recollections, and I now respectfully submit it to your disposal.

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

JOHN N. McLEOD.

NEW YORK, Nov. 22d, 1843.

SERMON.

"THESE THAT HAVE TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN ARE COME
HITHER ALSO."—*Acts xvii. 6.*

SUCH was the high eulogy pronounced on Paul and Silas, by the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica. The language, as originally applied to those ministers of Jesus Christ, was not indeed designed as complimentary, for it was employed by the enemy. Still it declared the truth, and admirably expressed, both what Christianity was then effecting in the Roman Empire, and what it was intended to accomplish on a grander scale, in after ages. "To turn upside down," when the expression is applied to a moral subject, is to revolutionize completely. And this is the aim of the true religion and its ministry. They seek nothing short of an entire revolution of the moral world.

On the fiftieth day after the death of Jesus Christ, this work of "turning the world upside down," of which the Thessalonian unbelievers complained, was commenced in the city of Jerusalem. And it was a glorious beginning, for then three thousand souls were converted to God, by the preaching of a single sermon. In a few days after, five thousand more were added to the church, and the year had scarcely elapsed, before, as the sacred history informs us, "multitudes, both of men and women, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."* It was not, however, to be expected that a revolution so signal would be permitted to proceed without opposition. Persecution arose, and brute force was employed to stop the progress of the gospel. But as the whirlwind detaches the winged seed from its birth place and distributes it over the earth, so the

* Acts v. 14—vi. 7.

storm of persecution scatters and plants the seed of divine truth. Driven from their homes, the disciples of the Saviour carried their religion with them; "they went every where preaching the word," and before the close of the second year after the Redeemer's death, vast numbers in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the surrounding regions, embraced the offers of the gospel. It was about the forty-fourth year of the Christian era, that the Apostle Paul, whose own mind had been thoroughly revolutionized by the sanctifying power of Christianity, began to preach the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles. And before the expiration of the next ten years, which brings us to the period of his visit to Thessalonica in company with Silas, thousands, and tens of thousands of the pagan inhabitants of Europe, Asia, and Africa, had abandoned their idolatry, and entered the church of Christ. A mighty revolution was indeed in progress. The true religion admitted of no compromise with the existing systems of superstition and immorality, with which it came in conflict, but boldly proclaimed their destruction. Its ministers were fearless and indefatigable in the exhibition of its claims, and successful in persuading vast numbers to give up all for Christ. It was not surprising, therefore, that the advocates of the ancient order of things should regard them as disturbers of the public peace, and denounce them to the civil authorities, as in the language of the text—"*these that have turned the world upside down have come hither also.*"—God the Mediator, whose prerogative it is to overturn the evil that he may establish the good, was "turning the world upside down," by the instrumentality of his own servants, that he might gather his elect of that generation to heaven, and demonstrate his power to accomplish all that he had promised to his church. This *great moral revolution* which had its beginning immediately after the fall of man, and which gathered strength for a new exhibition of its mighty power from the transactions of Calvary, and the scenes of the day of Pentecost, has gone on from age to age. It has effected in every generation, all that God designed should be

accomplished by it. Christendom is indebted to it for all the immunities of spiritual and civil freedom, by which it is distinguished. It is filling heaven, from day to day, with a redeemed and sanctified population, and it will advance until the world is brought back to holiness and God. "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."*

In the text two principal subjects are presented to our consideration ; these are,

I. *The revolution which Christianity is effecting in the world*; and II. *The agency which it employs*. "The world is turned upside down," say the unbelievers of Paul's day, and they who are doing it are "these" ministers of Jesus of Nazareth, "who are come hither also."

The globe which we inhabit is distinguished among the other provinces of Jehovah's empire, as the theatre of two grand revolutions. The first is man's apostacy from God ; and the second his recovery through the mediation of Jesus Christ. By the former he was ruined in all his interests ; and by the latter, which is still in progress, provision is made for his restoration to the favour of God, and confirmation in an eternal life of happiness, on his submission to the terms divinely prescribed in the gospel of free grace. As it was by the power of moral evil the first revolution was produced, it is by the power of the true religion that the second is mainly accomplished. Christianity then, whether we view it in its effects on the individual mind, turning it to holiness and God, or in the reformation it produces on Society at large, is a revolutionary influence. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new."—"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new."† So far as personal character, and social institutions are subjected to

* Revelation xi. 15.

† 2 Cor. v. 17—Revel. xxi. 5.

the influence of the religion of Jesus Christ, they are changed progressively for the better. But more particularly we remark,

1. *That the revolution of Christianity is designed to destroy the kingdom of Satan on the earth.* Satan is an angel ruined by sin. He was the leader in the rebellion of fallen angels, that first revolution of which we hear in God's dominions, turning away his intelligent creatures from Him. He is the author too, of the second, for he tempted man to his apostacy. And now he is "the god of this world." The great majority of our race, from age to age, have been the voluntary subjects of his kingdom, and even at the present moment, amidst all the lights of Christendom, the largest proportion of the numbers, the wealth, and the learning of the world is employed in perpetuating his soul ruining dominion. The character of Satan's kingdom may be known from a consideration of its principal institutions. These are, first, *infidelity*: that system which denies the being of God, the accountability and immortality of the human soul, and all idea of future retribution; which leaves creation without a creator, the universe without a government, and man to a momentary existence on earth, without hope or fear for the future, and at last to lie down and die like the brutes that perish. The devil is no infidel himself. He has too much rationality for that. And with all his ineffable depravity, he is a speculative believer in the great fundamental doctrines of natural and revealed religion. But, oh! how successful he has been since man's fall, in destroying immortal souls, by persuading them to atheism, and deism, and those other forms of unbelief which reject the Bible, and the only Saviour which it reveals. In our own day and country this infidelity is one of the main pillars of the adversary's kingdom. Another institution of Satan's kingdom is *Paganism*. Man is a religious animal. Satan finds him demanding some kind of religion, and he fabricates paganism to meet the requisition. Infidelity rejects God entirely. But Paganism in its various forms deifies every thing that exists, and creates

new things that it may worship them. And the practical effect of all this is, to lead men away from the true God, and to perpetuate Satan's dominion in their hearts. When Paul and Silas went to Thessalonica to "turn the world upside down," as they had been doing in other places, the great majority of human beings were Pagan idolators. It is so still, and with this condition of things Satan is well pleased. To worship the gods which he has made is to worship himself, for they are all his chosen representatives. A third institution of Satan's kingdom is *Popery*. And what is it but a corrupt substitute for the religion of the Son of God? Man somewhat enlightened rejects Paganism as evidently irrational and anti-christian, and the adversary gives him Popery, which is little more than ancient Paganism dressed in some of the robes of Christianity, and baptised in the name of its divine and blessed author. And that we do not speak of it too severely in assigning it this character, is evident from the Scriptures themselves. They denominate it "the lie, the mystery of iniquity,"—and, as personified in its supporters—"the son of perdition, that wicked, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."* *Vice* in its varied forms, is another main pillar of the Devil's kingdom. This is the unrestrained indulgence of the depraved appetites of the soul, and brutalises the intellect, eats out the heart, brings the body to the grave, and destroys the immortal soul for ever. It is a chief instrument by which the "god of this world" brings ruin on his victims.

Religious formalism is also an institution of the Devil's kingdom. The others just referred to are found in the world without, but this exists in the church of God herself. It is the substitution of the mere externals, for the living realities

of the gospel. The religious formalist is the man who is dressed in the garments of salvation, while Satan maintains his dominion in his heart; and he is as really a servant of the adversary as though he openly wore his livery. Over a kingdom supported by these and similar institutions, most skilfully adapted to fallen human nature, as it is, that great master spirit, the Devil, presides, and one of the main objects of the revolutionary movement of Christianity is its destruction. This it aims at effecting not by destroying the persons that support them, but by bringing down the institutions themselves. And just in proportion as the true religion has taken hold of the world, has the power of Satan been curbed and vanquished. Infidels have been taught to acknowledge and serve the true God. Pagan idolaters, as in Thessalonica of old, and as in the Sandwich Islands in our own day, have been induced to give their idols to the moles and the bats. And the papal devotee, the profligate of the world, and the hypocrite in Zion, have been completely transformed in their character, and through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, prepared for the fellowship of God in heaven. God the Saviour has gone from generation to generation, by his spirit, into the kingdom of darkness, and brought out of it his own redeemed sons and daughters. And the day is coming when the revolution of Christianity shall sweep that kingdom from the earth, that on its ruins may be erected the universal millennial kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

2. *The revolution which Christianity is effecting is designed to save the Church of God.* The church, purchased by the blood of Christ, has always been a distinct object in the divine mind. As distinct as the great community of holy angels from the human race, or that race from the various orders of the inferior creation. Considered as she is in the divine mind and invisible, she is composed of the "election of grace" of every age; a portion of this great society is found on earth during every generation, in a visible form, and with her temporary addition of mere nominal professors,

constitutes a distinct organization. From this immortal corporation proceeds the influence that destroys the adversary's kingdom, and *her salvation* is the grand end of the Christianizing revolution. "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."* To secure the salvation of the church, the plan of this mighty revolution was devised in eternity. To carry out the plan to its accomplishment, our globe was saved from destruction by the power of the curse. For the same purpose, the revelation of mercy was made to man in Eden immediately after the fall; and when the fulness of time was come, the Son of God, as the appointed substitute of sinners, came down from heaven, assumed our nature, agonized in Gethsemane, died on Calvary, ascended to the throne of his mediatorial glory, sent his Holy Spirit into the church, and made provision that all the minor revolutions of the world should contribute to the advancement and completion of *this*, the grandest in its objects, its agencies, and its results, which the universe has ever witnessed! History records no evolution by which permanent good has been done to the world, which is not directly or indirectly, traceable to the influence of the true religion, and which has not contributed to the welfare of the church of Jesus Christ. And how often has God overruled those which have been produced by the pride, ambition, and cupidity of man, for the promotion of the same results? It was the influence of Christianity revived in the hearts of man that gave to the world that grand moral revolution—the Protestant Reformation. And, whatever may have been the motives of the statesmen and warriors of Britain in the subjugation of the millions of India, or in the more recent conquest of China, God, the Mediator, is evidently overruling both for the removal of the obstacles to the progress of his kingdom, and to prepare the way for the dissemination of the gospel over all the earth. To save the church, the revolution which converts to holiness and God

* John xvii. 2.

is produced in the soul of the individual sinner. To save the church, the revolutions of States and Empires are managed and controlled by Jesus Christ. And when the last elect sinner is prepared for glory, the revolution which Christianity is now effecting will be completed, this rebel province brought back to its rightful sovereign, and "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," arise.

3. *This revolution is intended to display the divine glory to the intelligent universe.* God is known by his works. But it is not the object of creation; neither is it the design of the scheme of grace, to teach the Divine mind its own capabilities. The creature may need experiment to make him acquainted with his own latent powers, but God possessed an infinite knowledge of his own resources before creation had a being. The grand end of all Jehovah's works is to show his own blessed character, and the principles of his moral government to the intelligent and accountable part of his creation. And how full of benevolence is this design! The more the intelligent creature sees of the excellency of God, the more will he be disposed to admire, love, serve, and seek his enjoyment in him. Revolutions develope principles and illustrate the character of their agents. So of the revolution which the true religion is effecting. It illustrates the character of God, the adorable Trinity, and brings out the principles of his moral government before the mind of the universe, to an extent, and with a splendor of display which mere creation and providence never could have effected. Had no salvation been provided for fallen miserable man, the mercy of God must have remained unexercised and unknown. And to how great a degree does the scheme of redemption enhance the majesty of his holiness, the glory of his grace, and the depth and intensity of his 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."* No revelation made to faithful, or rebel

* John iii. 16.

angels, or to man in innocence, taught the grand doctrine of *substitutionary obedience and suffering*, as the ground of the sinner's pardon and acceptance, and no where else is there made such an awful and overwhelming display of the divine hatred of sin, as in the cross of Jesus Christ. Even "unto principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known, *by the church*, the manifold wisdom of God."* Take away from the universe what it has learned of the character and government of God, from the revolution of Christianity as it has been progressing from age to age, and it would know comparatively little on these momentous subjects. And from this revolution it will be seen, that God will so overrule the introduction of moral evil into the universe, as to promote its highest good, and his own highest glory. Thus will the infinitely wise and gracious design of the God of love, be accomplished; angels and saints made acquainted with his character, and knowing him fully, be made happy in his favour. A revolution which accomplishes such objects as these, is as worthy of God, as it is interesting to his creatures.

II. *The second general topic presented in the text, is the agency employed in the revolution we are considering.* "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." The reference is to the Christian Ministry—the servants of Jesus Christ, who employs their agency in subordination to himself. That agency, then, is to be regarded as :

1. *Divine and almighty,—the agency of God the Mediator.* The destruction of Satan's kingdom, the salvation of the church of God, and the exhibition of the divine character in its harmony and glory before the universe, is a work too stupendous for created power. God the Trinity is the agent in it, and each of the three blessed persons in Deity performs his own voluntary part in the revolution which secures its accomplishment. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it,"

* Ephesians iii. 10.

saith the Lord.* While, however, this is the case, by the arrangements of the economy of grace, Jesus the Mediator is placed at the head of the movement. This august and honourable position He deserves as the reward of his merit, and to its demands he is infinitely competent. "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."† The humiliation of the son of God issuing in his death and burial, was indispensable to the success of the revolution of which we are speaking; and it was as worthy of the divine Father as it was due to his humbled Son, that in the very nature in which he had been degraded, he should be exalted to the throne of universal government. He is "Head over all things to the church which is his body." The whole creation, rational and irrational, holy and depraved, is under his control. The atom of matter, the angel of light, the movements of empires, the spirits of darkness, and all influences that can either facilitate or oppose the progress of his kingdom, are in subserviency to his power; and thus the revolution moves on to its final accomplishment under his irresistible agency. In employing this agency for its appropriate purposes, the Mediator sometimes acts directly, as the punisher of sin, by his destroying judgments. He it is that sends the pestilence, famine and war, to chastise the nations, and in these inflictions his hand should always be seen. But he acts especially by his Holy Spirit whom he has sent into the church as her sanctifier and comforter, and to whom he has assigned the work of preparing his redeemed for glory. It is as the Spirit of the Son that he comes in conversion, to bring back the wandering sinner to God, to comfort the afflicted, to revive the true religion in the hearts of men individually and in masses, and at last to prepare the soul for heaven. But whether he acts by the desolating judgment,

* Ezekiel xxi. 27. † Philip ii. 8, 9.

or the saving moral influence, the divine Mediator himself is the grand agent in carrying on the revolution.

2. *This revolution employs the co-operating agency of holy angels.* The angels are the highest order of intelligent creatures with which we are acquainted,—they are spiritual, intelligent powerful beings, sustained in holiness and happiness, by their connexion with Messiah's throne. And we know from the word of God that they take a deep and absorbing interest in all that concerns the salvation of man, and the honor of the Redeemer of sinners, who is also their own confirming head. Angels are invisible to the human eye, either from its imperfection or their own spirituality; and with them even the saints can hold no sensible communion, in the present state of being. Still it is a matter of revelation that their agency is employed to a vast extent, and with immense utility, in carrying out the designs of the mediatorial kingdom. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,"* is a general promise to the church; and in another connexion the pregnant question is asked, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"† Upon the consideration of this subject we cannot at present enter extensively; but standing on the boundary of the vast and inviting field which it opens, we offer the single thought, that the part assigned to holy angels in carrying on the revolution of grace, is principally to *restrain and counteract the malignant influence of Satan and other fallen angels*, as that is perpetually at work against the church of God. A grand invisible agency which is wholly evil is constantly employed by the devil and his angels, to ruin man and thwart the purposes of grace for his salvation; and to restrain and prevent this, the equally powerful agency of benevolent holy angels is made use of by Jesus Christ, the "Head of all principality and power." While

* Psalm xci. 11. † Hebrews i. 14.

the armies of the prince of darkness are arrayed against Messiah and his church, and opposing the progress of the revolution that shall ultimately deprive him of his usurped dominion over the globe—the hosts of cherubim and seraphim “that kept their first estate,” are holding them in check, preventing their evil designs, throwing the protection of their love and power around the heirs of mercy, and daily making conquests from the kingdom of Satan in our world. It was an angel that destroyed the army of the Assyrian when threatening ruin to the city of God. An angel opened the doors of the prison of Jerusalem, that the Apostles might go forth and continue their work of “turning the world upside down” by the preaching of the cross. The ministry of angels is employed in pouring forth the vials of divine wrath on Antichrist and his supporters, and when the last day shall arrive, angelic agency will be used in awaking the dead from the slumbers of the tomb, in consigning the reprobate to the prison-house of wo, in escorting the redeemed to glory, and in contributing to the production of those other imposing scenes by which the close of time shall be distinguished. Nor are we disposed to confine the work of angels in reference to the heirs of salvation for whom they minister, to that which is merely providential, and having concern with their natural lives. Is there not evidence that they also contribute to their sanctification, and religious comfort? From both revelation and experience we know that Satan and other sinful spirits have access to the human mind for evil—much control over the sentiments and feelings of the heart, and indeed over all the springs of human action, which they touch for the worst of purposes. All this is implied in the doctrine of temptation. And certainly it is not unscriptural to suppose that good spirits have at least as much power over the human soul for good, as bad spirits have for evil. If evil angels suggest error to the intellect, and folly or immorality to the affections, why may not good

angels commend the truth, and encourage purity and holiness of heart and life? If Satan can alarm and terrify, and produce discomfort in various forms, why may we not suppose that Gabriel, and other guardian spirits of the heavenly host, have power to soothe the troubled spirit, and fill the drooping soul with joy? An angel comforted the blessed Saviour when the devil left him after his temptation in the wilderness, and another was present with him for a similar purpose, when he began to recover from his agony in the garden; and surely it is a ministry of consolation that these celestial guardians exercise over his redeemed and believing children, who have fellowship with him in his sufferings. Holy angels are the invisible agents of God the Saviour, in opposing diabolical influences and operations—in taking care of the church purchased by his blood, and in other modes contributing to the progress of the gracious revolution, in whose success they rejoice with exceeding joy. But,

3. *The agency employed in the revolution of Christianity includes the gospel ministry.* "These"—Paul and Silas—these men, these ministers of the gospel, "that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also." Angelic agency belongs to the *invisible*, and that of the gospel ministry to the *visible* world. Co-workers with celestial spirits they constitute the main visible agency employed by Jesus Christ, in bringing back our fallen race to God. "See I have set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, to build and to plant," saith God to the prophet Jeremiah.* And the Apostle Paul appropriates and explains the sentiment, when he adds, in regard to the New Testament ministry, "for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds."† By the alarming and persuasive influence of the tongue and pen proclaiming and applying the truth of God

* Jeremiah i. 10.

† 2 Corinth. x. 4.

to the understandings and hearts of men, the ministers of Christ in Paul's day were pulling down the strongholds of opposition to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and seeking with success the conversion of souls to God. And this is still the appropriate and honorable work of their successors. Every Christian in his place has something to do in advancing the interests of the Saviour's cause, and we have no disposition to undervalue the influence of the sanctified and zealous, whether male or female, in the private membership of the church; we recognise and respect it as of great power for good. But while this is admitted, it is a truth which lies on the surface of divine revelation of both testaments, that God has appointed a *class of public functionaries*, whose special business is the edification of the church, and by whom, as his own ambassadors, he invites back the world to himself. "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 unto God."* Perhaps there is no single passage in the word of God, though it is full of information on the subject, that exhibits with greater distinctness than the one just quoted, the character and employments of the Christian ministry, and the relations they sustain to the church and world. The ambassador is an *officer* of the power which appoints him, and Christ's ambassadors are official persons. The great business of these official persons is "to beseech and pray" men—that is, to exhaust upon them the power of persuasion, that they may be reconciled unto God. And in doing this, they are acting "for Christ," in Christ's stead, as his substitute, as the original word expresses—*his representatives* before the world. And that Paul is not speaking here as an apostle merely, or in reference to any thing that was extraordinary in his office, is evident from the entire connection. Paul has been in heaven for centuries, but the work of reconciling the world to God is still to be done,

* 1 Corinth. v. 20.

and as long as it remains in progress, Christ will have ambassadors to carry it forward. Here also we are presented with the true theory of the origin, and continuance of the ministerial office. The ambassador derives his office from the authority he represents, and not from the persons to whom he is sent, whether they be friends or foes. So of the ambassador of Christ, he does not receive his official power from the men of the world, still at enmity with God, and often rejecting his message; nor even from professing Christians in the church, but from Jesus Christ himself who sends him to the former for their conversion, and to the latter for their edification and comfort. It is the undoubted right of the Christian people to say for themselves, who among Christ's ministers shall be their spiritual guide, but they do not give him his office. Before he can be *their pastor* in particular, he must have received the ministerial office, according to the established order, from those who already possess it themselves. Unlike the offices in the civil state which the scriptures denominate the "ordinance of man,"* the Christian Ministry, is not a creature even of the saints of God, but an institution of Jesus Christ. The minister of the gospel, and his authorized help, the ruling elder, are often styled the *representatives* of the people, and this to convey the idea that they have derived their office from them; we had rather denominate them the representatives of Jesus Christ to the people, and for their spiritual benefit. And again, expressing the same truth, the ministry is represented in scripture as the gift of the exalted Saviour, and of the Holy Spirit to the church for her progressive sanctification. "I will *give* you pastors after mine own heart."† "When he ascended up on high he *gave*—pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry."‡ "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the *Holy Ghost has made you*

* 1 Peter ii. 13.

† Isaiah lxiii. 6.

‡ 1 Corinth. iv. 1.

overseers.”* Here the ministry appears as a precious boon bestowed by Jesus Christ upon his church, and perpetuated in her by the Holy Spirit, as one of the principal means of sanctification to her members. The facts, of the case too, as we find them recorded in the sacred history, sustain this view of the subject. Under the Old Testament dispensation the officers of the church were appointed by God himself. The priesthood took office in the operation of an established and uniform system of law, providing an uninterrupted succession of incumbents. And the Prophets were called in an extraordinary way by the immediate act of their divine master. John the Baptist, too, obtained his office as the forerunner of Jesus Christ, immediately from the hand of God; and when the New Testament economy was introduced, its first ecclesiastical officers received their appointment from the head of the church himself, while he discharged his personal ministry on earth. He called the Apostles individually to his service, and after his resurrection, when he was about to ascend to heaven, he gave them the commission under which the ministry of every age discharge their sacred functions. “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them—and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”† This was spoken, as the context declares, to the “eleven disciples,” and through them to the ordinary ministry of every age. Under the New Testament economy the form of the ministerial office was indeed changed with the change of dispensation, and with the close of the apostolic age, the extraordinary call authenticated by miracle has passed away. But still the same great principle pervades all dispensations alike, and that is, that the ministry of that divinely constituted and immortal corporation, the church of God, derives its power from Jesus Christ, its head and Lord, and is his representative to both saints and sinners

* Acts xx. 28.

† Matt. xxviii. 16–20.

in the world. By the donation of the Father all office power resides originally in Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of Catholic Zion. When he left the world he made a deposit of power, ecclesiastic and spiritual, in the hands of the primitive ministry. When they were planting the church among the nations they "ordained them elders in every church."* And these elders or *Presbyters* were the overseers, or *Bishops* of their respective flocks, and to them belonged the power, acting together as a "Presbytery," to transmit the gift of office to their successors until the end of time. "And the things that thou hast heard of me, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."† The gift of office which Timothy and Titus received from Paul with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, they imparted to the Presbyters whom they ordained in every city and church. These in a similar way transmitted it to other "faithful men," and these again to their successors in subsequent times. The chain of the succession may indeed be buried and hidden in many of its links, but none can demonstrate that it has ever been broken and destroyed. He who has always preserved his church on earth amidst all the changes and corruptions to which she has been exposed, and who has kept the Bible in the hollow of his hand, when it was almost forgotten by the world, has preserved the ministry, and in their hands the gift of office, and it shall not be lost in any coming revolution. We claim, then, for the *Presbyterian Ministry*, the full power of Christ's ambassadors—the entire, and only *Episcopate* which he has ever authorized in his church. For the teaching elders of each and every Christian denomination, "ordained in every church" according to scriptural example, we claim the power of preaching the gospel, of conducting the solemnities of public worship, of dispensing the sacraments, and, in company with their appointed aids, the "elders that rule well," of governing the house of God, as the successors of the primitive ministry of

* Acts xiv. 23. Titus i. 5.

† 2 Tim. ii. 2.

apostolic times, and of other periods more or less remote. And we found the claim to this *ministerial succession*,—the succession of Presbyters all possessing a parity of power—not on any historical documents of man's invention, for none such are to be trusted; but directly on the promise of Jesus Christ, appended to the ministerial commission. "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." God did not intend that the preservation, and transmission of the gift of office in his church should be a matter of sense, but of faith. And faith's foundation and aliment is the divine promise. The promise here is, "lo I am with you," not occasionally and at intervals merely, but "alway"—not "alway" during any particular period short of the world's duration, but "alway even unto the end of the world." The river may run under ground, and it may be muddied and polluted, but still its current runs on from its source to the ocean. Nor, while we reject the claims of a lordly prelacy, can we sympathise with that scheme of half way Presbytery which derives the office of the ministry from the body of the Christian people, and makes the minister of Christ the people's delegate and agent, in the possession and exercise of ecclesiastical authority. What is this but old fashioned Independency in the dress of her ancient opponent? We know that the church and her ministry should never be separated, for their interests are one. We fully accord to the Christian people the right of choosing their own spiritual guides, without restraint from any quarter; and we know that the usefulness of the ministry depends largely on the supports of that Christian public opinion of the whole body of the faithful, which they themselves contribute so much to create and foster—but we are not willing to allow that official power is nothing, or that if it be something, it is distributed in the church as the principle of civil sovereignty is in the state. We are unwilling to sink the character of the ambassador of the "King of kings," in that of the mere agent of even sanctified men and women. We had rather say with Paul "I magnify mine office"—"we have this treasure in earthen

vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”*

To constitute an approved and successful minister of Jesus Christ, three things are indispensable—adequate personal qualifications—an official appointment—and the blessing of the Spirit of God. Among the personal qualifications are first, *holiness of heart and life*. Of Barnabas of old it is said, “that he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith,” and so should it be in the power of man to say of every Christian minister. Unsanctified men may, indeed, be found in the gospel ministry, as there are mere nominal professors in the visible church; and God may overrule even their operations for the good of his people. He may if he pleases make use of an enemy to carry the message of salvation to the sinner. But if he sometimes permits the existence of such in his house, he does not approve of their character, or impious claims to act as his ambassadors. The approved minister of Jesus Christ is a personal friend of that Saviour in whose name he professes to act. He is reconciled personally to God by the blood of his Son, while he beseeches others “in Christ’s stead that they be reconciled unto God.” No man can understand or explain the scriptures aright, unless he has been taught of God the Holy Spirit; and he who persists in officiating at the public altar while yet in an unsanctified condition, does it with a lie in his right hand, for the church and the world both, claim and expect from him the life and conversation of the child of grace. Verily, that individual tampers most fearfully with all his immortal interests, who assumes to speak and act as a minister of Jesus Christ, without being possessed of some good hope through grace, that along with his call to the ministry he has enjoyed the effectual call of God the Holy Spirit, persuading and enabling him to lay hold on eternal life for himself! My Christian brethren in the ministry of various denomination† whom it is my happiness to see be-

* Rom. xi. 13—2 Cor. iv. 7.

† There were several such upon the platform, and others in the body of the house.

fore me, let us improve this solemn occasion, by re-examining the evidences of our own personal piety, and again devoting ourselves to Jesus Christ for personal salvation. Let us take the blessed Redeemer to ourselves as our own Saviour and friend, and then will we be able from our own knowledge of his inestimable worth, to commend him with success, to the faith and acceptance of the world.

A second personal qualification for the ministry is *a sound mind, cultivated by adequate learning*. The Christian minister is a public religious instructor. The Bible is his text book, and salvation through grace the commanding theme of his pulpit exhibitions. In the Bible there is much which the feeble intellect cannot appreciate, and to understand it properly, and present its truths in such a way as to command the respect of men of superior powers and education, requires a more than ordinary mental capacity. When, too, we remember how much intellect, and learning, and knowledge of human nature, are found in the ranks of the opposition to Christ and his cause, it is evident that the church forgets her best interests when she calls to her ministry the feeble minded, and unlettered. So far as we are acquainted with the ministry of the apostolic age, they were all men of vigorous intellects, irrespectively of their extraordinary endowments; and the lack of adequate learning which some of them experienced, was supplied by the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost. And who does not perceive that the learning and mental discipline of Luke and Paul, when these came to be sanctified by the grace of God, gave them a vastly increased power of public usefulness? And let it not be forgotten, that in the ranks of the gospel ministry have always been found, from age to age, some of the most superior, and highly cultivated minds of the existing generation. But,

2. *An official appointment* is necessary to an approved ministry. The best personal qualifications do not make a man an officer, in any department of society. To act officially implies an orderly appointment, and this proceeds on

the three following principles—no man is the proper judge of his own qualifications for public service—society has a right to determine in the appropriate way, who shall administer the offices established for her advantage—and a public appointment is the medium through which God the Mediator ordinarily calls men to his service in the church. The former of these principles are universally understood and acted upon in civil society. No man can assume office in any voluntary association, or in the different departments of State, without the consent of the competent authority. And shall the church of God, which is the most orderly community on earth, that community from which the world has learned its most valuable principles of order, be less careful of her interests? This subject, however, is invested with additional importance when it is remembered that the official appointment, as we have shown already, is the medium through which the Head of the church now calls men to his service. He no longer employs extraordinary modes, but proceeds according to an established order. Nor are we at any loss to know what that order is. It is *ordination by prayer, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*. “Neglect not,” says Paul to Timothy, “the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.”* According to the order thus prescribed, the officers of Christ’s house ordain the candidate of whose qualifications they have previously judged, and thus confer the undivided ministry. This is the official appointment which the Redeemer approves, and thus he calls to the discharge of the embassy of reconciliation.

3. To success in the ministry, *the blessing of the Holy Spirit* is indispensable. “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.”† The Spirit of all grace is the great agent in the conversion of the sinner, and sancti-

* 1 Tim. iv. 14. † 1 Corinth. iii. 6.

fication of the believer in Jesus Christ. He, however, acts through an appointed instrumentality; and his main ordinance for the salvation of man is the Christian ministry. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." "It has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."* And without disrespect to any other divine institution, we are safe in saying that the gospel ministry has always been the chief instrument of the Holy Ghost in bringing sinners to Jesus Christ, and preparing the saints for the rest of heaven. Let God the Sanctifier, therefore, bear the glory. Blessed be his name that he uses the "earthen vessel" of the ministry to convey the favours of grace to their appointed recipients. How dignified, how responsible, how full of blessing to the world is this ministry! View it in the light of God's word, and it will be seen to be one of the best gifts of the exalted Saviour to his church. By the ministers of the cross the sinner is warned of his danger, instructed in his duty, and invited to Jesus Christ for salvation; by them the mourners in Zion are comforted and revived; and by them the saints are edified in their most holy faith. They conduct the solemnities of public worship, dispense the sacraments of the New Testament, and with their appropriate helps administer the discipline and government of the church of God, for the preservation of her truth and purity and the honour of her Head. View the ministry in the light of history, and it will be seen that they have always been the foremost in the preservation of the order of society, constituting a grand preventive moral police, which exercises the most powerful restraint on the bad passions of men. And how much have they effected in the instruction of the ignorant, in dispensing the public and private charity to the destitute, and in reforming and sustaining the literature and the morals, as well as the religion of the world! Who were the grand agents in commencing and giving direction to the

* Romans x. 17. 1 Corinth. i. 21.

Protestant Reformation—that fountain of good, from which streams of blessed influences are still issuing for the benefit of mankind? It was such men as Zuingli, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Henderson, ministers of Jesus Christ. View, in a word, the gospel ministry in the light of our subject, and what does it disclose? It presents them as the main visible agency employed by Jesus Christ in carrying on the *mighty revolution of grace*—co-workers with angels in “turning the world upside down,” that the kingdom of Satan on our earth may be destroyed, that God may be glorified, his Son in our nature honoured to the utmost, and the millions of our fallen race for whom mercy is intended, recovered to holiness and life everlasting!

In conclusion, it is not my province on the present occasion, to attempt any application of the principles of our subject, in the form of practical exhortation. This ground will be properly occupied by the respected brethren who have been appointed to deliver the charges to the pastor, and people.* You will permit me, however, my Christian friends of this congregation, to tender you my warmest congratulations, on the highly auspicious circumstances by which we are now surrounded. We are assembled for the purpose of ordaining to the ministry, and installing as your pastor, the man of your unanimous choice, himself the son of your present pastor, born and nurtured in the midst of you, and progressing from infancy to manhood under your own immediate eye. We eulogize him not. The transactions of this day are evidence of the esteem in which you hold him. Nor are we now giving you a pastor to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of a previous incumbent, or by the hand of death. On the contrary, God is sending you a *second* pastor, while the *first* still survives

* The Rev. Dr. Black, of Pittsburg, charged the pastor, and Rev. Samuel Stevenson, of Philadelphia, the people. There were also present, Rev. Dr. Wylie, who made the ordaining prayer; Rev. Professor Wylie, of the University of Indiana, who proposed the questions, and Rev. Dr. Crawford, who offered the concluding prayer.

in the midst of his usefulness. A generation has gone to the grave since some of you who are now present here, witnessed the induction of your senior pastor, some forty-two years ago, to his present charge. How many souls he has been instrumental in converting to Jesus Christ, since the commencement of his prolonged and efficient ministry, and whom he shall have as his joy and crown, when called to render an account of his stewardship, the closing scene of time can alone disclose. We join with you in rejoicing that he still survives, and that although his head is whitened with the snows of many winters, we may say of him as was said of Moses of old, "his eye is not dim, nor his natural force abated." Allow me again, my Christian brethren of the congregation, and all others who compose the audience which we now address, to ask of each of you a parting question suggested by our text—Have you experienced in your own hearts, that saving revolution which the true religion produces? "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Without this you are still enemies of God, and in danger of his wrath. With it, all is safe.

When the prophet Elijah had finished his career on earth, and was about to enter into his reward, a chariot of fire was sent from God to convey him to the abodes of the blessed. And while he is ascending, the mantle which he wore and which he needs no longer, is seen to fall from his shoulders. It is taken up by the young Elisha, and wrapped around his person, as an emblem of the "spirit of Elijah," which now rested on him, his disciple, and successor in the prophetic office. May it be so in the case before us! May it be long before *this Father Prophet* is called from the service of the church below, which still needs his counsels; but when he too is called to ascend, may his mantle fall upon, and clothe in its ample folds, his well beloved son, whom we now proceed to invest with the sacred ministry, and instal his assistant and successor, in the pastoral office.