

ORIGINAL SERMONS;

BY

Presbyterian Ministers,

IN

THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.

Now, I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

PAUL.

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SERMON I.*

BY THE REV. JOSHUA L. WILSON, D. D.

METHODS OF PEACE.

Let us follow after the things that make for peace. ROM. xiv. 19.

HISTORY, tradition, observation and experience, all announce that this world is a "vast scene of strife." That irrational animals, under the influence of ungovernable instincts, should torment and destroy each other; or, that hopeless fiends should revel in eternal discord, is no matter of surprise—but that rational creatures, preserved in a condition of hope, exposed to everlasting despair, capable of intellectual improvement and social happiness, children of the same family, all looking forward to death and after death the judgment, should, under the influence of pride, prejudice, passion, ambition or avarice, make this world a scene of contention, rapine and blood, is a picture of degeneracy, at the sight of which angels may wonder, and men should weep.

If animosity and strife were *only* found among those "who say unto God, depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways"—if *none* but the avowed sons of Belial were engaged in "*hatred, variance, emulations, wrath and strife*"—there would be less cause for surprise and regret. But, what language can de-

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scribe the affecting scenes, where the professed subjects of the Prince of peace display their hostile banners, and silence the voice of friendship and the accents of love by the clangor of passion and the din of discord; where the experience of age is silenced by the clamor of youth, and the meekness of wisdom scorned as imbecility—where pre-eminence is sought by novelty, and multitudes turned from the “old paths” by innovation; where the true ministers of God are constrained to engage in theological debate with men who corrupt the word of God; where all the panoply of heaven is buckled on to defend the church against those who subvert the souls of men by substituting a vain philosophy for the gospel of Christ.

How painful was the task imposed on the apostles and elders when they were constrained to leave their several fields of delightful and useful labor, and assemble at Jerusalem, not to contend with infidel Jews nor with Pagan philosophers, not to push their united force against the common and avowed enemies of the cross of Christ; but to dispute with professing Christians—to measure the weapons of theological warfare with the professed ministers of Jesus Christ—to contend earnestly with men who had gone out from among themselves, troubling the churches and subverting souls with uncommanded words!

How affecting was the premonition given by the apostle Paul to the elders of the church of Ephesus, assembled at Miletus—“Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations—and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, and

have taught you publicly, and from house to house—wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers—to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears!”

In scenes of strife and debate, in scenes of resistance, striving even unto blood, the apostles resembled the prophets. The disciples were like their master, and the servants as their Lord. The reason is plain. Truth and falsehood often meet, and never agree. Every man therefore who wishes to preserve a “good conscience,” must “war a good warfare.” He must not for a moment, nor in the slightest degree, favor that “*monster of modern philosophy*, THE INNOCENCE OF ERROR. He must detect it; pursue it; hunt it down; urge it over the precipice: but permit those who started with it to disentangle themselves and save their lives,” if they can. To accomplish these objects, to remedy evils of such magnitude, to wipe disgrace from the church of God, to cultivate peace by the promotion of purity, the ministers of reconciliation point to the Prince of peace, his precepts, his example. They say to all, “Brethren, whatsoever things are *true, honest, just, lovely* and of *good report*, think on these things.” They say to all,

as in our text, "follow after the things that make for peace."

To this exhortation, brethren, I affectionately invite your attention, while I endeavor to direct your hearts into the love of God, and your feet in the paths of peace. And may the Holy Spirit of truth, grace, and peace descend into every heart, and crown this labor with his smiles and benediction.

The term peace is very significant. It signifies respite from war, quiet from disturbances, exemption from tumults, rest from commotions, reconciliation of differences, suppression of evil passions, freedom from dangerous errors; all foretastes of the highest state of peace, heavenly rest.

My text speaks of peace in general. Were I to descend to particulars, I might recommend spiritual peace, which consists in deliverance from sin, by which we are at enmity with God; social peace, which is a state of mutual agreement and confidence; ecclesiastical peace, which is a freedom from contentions in the church, and exemption from persecution.

On these I cannot now enlarge. The same process which advances peace in general, will promote every kind of peace to which I have alluded.

In pointing out several steps which we may take in following after the things that make for peace, I observe,

1. Every one, who desires to promote peace, must take special care to be himself a good man.

Bad men, in church and state, are like "the troubled sea that cannot rest." From goodness only can we expect the fruits of goodness. The principal characteristics of a good man are love and humility. Love to

God, love to his neighbor, love to his enemies, fills the heart of a good man. The knowledge of what he is, and what he ought to be, a view of his own meanness and the Saviour's merit, a sense of his own vileness by a discovery of the glory of God, a deep conviction of sin and a hope of mercy through the blood of the cross, brings him to the dust, clothes him with humility. He sits at the feet of Jesus, who was meek and lowly in heart. He follows the example of Jesus, who made himself of no reputation.

Too often, my brethren, there is a pernicious distinction made between goodness and greatness. The idea that many form of goodness is low and degrading. To express low thoughts of one, of whom a low opinion is formed, it is not unusual to say, he is a good, well-meaning man. Publish in any of our churches the name of an unknown minister of Jesus Christ, and what do you immediately hear? "Is he a great man?" "Is he a great speaker?" "Shall we be much entertained?" Does not this prove that there is an invidious distinction between goodness and greatness? Ought not persons rather to ask, is he a good man? Is he an evangelical preacher? Shall we be edified in love, comforted in hope, and conducted in the way of truth and peace, by his preaching? Ministers of the gospel are in great danger of being led astray by this popular error. The applause of men, the splendor of distinctions, the sound of titles, too often captivate their hearts; and in their efforts to become great men, they sometimes lose sight of goodness. Such great men frequently disdain to tread in the plain and beaten path of evangelical truth. To reject old systems, to invent new plans, to be the leader of a sect, to soar on the

wings of fancy or sit on the summit of popular applause, are the purposes for which they trim the midnight lamp. "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." But in proportion as reputation is acquired by the sacrifice of goodness, peace is destroyed. Contention, strife, and division, are the concomitants of such greatness. In the opinion of the Lord of glory, the humble man is the great man. "To this man will I look," saith Jehovah, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." It is by cultivating meekness and lowliness of heart that men "follow after the things that make for peace." And let the gilded aspirants who float on the breath of popularity and glitter in the sparks of their own kindling, know that the path of their brightness shall end in darkness, when the humble shall be crowned with a halo of glory. The happy spirits that adore and burn before the throne of the Supreme, are humble. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that would be chief among you let him be servant of all."

2. He who would follow the things that make for peace must, as far as possible, think favorably of the sentiments and conduct of others. I admit that those who are taught of God cannot think favorably of dangerous errors, of evil devices. This is plainly impossible. The idea of a man of common sense and common honesty thinking well of others contrary to evidence, is palpably absurd. But the sons of peace will be more careful to extract the beam than pull out the mote. Every one ought to know that the Lord seeth not as man seeth. Jesus Christ has said, "Judge not from appearance, but judge righteous judgment. A thou-

sand circumstances may influence the opinions and conduct of others, which we can neither know, understand nor appreciate. In all doubtful cases our judgment should be suspended till an opportunity be afforded for a full and impartial investigation. One of the most amiable traits in the portrait of charity is, that she "thinketh no evil." It often happens, that good men who have the same benevolent ends in view differ about the ways and means of accomplishing their designs. In such cases mutual forbearance and candid explanation are indispensable for the promotion of peace. Were men at all times swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath, at all times disposed to bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ, which is love; at all times vigilant and active in following the example of *him* who pities our weakness, helps our infirmities, and forgives our sins, strife would come to an end, and peace universally prevail. Those who believe that God has opened their own eyes, and restored their souls, and made them to walk in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake, ought to feel compassion and exercise forbearance, and hold out the hand of assistance to such as are still under the power of darkness. The sympathies of piety incline us to pity the children of affliction. We hasten to save with a friendly hand those who are exposed to peril, and we experience a gratification in administering to the necessities of the wretched. But who are more the children of affliction than those who are blinded by the God of this world? Who are in more imminent danger than the dead in trespasses and sins? Who are more wretched than the deluded wanderers from God, from heaven, from hope? And shall we pass such with disdain? Shall we repel

them by reproach? Shall we take the attitude of self-righteousness, and despise others? Let us remember the rock whence we were hewn, the hole of the pit whence we were digged, and become the promoters of peace by being gentle towards all men.

3. He who follows after the things that make for peace, must possess and cherish a forgiving temper. In this world of strife every one meets with enemies. However unexceptionable his conduct, however pure his motives, however sound his faith, he will meet with the strife of tongues, and feel the darts of malevolence. To abstain from retaliation, to take joyfully the spoiling of goods, to be patient under reproach, to bless when cursed, to do good when injured, to forgive as he hopes to be forgiven, are labors of love reserved for those *only* who follow after the things that make for peace.

Do you tell me that if your enemies would repent, if they would humble themselves at your feet, if they would confess their faults and redress the wrongs they have done, then you would forgive them; then you would ask the Father of mercies to bless them; then you would cherish them with feelings of benevolence? Let me tell you that for this desirable change of heart and life you must not wait. While they remain your enemies you must do them good, and thus be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect; for "he causeth his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain upon the just and unjust." If you indulge a hostile temper and delay forgiveness till your enemies fall at your feet, till they repair damages and solicit the hand of reconciliation, you do not then forgive an enemy; you embrace a friend. And if you love those

only who love you, you do no more to promote peace than publicans and sinners, and even the most malicious hypocrites.

4. He who would follow after the things that make for peace, must engage in controversy with the meekness of wisdom. The discussion of subjects on which men differ in opinion, is unavoidable. Men of great self-denial, of hopeful piety, of high literary attainments, have taken different views of the same subjects, and been conducted to different conclusions by their investigations. This is not at all surprising, where men "know only in part," and "see through a glass darkly." There is, however, an immutable difference between truth and error, an infallible standard of right and wrong, a correct mode of interpretation. But this difference cannot be perceived, this standard is never reached, this mode will never be adopted where pride, prejudice, passion and love of pre-eminence reign in the hearts of men. Those who enter the list of controversy for the promotion of peace will never indulge in declamation, nor raise the tone of dictation. To the law and testimony they will make their appeal. To promote party interests, to maintain obstinately favorite plans, to strive for victory more than truth, must be always considered unworthy motives in Christian disputation. To garble sentiments, distort principles, misrepresent arguments, is a departure from courtesy and candor. Nor can it subserve the cause of truth nor promote peace, for men to expose their opponents to hatred by alleging their opinions to have been held by bad men. Are we bound to discard a proposition, as false, because wicked men have held the truth in unrighteousness? Could we expose to the greatest odium

whole communities by calling them Papists, Heretics, Calvinists, Arminians, Hopkinsians, or Unitarians, would this settle the important questions concerning the supremacy of the Pope, the doctrines of election, falling from grace, God's being the author of sin, or the divinity of Christ? These, and other points of dispute, if ever decided, will be settled by a very different process, and he who fancies that truth and peace are promoted by names of disgrace, is as far from the ways of wisdom as he who imagines that hatred is the cause of love. We are warranted in saying that the holy scriptures are given by inspiration of God. They are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. To them we should appeal, as an infallible standard.

The Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Therefore many of them believed. Let every one who enters the list of controversy advance with diffidence in himself, confidence in Christ, candor and affection towards his opponents, having for his grand object the glory of God in the advancement of truth and peace. Every man who enters upon theological discussion should think and speak systematically. But as all systems formed by human device are imperfect, Christian theologians must form their system by the oracles of God. The man who examines these oracles, in order to know what to believe and what to do, and holds himself in readiness to add or retrench as the light of God's word requires, is in the way of truth, a promoter of peace, a fair candidate for usefulness and glory.

5. They who follow the things that make for peace, must maintain against all opposition the purity of the church.

The purity of the church consists in sound doctrine, correct discipline, and a deportment becoming the gospel. All men, except fools and maniacs, will have some religion, which they either now profess or intend to profess hereafter. We profess Christianity, giving it preference, from education or choice, to Paganism, Judaism, Mahometanism or Deism. Also, from education or choice, out of about 800 sects of professed Christians, we have selected that particular branch of Presbyterianism now known in North America by the name of General Assembly Presbyterians. Every denomination of Christians makes an appeal, more or less direct, to the Bible. Every Christian sect must say what the Bible teaches, and on this interpretation they must risk their salvation. They have a right, under their responsibility to God, to interpret his word, and to adopt their own mode of explanation. Here their right of explanation ends. Their creed, once expressed—that is, their explanation of what the Bible teaches men to believe and do—once adopted as a system of truth, is their philosophy of the facts of the Bible, and further explanation by them is inadmissible unless they intend to change their creed. Admit them to explain the Bible and thereby form a creed; then admit them to explain their creed; and then admit them to explain that explanation; and you have three creeds instead of one; nay more, you may have twenty creeds under one denomination, and every new expositor may call the explanation of his predecessor or cotemporary stale and worthless.

Such a license as this, would destroy all Christian confidence, distract all Christian societies, and put an end to the legitimate use of creeds and confessions. I say, then, a Confession of Faith, once formed, expresses, according to the views of the framers and adopters, if they be honest men, what the word of God teaches, and men make and adopt a confession at the hazard of their souls. If men see their creed is wrong, let them make a better, but let them deny the former and not profess to retain it while they make a new system by philosophizing on the facts contained in the old one. When we speak then of sound doctrine, or a form of sound words, we mean the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures, expressed in the language of our Confession of Faith. If there be any subject on which the confession has said nothing, on that subject brethren of the same denomination may be allowed kindly to differ in opinion, but on every subject on which the Confession has spoken, they are bound to speak the same things, to mind the same, that there be no division among you. He then who corrupts the Christian creed of the society to which he belongs, corrupts the word of God, on the supposition that the society holds the truth. He who perverts the Confession of Faith of his own church perverts the doctrines of the Bible. He who wrests it wrests the scriptures to his own destruction. If a confession be wrong, leave it, and say in another, what ought to be believed and practised; but wo to that man who says it is right, and yet perverts it. I speak not this unadvisedly. There is no sin, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, so great, as that of preaching "another gospel, which is not another." It would draw down the curse of God

upon an angel from heaven. Wo to that society which frames or adopts an erroneous creed, and wo to that man who professes one creed and preaches another. He may possess the most splendid talents; he may wear the brightest crown of human applause: but it were better for him had he never been born.

Discipline stands intimately connected with doctrine. I am aware that church discipline is treated with levity, and sometimes even with scorn. The censures of an ecclesiastical court are considered by many as mere scarecrows to terrify the weak and ignorant. What ideas have we of a kingdom? Is not Jesus Christ our king? Is he not set upon the holy hill of Zion? Has not an inspired apostle said to the subjects of this kingdom, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account?" Can there be a kingdom without laws, without penalties, without officers, without subordination? The officers in the kingdom of our Lord do not watch for men's bodies, to imprison or torture them; nor for their estates, to confiscate them: *they watch for their souls*, and of their vigilance and fidelity they must give account. The king of Zion has given them power, whether it be believed or disbelieved; not merely the power of teaching, exhorting, warning, reproving, and rebuking; but of suspending and excommunicating the ignorant and scandalous. And what they bind on earth is bound in heaven. The king ratifies every just decision. And wo to that man who treats the discipline of Christ's house with indifference! But discipline should be exercised to promote peace—exercised with prudence, patience, tenderness, affection, deliberation, solemnity, and without partiality.

The promotion of the glory of God, in the salvation of men, by preserving the peace and purity of the church, is the blessed end of discipline. And that discipline will promote the greatest degree of peace which is exercised with the greatest degree of love. Let the strong bear the infirmities of the weak. Let the spiritual restore the tempted. And let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor.

But let discipline be neglected, because the task is arduous, painful, and unpopular; let false teachers be encouraged, because there is an 'elective affinity' for error; let conformity to the world be indulged on the plea of mental cultivation, polite accomplishment, or innocent amusement; let a lax church open its doors and become an asylum for the offenders of a church more strict; let a multitude of small churches be organized in the neighborhood of each other, to gratify discontented minorities, or answer party purposes: and there is an end to peace. The waters of the troubled deep cannot be more agitated by a tempest than will such a corrupt society be disturbed by discord, debate, wrath, strife, heresies, and even tumults.

6. Those who follow the things that make for peace must support the Bible cause. The Bible is God's book. From it we learn our origin and our end. It is designed by its author as the grand instrument of peace. Bible Societies wear a peculiar aspect; an aspect which it is impossible for Satan, with all his artifice, to imitate, pervert, or destroy. Union, purity, and peace form a threefold cord not easily broken. Sacrifices have been perverted, signs and wonders imitated, the Urim and Thummim counterfeited. Missionary Societies, Tract Societies, Education Societies,

Theological Seminaries, and Sabbath Schools, though excellent institutions, may be, and some of them already have been made, the unwilling instruments of propagating the most fatal errors. And what good institution on earth has not been perverted or contaminated by men of corrupt minds? I answer, Bible Societies. These cannot be imitated, perverted, nor overthrown by Satan and his ministers, transformed into an angel of light and ministers of righteousness. Bible Societies, pure in their principles, benevolent in their designs—simple, sublime, and powerful in their operations, are accomplishing by means what was once done by miracle—the communication of the wonderful works of God, to every man in his own tongue wherein he was born. They have done more for the promotion of peace in eighteen years, than was done before for eighteen centuries. They form a point of union for the philanthropist, the patriot, the philosopher, and the Christian. A place where they can all meet without light having fellowship with darkness, or Christ holding concord with Belial. They form an unfurled banner, inscribed with love, around which all Christians can assemble in peace. They form a deep-rooted, towering, and flourishing tree, whose branches spread over every clime, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

Ye lovers of order, ye friends of peace, ye promoters of righteousness, cherish this lovely tree. Sit together under its shadow; partake of its pleasant fruits. O how I long to see the happy day when the peace of God shall reign in every heart, and the nations and churches learn war no more. Come, thou blessed Prince of peace, and cherish this lovely tree.

Here shed the lustre of thy fame;
Diffuse thy grace abroad;
Let distant nations learn thy name,
And own their sovereign Lord.

II. After what has been said, I have time to say but little with regard to the motives which should excite us to follow after the things that make for peace. There are however three leading motives which must operate powerfully upon the heart of every good man. The love of Christ, the command of Christ, the blessing of Christ. Who can resist the Saviour's love? Who can trifle with the Saviour's injunction? Who can slight the Saviour's blessing?

Dear brethren, many of you are called in a particular manner to be ministers of reconciliation, messengers of peace. It is your honor and felicity to pray men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. In order to fulfil your ministry, in order to promote peace, you must buy the truth, and sell it not. You must strive to know, and not shun to declare, "all the counsel of God."

There are times when no voice should be silent, no hand idle among the friends of orthodox principles. They are bound by all that is dear in time, and all that is solemn and glorious in eternity, at the hazard of reproach, and losses, and persecutions, to "display a banner of truth." Many corrupt the doctrines of the gospel at the fountain head, and offer to perishing souls a vain theory, and the mischiefs arising are greatly increased by a zeal and liberality "not according to knowledge." Some esteem the external order of the house of God a matter of no importance, and hence are continually intruding into our churches novelty and innovation. Such a state of things with an intempe-

rate pursuit of wealth—the relaxation of social ties—the violence of political ferment—with the approach of those fearful days which are coming upon the earth, must grieve the godly, ensnare the unwary, stumble the blind, multiply the profane, and instead of promoting peace, spread discord, confusion, and every evil work. And, brethren, will any of you hasten on this work of desolation? Will any of you slumber on till the midnight cry awake you? Awake, arise, commence this hour to follow the things that make for peace; and who can tell what an extent of ruin you may, by the blessing of God, avert from your own souls, your families, your country, and from the church of God? The means of success are placed at your disposal. The subjects of faith “once delivered to the saints,” and the primitive practice of Christians, call for your unwavering attention, not only on account of their intrinsic value, but because they derive a new interest from “the signs of the times.” The precious, uncorrupted truth of the gospel must be maintained, vindicated, and urged upon the consciences of men. The ignorant must be instructed, the timid encouraged, the lukewarm stimulated, the unsound and incorrigible cut off. All must be taught to view, in a juster light than has been common, the nature, value, and importance of the Redeemer’s institutions, which are placed in the church, and must be conducted by the church; for his kingdom is not of this world. All must be put on their guard against the many “Antichrists,” which, in various shapes, are abroad in the world. They must be cautioned against those “swelling words of vanity” and “fair speeches of craft,” by which they are in danger of being led in the paths of delusion. The foundation.

of saving truth, the comely order of Zion, the costly privileges of the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood, must be explored and practiced, and possessed, and enjoyed. Men must be taught in meekness and wisdom to give a "reason of the hope that is in themselves," and a reason for their opposition to the errors of others. They must be led to a better knowledge of the holy scriptures, and be persuaded to resort to those instructors who will "feed them with knowledge and understanding;" to exert themselves in the use of suitable means to procure a ministry of able and faithful men, who will "rightly divide the word of truth," "taking heed unto themselves and to the doctrine," that they may both save themselves and them who hear them; and in fine, they must consider Christian families as the nurseries of the church on earth, as the church on earth is the nursery of the church in heaven; and thus be brought to bring up youth in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord:" and then we shall have peace; then all will speak the same things, and there will be no divisions among you. "The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

SERMON II.

BY THE REV. J. L. WILSON, D. D.

THE CHARACTER OF MAN.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye 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; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by *nature* the children of *wrath*, even as *others*.

EPH. ii. 1, 2, 3.

THE condition of man is here painted, in shades of "*darkness which may be felt.*" The picture is drawn, the circumstances delineated, by the pencil of inspiration. To be by *nature* children of *wrath*, under the power of Satan, habitual practitioners in vice, slaves to sinful desires and lusts, *dead* in trespasses and sins, is a condition of *helpless* depravity. And this condition would be as *hopeless* as it is *helpless*, were it not that there is ONE, who has life in himself, who quickens and raises up whomsoever he will. John v. 21, 25.

Those whose condition is here described, may, perhaps, in the pride and levity of their hearts, smile at a seeming incongruity in our text. They may ask, how can the *dead* walk and talk, and *live* in lusts? Let such souls be once *quickened*, and their smile of levity will be changed into the most solemn inquiry. Acts ii. 37. They will confess their deeds. Acts xix. 18. They will own themselves by *nature* children of *wrath*. Ps. li. 5. They will feel, that a condition of spiritual death, which is the state of all unregenerated men, is the very condition described in our text—*dead in tres-*

passes and sins. Mat. viii. 22, 1 Tim. v. 6, 1 John iii. 14. Compare Ephesians i. 19, 20, and ii. 5, 6, and John v. 24.

It is not uncommon for the inspired writers, in presenting several important topics, in a single sentence; to place that first, in the order of words, which is last, in the order of events; and sometimes that event, which is first in the order of time, is last in the order of description. Thus, in speaking of the power of God, in connexion with the gospel, it is said, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. Here, the purpose of God, in Christ, for the salvation of sinners, is first, in God's plan, but last, in the apostle's description. So in our text, the native character of man, *first* in the order of events, is placed last in the order of language.

Therefore, in the discussion of the subject, the following method is proposed:

I. THE NATIVE CHARACTER OF MAN. *By nature children of wrath.*

II. THE PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF MAN. *Dead in sins, wherein ye walked.*

III. THE RENEWED CHARACTER OF MAN. *You hath he quickened, who were dead.*

I. We are to consider the native character of man.

By character, I mean personal qualities, natural or acquired. By native character, I mean, the temper of mind, and disposition of soul, in which we are born; and the natural inclination or tendency we have to any particular course of conduct—qualities which precede

knowledge and conscience, which are neither imitations nor the effects of example. A native place is the place of one's birth. A native body is that substance, all the members of which were written in God's book and curiously fashioned, before one is brought into the world. And a native character is the state, temper, and disposition of mind in which any one is ushered into life and brought upon the stage of action. This character is antecedent to any moral conduct, in view of obligation, arising from the knowledge of any law, human or divine. Some, with great ingenuity, learning, and labor, have attempted to show that "*by nature*" means *custom*. But the tenor of the scriptures and the confessions of the pious incontestably prove that "*by nature*" signifies those *innate propensities* from which our evil customs or practices flow, as feculent streams from a corrupt fountain. The difference between *nature* and *practice* lays the foundation for the twofold definition of *sin*—"Sin is any want of conformity unto the law of God, or any transgression of the law of God." To come short of the glory of God, that is, to be unholy, is *sin* (Rom. iii. 23) just as much as any actual transgression. 1 John iii. 4.

To be born under the guilt of Adam's first sin, entirely destitute of that righteousness in which man was created; with a *nature* so corrupted as to be "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually," is a miniature picture of the *native character* of man. This is "*original sin*. From this do proceed all actual transgressions." Larger Catechism, Ques. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and scripture proofs there.

It is asserted by some that a *nature* cannot be holy or

unholy.* But this is assertion without proof. What is a nature? A nature consists in the essential properties of any existence which constitute it what it is; which discriminate and distinguish that sort or species from all others. The logical definition of a *nature* is not different from that of a *substance*. It is *that* which constitutes a thing or being what it is; and makes it differ from another thing or being. Bread and a stone are of different *natures*, and hence their different uses. A dove and a vulture are of different *natures*; hence their different propensities and *customs*. The same may be said of the lamb and the lion, of a man and an angel.

When God created man "*upright*" and formed him in his "own image," one part of that image is particularly specified to be "true holiness." Eph. iv. 24, and Lar. Cat. Ques. 17. Holiness is not a single perfection of God, as wisdom, power, goodness, justice, and truth are single perfections; but holiness is essential to God's *nature*, and pervades all his perfections; hence Jehovah is "glorious in holiness." But all created *natures* may change or be changed. God alone is immutable. None but God can say, "I am Jehovah; I change not." Water can be changed into wine. A stone can be made bread. But the wine would not remain water, nor the bread continue a stone. These changes, in the *nature* of things, if they take place, are produced by the direct agency and power of God. But when a holy angel changes into a devil, or a holy man into a sinner, the change from a *holy* to a *sinful nature* is produced by the departure of the creature from the creator when left to himself, that is, when left to the freedom of his own will.

* Dr. Beecher and Mr. Finney,

That the *native character* of man is what I have stated, can be proven,

1. From a scriptural inquiry. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Job xiv. 4. "This inquiry forms a decisive testimony that Job believed in the *doctrine of original sin*." When Eliphaz reproved Job for supposed impiety, he never disputed the correctness of his views on this subject, but consented to the doctrine in its full extent, by asking a similar question, "what is man, that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" Job xv. 14. Bildad, who also disputed with Job, did not contradict him on this point, but asked in his turn, "how can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job xxv. 4.

There can be no propriety in these questions, no truth in the doctrine they imply, if it were true, as some now affirm, that "the nature of man is neither *holy* nor *unholy*;" that "the *first sin* in every man could be prevented by himself;" that "there is no sin but what is *voluntary*." These *moderns* in theology have become wiser than the *ancients*!!!

2. That the native character of man is as has been stated, is proven from one single exception to this general doctrine of *original sin*. God manifest in flesh forms this exception. It is affirmed that he was "born of a woman;" that he was "holy and undefiled;" that he took on him man's nature, with all the essential properties and innocent infirmities thereof, yet without sin." Con. Faith, chap. viii. sec. 2, and proof texts there. And to put a seal upon the lips of some modern theorists, and prevent them from saying, "O very true,

the Son of God was holy, in all his voluntary exercises; but his *nature*, like all other *natures*, was neither *holy* nor *unholy*;" the celestial messenger said to Mary, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35. It was not said *that thing*, which is neither *holy* nor *unholy*, shall be born of thee, and become *holy* by *voluntary moral exercises*; but *that HOLY THING* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. That *holy thing* was no doubt *a nature*. We know it was not "*the nature* of angels." It was the "Word made flesh;" and by the power of the Highest brought into the world *holy*. This single and *only* exception forms a most conclusive argument in support of the doctrine of *original sin*, as it is stated in the standards of our church.

3. The *native character of man* is proven to be as above stated, by the doctrine of the new birth. If the nature of man was not depraved, if sin consisted only in a series of wrong volitions and *practices*, in view of known rules of duty; if, "to say of an accountable creature, that he is depraved by nature, is only to say, that, rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability;"* then there is indeed great need of *reformation*, but no need of *regeneration*. To talk of being "born of God," "born of the Spirit," "created anew," "transformed into the image of God," is very consistent with the doctrine of a depraved *nature*, and the necessity of a radical change, produced by supernatural agency; but

* Dr. Beecher.

all this is supremely absurd, if nothing is wrong but a misdirection of our "capabilities." All that is to be done in that case, is to induce the sinner to change his "governing purpose," and thus "make himself a *new heart*."* And this he can do, for he "is rendered capable by his Maker of obedience," and "ability to obey is indispensable to moral obligation;"† and he "has more power to love God than hate him;"‡ and therefore it is highly absurd to pray that "God would enable sinners to repent and believe."§ It may fairly be presumed that nothing could have induced so many learned writers since the days of Pelagius to cherish such unscriptural opinions, but a strong desire to avoid the doctrine of original sin, and the doctrine of regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost—two doctrines so peculiarly offensive to the pride of the human heart.

4. The sanctification of Jeremiah and John before they were born, proves the native character of man to be as above described. Jer. i. 4, and Luke i. 15. What was the matter with them? These children, like Esau and Jacob, "were not yet born, neither had done good or evil." Rom. ix. 11. The period of their accountability had not yet arrived; but God sanctified them, and kept them alive, and kept them from sin, and kept them for singular usefulness. They were not, like the Son of God, without sin; but they were sanctified before they were born, and through life furnished an evidence of supernatural grace, by their unfeigned obedience.

God thus demonstrated that infants need regeneration; that the Holy Spirit can operate upon them

* Finney. † Dr. Beecher. ‡ Rev. F. A. Ross.

§ Dr. Skinner and Rev. E. Beecher.

directly, without the use of means; and that if he did save two, in this way, who lived long in his service here on earth, he can save thousands, in the same way, on whom "death passed" before they committed actual transgression. Multitudes of infants have been subjected to death, who had never broken any law "after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" that is, knowingly, wilfully, and deliberately. But God, who is rich in mercy, has given us a comfortable hope, that "As infants die in Adam without their own personal transgression, so they will be saved in Christ without their own personal exercise of faith in him; yet they must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.* But if their *natures* were neither *holy* nor *unholy*, they could not be fit for heaven nor hell.

If they were not lost, by the sin of the *first* Adam, they cannot be saved by the righteousness of the *SECOND*. If they did not *fall* by the breach of the covenant of works, they cannot be *raised* by the fulfilment of the covenant of grace.

But those who deny original sin, imputed and conveyed,† must deny also imputed righteousness,‡ in order to appear consistent. Hence it is manifest that they form a system different from that which is adopted by the Presbyterian Church, and preach another gospel.

5. The *native character of man*, as above stated, is proven by the confession of David and the declarations of Christ.

David not only acknowledged his transgressions, but his *sin* was ever before him. He as bitterly lamented that he was conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity as that he had sinned and done evil against heaven and

* Con. F. ch. x. sec. 3. † Ib. ch. vi. sec. 3. ‡ Ib. ch. xi. sec. 1.

in the sight of God. Ps. li. 3—5. How different was this from the language of those who declare “they never repented nor will they ever repent for original sin.” What says our Lord? “A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” It is perfectly fair to determine the *nature* of the tree by the fruit that it bears. Change the *nature* of the tree, and you change the fruit. If a good tree *cannot* produce evil fruit, and if a corrupt tree *cannot* bring forth good fruit, does it not follow that the fruit of a tree neither *good* nor *corrupt* will be like the tree itself, neither *good* nor *evil*? Has this been the case with the fruits produced by the human race? Have their fruits been so harmless and useless as to prove that the nature of the tree was neither holy nor unholy? Have not all actual transgressions demonstrated the original corruption of our whole nature? * Let universal experience, observation, and the word of God answer the question.

Having seen clearly, in the scriptures of truth, in the conduct of all unregenerate men, in the peculiar purity of the son of God, in the sanctification of children before they were born, in the confessions of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and David, in the illustration given by Christ, and in the words of our text, that original sin is the source of all actual sin; I must ask your attention to the next topic of discourse, viz:

II. THE PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF MAN—*Dead in sins, wherein ye walked.*

A dead body is incapable of the pursuits of life. Those objects which engross the attention of the living are in vain presented to attract the notice of the dead.

* Con. Faith ch. vi. sec. 4.

The senseless corpse, left to itself, possesses one uniform tendency to decay. This tendency increases as decay advances, with a rapidity equal to the increased velocity of a globe in motion on an inclined plane. But let this body be embalmed, and decay is retarded. Let the same body be animated, and it is sensitive. Let it be restored to health, and it performs immediately the ordinary functions of life. Light and darkness, beauty and deformity, pleasure and pain, rest and toil, safety and danger, are all perceived and felt, and all produce their appropriate effects. Thus it is with sinful man. While dead in sins, he is incapable of the pursuits and pleasures of the godly. He has eyes, but sees not; ears, but hears not; a heart, but understands not. The light shines, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. The deformity of sin and beauty of holiness are alike unperceived by him. The pains of the second death and the pleasures of eternal life are alike unfelt and unheeded. The natural and habitual tendency of the sinner is downward to perdition. The rolling ball descends the declivity with no more rapidity towards the abyss, than the "dead in trespasses and sins" precipitate to ruin. In a thousand ways he is checked and hindered, and almost stopped in his progress to ruin, like the embalmed body; but never, never does he perform the operations of spiritual life until "quickened together with Christ, by God, who is rich in mercy." Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6.

Nevertheless, it is evident from our text, and from all experience, that men, *dead*, being under sentence of death—*dead*, being exposed to eternal death—*dead*, being as incapable of performing the operations of spiritual life as a corpse is of animal actions—*men, dead*

in sins, can “walk according to the course of this world;” can act under the influence of “the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;” can “have their conversation in the lusts of the flesh;” can be engaged in fulfilling the desires of the carnal mind. “To be carnally minded is death.”

The indubitable evidence of this *death* is **INSENSIBILITY TO ETERNAL THINGS**. To produce instances for proof and illustration, we need not select, from a world in wickedness, the most rare specimens of vice. We need not suppose wealth obtained by injustice, power maintained by oppression, eloquence employed in seduction, treachery concealed under the mantle of piety, or malice ending in murder. We only have to exhibit souls drawn away from God by the enticements of the world. Let us select, as one example, the man of business.

Business, as opposed to idleness, assumes an honorable appearance. The man of business, contrasted with the man of dissipation, feels the dignity of his own pursuits, and exults in a fair and natural consciousness of comparative merit. The sober air of business resembles the garb of sanctity. Diligence, industry, saving of time, order, patience, self-denial, all necessary to success in business, are the very habits of morality. But habits of morality, without the true principles of piety, are like the body without the spirit—*dead*. The man of the world, engrossed in business, forgets God, forgets eternal things, neglects the “great salvation,” heaps up riches to indulge his lusts, and labors for heirs who are, too frequently, ruined by their inheritance. The uncertainty of human life leads him to be exact in his contracts and regular in his accounts, and to risk nothing but his own soul, on the precarious tenure of earthly existence.

Under the spirit of the world, his time, talents, and affections are all absorbed by earthly things, and his chief happiness consists in expectations of greater wealth. All this industry, sobriety, punctuality, and economy exhibit a fearful example of that *insensibility to eternal things*, which places the man of business among the "dead in trespasses and sins." How does this man spend the Lord's days—the *holy Sabbaths*? Unless he engage in his usual pursuits of life, or seek relief by company and amusements, are they not days of dulness to his soul and sluggishness to his body? Are not the ministry of reconciliation and the means of *eternal life* "dull decencies" and "shadowy forms" to him? Look at him in the house of God; for he sometimes there appears; can you believe him the same man whom yesterday you saw on his farm, in his shop, or behind the counter? His whole soul was then awake, his energies were vigorously employed, his capacities had objects, worthy, in his esteem, of their highest efforts. Yesterday he breathed his native air, beheld "the brilliant images of earth's gay glory" play before his vivid imagination; and heart and soul, and mind and strength were passionate devotees at the shrine of MAMMON. To-day he slumbers. It is the Lord's day. The Bible, to him, is cheerless as the desert; the Saviour, a root out of dry ground; the sermon, a glass before the face of a natural man; he goeth away, and "straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." The doctrines of original sin, actual transgression, the incarnation of God's eternal son, the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our reconciliation to God, the resurrection for our justification, the ascension and exaltation of our great high priest, for our encouragement; the renewing, sanctify-

ing, and consoling power of the Holy Ghost, for our salvation; the faith, repentance, humility, and holiness required by the gospel, as evidences of our being fruitful branches united to the true vine; the rewards of the righteous, and eternal damnation of the wicked, are unintelligible mysteries, to the worldly man, whose heart is choked with the cares of avarice, the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things; he is "dead in trespasses and sins."

Take another example. The man of pleasure. The scriptures declare that "she who liveth in pleasure, is *dead* while she liveth." This is as true of men as of women. Pursuits of carnal gratification are as destructive of the principles as they are opposed to the spirit of piety. A round of fashionable entertainments, however harmless in the eyes of the world, clearly demonstrate an *insensibility to eternal things*. Alienated from God, disgusted with holiness, unfitted for heaven, life is spent "after the course of this world, according to the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation, in times past, in the lusts of our flesh." "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" are classed in the blackest list of offenders, to whom God says, "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in the day of slaughter;" yet these are so *dead* in sins, so *insensible* to the doom that awaits the hypocrite, "when God shall take away his soul," that not a few assume a "*form of godliness*," but deny "the *power*."

The man of business deludes himself by a comparison with the man of pleasure. The comparison is, in some respects, just; but the inference is erroneous.

One has a lawful calling; the *other* pursues forbidden objects. *One* is industrious; the *other* worse than idle. *One* is frugal; the *other* prodigal. *One* is sober; the *other*, a reveller. Thus they differ. Yet they are alike. *Both* walk after the course of this world. *Both* fulfil the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. *Both* neglect the "great salvation." *Both* are void of the spirit of Christ. Thus they are alike. And yet they differ. The man of pleasure can hardly believe himself right; the man of business can scarcely think himself wrong. The man of pleasure hurries on, without calculation, as appetite leads or passion propels; the man of business makes due calculation for every thing but heaven, and thus shows himself *insensible* to the gain or loss of his immortal soul.

The prophet Ezekiel once saw "the whole house of Israel," as a valley of dry bones. They were very many and very dry. No "human ability" to unite bone to bone, and make themselves stand up. No "self-determining power" to cover their ghastly skeletons, with all the wonderful, commingled organizations, essential to human forms. No "governing purpose," to bring the "breath of life" into their own *dead* carcasses. *Dead* they were, and *dead* they must ever remain, unless the life-giving God quicken them. A just emblem of our whole race, in their native and practical characters. The whole house of Israel was made up of individuals who were living, and walking, and talking after the course of this world; but *dead* while they *lived*; *insensible* to their present condition, indifferent to the possession and enjoyment of spiritual and eternal life. Can they live? Lord thou knowest. What must be done? Say, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." "For this cause was the gospel preached

to them that were *dead*, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but *live* according to God in the spirit." I Pet. iv. 6. I shall now consider,

III. THE RENEWED CHARACTER OF MAN. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in sins wherewith ye walked.*

When Ezekiel, as he was commanded, prophesied to the *dry bones*, there was a *noise* and a *shaking*, "bone came to his bone." And "lo, sinews and flesh came upon them and skin covered them." When he prophesied to the wind, as he was commanded, "breath came into them; and they *lived*, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Thus it is when the gospel is preached according to the command of its divine author. "God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us when we were dead in sins." Thus there is formed by the power of God a *new character* in man. In the language of the word of God, the man is a "*new creature*." "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. v. 17.

The power to *create* belongs to God alone. The adoring intelligences cast their crowns before the throne of HIM "who liveth for ever and ever," saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power; for *thou hast created ALL THINGS*, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. iv. 11.

1. *To create* is to bring into being or existence something that before had no existence. "In the beginning God *created* the heaven and the earth." Gen. i. 1.

2. *To create* is to change the form, or state, or situation of matter, which cannot change itself, and requires as great power as to make it exist at first. "And God

created great whales, which the waters brought forth abundantly, &c. Gen. i. 21. "God *created* man—and the Lord God *formed* man of the dust of the ground." Gen. i. 27. Compare ii. 7. "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman." Genesis ii. 22.

3. *To create* means also to bring about the miraculous conception, and produce the mysterious person, of God manifested in flesh. "The Lord hath *created* a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man!" Jeremiah xxxi. 22.

4. *To create* is to give and work saving grace in the ruined children of the first Adam, in whom they *died*, by uniting them to Christ, the second Adam, in whom all true believers live. "God——when *we*"—(Paul and other true Christians)—"when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ." "For we are his *workmanship, created* in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. ii. 4, 5, 10.

5. *To create* is to cleanse the heart of a servant of God from remaining corruption, by the power of the Holy Spirit. "*Create* in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Ps. l. 10, 11.

I know of no sixth definition to the word *create*. All these prove that to *create* is the prerogative of God. The fourth and fifth definitions apply to the subject before us, and suggest to our minds the following facts.

1. The *renewed character* of man evinces a great change. Men sometimes undergo political, commercial, physical, and mental changes which are remarkable and very great. Joseph passed very rapidly

from the dungeon to the palace; Job, from a state of great affluence to a condition of poverty; Lazarus, from being a putrid corpse, was instantly restored to life and health; and Legion, in a moment, sat down at the feet of Christ, clothed and in his right mind. These changes, whatever might have been the second causes, or whatever might have been the passive or active condition of those who passed through them, are ascribed to the power of God, but not called *creations*. They are changes wrought in the conditions of men, all of which might be accomplished without the creation of a *new heart*, without the production of a *new character*. If Joseph, Job, Lazarus, and Legion were among the people which the Lord hath "*created* for his praise," "*created* for his glory," then they had undergone a change of character distinct from and far superior to the changes above specified. Psalm cii. 18. Compare Isa. xliii. 6, 7.

2. The *renewed character* of man is produced by the immediate power of God. Those who are *created anew* in Christ Jesus unto good works, receive Christ, believe on his name, and walk in him. These are voluntary exercises, which exhibit a *new character*; but what took place before these exercises? The persons "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 12, 13.

Not of blood. Not by descent from pious parents; for sin, not holiness, is conveyed by ordinary generation; not by the typical sacrifices, for the blood of slain beasts could not purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God; not by the blood of the cross. for that was shed to reconcile things in heaven

and things on earth, and not to change the hearts of either party.

Nor of the will of the flesh. Not born by the “governing purpose” of the whole corrupt nature of man. “For when we were in the *flesh*,— a condition of *native character*,—“the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members,” not to regenerate us, but “to bring forth fruit unto death.” For “they that are in the *flesh*” “cannot please God.” Romans vii. 5, viii. 8, 13.

Nor of the will of man. “A natural man, being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, has no *will* to any spiritual good, accompanying salvation, and no *strength* to convert himself, nor prepare himself for conversion, but on the contrary chooses evil continually. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them.” “No man can come to me (Christ) except the Father who hath sent me draw him.” John vi. 44, 1 Cor. ii. 14, Con. F. ch. ix. sec. 3.

But were born of God. Whatever be the means and subordinate agents employed, God is the immediate and only efficient agent. “That which is born of the spirit is spirit.” “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,” (an unrenewed heart,) “hath he quickened together with him,” (Christ,) “having forgiven you all trespasses.” “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to “the hope of eternal life.” John iii. 6, Col. iii. 13, Tit. iii. 5, 7, Con. F. ch. x. sec. 1, 2.

3. The *renewed character* of man is the evidence of a mysterious change. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." John iii. 8.

Those who discard mystery in religion must reject the Bible; those who discard mystery in nature must reject the book of creation; those who discard mystery in theology must reject God. "Who by searching can find out God? Who can know the Almighty to perfection?"

4. The *renewed character* of man is inseparable from good motives and right volitions. "Thy people shall be *willing* in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." Ps. cx. 3. "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." Rom. vii. 22. "I was not *disobedient* unto the heavenly vision." Acts xxvi. 19. "To *will* is present with me." They who are in Christ Jesus "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." "It is God that worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure." Yet by reason of remaining corruption, the *will* is not made immutably free to good *alone* till the saint shall arrive in a state of glory. Con. F. ch. ix. sec. 4, 5, and proofs there.

5. The *renewed character* of man is formed after the most perfect model; agreeably to an eternal purpose, and for the brightest illustration of God's glory.

At first man was created in the image of God. By sin that image was lost. In the *renewed character* that image is restored. "Ye put off concerning the former conversation the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be *renewed* in the spirit of your mind; and put on the *new man*, which after God

is *created* in righteousness and true holiness; which is *renewed* in knowledge after the *image* of him that created him." Eph. iv. 24, and Col. iii. 10.

The formation of this new character was decided in the election of grace. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the *image* of his son." This is the best model. Rom. viii. 28. "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 2. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy* and without *blame* before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace; being predestinated according to the PURPOSE of him who worketh all things after the *counsel* of his OWN WILL." Eph. i. 3--12.

The formation of this *new character* is begun in regeneration. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are *changed* into the same *image* from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians iii. 18 and iv. 6.

The formation of this *new character* is carried on by the power of God in the perseverance of the saints.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. i. 6. “If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Rom. v. 10. “Because I live ye shall live also.” John xiv. 19. “Kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Pet. i. 5.

The formation of this *new character* was intended by Christ when he gave his life a ransom for many. Mat. xx. 28. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Tit. ii. 14. “Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having *spot* or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be *holy* and without *blemish*.” Eph. v. 25—27. “Lo, I come to do thy *will*, O God;” “by the which *will* we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once*.” “For by *one offering* he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” “Wherefore the Holy Ghost is a witness to us.” “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” “Now where remission of these *is*, there is no more offering for sin.” Hebrews x. 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18.

This *new character* is formed by the use of means and subordinate agents.

Means are God's ordinances—his word, sacraments, prayer, and whatever he has commanded to be said or done. Agents are men and angels, sent to “minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation.” “And he gave—

apostles—prophets—evangelists—pastors—teachers—helps—governments—for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 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.” Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. Compare 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28, and Lar. Cat. Q. 154, 155, and proofs there.

6. The formation of this *new character* is for the highest glory of God. On this point we have the testimony of the angels at the birth of Christ. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.” Luke ii. 14. The testimony of Paul—“Unto me, who 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 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 made known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, by whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him.” Eph. iii. 8—12. The testimony of all the heavenly hosts, and the redeemed in glory. “And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and

the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Rev. v. 5—13. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, AMEN." Rev. vii. 9—12.

SERMON III.

BY THE REVEREND SAYRS GAZLAY.

THE WAY OF SALVATION.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Rom. viii. 3, 4.

THERE are radical principles in the gospel, in which its glory and excellency peculiarly consist. They are those which, in the greatest degree, chafe and mortify human pride; therefore they are most impugned by men: for they require such an exercise of humility, such an implicit deference to the sovereign prerogative of God, such an acknowledgment of our ignorance, that it is difficult for our proud hearts to yield. The loftiness of man does not easily bow so low as to feel the power of the humbling truth, that we are of yesterday, and know nothing; that our apprehension of divine things is as far below God's views as the earth is below the heavens.

In the passage of scripture now proposed for investigation, some of these principles are contained, as the helpless condition of lost sinners, and the doctrines of incarnation, imputation, and justification.

Since God is holy, it must necessarily be, that he exercise holiness in all his works. Here is the origin of the moral law. The holiness which it requires of fallen angels and of elect angels, of fallen man and of man before the fall, is the same; not because the con-

dition of these subjects is the same: for it is not so; but because God is the same. He cannot deny himself.

The holiness of the moral law, the strictness of its requirements, its inflexibility, all demonstrate so much of the divine character and glory, as it is written, *The righteousness of God—being witnessed by the law and the prophets.* Holiness is right and good in its own nature; therefore God, being good, dwells in perfect happiness. As happiness without holiness is impossible, therefore to seek the happiness of creatures is to require them to be holy. The infinite benevolence of the divine nature made it certain that he would desire the happiness, the best good of his creatures: the Lord is good unto all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. The perfect and universal holiness of the moral law is therefore the necessary and unavoidable result of the divine perfections. There is here nothing arbitrary; it could not have been otherwise without infringing upon the divine perfections and glory. Had the moral law yielded any thing, in its strictness, to the weakness and condition of fallen man, it would have made its author the minister of sin, and then the law had not witnessed the righteousness of God, nor been a transcript of his moral character; and then the requirements of the law would have been based on something besides the divine character, as be ye imperfect, because ye cannot do the things that ye would; and not, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Giving laws to regulate society and promote the welfare of an empire, is a royal prerogative, which no king has omitted to exercise. The welfare of community so depends upon it, that it would not manifest a benevolent regard to the good of subjects, to omit it.

All civil governments and all heads of families furnish examples of this principle in government. If it pertains to the head of a family to regulate his house, and to a king to give laws to his empire for the general good, then two things are evident; God has given a law, expressing his will to men; and he has done perfectly right in all the holy requirements of the moral code. The infidel cannot suppose that the holy and benevolent sovereign of all worlds would look on all the cruelty, injustice, and depravity, which the world of men exhibits, and sit a silent spectator of the wickedness and misery. If it be admitted that a father will command and regulate his family, and a king his empire, can it be doubted that God would do as much for his kingdom? He has infinite benevolence, and therefore in faithfulness to the welfare of his kingdom, and in kindness to us, he has blessed us with the instructions and solemn sanctions of the moral law.

God is as holy as he requires us to be: all his ways and thoughts are in perfect accordance with that holiness which he requires of his creatures. When man came from the hand of his creator, he was upright; he was holy; and therefore able to render entire holy obedience to his Creator. Now he is a fallen creature, and as no one can lawfully take an advantage from his own wrong, his accountability remains unimpaired. Since the fall, human nature is depraved; and were *by nature* the children of wrath: not by actions and conduct only are men children of wrath; but they are so *by nature*, guilty, sinful, and under the wrath of God and the curse of his holy law. The carnal mind which we all have by nature, is enmity against God. It is so before we are aware of it, before we know the require-

ments of the law. After we obtain that knowledge, it is too late to avoid the curse; for it will rest upon us, even if afterwards we should render continued perfect obedience: for the man who has once committed theft in violation of the civil law, never can be justified by that law which he has broken, by offending no more. But no man, perceiving his depravity, can avoid the evil to which his nature is prone; whatever efforts he may make in his own strength, still sin dwells in him. This is proved by the universal experience of fallen man, and by the testimony of scripture; *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not—when I would do good, evil is present with me—ye cannot do the things that ye would.* That sin can pertain to our nature or conduct before we are aware, or before we have knowledge of moral obligation, is made evident by what is taught respecting the sin of ignorance: he that did not know his master's will, must notwithstanding be beaten.

The impossibility of a fallen creature's being justified by works, or by any obedience which he can render to the moral law, is what the apostle intends by *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.* That this is the meaning, is evident from the fact, that Jesus came and suffered, to effect the justification of sinners, which was the thing that the law could not do. If this object could possibly have been effected by the law, Christ need not have come and suffered; and if it need not have been done, then it would not: for it is inadmissible that God would do that which was needless: therefore the meaning is clear, as it is written; *if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by*

the law. It is further evident that this is the apostle's meaning, from an evidently parallel passage in a sermon from the lips of the same apostle, recorded Acts xiii. 39: *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

A righteousness was required for the sinner's justification, which, in his fallen state, he could not render: for it was one which answered all the demands of the law—every jot and tittle. Such a righteousness was out of his power; yet the curse of the righteous law rested upon him, and doomed him to death. *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.* A righteousness which an infinitely holy God could accept, must have been perfect. This, which could not be effected under the law, is effected under the gospel: *For the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did.*

The justice of God is a precious and glorious attribute, for which all holy creatures love and adore him. If any one of his perfections be more precious and glorious than another, it may be supposed that it is this. What would save the character of a public man or private citizen, who should give evidence that he was unjust? He might be generous and charitable; but if he defrauded others to bestow alms upon the needy, his character would wear a stain. If the atonement had not been made, no sinner *could* have been saved, unless God had given up his holiness, violated justice, and become mutable; which are impossible: for God is holy and without shadow of turning.

Here perhaps the objector will ask, How is it consistent with justice for God to require, as a condition

of justification, a righteousness beyond what the sinner himself is able to render? It may be replied, the facts are before us. God would not unnecessarily subject his beloved son to the curse of the law. The objection implies that he has done so. It is too late to inquire, how it is consistent with justice for God to require a righteousness for justification, which the sinner is every way unable to render; God has done it, and has declared the fact. If we are not satisfied with his righteous judgment, we have cause to tremble. It is consistent, however, with divine justice, just as it is in the case of fallen angels, who suffer the curse of eternal death; because there is no way in which they can be justified. Neither nature nor grace, law nor gospel affords any method by which it is possible; yet God is just in their treatment.

It is consistent for God to have made that requirement, just as it will be eternally consistent for lost sinners to remain under eternal death, because there will be no way possible by which they can escape from it, or give to God a ransom for their souls. When their inability shall render their punishment unjust, we may expect a new revelation.

It is consistent with divine justice, just as it is consistent with civil justice, to sentence a murderer to the penalty, and bind him to its unavoidable execution; because he cannot do any thing which will repair the breach of the law, or ransom himself from its demands. Will we deny to Jehovah the prerogative which we claim for man?

It is consistent with divine justice; because that justice, being infinite and perfect, cannot be satisfied with any obedience of the sinner that is not perfect and

entire. Nothing less can be accepted without a violation of justice, which is injustice. Our being sinners and obnoxious to the penalty of the law, is a fact which cannot be affected by our inability to work out a justifying righteousness; otherwise we run into the absurdity, that if a sinner cannot render himself holy from his earliest being, so as to fulfil all the requirements of the law, then, as he is not accountable, he is holy; he does fulfil all those requirements; justice is satisfied; God must save him, and save him too from nothing: for if his condemnation would be unjust, then there is no condemnation upon him.

It seems that no doubt need to embarrass the mind of any one upon this subject: for it is a universally acknowledged maxim, that the violator of law is held and bound to the penalty; if this be not consistent with justice, then all law is injustice.

The inefficiency of the law to bring sinners to justification, is not deducible from any fault in the law, but is deducible entirely from our corrupt, fleshly, or carnal nature—*The law was weak through the flesh.* The term “flesh,” in the scriptures, when used in reference to the natural condition of sinners, means their corrupt nature. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. So then, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God. The law was inefficient, from the state that sinners were in—depraved and condemned. The law could not raise that condemnation. The sinner was condemned already; because he was a sinner. *God hath included all under sin, in that all have sinned.* We were born sinners; born under the wrath of God—and were by nature the

children of wrath. Sin entered our hearts ere we were aware of it, and defiled us, and brought the curse upon us. We are degenerate plants of a strange vine; by nature the children of wrath; man is born as a wild ass's colt; the wicked are estranged from the womb; who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? 'How can he be clean that is born of a woman? Adam begat a son in his own likeness. But the depravity of our nature is not all: the sin of our first parent is reckoned to us as ours; by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. We were rendered sinners by that first transgression; and living to act out our depravity, we become guilty of actual transgression. In this condition, this being our flesh, our carnal nature, how apparent is our helplessness under the law. How evident is the inefficiency of the law to bring such sinners to justification.

The condition of the sinner, with respect to his continuance in actual sin, shows his helplessness, even under all the advantages of the new dispensation. If by the convictions of the Spirit, the terrors of eternal judgment, and the power of an awakened conscience, he should really wish he were a Christian, that he might escape the wrath to come; and if he should make the greatest possible efforts, in his own strength, to perform any duty in a holy manner, "every effort would but evince his weakness; every struggle would bind him faster and faster in his chains." This is shown by the words of the Saviour: No man can come unto me, except the Father, which sent me, draw him; for without me ye can do nothing. The helplessness of our carnal state is such, that no efforts in our own strength can deliver us from condemnation, or enable us to render any holy obedience to the divine require-

ments. The influence of the Holy Spirit alone can enable us to comply with the terms of the gospel, because of the weakness of the flesh. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; *the flesh profiteth nothing*. The reason is, we are dead in trespasses and sins; our will is only the exercise of minds entirely sinful, carnal, unholy, and can no more of itself beget a holy exercise, than a thistle can produce figs, or a thorn, grapes. Every unregenerate person yet remains under the law; and all they do is under the law. It is grace, and not works, not unregenerate doings, that can raise them out of this condition: because the law worketh wrath; for as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.

To accomplish an object so congenial to infinite benevolence, as to provide a way by which the justification of a sinner could be effected, the Son, who is equal with God, became incarnate, took upon him our nature; *God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*. He appeared in the world among men, not with all the radiant glory in which he was arrayed in heaven. Although he was the mighty God, he took upon him the form of a servant, the form and appearance of man who is sinful flesh; but he remained holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. While here on earth his divine glory was eclipsed to the eyes of men; but not to the eyes of angels; they still beheld his glory in heaven. To three of the disciples he granted a glimpse of it at his transfiguration. When he had finished his work on earth, he ascended to his wonted glory on the throne of God, according to his petition: *Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was*.

Such language as the following: he took not on him the nature of angels; though he was rich, for our sakes

he became poor; he came into the world, was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, clearly indicates that he was really some other being than these forms indicated. It never was said of a mere man, that he was manifested in the flesh, took upon him the form of a servant; it never could be said. These forms of expression only can be accounted for by what the scriptures in many places openly affirm, that he is God, who created all things, is over all God blessed forever, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.

He became man, not by transmutation, but by a union with manhood, and remained truly both God and man, or Emmanuel, God with us; that he might be a mediator between God and man, a day's man, who might lay his hand upon us both. The work of mediator required this. He must have been man to obey the law given to man, and broken by man; that he might bear the curse that lay upon man; and at the same time, having all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, his expiatory sufferings might be of infinite value; and being endured by one who was really a man, really one of our race; and being endured for us, in our place and on our behalf, God could be just while justifying those who are in him by faith. If the penalty of the law was eternal death, the eternal displeasure of God, yet such was the dignity of the sufferer, such was the value of his sufferings, that, in a shorter period, he suffered as much for his people, for their sins, as entirely satisfied all the demands of justice against them.

That the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ might be of any avail, it was necessary that it be made for those who were to be affected by it; else it could have no

relation to them: therefore the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all. Why cannot fallen angels be saved by this atonement? Simply because it was not made for them. If it were only made for sin indefinitely, it would have as much relation to them as it would have to us. It was our sins then, and not the sins of angels, for which the Saviour suffered, which were condemned in him; it was our sins that were laid upon him. He could not however bear our sins, and not the sins of angels, unless it were that our sins were placed to his account, and theirs were not so placed to his account. This only can be the distinction. When therefore it is said, *and for sin condemned sin in the flesh*, we are compelled to understand that the sin which was condemned in the flesh of Jesus, was the sin which was imputed to him, and laid upon him. If a civil government should apprehend an innocent man and put him to death without laying any thing to his charge, it could not be said that he suffered for the sins of others: for it would not be true, seeing that no such sins were mentioned in his indictment, or in the counts or accusation laid against him; or in the judgment condemning him. Neither could it be said that he was made a sacrifice to public justice: for public justice had no claims for satisfaction upon him; he was innocent. He could only be said to have been made a sacrifice to public injustice, a sacrifice to public disgrace. The civil government that could do so would be infamous in the view of the world. The condemnation and punishment of the innocent, against whom no crime is laid, is an absurdity, the extreme of injustice. It is not so in the condemnation and sufferings of Christ. He died for our sins; for the transgres-

sion of my people was he stricken. The condemnation and sacrifice of Christ has put no stain upon the escutcheon of infinite justice; because he voluntarily consented to be our substitute, and to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. This rendered the punishment of the innocent consistent with justice. Sin was condemned in him; but not his personal sin: for he had none. What sin then was condemned in him? Clearly the sin of men that was imputed to him. Herein the justice of God is maintained, and his ways justified before men. The innocent is condemned and cursed; but it is just and righteous, because with his consent our sins were laid upon him, and he willingly bears the curse that is due to us, to deliver us therefrom. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* O wondrous grace! Who can fathom the height and depth of the wisdom, the condescension, and justice which are here displayed?

If, in the passage, we understand the words, *for sin*, to mean, *a sin offering*, the result is the same: for if Christ were condemned and crucified as an offering *for sin*, it must still have been *for sin*, either his own or imputed. If he was without sin, and if none was imputed, then he was not a sin offering; neither could sin have been condemned in him, inasmuch as punishing the innocent is not condemning sin. The passage is *expressive* on this point. The meaning is *clear*, and all doubt precluded: Christ had no sin in his own person, and yet sin was condemned in his flesh. The lamp of life is lighted to dying men. Jesus bare their sins in his own body; died for us, that we might live; justice is satisfied; all its demands are answered, by the penalty due to us being laid upon Jesus, our substitute.

If our sins were all imputed to the Son of God and condemned in him; and if this atonement be accepted of the lawgiver as a complete satisfaction for us to divine justice, as paying all the demands of the law, then we perceive how it is, that *the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us*, if we be really in Christ, and have the fruit or evidence, walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit. We are thereby completely justified, being in Christ. He is our peace, by removing all the curse of the law from us, bearing the penalty for us. We are no longer under the law; that being dead, wherein we were held. The apostle fixes the meaning of *the righteousness of the law's being fulfilled in us*, by introducing the subject with asserting that there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. We are free from the condemnation of the law, having fulfilled all its demands by our representative. Christ fulfilled all the righteousness of the law; and he did it for us, on our account, in our place. It becomes ours the moment we are in him by faith: for we are in him, and he is in us; and thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, and we are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. As the sins of believers were all imputed to Christ, so that he could justly be condemned for them, and be made a curse for them; so the righteousness which he wrought therein, is imputed to us, and becomes ours for justification, as fully and completely as if all its demands had been performed by us personally; so that there remains no condemnation to them which are in him. They are then counted as righteous before God; no sin is any more charged against them; there is no more curse for them to bear,

nothing but the favor and blessing of heaven awaits them. Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works: not having on our own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness of God by faith. If then the believer have on the righteousness of God, the righteousness of the law is counted as fulfilled in him to his complete justification. He will stand complete in righteousness forever and ever.

That the righteousness which is fulfilled in believers is not sanctification, is evident from the consideration that in this sense the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled in them, and never can be: for it is written cursed is every one who continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them; so long as it will be true of a saint in glory, that he has ever committed one sin, so long it will remain true, that all the righteous demands of the law have neither been fulfilled in him nor by him personally.

The object to be accomplished by the atonement was the justification of sinners. Why did God send his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemn sin in the flesh? The answer is given. It was that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, which the law could not effect. Now the believer is justified, having on the righteousness of God. If the believer have on the righteousness of God, he must be justified. He may say, in the Lord have I righteousness. As the sin which procured the condemnation of Christ is *in* us, is *our* sin; so the righteousness for which we are justified is in Christ, is his righteousness: *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* He hath

made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. If the righteousness of Christ were not imputed to believers unto their justification, the object of condemning sin in him would not be obtained. That object was their justification. But how can they be just before God? They are unholy; they are guilty. God, who will by no means clear the guilty, cannot pronounce them just, without perverting justice and truth. This scheme of justification explains it, and makes it all plain. Our sins have all been condemned and punished once to the satisfaction of divine justice; and there is no necessity of repeating it in us who believe; what the honor of the law required, has already been rendered by our substitute; therefore believers can be acquitted and justified consistently with divine justice; and therefore it will be done.

Omit this doctrine of imputation, and we must deny the possibility of our justification: for it rests upon no other basis. If our sins were not imputed to Christ, he never suffered for them, made no atonement for them, any more than for the sins of fallen angels, which were not imputed to him. If our sins were not condemned in him, they will be eternally condemned in us: for God is just, and will by no means clear the guilty. If Christ has not satisfied the law by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree; by having our sins condemned in his flesh; it is evident we have the awful account yet to render for ourselves in the blackness of eternal darkness.

It is in no accordance with the gospel, to suppose that our justification could be effected by Christ's suffering, not for our sins, but to make a display and demon-

stration of divine justice. This would make that suffering unnecessary; and if unnecessary, unreasonable and unjust. For God had already given a greater display of his justice, and of his displeasure against sin, in binding the angels that sinned in everlasting chains under darkness, than such a scheme supposes. A display of his justice was already made, and stood in bold relief before the universe. Such a display was no longer wanting to save sinners of our race. If that was all that was wanting, Christ need not to have suffered. Sinners could as well have been saved without the atonement as with it. What was wanting to save sinners, was not such a display of divine justice; but a preservation of that justice; something to render their salvation consistent with justice, that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; something to prevent injustice in saving them. It was necessary that God's wrath be expressed against the sin of those who should be saved. For this purpose their sins were laid upon Christ, and condemned in him. The punishment of angels was an infinitely better manifestation of divine justice, than the condemnation of the holy Jesus, if no sin was imputed to him. The one is an awful display of divine justice; but the other, being the punishment of one to whom no sin in any way appertained, is no display of justice in any degree. How such a display of injustice, openly made before the universe, could make it consistent to violate justice in the salvation of the guilty, whose sins have not been expiated, has never been shown.

If all that is requisite to the salvation of sinners be a display of divine justice, then may we not suppose, that the display which is made in the curse upon fallen

angels; and that which is making in the spirits in prison, and which, by the increase of their numbers, is daily increasing, are rendering the salvation of sinners daily more and more easy, as that display is daily becoming greater; so that by and by sinners can be saved without any reference to the atonement of Christ? And since the benevolence of God forbids that he should require any punishment after the display of his justice, be sufficient and satisfactory, may it not be further supposed, that, at some future period, the display of divine justice will be so full and complete before the face of the universe, that all the sons of misery may arise to bliss in heaven, without any atonement, and God be just? If such expectations cannot be indulged, if they are subversive of the gospel, and inconsistent with the divine perfections, the premises from which they are adduced must be marked and avoided.

The ground of our justification then cannot be mistaken. Christ died *for our sins*, bare our sins. He is the propitiation *for our sins*. He hath made him to be sin *for us*, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. All which scriptures plainly show that Christ was made our substitute, to whom our sins were imputed, so that he that believeth is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses.

SERMON IV.

THE WAY OF SALVATION.

CONTINUED.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Rom. viii. 3, 4.

IN the preceding discourse the above passage of scripture has been discussed, and its instructions gathered. It was found to contain some of the radical principles of the gospel, which clearly illustrate the way of salvation. Those principles are expressed in the following summary. Such are the perfections of God that he cannot clear the guilty: therefore, no sinner could be saved, unless his sins be condemned and expiated, without a violation of immutable justice. Since the justice of God must be expressed in his law, it was necessary that such a perfect law be given, as it was not possible for man, in a fallen state, to obey: for it requires us to be as perfectly holy from our first being, as God himself is perfect. Man finds himself a sinner already, and the covenant of works already broken, both by his representative, and by himself in his own person, so that his justification by any thing which he can do, is impossible; and it is equally impossible for God to dispense with the least tittle of the perfect righteousness of the law. There is nothing which the sinner can do that would make it just for God to save him. In this deadly condition he was the object of Divine compassion, and

God sent his own Son, who willingly came out of love, and suffered in his flesh the curse that was due to us for sin; and as our sins were imputed to him, so that they could be condemned in him, we believing in him, and receiving him, are, by the imputation of that perfect righteousness which he thereby wrought out for us, counted as fulfilling all the demands of the law, and are thus justified before God through grace; counted as righteous in his sight, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit to the exercise of a living faith, and are thus made heirs of eternal salvation.

From the view which has now been taken of the way of salvation, the following suggestions naturally arise.

1. All sin is not voluntary. If the disobedience of one made or constituted many sinful, the many thus made sinful were not voluntary in that act which made them sinful, none being voluntary therein but Adam; yet that act is so counted to his posterity that it brought condemnation upon them: *for the judgment was by one to condemnation*; through the *offence of one* many be dead. The many who are under condemnation to death for that one man's offence, were not voluntary therein: for we are made subject to vanity *not willingly*.

Besides, if we are all *by nature children of wrath*, we are not voluntary in that under which we are born, under which we lie by nature.

This is set in a still stronger light by the experience of every Christian who groans over indwelling sin which he cannot avoid. If to will is present with him, while how to perform that which is good he finds not, then he is not voluntary therein. If he *cannot do* the things that he would, then he is not voluntary in that which hinders the execution of his desires to do good.

It is therefore entirely evident that while much sin is voluntary, it is not all so.

2. Sin and holiness are not necessarily personal, i. e. they do not, in every respect, result from the personal acts of those who are counted sinful or righteous. If it were not so, our sins could not have been condemned in the flesh of Christ; neither could the perfect righteousness demanded by the law ever be said to be fulfilled in such transgressors as we all are; neither could it be said, that we are complete in him; not having on our own righteousness. If we are righteous before God, and have not on our own righteousness, then righteousness is not always personal, and the principle is proved to be founded in gospel truth; and the point is gained.

3. The possession of the natural faculties of a moral agent do not constitute an ability to do what the perfect law of God requires. The natural faculties of an infant do not constitute any ability in such infant to walk or to talk. The natural faculties of Judah, Reuben, and Simeon did not constitute any power in them to hold conversation with Joseph, in the Egyptian language, when he conversed with them by an interpreter, although they had the same natural faculty of speech that he had. Adam and his posterity after the fall had the same natural faculties that he had before the fall, and yet they had not the same power to stand complete in personal righteousness by universal obedience to God: for this, after the fall, was an utter impossibility, else a sinner *could* be justified by the works of the law, and it would not have been written on this subject, for what the law *could not do* in that it was *weak* through the flesh.

A man who has the natural faculty of loving can love; for he does love: but it does not follow that he has a self-determining power over his affections, to change them at will. A man who loves his child cannot transfer that affection to a stick of wood, even if you should present such motives before him as to make him wish to do so. Suppose a man were in prison, whose most ardent desire is, to be enlarged, that he might return to an affectionate family; and suppose a governor should offer him an immediate discharge, if he would only hate his affectionate family for one minute; now it is perfectly obvious that he has all the requisite natural faculty of loving and hating, the motive is sufficient, and the condition, hating his absent family for one minute, would do them no injury; he therefore summons his greatest efforts to the task; but it is impossible. Thus, it is evident that as man has not a self-determining power over his affections, the possession of natural faculties does not constitute an ability to control or transfer his affections, or to render what justice requires. And thus it appears that every way the law is inefficient through the flesh, to bring a sinner to justification.

All men are naturally Arminians, and they are ever devising methods of wresting the scriptures and evading the truth, a lively demonstration of the truth, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.

4. It is evident that the justification of a sinner, one who is fallen from perfect and universal obedience, is impossible under the law, or under the

covenant of works. If he could now become perfectly holy, and continue so forever, still his justification would be forever impossible; the stern purity of justice would forever forbid it. However much he might be pitied, he never could be justified while God remains holy and immutable. A God of infinite perfections could not justify and save him on the ground of works if he would, without violating the purity of eternal justice.

The helplessness of sinners under the gospel dispensation does not consist in their inability to provide an adequate atonement; for this, through grace, is already provided; but it consists in a want of a self-determining power in the will, or in the mind, to turn their affections to holiness and to God, so as to love what they hate, and hate what they love—a power, by which a carnal and unholy will may originate holy affections; a power, by which sin may beget holiness: which are all contrary to human nature, and which involve contradiction and absurdity. Herein consists the sinner's helplessness now, the necessity of divine grace, and of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. If the sinner had natural power to turn his own heart from depravity to holiness and faith, he would not be helpless: for this would secure his salvation; neither would the Spirit's influence be necessary to his regeneration.

5. The helplessness of sinners, under condemnation for sin, their entire inability to extricate themselves from the righteous judgment of God, does not render their condemnation unjust, nor the penalty of the law too severe. The fallen angels are a standing demonstration of this truth; the whole plan of redemption is based upon it. If it were not so, Christ need not have

suffered: for he need not have made an atonement for sinners which justice could not require, and for want of which the sinner could not have been condemned. All the facts which appear under the divine government furnish irresistible evidence that no helplessness or inability of the guilty can affect the justice of their punishment. The same principle is found in our civil polity. No satisfaction which is in the power of the felon to make can be accepted in place of the penalty of the law. Is he under sentence of death? There are no prescribed conditions to be performed on his part to procure his acquittal or pardon. We claim this prerogative for man; and shall we deny it to God?

6. The helplessness of the sinner is no discouragement to his seeking and obtaining the salvation of the gospel; but a knowledge of the fact is necessary to this purpose. No sinner ever did come to Christ without this knowledge of his helpless, dependent, and lost condition; they that be whole have no need of a physician. Convince a man under a malignant disease, which he cannot cure, that he needs a physician, and point him to one that can cure him, and do you throw any obstacle in the way of his recovery? Do you not promote that object, and do that which is necessary to it? If he believed he could effect his own cure, he would never apply to a physician, and never be healed. If the sinner believe that he can save himself, his proud heart never sends him a suppliant to the Saviour's feet. If he believe that he can change his own heart when he will, or regenerate himself, he never does, he never can feel the necessity of surrendering himself, and falling into the hands of divine grace, that he may be saved.

The helplessness of the sinner is the reason why he should come to Christ, a strong motive to his coming. If he cannot save himself, he must look to God to save him. Blind Bartimeus, because he was helpless, came to Jesus, and received sight. His inability to restore himself to sight, was a great cause of his coming to one mighty to heal. The sick send for a physician, because they are helpless and cannot heal themselves. If the sinner had power to save himself, or to do what is necessary thereto, he would have no need of coming to Jesus for such a purpose. But now, as a poor, lost, helpless worm, and as a guilty rebel, he must look to Christ, come to him, and be saved by him, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, and by pardoning grace, or remain lost forever.

“Lord, can a feeble helpless worm
 Fulfil a task so hard?
 Thy grace must all the work perform,
 And give a free reward.”

“Lord, with this guilty heart of mine,
 To thy dear cross I flee,
 And to thy grace my soul resign,
 To be renewed by thee.”

How lamentable is it, that some whose lips should keep knowledge, persuade the wicked that they have natural power to do every thing necessary to their salvation; and thus strengthen the hands of evil doers, that they cannot turn from wickedness. If it be not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy; if the preparation of the heart in man is of the Lord; if salvation be of the Lord; then one obstacle in the way of a sinner's salvation is removed when he is convinced of this truth.

7. The requirements of God's law are not measured by our ability, but by the divine perfections, by the immutable principles of eternal justice. If the limits of our power were the limits of God's requirements, when we could have been saved under the law, without the atonement of Christ; then the law had not been weak through the flesh: for justice must have been satisfied with what sinners could themselves have rendered. The Spirit of truth has shown that the obligation of moral agents to be holy, is not based upon any power in a moral agent to sanctify himself, or to change his affections by an act of his will; but that it is based upon the holiness of God: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy.

8. We learn from the discussion of this subject, that our Confession of Faith is in admirable accordance with the fundamental principles of the gospel, in maintaining that *a natural man, being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, [his own natural power,] to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.* It is altogether and every way impossible for the sinner to render what divine justice demands, or to come to Christ without the drawings of the Father and the influence of the Spirit.

9. It is delightful to perceive, that in the salvation of sinners according to the gospel, divine justice is not violated, nor in the least infringed. It was a triumphant feeling with an inspired apostle, that he could say, *do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea we establish the law.* To preserve justice inviolate, and to maintain the honor of the divine throne, our sins must be condemned, the wrath of God

must be expressed against them, and the sentence executed. That this might all be done, they were laid upon Christ, imputed to him, that they, being condemned in him, and justice thus satisfied, the believer might be justified and saved. If infinite wisdom and benevolence had not devised this plan, justice would have held all our sinful race under chains of darkness in eternal death. By the principle of imputation, our sins are condemned, and we are justified; and God is *just* in justifying the believer. The believer is safe; he stands upon the rock of ages. Justice has nothing in account against him. It has spent all its shafts upon his surety, his substitute, the God-man. The gates of glory stand wide open for his free and welcome admission. He shall appear in glory, arrayed in the righteousness of God. The Judge, laying by the stern robes, will shout in the audience of high heaven, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

10. The rays of divine glory are mingled with gospel truth, while the goodness and wisdom of our heavenly Father appear in his so constituting our nature and our relations, that the principle of imputation can be maintained in the divine moral government. If he had not founded this principle in the constitution of man, this relation to federal heads, no sinner could have been saved; because the demands of infinite justice could not have been rendered.

The relation which we bear to both the first and the second Adam is the same. If we can be counted righteous for what the second Adam did, then we can be counted sinners for what the first Adam did. If the

connexion cannot hold in relation to one of these federal heads, it can no more hold in relation to the other: for the scripture asserts that the relation is the same to both; *as* in Adam all die, *even so* in Christ shall all be made alive. *As* by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, *so* by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. If we take the wisdom of God, and not the wisdom of men for our guide, we know that if God had not constituted this relation between us and the first Adam, it could not have existed between us and the second Adam; and the song of Moses and the Lamb had never waisted the glory of God, nor cheered the myriad hosts of heaven. How precious must this doctrine be to the redeemed children of God; how full of grace in their view, what beams of divine goodness greet the vision of faith. The gospel may be a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to Greeks: but it remains to saints, the *wisdom* and the *power* of God to salvation. These faint visions now which cheer our hearts will, when we shall no more see through a glass darkly, be changed from glory to glory. With a new and inconceivably brighter view, shall we exclaim, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.

II. The discussion of this subject lays open the depth of our depravity, the extent of our guilt. The innumerable catalogue of actual transgressions which we have committed in the face of heaven, in violation of infinite obligation to love God, the best of beings, and to obey every precept of his holy law, render us justly obnoxious to eternal death, and deserving the treatment of rebels. The dark picture of our depravity

and guilt is rendered still more dark by our having a corrupt and sinful nature. The man himself is evil; an *evil man*, out of the *evil treasure of his heart*, bringeth forth evil things; so that, previous to actual transgression, we are *by nature* the children of wrath. The dark picture, already so dark, is not yet drawn. The climax of our guilt is reached by our connexion with Adam, and partaking of his sin, whose disobedience is so counted ours, that we are constituted sinners by it. As he is our federal head and representative, and acted for us, we are involved in the guilt of his transgression; as it is written: *in Adam all die*. As death is the wages of sin, we could not die in Adam, unless we sinned in him. How humbling is our condition, in view of all that defiles us, and renders us deserving of wrath from heaven. Well may we exclaim under the soul-humbling views of truth, Behold we are vile. O wretched men that we are; who shall deliver us from the body of this death? Well may the sinner agonize under the discovery of the magnitude and blackness of his guilt. Well may he look around him, to see if there be any door of hope, any kind arm to save, that he perish not. Well may he be aroused to the most intense interest, and flee from the wrath to come.

12. The power of the holy Ghost is necessary to raise dead sinners to spiritual life. They are helpless of themselves, because they are dead in trespasses and sins. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh [our carnal] nature, profiteth nothing; no man can come to me except the Father, which sent me, draw him. The helplessness of the sinner shows his need of the Spirit's influence; because he is dead, he can only aim to spiritual life by the Spirit's power. Notwithstanding

all that the sinner can do, of himself, he is sinking under the righteous sentence of a holy law, to the second death; because his carnal mind cannot be subject to the divine law. But the goodness of God awakes the ear. He sends the Holy Spirit to strive with men, whose infinite power can restore them to life and hope. The work of converting sinners, and purifying their hearts, is his delightful and glorious work. It was because the sinner was helpless, lost, and dead, that the Spirit was sent upon the errand of grace. No sinner, therefore, can say, that, if he aim to seek mercy and help of God, he will not be enabled to find salvation, in a day, an hour, or a moment: for in the Lord is help and sufficient power to raise the dead to life. The millions of miserable sinners who have come to Christ, and found salvation by grace, were as helpless as those who yet remain in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. The moment the sinner discovers his miserable and helpless condition, and sighs for deliverance, and looks away to Christ, that moment the infinite Spirit may breathe life into his soul; for he says, behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Finally, the way of salvation, as taught in the gospel of Jesus Christ, is all of grace. Boasting and works are equally excluded. Means are not excluded; but works of righteousness for justification, the efficiency of means and of human efforts, are excluded. When God saw us lost, miserable, guilty, and helpless, and doomed by the holy demands of justice to everlasting destruction,

his eye pitied, and his arm provided salvation, by sending his own Son to bear the curse for us. This he did, not for any good we had done, or for any thing we had deserved; but unasked, unmerited by us, and out of his own good pleasure, for our benefit to the praise of the glory of his grace. When an atonement which we could not make was necessary to our justification, he provided it of his own good pleasure; when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Salvation, therefore, in plan and execution, from commencement to completion, is all of grace. The same grace that can save from one actual transgression can as easily save from a corrupt nature, and from imputed sin. The fountain is so full that our extensive guilt imposes no obstacle beyond what one sin would create. Do we need a perfect righteousness, in which to stand before God and be accepted, and which we could not provide? Grace shows it, already abundantly provided. Do we need the influence of the Holy Spirit to enable us to repent of sin, and come to Christ with renewed and believing hearts? Grace supplies that need; the Holy Spirit quickens whom he will, and raises them to spiritual life. Grace is written in every page of the gospel: and to God, the Father of mercies, the Redeemer of men, be all the glory of providing and effecting the salvation of men. The song of the Redeemed in heaven will glow with this theme, in the endless joy of heavenly praise. The grace which shines so resplendent in redemption, will enkindle the warm emotions of love, gratitude and joy: for the glory of God will be seen and felt, in that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which, through grace, will be bestowed upon creatures so unworthy, and once so

vile, and who are raised to honor and happiness eternal with God and the holy angels. Heaven will echo, glory to God in the highest, because peace and good will to men, by infinite grace, abound in all the joys of the redeemed hosts. Amen.

SERMON V.

BY THE REV. DANIEL HAYDEN.

SEASONABLE ADMONITION.

Lay hands suddenly on no man: neither be partaker of other men's sins:
Keep thyself pure. 1 TIM. v. 22.

IN the biography of Paul, we know not which most to admire; his zeal for the propagation of the gospel, or his solicitude for the purity and peace of the church.

Timothy, whom he acknowledges as a spiritual son, seems to have imbibed the same spirit. Paul says of him, I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. Phil. ii. 20.

Their solicitude led them to look out for faithful men to whom they might impart the sacred gift. 2 Tim. ii. 2. "And the things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

No one who has read the epistles of Paul to the Galatians, Timothy and Titus, can be unapprised of the fact that some unfaithful men had been inducted to the

ministry, who had corrupted the doctrines of the gospel, and introduced schisms into the church. Jude speaks of these as having crept in unawares, and the 24th verse of this chapter seems to imply the same fact: "some men's sins are open beforehand, going beforehand to judgment, and some men they follow after." Their character and qualifications had not been sufficiently developed. The necessity of caution in ordaining men to the sacred office was apparent. Whatever temptation Timothy might feel, from viewing the vast extent of the fields white unto the harvest, the fewness of the laborers, or the Macedonian cry, Paul enjoins it upon him to lay hands suddenly on no man. This course would ultimately defeat his benevolent designs.

But these things were written for a memento to future ages of the church, and are obligatory on us. Presbyteries have many temptations to act precipitately in this solemn duty.

As the whole subject brought to view in the verse has an intimate connection with the injunction, we shall,

I. Consider the nature of the ceremony of ordination.

II. The requisite qualifications in the candidate.

III. The nature of this participation and its evil consequences.

I. We are to attend to the rite. And here it is proper that we should examine its origin. Until the days of Moses we read of no formula in setting apart men to the priestly office. The father of a family, or some venerable and pious chieftain appears to have officiated at the altar. This is apparent from the history of Noah, Abraham, and Melchisedec. But when God was about to settle Israel in the land of promise,

and establish a more extensive ritual of divine service, he called Aaron: and directed Moses to set him apart as the high priest of that people. The ceremony was splendid, and performed in the presence of the great congregation, which he was to serve. See Ex. 28th and 29th chapters. With this new order of things Korah and many of the princes of the tribes were offended. And they said to Moses and Aaron, are not all the congregation holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? But Jehovah vindicated his own institution, by inflicting on Korah and his company a memorable judgment. And thus the point was settled that no man might officiate as priest in the church, unless called of the Lord. See Num. 16th chapter. This order continued until Christ called and commissioned his disciples to go and preach the gospel to all nations. And they were enjoined to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high. The day of Pentecost was divinely appointed for their solemn inauguration by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. They then commenced their ministrations and had many seals of their appointment. Saul was soon after miraculously called, and set apart by the direction of the Holy Ghost. And afterwards Paul and Barnabas were set apart, as evangelists to the heathen, by the immediate requisition of God. See Acts xii. 3.

So far we have account of special calls and ordinations. But the day of miracles and prophecy was to cease. Before the inspired apostles had finished their labors, they settled the principles on which an ordinary ministry was to be given to the church, and continued

till the end of time. We have special directions given to Timothy and Titus on this subject; and we have the ceremony specially stated in the history of the ordination of Timothy. See 1 Tim. iv. 14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." See Acts xiii. 3; "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands upon them, they sent them away." This ceremony of setting apart one whom God had called was considered solemn, as appears from their fasting and praying. Like the ordinances of the Lord's supper and baptism, it is intended no doubt to strongly impress our minds through the medium of our senses, that the individual is the ambassador of Christ. From all these facts, it appears ordinations ought to be performed in the presence of the people which the bishop is to serve, as far as practicable. But

II. We present some of the qualifications requisite in the candidate.

These may be ranged under four general heads.

Ist. We are informed that no man taketh this honor to himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Hebrews v. 4.

The same doctrine is implied in what Paul says in his first epistle to the Corinthians ch. xii. verse 27, and onward. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular; and God hath set some in the church: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues: are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all

“speak with tongues? do all interpret?” And all these things agree with God’s promise by the prophet Jeremiah iii. 15. “And I will *give* you pastors, according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

The same doctrine is taught in Eph. iv. 11. Hence it is evident that *all* are not called to preach the Gospel. The body has many members, and divers gifts are bestowed by the great head of the church, for the perfecting of the saints. This call is then evidently requisite to ordination. The first indication of this call is mentioned by Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 1. “This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” No man is likely to succeed well in any occupation, unless he be pleased with it. Yet the mere expression of such desire is not a sufficient warrant for the Presbytery to proceed to ordination. Many carnal motives may originate this desire: even such as influenced Simon Magus. A desire for elevation in society, a life of supposed ease, or a thirst for popular applause, may be at the bottom. Whereas a deep sense of personal obligation to Christ, for pardoning mercy, and bowels of compassion for immortal souls, ought to make him willing to suffer the loss of all things, and suffer all things for the gospel’s sake. But this desire must be accompanied,

2ndly, By a life of morality and genuine piety. He must have a good report of those without. 1 Tim. iii. 7. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God; not *self-willed*, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate. Titus i. 7—8. But,

3dly. He must be apt to teach. I Tim. iii. 2. This implies an aptness to learn, as no one can teach others what himself knows not. Also, a facility of making himself understood. The mind must be disciplined to study, and the art of language well understood.

4thly. He must be sound in doctrine; holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught; that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. Titus i. 9. The excellency of Timothy was, that from a child he had known the holy scriptures. The doctrine of the candidate must be the doctrine of the Bible. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Is. viii. 20, and of his soundness in doctrine the Presbytery are judges.

The Presbyterian Church have laid before the world their views of the doctrines of the Bible, the discipline of the church, and form of government. This affords an opportunity to each candidate to judge of the propriety of his attachment to us.

If these views of doctrine, discipline, and government in the mind of a candidate accord with the faithful word, he can act the part of an honest man in adopting the confession as his individual creed. This creed is, to the Presbytery adopting it, their standard, in receiving members into their body. No individual is under necessity to adopt this confession. He is at full liberty to adopt any other creed, and attach himself to any other body of Christians, or form a society of his own. To his own master he standeth or falleth.

5thly. If he wish to be called as a pastor, he must have a call of the church, and I know not whether it is not indispensable in the case of a missionary. The

whole church is deeply interested in the result of a probationer's trials; and as the several parts of the same body of Christ, they should concur in the decision. Their decision, in regard to the probationer's qualifications, consummates the evidence on which the Presbytery are to act. When these principles are admitted, it is easy to see the different part taken by the church and the Presbytery, in the work of ordination in primitive times. The time of trials must be such as to give sufficient opportunity to all concerned to be satisfied of the qualifications of the candidate. It is then the duty of the Presbytery to proceed to ordination. "They will not be partakers of his sins; and they will keep themselves pure." But

III. We were to speak of the sin and evil consequences of precipitancy.

The most faithful servants of Christ have their temptations to encounter in this momentous concern of the church.

The millions of immortal souls, hurrying to death and the bar of God, without a ray of gospel light to guide their path, the desolations of Zion, and the Macedonian cry, awaken the tenderest sensibilities of the man of God. The strong tide of feeling often sways his better judgment: he lends his aid in supplying the church with an unsound or unqualified ministry. Too late, alas! he discovers his folly and regrets his precipitancy.

But false maxims sometimes lay a snare for his feet. The doctrines of the Bible are divided into two classes, the one of major, the other of minor importance. The major are thought to be but few in number, and unhappily, undefined. One thinks these major points

are wholly matters of duty; another, principles of theory, or both. The question arises, how far may the candidate be permitted to contradict the Confession of Faith, and yet be ordained. One candidate differs in one point; another, in another. Still, they are permitted to pass, under the appalling opprobrium "will you make a man an offender for a word?"—forgetting that the crime of *Satan*, and that which ruined mankind, was the little word, *not*, interpolated in the divine threatening; which made it read, "Ye shall not surely die."

If the Confession of Faith contain a faithful summary of divine truth, the candidate should not be ordained who denies any part of it; for "man is not to live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord;" and "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

Another maxim coming into use is that each individual has a right to put his own construction upon the Confession of Faith. If this principle were admitted at full length, it would nullify not only the Confession of Faith, but the word of God. Every sect in Christendom would claim protection under our banners. And our church would resemble the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. The head was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part iron and part clay; and it would share the same fate. This maxim, however, is true under two restrictions, viz: 1. Such construction must not contradict other doctrines exhibited in that formula, nor the word of God. 2. It must be subject to the decisions of the judicatories of the church. This is all the liberty an individual can claim, remaining a member of the Pres-

byterian Church, and all that an honest mind should wish. If, indeed, it be found that the Confession of Faith contains any doctrine repugnant to the Bible, our duty is, to amend it. It pretends not to infallibility. But it shows a manifest want of candor, to profess before God and man to believe its correctness, and then, in preaching, to oppose its most obvious meaning.

In these days, the march of mind is such that the *Gnostic* perceives, with all the blaze of noonday sun, that the labors of the Reformers are but the twilight discovery of divine truth; and that Pelagius and his followers were the brightest luminaries of the ancient church. Indeed, it would appear that the most pious labors of reformers, for 300 years, have only cast a thick veil over the Bible. Even the man who has never read his Bible through, sees clearly that the Confession of Faith does not accord with the word of God.

When human reason sits as an umpire to decide on doctrines, and its fruitful constructive genius, to translate the scriptures in accordance with philosophy, we are sitting on the slippery steeps which landed the ancient church in mystic Babylon. Soon her churches were filled with the images of heathen *Gods*, converted into Christian *saints*; and the *Saviour's* blood was exchanged for the prayers of saints, and the Purgatorial fires of Paganism.

Another temptation to improper licensures and ordinations, is the fear of singularity, the love of ease, and a fear of reproach.

When error has gained ascendancy, every thing which can wound a man's feelings, every thing that can excite popular prejudice against the man who attempts to withstand the inundation, will be employed.

These are sometimes as appalling as the martyr's stake or the despot's dungeon.

Here are strong temptations to swerve from the path of duty. Nothing but a sense of final account can support him.

Again: as the church takes part in the trials of candidates, and give their verdict, so they also are liable to participate in the abovenamed sin. The same temptations to neglect duty offer themselves. A beloved disciple, who was by no means a striker, left the churches the solemn warning not to receive into their houses nor bid God speed to the man who hath not the doctrine of his master. This will apply emphatically to the commendation they may give an unworthy licentiate.

What is here said of candidates and licentiates is also implied in receiving those who are already ordained. A leading principle of the Presbyterian government is, that the Presbytery is the only door of entrance to the ministry, and judge of the qualifications of her own members. No minister of a different Presbytery can labor within her bounds without liberty. Still, there is an understanding that, as the church is one, ministers whose good standing is credibly attested may be received into another. But when a minister is received on testimonials, that testimony is received in place of a course of trials. The judgment of another Presbytery is assumed as her own. Now, when the testimony claims full credit, the sin above cited is avoided. But whenever the testimony is suspicious, the Presbytery ought to have satisfaction some other way. We deem the reception of a minister from another body equivalent to an ordination. The transac-

tion is virtually a commendation of the received brother, to all the churches, as a good man and a sound divine.

And here we have to lament that the supreme judicatory of our church, by terms of correspondence with other churches, obstruct the path of duty. These terms of correspondence require us to receive ordained ministers from those bodies, differing among themselves and from us, in their creeds and government, upon their giving assent to some general questions intended to be put to candidates after they have passed through a course of trials, at the hour of ordination.

By the application of the new laws of construction, we admit members without becoming acquainted with their faith. Hence, loss of confidence and a variety of evils arise. Over the soundness of all her Presbyteries the General Assembly has control; but none over a consociation. These consociations are liable to become corrupt; and the evil may wax worse and worse. Thus the faithful Presbyter finds the path of duty much obstructed, and feels many temptations to become partaker of other men's sins.

Finally, brethren, let us watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not. Let us recollect that by our unfaithfulness in our stewardship, we may be instrumental in restoring the dark ages of the church, and ruin many precious souls. Let us be careful not to nullify God's laws by our views of expediency. We should bear in mind that holiness, without which no man can enter glory, stands intimately connected with truth. Let us never seek applause by inventing new and metaphysical theories; and thus perplex the minds of gospel hearers. In all our minis-

trations let us retain, as far as practicable, the words and style of the Bible.

And whilst we earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, let us not contend for mere matters of opinion. Where God has fixed the boundaries of divine knowledge, let us cheerfully stop, and not try to be wise above what is written.

And, finally, let us keep in mind that we are soon to give an account of our stewardship. Then the man, who, seeking his own honor and ease, has floated down the muddy stream of popular applause, shall land in the gulf of black despair.

Whilst the man who counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and died a martyr for truth, shall wear a resplendent crown of glory, and shine as a star of the first magnitude in the kingdom of God.

SERMON VI.

BY THE REV. JAMES HALL BROOKES.

FULFILMENT OF THE MINISTRY.

And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. COL. iv. 17.

It is an unsettled inquiry, why Paul directed the pointed message of the text to be delivered to Archippus.

The language, in our conception, contains the elements of a gentle rebuke. Archippus, probably, had

been recently inducted into the office of the ministry; and had thus become the bishop or overseer of the church at Colosse. Unlike the apostle, who burned with an inextinguishable zeal in the fulfilment of the ministry, and who went fearlessly onward in the completion of the great work to which, as one born out of due time, he had been called, Archippus, we suppose, had betrayed symptoms of timidity, or indolence, in discharging the duties to which he had been consecrated. The apostle, therefore, vigilant for the defence of the gospel, of which he would conjure him not to be ashamed, and solicitous that he should not be intimidated by the impediments which began to rise before him, sent a special message to the church of the Colossians, directing them to charge Archippus to buckle on the harness, and go forth to the conflict. He would have him reminded of the oath of allegiance, which he had taken to his king—the captain of salvation, to the sacramental hosts of God's elect—an oath, by which he had bound himself to be faithful until death.

The ministry of the gospel is the exhibition of the mercy of Jehovah to this fallen world. Alienated and estranged, enemies and rebels, its people are exposed to the wrath of God, which is to be poured out without mixture, upon every unreclaimed apostate in his empire; and which will be rained upon all such, in one unmitigated tempest of fire and brimstone forever and ever. This ministry of mercy and of reconciliation is received from the Lord. To him are they accountable who have entrusted to them a dispensation of this grace of God, for the manner in which they perform the high and holy trust. Faithful, untiring, and

devoted, his ministers may assuredly expect his presence along with them, as they go forth through this revolted world, proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will to men." The author of the ministry is and will be with such ministers till the end of time. Unfaithful, tiring, and undevoted, the curse of heaven rests upon them here, and it will light upon them in all its withering energy, throughout eternity. What untold, unknown horrors will eternally seize upon their guilty souls, as they realize every moment, through ceaseless duration, that, having preached the gospel to others, they are themselves cast away—away from light, and life, and peace, and glory, into darkness, and death, and despair, and everlasting contempt. How insupportably dreadful the condition! And what a powerful inducement does it present to the minister of the gospel, to be faithful in the fulfilment of his sacred work! Let all the ministers of the gospel, then, take heed to the ministry which they have received in the Lord, that they fulfil it.

The execution of this trust, we imagine, consists in two things; matter and manner.

We will proceed, therefore, to illustrate the obligation of the minister of the gospel, involved in the general charge, as it is contained in these two cardinal facts.

I. The matter included in fulfilling the ministry.

It is obvious, then, that the doctrines and facts of the Bible are the matter, of which every exhibition, made by the minister of the gospel, is to be composed. It will, surely, not be understood to be intimated, that all the doctrines and facts of Revelation are to be presented, and illustrated in all their bearings and con-

nexions, in every sermon which the minister delivers. Such a project would require more time for its accomplishment than is ordinarily, allotted to human life. Nor is it intended that the doctrines and facts of the Bible are of equal importance; and that therefore they are to receive an equal degree of attention in the discharge of the ministry. But it is intended and maintained, that no sermon is to offer any sentiment as a doctrine of the Bible, which is not explicitly taught in the Bible. Of course, therefore, all assumptions, and inferences, and theories, and the whole family of questionable origin are positively excluded from the legitimate fulfilment of the ministry. It is, moreover, intended and maintained that there are certain doctrines and facts of the Bible, which are so fundamental in the Christian system, and so essential to its very existence, that the omission of them in any sermon is a flagrant dereliction of the obligation to fulfil the ministry which has been received in the Lord.

And here it may be expected that some specification of those regarded of this description should be made. We shall not therefore shrink, delicate as may be the task, from a frank and unreserved expression of our own sentiments in relation to this most important matter.

As the existence and government of God are acknowledged by all beings, except that non-descript in the universe, the Atheist; and as they are, in some form or other, recognized in every mode of ministration in the pulpit; we presume them, for the present, as conceded.

I. We observe, then, that the ministry of the gospel is, to preach Christ Jesus, the Lord, in his true character

of God-man, and himself the servant of the church, for Jesus' sake. Christ is to be the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending of all his ministrations, private and public, social and official. His doctrines are to be explained and defended; his precepts are to be enforced and obeyed; and his example is to be imitated and recommended in the deportment of him who would so take heed to the ministry, as that it be fulfilled. To preach Christ in his true character, in his person and offices, is the capital article in the commission given by the Lord to his ministers, as he sends them forth to preach the gospel to every creature. As, therefore, they hope themselves to escape, and to save others from eternal damnation, they are to believe and to inculcate the doctrine of Christ's complete essentiality with God the Father, his full equality with him in power and in glory. "For he is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." In this supremely exalted character has Christ been preached, ever since the first intimation of mercy was afforded to fallen Adam. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, preached Jesus of Nazareth, in touching sublimity, when he exclaimed, "Behold! the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all." "A prophet," said the legislator of Israel, "shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of his brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." But time need not be consumed in these specifications. Every patriarch and prophet, every priest and Levite, every judge and king, every minister, called of God, as was Aaron, under the old dispensation, preached Christ, the Lord of glory, the mighty God, the everlasting

Father, the Prince of Peace. We need not stay to exhibit the matter touching Christ, embodied in the sermons of the evangelists, and apostles, and seventy disciples, and every minister of the new dispensation who was counted faithful being put into the ministry. What an edifying example do they furnish of the manner of preaching of Christ, the salvation of God, to his redeemed people. Let us hear the word of God, as they uttered it, being moved by the Holy Ghost. "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us. Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God." If, therefore, any man or angel preach not the doctrine of Christ's supreme divinity and perfect humanity united in one glorious person, making the second of the adorable Trinity of persons in the eternal Godhead, he shall be accursed; "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Ah! if the anathema of Jehovah shall descend, at the final maranatha, in the thunder of wrath upon the layman sinner, who believes not, and loves not the Lord Jesus Christ; in what redoubled volleys will it not break upon the devoted head of the preaching sinner, who denies, and derides, and vilifies the majesty of the king of kings, the Lord of hosts! O yes, upon his horror-stricken and guilty soul will be poured out all the plagues which are written in the book of God. Let every minister take heed to the ministry which he has received, in this most vital point, that he fulfil it.

2. We next advert to the doctrine of the atonement, as of pre-eminent importance in the fulfilment of the

ministry. As to the extent of the atonement, it is, perhaps, not so strictly correct to consider it with reference to a specific number, for whose benefit it is designed, as in reference to the law and justice of God: being a device, by which the penalty of the one and the claims of the other are fully satisfied in the person of a surety; while a door of mercy and of hope is opened to a dying world. If the distinction sometimes made, more especially between the atonement proper and its immediate and necessary result in behalf of God's people,—reconciliation between God and the sinner,—be tenable, we are the more persuaded, that we advance the correct view of the atonement itself. It is not meant to be asserted, that the number savingly interested in the atonement is not so certain and definite, as that it can either be increased or diminished. But it is meant that, were this number far less than it really is, the Saviour, so far as we can comprehend the mystery of godliness, could not have been exempted from a single pang which he endured in paying the debt of penal sufferings to the law and justice of God. And were the number far greater than it will ultimately be found to be, nothing more than he did could have been required of the Saviour, to render a perfect obedience to the law and justice of God. We maintain, as essential to the very nature of atonement for sin, the great principles of literal substitution, of vicarious suffering, and of proper and full satisfaction to the law and justice of God. This sentiment is, in our estimation, most happily taught in our incomparable Confession of Faith. "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully

satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given him." It is perceived, no doubt, that we utterly repudiate the modern notion, that the atonement is a mere display of the perfections of Deity, and an exhibition of the results of sin. So far as a display and exhibition of this kind are only intended, we perceive not why they are not, this moment, being made, by every fallen spirit, angel and man, in the prison of hell. No intelligence in the universe, as he hears those groans which outlast the spheres, and witnesses that anguish that will be but just begun when time shall be no more, will have any doubt as to the consequences of sin. Nor will he be destitute of a most awful display of the perfections of the great God. And think you the hopeless subjects of such perdition will, themselves, not realize the perfections of God, and the results of sin in dread reality? A perfectly innocent and holy being could not therefore suffer, as did the eternal Son of God, by way of simple display and exhibition. O no. "He endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified and buried," that he might redeem his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. If such is the representation which Christ himself has given of the nature and design of his own sufferings and death; then such is the representation which his ministers should always make of these amazing transactions. Any other representation, of course, cannot be the fulfilment of the ministry, in this respect, which has been received in the Lord.

3. We will now notice, for a moment, the doctrine

of depravity. By depravity is intended "the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, which consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it: that, the covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression. From this original corruption, whereby all men are indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." Every sin, whether original or actual, is either a positive transgression of the law of God, or an absolute want of conformity thereunto. In either case, the subject of the peccancy is exposed to the penalty of the law, which is the wrath and curse of God, both in this life and that which is to come.

Now, on what continent, in what island or peninsula, in what clime, or in what sequestered, happy spot, can we be presented with the rare specimen of a descendant of Adam, uncorrupted and unsinful? It is true, that a notion, a mere assumption, without a particle of evidence for its support except the favor of great names, is maintained on this fundamental article of the Christian system; which seems to us to be alike at variance both with the doctrine of the Bible, and with the inevitable deductions of sober reason. The notion to which we refer is the dogma, that depravity consists, exclusively, in the state of the heart, and does not exist previously to the exercise of the voluntary powers. The Bible, as we verily suppose, does not teach us, that at

the moment and by the fact of the commencement of our voluntary operations, we become depraved. Nay truly; but it teaches us that we were conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. Unless, therefore, human beings are voluntary agents in their own conception, and at their own birth, they are depraved before the exercise of volition commences. From this conclusion, it is confidently believed there is no possible escape, except it be under cover of a sophism. And hence it is sometimes attempted to be eluded by the quaint evasion, that moral agency begins much earlier than we are accustomed to imagine it does. This is a puerile thought, and touches not the difficulty; nor does it reach the conclusion. But a more dexterous parry is shown in alleging, that voluntary agency is essential to the very existence of human beings; and that therefore sin is still the result of choice. As this is a naked assertion, without the shadow of proof, it would certainly not be unfair treatment to pass it without farther notice. Still, as it is specious in the opinion of some, it may merit an additional thought. Let it be particularly remembered, then, that the conclusion which we are defending, regards depravity as coetaneous with human existence—even in its remotest embryo. If, therefore, the notion whose validity we are now examining were tenable, it would only follow that depravity and free agency are simultaneous attributes of human nature. And then it would be as good logic, and perhaps better Theology, to predicate free agency of depravity, as to predicate depravity of free agency. The truth seems to be, that depravity is essential to human existence, ever since the fall of Adam; while there is a period of this existence, whose precise meta-

physical character is involved in mystery, which we cannot penetrate. And during this period, so far as the laws of mental operations are known to our world, voluntary agency cannot, in any sense, be an attribute of the being in question. Or, if such agency belong to such being at all, it does most indubitably belong to it in a mode wholly different from that in which it belongs to those of the race who have passed the period now contemplated. It is, in our view, utterly inconsistent and gratuitous to limit either holiness, or sinfulness, to any one power, or faculty, or affection of the soul. It is the state of the entire man, in either case, which constitutes the true character. And, therefore, neither sinfulness nor holiness consists exclusively in the state of the heart; nor yet is either of them the simple and direct result of voluntary operations; but the exhibition of the real condition of the whole man. Such, then, in our estimation, is the only view of this all-important and radical doctrine, which will be a fulfilment of the ministry which has been received in the Lord.

4. We notice, next, the doctrine and fact of man's utter inability to recover himself from the ruins of his apostacy. By inability, we mean a total absence of all strength, or power, or competency whatever, on the part of man, to recover what he has lost by his depravity, and to restore himself to the favor of God, which indeed would be to recover the sum total of his loss. The distinction, therefore, so generally made, between what are denominated natural and moral ability, we have ever regarded as futile, and without foundation in fact. If the sinner were inclined, with the strength of an angel, to recover himself from his depravity, he

would, in our opinion, be perfectly incompetent to the mighty task. We, of course, do not admit that the obligation of the sinner to obey God rests either on his natural or moral ability to render such obedience. This obligation originates in the nature of the God of heaven, and that of rational beings, as he constituted them; and binds all of them, holy and unholy, able and unable, to obey, unless those unable to perform were disabled by God himself. The doctrine, that the obligation of the sinner to obey the law of God, rests on his natural ability to render the required obedience, and is, therefore, urgent, in proportion to the amount of such ability, is, in our most solemn conviction, not only grossly absurd, but is fraught with the most mischievous tendencies. Make the supposition that the sinner should will away his natural ability to obey God, then his obligation to obey would be utterly cancelled, according to the theory now under review. We should thus be presented with the very singular paradox of that, which is the sinner's only crime, his free choice, being, at the same time, his full indemnity. They who ascribe so much to free volition, may well look impartially at this dilemma. But even admitting, that our view of this thing is not defensible, what is gained by a tenacious adherence to the chimera of natural ability? Its projectors have ever ingenuously admitted that such is the degree of man's moral inability to obey God, that it is absolutely out of his power to remove this want of power to perform his duty. And thus is it maintained, that the sinner has the power to do that which it is, at the same time, conceded he has not the power to do. Or, which is the same thing, it is maintained that the sinner has natural power to do that which his

moral impotency renders absolutely impracticable. Besides, what a strange infelicity of phraseology is it, to talk of a sinner having natural ability to perform spiritual acts? And still farther, if God could not make Adam or any other creature holy or unholy in nature; nay, if he himself is not holy in nature, but only in inclination, what jargon is it to talk of ability or inability of nature! It is not for us to bring these divergent lines together. In the mean time, we are assured that "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The word strength is a generic term, and of course includes every species of ability predicable of the race. In the connexion in which it is found, as we have quoted the passage, it signifies a total want of all power, being expressive of the state of death, of which ability cannot, in any sense, be affirmed. And this is that total, utter helplessness which reduces sinners to the condition of absolute and unqualified dependence on the sovereign grace of God, for deliverance from ruin; and which renders the bestowment of this grace so rich and glorious a display of heaven's beneficence to wretched man. Let this momentous topic, therefore, be candidly examined in the light of the Bible. And let every minister of the gospel, in this respect also, take heed to the ministry which he has received in the Lord, that he fulfil it.

5. We come, in the next place, to the doctrine of the renewal of man's nature by the agency of the Holy Ghost, which is the true source of all his ability, whether natural or moral, to obey the holy law of God. It should ever be borne in solemn remembrance, that in whatever degree the sinner possesses ability to per-

form his duty, in the same degree, is the necessity of the influence of the spirit of God to enable him to do this work, diminished. It is not to be wondered at then, that they who most highly extol the sinner's own ability, should renounce the doctrine of the direct and positive agency of the Holy Ghost, as essential to the new creation in Christ Jesus taught in the Bible. Hence, we hear the astounding sentiment uttered from pulpits, said to teach the doctrines of Christ,—who most solemnly declared, ‘except a man be born of the spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God,’—that for the sinner to change his governing purpose is for him to undergo all the change contemplated in the scriptures. How deplorable is it, that men should thus spoil themselves through vain philosophy, falsely so called. And, however others may account for so startling a fact, for ourselves, we hesitate not to affirm, that it is the necessary result of the prominency given to the ability of sinners to perform their duty, independently of foreign assistance. They are not shut up to the faith of Christ; to an humble reliance on his intercession; and to an absolute dependence on the quickening power and grace of the Holy Ghost; but are flattered with the pleasing notion, that they have themselves the ability to do all that God requires of them—more power to love than to hate him; and that if they will but put forth this power in altering the leading purpose of their lives, they will then be the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that they should walk in them. What indignity to God the Holy Ghost! No truth of revelation has been more exposed to profane wit, and philosophical scepticism than that of the agency of the

Holy Ghost. The inculcation of this truth, however sober and scriptural, is treated with unmeasured contempt. How much to be lamented then is it, that ministers of the Gospel, through a blind zeal for new and unwarrantable modes of philosophising on the doctrines of the Bible, should aid the enemies of all-righteousness in their unhallowed opposition to this glorious and blessed truth. Brethren, is not the Holy Ghost the author and giver of life? Will the sinner ever have one right thought or desire, or perform one right act, without his special aid? Who renews the soul? Who convinces the sinner of his lost and perishing condition? Who gives him the grace of repentance and faith; reveals to him the mercy of the Lord Jesus; leads him to the Cross; and imparts to his troubled soul the peace and comfort which flow from justification, and acceptance through the blood of the everlasting covenant? Who sustains and invigorates the spiritual life which he first bestowed; imparts holiness and strength, victory over the world, love to God, zeal for His glory, and sincerity in dedication to his service? Is it not the Eternal Spirit? Is he not the author of all those blessings and exercises? We must then magnify His influence, and give Him the praise of all that he performs. We must hold fast the old scriptural doctrine of the special agency of the Holy Ghost; and implore, earnestly, His gracious aid, if we desire success to our ministry, and prosperity to the church. Let every minister take heed how he fulfils his ministry in this very important and deeply vital point.

6. We advert, in the last place, to the doctrine of justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ. The necessity of obtaining justifying righ-

teousness, through the obedience unto death of the Eternal Son of God is one of those fundamental truths which are slowly and reluctantly received by the hearers of the Gospel. And even when it is admitted, it is not soon believed by the heart, and expanded into the full extent of this stupendous and glorious mystery. The pride and self righteousness of man resist this doctrine with an obstinacy removable only by the power of the Almighty Spirit. The notion that he does not, absolutely, depend, for justification, on a gracious act of mercy procured through the intercession of a surety, independently of his own works or merits, is ever intruding itself upon his imagination. This fatal mistake is to be corrected only by repeated and explicit developements of the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ; of his vicarious sufferings; and of gratuitous justification on account of his perfect righteousness, and reckoned to the sinner as his own righteousness upon his belief in Christ as his only Saviour. By patient and full instruction, our hearers, under the gracious illumination of the Holy Spirit, are convinced of the utter hopelessness of establishing any righteousness of their own; and are brought to receive, with simplicity and gratitude of soul, the gift of righteousness through faith in a gracious and glorious substitute. This great truth is the key-stone which binds together the whole fabric of the Gospel method of salvation. What, then shall we think of that ministry which rarely or never presents this doctrine to the minds of those who hear; which indulges in a certain, not very intelligible current of sound, and mode of expression, amounting to very exceptionable phraseology; instead of directing perishing sinners to high conceptions of the blessed

Saviour; simple faith in his sacrifice; ardent love to his name; and hungering and thirsting for his righteousness, as for the bread and water of life. Oh! let every minister of the Gospel, as he would be free from the blood of souls, and from the awful charge of having shunned to declare the council of God, take heed, in this most vital of all points, to the ministry which he has received in the Lord, that he fulfil it.

There are many other doctrines and facts of the Bible, which, did time permit, we would add to these specifications. As these, however, are among the most important of the doctrines and facts of the Bible, when they are rightly understood and taught, the others are the more likely also to be so understood and taught.

We, therefore, pass to a very brief notice of—The manner in which the ministry is to be fulfilled.

And here we observe, that modern sermonizing, is strikingly marked by a propensity for novelty in the modes of illustrating, and of exhibiting the doctrines and facts of the Bible. It were greatly to be desired, that a strict adherence to a uniform standard, a form of sound words, should be maintained in fulfilling the ministry: especially by those who profess to entertain the same views of the doctrines and facts of the Bible. Nor is such adherence to a form of sound words a mere matter of indifference, (as too many seem to suppose,) left to the option of every one who ascends the sacred desk, to decide for himself. It is alike the injunction of an inspired Apostle and the solemn requisition of the Church, when she imposes on her sons, about to minister at the altar, the very sacred obligation of adopting her established and public Formularies of faith and of practice. Ah! what tears of mourning

and what sighs of anguish would have been spared to Zion, had these holy ties never been sundered by those to whom their restraints ought to be liberty, and honor, and glory. It is the dereliction of these bonds that causes the dissention and discord which so grievously afflict the church; which has infused into her body the poison of death and the principles of dissolution; and has opened upon her the sluices of error, like the turbid waters of a torrent, which, having broken through the mole that confined them, sweep over the land, leaving waste and ruin in their track. The temptation to the course which we would rebuke, in the most decided tone, is strong to young and inexperienced ministers, who are ardent, and ambitious of the reputation of shining talents, of great originality of thought; and who have much less judgment and taste, than they have vanity and presumption. Disdaining to walk in the pathway in which the patriarchs of the church trod, and in which her fathers still tread, to the temple of truth, and in which they directed weary pilgrims to go, who were desirous of finding this temple, these youthful tyros and novices, to exhibit their superior skill and wisdom, and courage, take a new, unbeaten way, not so straight and narrow. It has no frame-work along it, no posts, nor pillars, nor signs, which so describe and define it, as that the slightest deviation from it is immediately discovered. It leads in all directions, and is without ending; so that a traveller who takes this route is ever in the right course, so far as a mere road is the right course. It is not surprising if they who travel this way should wander on till ultimately they perish in the desert of error and of sin, like the hapless caravans that sometimes perish in the

trackless fields of burning sand, in the land of deserts. O, it is of unspeakable importance to weary travellers, on a long and perilous journey, beset with a thousand dangers, that they be directed into the way which leads to the wished-for home, a sweet place of rest, a city of refuge. And they, appointed as guides on the way, have a fearful responsibility resting upon them for the manner in which they perform the trust committed to them. Ah! if they misdirect those with whose instructions they are charged, and they lose the right way, and finally perish in consequence of the instruction which they received, how shall their instructors account to the Lord of life for their infidelity and perfidy? Let young men, then, more especially, let all appointed to be guides to pilgrims on the way to Canaan, so direct them, as that they shall find that good land. Otherwise they will not take heed to the ministry which they have received in the Lord, that they fulfil it.

Would our time and limits permit, we should wish to make a few remarks on the demeanor of the outer man, in the fulfilment of the ministry, and also in the ordinary intercourse of life. Let the example of Christ and his apostles be the model which all ministers, but particularly the young, adopt, in discharging the functions of their office. Christ spoke as never man spoke. But it was in all the inimitable dignity and majesty of perfect ease, and simplicity, and plainness. And although no minister can acquire the manner of this divine teacher, yet every minister is bound to approach as nearly to his example as a mortal may. In every performance the apostles displayed the true sublime of oratory. But it was not flourish, nor bombast, nor gasconade, nor rant. It was the resistless elo-

quence of rich minds and devoted hearts. Let it not be supposed that we deprecate the very best manner of which the minister is capable, when he is delivering the message of God to his fellow men. Nay, verily, if he can embody every charm of elocution and every grace of composition in every sermon which he delivers, the result upon the influence of his ministry will be so much the more auspicious. And all this would be wholly different from those spangling or boisterous effusions which too many, in the sacred office, pour forth in gusts upon their unedified and gaping hearers. The image is not the object; wind is not rain; shadow is not substance; smoke is not fire. The men of whom we speak would do well to preserve among their mementoes an observation of the eloquent and tasteful Hall,—one of the most finished pulpit orators of modern times,—who, being asked his opinion of a brilliant pulpit performance which had filled a gazing crowd of hearers with wonderment, replied, ‘it was very fine; but a man cannot live on flowers.’ We have only time to say, in relation to the ordinary intercourse of ministers with society around them, that there is a certain gravity, whose theory, at least, is not difficult to be learned, which they are directed, in the word of God, to maintain upon all occasions. Alas! how wounding to the Saviour and his cause, when a minister of the gospel exhibits a levity of deportment, a lightness of mind, and a foolishness of conversation not surpassed by the vain, and fashionable, and thoughtless youth of the world. The Lord save the church from the blight and the curse of such ministers. That minister, who does not take heed to himself and his doctrine, does not cherish an evangelical solicitude for the salvation of

his hearers, will not be the means of saving them; and he himself shall be a cast away. Nor does he who is not prayerfully vigilant as to the matter and manner of his ministrations, so take heed to the ministry which he has received in the Lord as to fulfil it. O then, let all the ambassadors of the King of saints, the head of the church, imbibe the full spirit of the gospel, and of its author, and go forth to the blessed work of entreating sinners, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God. Thus, though by far the greater part of those whom he warns and exhorts, treat his message with scorn and indifference, yet he shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and God shall be his strength. How magnificent, how stupendous are the objects to which the whole mind and soul of the gospel minister ought to be ever directed!

SERMON VII.*

BY THE REV. JAMES BLYTHE, D. D.

GOSPEL DOCTRINE AND CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Finally, brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 11.

To recount the past struggles, temptations, and felicities of our Christian course, and, with confidence in God, to look forward to those that may come, form at once the duty, the happiness, and safety of the Christian. Says

* Delivered to the church and congregation of Pisgah, on the resignation of the pastoral charge, after a connection of forty years.

Paul, "And now I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Let the apostle's conduct be our example to-day.

While we take a hasty review of the way in which God has led this church and myself, we will be of good comfort. Let us also recount some of the duties which lie before us; and thus close that delightful relation which has subsisted between this church and myself for forty years.

The remembrance of the first day I came among you has always been to me a delight, and the cause of gratitude. I found this church in a divided and distracted condition. Though but a youth and a stranger, God so blessed my feeble efforts, that peace and concord were restored. At that time, I had not the most distant idea of ever being a citizen of this state, yet perhaps the events of that day led ultimately to the union between this church and myself, which has been so protracted and so delightful.

I became your pastor. For forty years I have labored to know nothing among you but Jesus and him crucified. While I speak I trust I feel deeply penetrated with a sense of the innumerable short-comings

and imperfections of my private and ministerial life, still God's grace must be magnified, and I hope is magnified, in me. If I have ever preached one sermon, or ever made one effort that has proved beneficial, it has been all of grace, and I humbly hope I shall rejoice in the day of Christ that I "have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

I feel desirous that this, my last sermon among you, should not be a mere effusion of feeling, but should contain something that, when I am no more with you, may serve the people whom I love more than any other people on earth, as *a criterion of truth and a guide in duty*. Therefore,

I. I shall in the first place briefly state what I have labored to preach among you; and

II. Throw together a few directions, as to your future duty.

I pursue this course, that you may be of good comfort, of one mind, and that you may live in peace.

I. I hope you can bear me testimony that I have *labored to depict human nature as it is depicted in the Bible*.

I have deemed this of primary importance. It is known to us all, that the church, in every age, has been afflicted by divisions, and often by palpable departures from the truth. In every instance of this kind with which I have been acquainted, the first step of errorists has been, to deny in some form, the total, native depravity of man. The second, and indeed the necessary consequence has been, the ascription of some kind of power to man, by which the sinner's salvation is not wholly of grace, communicated by God, but, in some way, of human origin, and the putting forth of human

power. In these things, I have labored to teach you as Christ and his apostles have taught us. Avoiding vain jangling and philosophy falsely so called, we have bowed down to the overwhelming truth, "that as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; that the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; that that which is born of the flesh is flesh," &c., &c. From these principles we have not hesitated to deduce the solemn truth, that condemnation is written upon every child of Adam from the moment of his birth; that if he be spared but for a day, it is an extension of mercy; that if he be taken in infancy to that place, where so large a proportion of the inhabitants are children, it is but an exhibition of *his* mercy who said, "suffer little children to come unto me;" that if he should grow up to maturity and despise the Saviour, his ruin would be of his own working; but that if he should be converted and brought to Christ, it cannot be ascribed "to him that willeth, nor to him that runneth, but to God that showeth mercy." We have not hesitated to teach you, that Adam's posterity are as amenable to God's law as was the first transgressor; that all mankind by their fall have lost communion with God, and are under his wrath and curse. We have not attempted to evade or hide from your view that doctrine so abhorrent to human reason, and deathful to all the hopes of the carnal mind and vain philosophy, viz: "that as our first parents were the root of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was *imputed*, and the

same death in sin and corrupted nature, *conveyed* to all their posterity."

We are aware this is but a gloomy picture; but be assured it is the only just portrait of man that can be drawn, if we dip our pencils in Bible truth. Fancy may decorate, philosophy may panegyryze human nature, and metaphysics may bewilder the pastor and his flock, but still revealed truth and stubborn fact will fasten upon the heart and conscience of every candid inquirer; and he still asks, with a sigh, "what is man, that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?"

2. *The doctrine of imputation has claimed much of our attention.*

When dwelling upon Adam's sin, and all its tremendous consequences, I have often asked myself what would a ruined world do if there were but one Adam, one imputation, one confederated head. Blessed be God, the supposition finds no place in our system. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Dear brethren, we have taught you that men are justified, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them; they receiving and resting on him and his

righteousness “by faith, which faith they have not of themselves,” it is the gift of God; “For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Does the weary traveller lean upon his staff? does the thirsty pilgrim eagerly look round him for some cooling fountain? does the dungeon-dweller sigh for the light of heaven? does the condemned criminal long for the news of pardon? So does the poor awakened sinner breathe after the justifying, enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying grace of God. So does he desire to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” who is to him “the way, the truth, and the life.”

3. We have taught you, *that intimately connected with man's total depravity, and necessarily growing out of it, is his utter inability to help himself.*

We shall have less occasion now to dwell upon this subject, as I did a few years ago publish my sentiments on human ability, to which I refer you. Suffice it at this time to say, in the language of Payne's *Elements of Mental and Moral Science*, “Though the fall of man effected no change in the original susceptibilities of his mind, though it created none, and extinguished none, it perverted all.” We have no doubt that one great cause of error on this contested subject, arises from confounding the *susceptibilities* and *capabilities* of our natures. To be susceptible of love, and to be able to love a particular object, are two different things. For example, fallen men are susceptible of the exercise of love, but until they are created anew in Christ Jesus, they are utterly incapable of exercising love towards God, holy beings, or good doing; because as fallen natural men, they are “enmity against God.”

They neither see him, nor can delight in him or in his service. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Can a rational being love that which has in his view no loveliness in it? Is God a lovely object in the estimation of an unconverted man? Certainly not. On the account of our original corruption, we are utterly *indisposed, disabled, and made opposite* to all good, and *wholly* inclined to all evil. This is the language of our standards. I hope it will not be forgotten by my dear friends of this church, that the question is not what *kind* of ability the sinner has, but whether he has ability of *any kind*, to obey God's commandments, if by ability be meant any thing more than the susceptibility of being wrought upon by divine grace. It is surely high time the Christian world should learn to avoid and pity that sophism by which we are made able by one kind of ability, and unable by *another* kind of ability, to repent, believe, and love God.

I cannot dismiss this subject, without making two remarks, which I hope the unconverted part of my audience will ponder well. *Our inability to obey God forms no part of a plea for remaining in disobedience.* First, because "God has laid help upon one who is mighty to save," to whom it is the sinner's bounden duty to apply; and secondly, because our inability is our crime, not our excuse. It is part of the ruin brought upon us by our fall; and no proposition can be more untrue, than that it would be cruel and unjust for God to command us to do that, which, by our sin, we have rendered ourselves unable to do. A second remark is this: Solemn, eloquent, and moving appeals

made to men, accompanied with assurances that they have power to repent, believe, and surrender themselves to God, is the direct way to fill the church, but to fill it with self-converted persons. I awfully fear, when that decisive day comes, the grand object of which will be to magnify the grace of God and to stain all human pride and power, such will be found to be the character of many of those conversions which have been fondly hailed as genuine.

My dear friends, have it deeply impressed upon your own hearts and upon the memories of your children, "*That man's ability to do good works is not at all of himself, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ.*" "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them." Let it never be forgotten by any person that hears me to-day, that the gospel is a blessed system of means, ordained of God. That there is a *door* of mercy, an *ear* of mercy, a *mercy seat*, and a promised spirit. O! Is not this enough? Who need despair, when Christ has died? Who will linger, when Christ says "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Who will not melt, when the Saviour weeps? Who will not tremble before him "who is declared to be the Son of God with power?" And O Christians, who among us will not lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh?

4. We have labored to present the Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, as operating a part as important and distinctive in the economy of grace, as that performed by the Saviour himself.

I have long been convinced that great despise is done to the Spirit, by the manner in which his agency is

sometimes spoken of. It is no uncommon thing to hear a company of sinners urged and commanded to come to God, to believe and repent, without the least reference to the Spirit. Indeed the agency of the Spirit is highly spoken of by such divines, in the work of sanctification, but not at all in the production of faith and repentance. These primary steps, according to them, appertain to the creature, and are of creature power. Now, my dear brethren is this the gospel? or is it not a device of vain philosophy? Hear the Saviour: "But if I depart I will send him (the Spirit) unto you, and he will reprove the world of sin." The world, not the apostles, not Christians, but *the world*: that is, unconverted persons. Now, what is it to be reprov'd of sin in an evangelical or effective manner? Can any person be reprov'd or convinc'd of sin, who does not see it, as committed against a holy God? Can any man who is not enlightened and regenerated, apprehend either God or sin in a proper light? Hear what the apostle says on this subject: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." The beginning, yes, dear brethren, the very beginning of the sinner's return to God, is of the Spirit, not of the choosing or working of the blind, deprav'd "natural man." It is the impartation of that power which the apostle calls spiritual discernment. This spiritual discernment cannot be predicated of the natural man, for he "cannot discern the things of the Spirit." Brethren, however humbling it is to human pride, the Bible is full of this doctrine. If we love him, it is because he first loved us. It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do

of his own good pleasure. But you are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

I have not, I hope, to-day, the infelicity of addressing a single person, who would not shut his ears, and turn away from any man who would attempt to preach the Gospel, and yet deny the proper divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Does he do less dishonor to the Gospel who denies to the Spirit his appropriate work, in enlightening and regenerating the heart of the sinner? The one denies the personality, and justifying work and righteousness of the second person of the Trinity, the other the personality and distinctive work of the third. The one dishonors God the Saviour, the other dishonors God the Spirit.

5. I have labored *to draw you near to the cross.*

To hold up before you the cross on which the suffering Saviour died, the great vicarious sacrifice, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," has been my leading object. My dear friends, if I have ever retired from this pulpit, without in some distinct form presenting this precious Saviour to you, I have reason to ask your forgiveness, but especially the forgiveness of that sufferer who bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

I have labored *to present Christ Jesus to you as a servant.* "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What a life of servitude did he live! Wherever poverty bore the

sufferer down, there was the Saviour found, as poor as the poorest citizen of Judea—"that we through his poverty might be rich." He was ever ready for the labor of the carpenter's son, or the more appropriate service of whole nights of wrestling in prayer with the Father, whose "righteous servant" Isaiah says he was. Wherever there was disease, there was this sympathizing physician found, causing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dead to be raised up, and the gospel to be preached to the poor. Is bereavement and sorrow to be soothed? Jesus wept. Are the people to be instructed? We find him who taught as never man taught, pouring the words of truth upon the ears of listening multitudes.

I have held up Christ before you as a sufferer. Such a sufferer! Was it ever known before, in the government of a righteous God, that innocence, perfect innocence, suffered? Twice had it been proclaimed, not by the instrumentality of angels, but by God himself, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Says the apostle, "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" and yet he suffered. "His visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Well might the holy inhabitants of heaven pry into this mystery. It was a wonder that never had been exhibited, or even conceived of before. Has justice forsaken the eternal throne? Is that being who laid the foundations of the earth doomed to moisten the ground which he had formed, with his sweat, his tears, and his blood? Is that arm which stretched out the heavens, to be bound, and he whom angels adore to be led away to Pilate's

bar? Is that hand to which all power and dominion are confided by God, to be nailed to a cross? Is the prince of life to become the prey of death? Yes, dear friends, yes, all this, and more. The cup of trembling is not yet full. Into that cup is to be poured a mysterious ingredient, of which men and angels know nothing, or but very little. It was the fulfilment of that dreadful denunciation, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and smite the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd." The hand of man was upon him; the powers of darkness were assembled around him. But what were both? "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." But O! the smiting of that sword wielded by Omnipotence, the gathering of that cloud which veiled at once the face of nature, and of nature's God: it was this that extorted from the lips of the innocent sufferer, the bitter lamentation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I see many in this assembly press closer to the dying man; they throw around the arms of faith and embrace the expiring sufferer. I hear them say, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Brethren, when reading the prophets as they detail the sufferings of Christ, when tracing the history of our Saviour's painful life, and the God-afflicted agony of his death—when walking, in retrospect, through the garden of Gethsemane, and when gazing on the cross, are you not amazed, that any man, not utterly infatuated, not left to a strong delusion to believe a lie, should speak of all this as a mere show, a kind of tragical pantomime? With what tears ought you and the church to weep over those who deny the Saviour the

glory of enduring the penalty of that law which sinners had violated—of bearing our sins in his body on the tree—of pouring out his life, *especially* for those of whom he says, “I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me”—of bringing in an everlasting righteousness, which is to be imputed to his people for their justification? Alas! that these things should ever have been made a question. But you have not so learned Christ. Hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints—the form of sound words handed down by your fathers since the Reformation.

I cannot dismiss this all-absorbing subject, without a thought or two more. All agree that Christ suffered. Why did he suffer? Because he in his own person was a sinner? It would be blasphemy to say so. The question returns, why did he suffer? The only answer that can be given is, that he suffered for and on the account of his people. He suffered, being innocent. His people were the real offenders. He was “wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.”

• Again, if this obeying and suffering Saviour were no more than a created being, what effect could his *obedience* have had to magnify God’s law, which every creature is bound to obey, for himself, to the utmost of his ability; or his *suffering*, to render it possible for God to be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus Christ?

Dear brethren, you have been taught to consider the above doctrines as parts of one indivisible scheme, as stones in the same building, Jesus Christ, the co-equal Son of God, being the chief corner stone.

II. I am to leave with you a few directions which may aid you in future duty.

1. *As members of the church at large.*

Many of the dispensations of God's providence during the last half century, but especially those which respect the church, appear to me to have been projected upon the scale of the world. The church is no longer that isolated, uninteresting object, the world esteemed it one hundred years ago. It is evidently now a city set upon a hill. To it every eye is turned. Its friends hail its triumphs, and its wide spreading conquests. Its foes tremble lest they should be broken to pieces by the smitings of that stone, cut out of the mountain, which is destined to fill the earth. However much deformity is still about the church, she is evidently putting on her beautiful garments. Her chief adornments are charity, love, and good doing. Sectarian exclusion is ceasing to be her character. Calvary is becoming "the mountain of the Lord's house, and is established upon the top of the mountains." The cross is ceasing to be the exclusive claim of a party. *These* cheerfully award it to *those*. It is at once the *test of truth*, and the *standard of the church*; the blood of the vicarious sacrifice is henceforth to be the sacred cement of our order. Dear brethren, awake and keep up with the spirit of the age. Be not discouraged. It was to have been expected, that when the church should awake out of her slumber, some should see things as by twilight. That they should be in danger of mistaking men for trees walking, and truth for falsehood; and that some even of her own sons should in the ecstasy of their first wakeful moments, mistake the exploded heresy of eight or ten centuries for the invention of their own matchless powers. I say again, be not discouraged. When the church shall have put on her most beautiful form, the doctrines of

the Reformation will be as new and delightful as they were to Luther and Melancthon; and Christ and him crucified as precious to every minister, as they were to Paul. While you mark those who cause divisions, and avoid them; and while you watch over and turn away from those who would preach another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or another Gospel which you have not accepted, wake up to all the grand substantial doctrines of Christian charity and benevolence, Identify yourselves and your children with the church. Let every child who is large enough to sit at your bountifully covered tables, be taught to commiserate the poor; and all who are old enough to know what is meant by the word heathen, be made, with their own hands, to aid in sending the Bible and the Gospel to heathen lands. Let no good work go on without lending a helping hand. Let charity which abideth, characterize you as a church and as individuals. You know me too well to suppose, I hereby mean to inculcate that sickly and false charity which palliates sin, or affiliates with error. No, brethren, be holy as your Father in Heaven is holy, and ever contend *earnestly* for the truth, never *bitterly*. Buy the truth and sell it not, no, not for peace.

2. *I am to speak to you as Presbyterians.*

I am one of those who believe, that the different sects of evangelical christians in the world, so far from being a curse to the church, have, on the whole, been a blessing. That they are the means of sustaining each other in the grand fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, might, I think, be abundantly proven. The justness of this principle will be seen, from the acknowledged fact, that there are four or five Christian denominations in America, upon all of which the blessing of God evi-

dently rests. They each form a part of the bulwark of the land. The moment any one of the fundamental doctrines of our religion is assailed, they all rally round the Cross. When any great work of Christian charity is to be put forward, they all meet in the same hall of counsel and of prayer. Upon these principles, I am not ashamed to be called a *sectarian*, nor to impart to you my last counsel, as a *Presbyterian*.

I would first warn you against that project, which proposes to abolish all creeds, to throw all the churches into one grand crucible, to fuse them by some undefinable process, and then empty them out upon the world amalgamated and refined. I object to this scheme, because it is evidently impracticable, unless the Pope, or some other individual, be made the infallible interpreter of the Scriptures. Also, because each of those church alchemists expect, when the whole process is closed, and the new-formed church comes out of the furnace, it will possess the exact likeness of that to which he belongs. Let it be enough for you, that the churches to which you extend the hand of brotherhood, cleave to the Cross with its vicarious sacrifice. That they rely upon Christ, with his justifying righteousness, the enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost, and possess his spirit of holy living. If we mistake not, this is all the *oneness* the church in her best estate will ever exhibit.

You also ought to be reminded, that the present is a peculiarly critical time with the Presbyterian church in America. Though far from being as active as she ought to have been, she has been enabled by divine grace, to stand nobly forward, among her sister churches, in most of the grand good-doings of the age. She has

commiserated the heathen. She has labored to obey the Master, and to preach the Gospel to all the world. She has bestowed her thousands to circulate the Bible. She has taken children into her arms. She has wept over injured Africa. She has labored to pour instruction through many of our colleges. She has mourned over the desecration of the Sabbath. And all this, without meddling or caring to meddle with the kingdom of this world. And what has been the reward she has received, at the hand of many whom the world gladly bless? Let the mantle of charity cover up the slander.

Dear brethren, what effect ought this to have upon us, as Presbyterians? Nothing more nor less, than to produce redoubled effort. Not from a spirit of meeting opposition with opposition. But remembering, that we shall reap, in due season, if we faint not—that necessity is laid upon us, yea, wo is unto us, if we publish not the Gospel, each of us as we can—that the eye of the Master is upon us; and he says to each disciple, “watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

It is known to you all, that the Presbyterian church has for a few years, been in a state of lamentable division and disorder. The attentive eye might have discerned the gathering storm years ago. This is no more than what might have been expected, when we remember that enterprize, the love of novelty and distinction characterize the age. In the days of the Apostles and ever since, there have been men in the church who have preferred themselves to Christ; their own distinction, to the peace of the church. All this is but the fulfilment of Christ's prediction, “offences must come.”

While we would mingle our parting tears to-day, over these afflictions of our church, we would take courage, when we remind you that the disease has risen to its crisis. The tempest is fast subsiding. It is our deliberate opinion, that the unity and purity of our church are safe.

Had I all the eldership of our church before me to-day, I would say to them, the keeping of the doors of God's house is especially committed to them, and that their power, in administering its government in ordinary cases, is as three or four to one. The church cannot therefore be filled with persons who have been excited but for a day, or who do not embrace our standards, except the eldership consent to it; and in all our church courts they have, and they ought conscientiously to claim and exercise equal rights with their ministers. It is true, some of the best men, both of the ministry and eldership, have been strangely fascinated, but we trust it has been but for a day. They are beginning to pause; to "stand in the ways, to see and ask for the old paths, and walk therein." I would leave it among my parting counsels to this church, to adhere in a spirit of meekness, but of *firmness*, to the standards of the Presbyterian church. Let no man "beguile you with enticing words." You are one of the oldest churches in the West. You have been one of the most united and peaceful. You will, I trust, be so still. For forty years, dear brethren, what has been my hope, my crown of rejoicing? And in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, will you not be my "glory and joy?"

I am, though far advanced in life, going to a new country, and to engage in a new field of labor, though not in labour to which I have been unaccustomed. I am

going not in quest of ease or emolument, but because I have long preached the duty of self-denial, and endeavoured to awaken in others a missionary spirit, and especially because I have consecrated myself to the cause of the church, of truth, and of literature, and my all, to the cause of God's Providence. It is no small consolation to me to believe, that when I am no more with you, and when you are collected in these consecrated walls, where we have so long assembled together around the MERCY SEAT, I shall not be wholly forgotten in your prayers.

3. *I am in the last place, to say a word to you, as private Christians.*

Personal piety is the glory of the church. It is the light of the world. Domestic religion, at once graduates and characterizes the worship of the great congregation. Dear brethren, in the language of our text, I would say to you, *Be perfect.*

As this is a Scripture injunction, it means something. What does it mean? When our Saviour said, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect," does he mean to inculcate that absolute perfection, which can appertain only to underived existence? Certainly not. He intended to enjoin a perfection in *kind*, not in degree. And when the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "Be ye perfect," he does not mean that perfection, peculiar to immaculate Angels or to glorified Saints, but to Christians in this mingled world of good and evil, of light and shade, of conflict and warfare. If I am asked, in what does Christian perfection consist? I would say, chiefly in two things. First, in a perfect resignation to the will

of God; and secondly, in the attainment of the grace of the assurance of hope.

Brethren, "Be perfect." That is, be ye able to say from the heart, "Thy will be done." Could the richest streams of Christian felicity that have ever gladdened the church, or the heart of the humble child of grace, be traced, this quiet resignation to God's will would be found to be their common fountain. Christian friends, remember God's power and faithfulness—the dying love of the Saviour, and the countless promises of his word. These are all engaged for your comfort and security. Why not be perfectly resigned to Him, when we "know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Brethren, labor for the grace of the full assurance of hope. Some have attained to it, and why not you? Make it a part of the work of every day, to lay your heart, as it were, along side of God's word, that thus you may know that the "Spirit itself beareth witness with your spirit, that ye are the children of God." One of two things will certainly be effected by this daily investigation. If you have only a name to live, and are dead, the important discovery will soon be made. But if indeed you are a child of God, the grace of full assurance will speedily grow up in your heart, and the whole of your Christian life, will, thereafter, be as an antepast of Heaven.

Be of good comfort.

It is a law of our rational nature, but especially of the Gospel, that *activity* in duty, and *tranquillity*, or "good comfort," go together. Brethren, if you would be happy, be dutiful.

Remember the duties of the closet.

I am afraid there is no duty so much neglected. Certainly there is none, from which springs more immediately the richest Christian comfort. How delightful to shut out the world; to commune alone with God, when the pure desires of the heart are addressed to him, uncontaminated with the pride of being heard of men, which so often mingles itself with all social prayer. Therefore, how wise and how imperative is this injunction of the Master, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Remember the duty of family religion.

God long ago commanded the offering of the morning and the evening sacrifice. The duty of unremitting family religion seems to me to be so indispensable to the keeping up a sense of our daily dependence upon God, and of the obligations of parental, and social life, that we cannot conceive of real piety, where there is no assembling of the family, morning and evening, around the mercy seat. What must our children think? They have seen us at the Lord's table. They have heard us solemnly covenant with God, and the church to renounce the world, and to walk daily as in the sight of God. What must our children think, and what will our hesitating and stumbling neighbors think, when they see us so much devoted to the world, as to be unwilling to redeem a moment, for family devotion? How shall we be able to meet the collisions of this jarring world, to exercise that forgiveness, which is of daily requisition, unless we have our hearts imbued with the spirit of our Lord's prayer, and have solemnly

covenanted on our knees, and in presence of our families, that in all things we would labor to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour? It has been well said, that house is without foundation, or covering, where the evening and the morning sacrifice is not offered up.

Remember the duties you owe to your children and servants.

What tongue can paint the responsibilities of parents and masters? God's church, when first organized, embraced a whole family; Abraham, his son, and all his household. And twice in the New Testament, the same grand principle of household religion is recognized. Why? Because, what the germ is to the future oak, what the foundation is to the future edifice, such is the family to the church. Would to God I could this day impart to you some of my convictions, and blessed be God, some of my early and later experience on this subject. I am convinced, there is nothing in which the church of God is so far behind her duty, and her privilege, as she is, in the fulfilment of the obligations she is under to the children of her members. We cannot now dwell on this subject. But I must be permitted to ask all Christian parents, if they are not guilty of dishonoring God, when they, for a moment, doubt (provided they do their duty) that every child they have shall be given to them, as companions in the way to glory? Are God's promises made to you? Are they not also made to your children? We have, all, it may be, unconverted children. Why are they so? Is it because there was no covenant relation formed between God and them, on their baptismal day? Or is it because God is slack concerning his promises? No, no, dear brethren. It is because we have failed

in parental prayerfulness, piety and wisdom. I would call upon myself and upon you to be stirred up on this subject. To take fresh hold of that God, who has said, "I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee."

We may talk about revivals, and about the dawning of the Millennium as we please. We may send our missionaries to the heathen. We may multiply Bibles by millions, and Sabbath Schools by thousands. We may engage in all these grand and glorious enterprises; but the work will not be done, the world will not be converted, the fruit of the hand-ful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountain, will never shake like Lebanon, till parental *obligation* and *faith* are in full exercise. The church must receive her finished glory from the hand of family piety, and parental confidence in a covenant-keeping God, as she had her first foundation in the family of Abraham.

As it respects the duty of masters, as they are in this country, I know not what to say. I find in the Bible abundant instruction, as it respects the duty of masters and *servants*, none as it respects masters and *slaves*. Therefore I know not what to say. I have long struggled with these duties, and have utterly failed; and can only pray God, speedily to commiserate the church and the land, as it respects this matter.

Remember the duties you owe to this church in particular.

All may be included in one word. Be of one mind, live in peace. I leave you a loving and peaceful people. There is among you no root of bitterness, or heart-burnings, known to me. And it is not the least of my consolations in parting with you to day, that you are about to pass to the pastoral care of a man, who

has much of the meekness of his Master about him, and who is sound in the faith, and whose heart, I trust, burns with the love of God, and who will devote himself to the salvation of your souls. I have no doubt you will transfer to him that love and confidence which you have so kindly extended to me.

To the eldership I would say, you have been, some of you, for many years, my friends and counsellors. You have all been fellow-laborers with me in the gospel. I now solemnly charge you, "take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers." Much of the well-being of this church depends upon you. Much of the purity and peace of the Presbyterian church in America depends upon the eldership. They who only rule well in the church have fewer temptations to meet, fewer partialities to gratify, fewer subtleties to propose and to explain. It is a rare thing that an elder commits himself upon paper, or in a public discourse. Nor are they so liable to be heated by the fervor of party, or inflated by the breath of popular applause. I therefore say again, the purity and the peace of the church is, by God, and our excellent form of church government, deposited with the eldership. I believe it has been deposited in faithful hands. They are the sheet-anchor of the church's safety, in as much as they hold up the hands of their ministers, by prayer, and throw in their counsels, and interpose the weight of their standing and influence to check innovation and error.

Finally, dear brethren, can you tell what is included in that consolatory assurance with which Paul closes his epistle to the Corinthians, "And the God of love

and peace shall be with you." It includes all things, under all circumstances, and at all times. The God of whom Paul so confidently spake to the Corinthians, is the same God in whom you and I confide to-day; and may I not say to this dear church, "the God of love and peace shall be with you." Amen.

SERMON VIII.

BY DAVID MONFORT, V. D. M.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. ROMANS iii. 28.

THE scriptural definition of the faith of God's elect is, "Faith which worketh by love." The term itself signifies the belief of testimony, or a confidence in the veracity of another, as well as in his ability to accomplish some particular thing. In the first sense it is used where it is said, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater," and this witness is defined to be God's testimony of his Son. A thing may appear in view of the mind to be simply true, without any circumstance of interest pertaining to it. In this case our belief is of an indifferent kind, or purely speculative. Or, a thing while it appears true, may also appear good and excellent, presenting something for our approbation and reception, which in its own nature is very desirable. We easily perceive that in this

case our belief is very different from the former. There is an influence upon the heart and the affections; and where the good proposed is placed within our power, and at the same time our exertion is required to obtain it, it becomes practical, producing a favorable determination of the will. This evidently fills the description of "faith which works by love," and implies the cordial delight of the soul in the Gospel tender of justifying righteousness through Christ, as being in itself worthy of our acceptance. And this righteousness being in the view of the mind perfectly adequate to the end proposed, viz: to present the sinner faultless before God, and to give him a right to eternal life, (which of all other things a convinced sinner most desires,) it obtains at the same time his confidence or reliance. Of this description of faith, we have a beautiful summary in our standard, where it is defined to be that "whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered in the Gospel."

The term justification is another leading one in the text which requires our particular attention. The original word is forensic, and signifies to pronounce or resolve one just or righteous in law. Here we are at once presented with a grand and peculiar mystery of our holy religion, viz: that of a person in himself guilty, and yet really and in fact declared legally righteous; for all without exception "have sinned." To this subject, our attention is invited by the text, which in reference to the doctrine of a sinner's justification, contains two propositions.

1st. A positive. It is by faith.

2ndly. A negative. Not by, that is, "without the deeds of the law."

In illustrating the first, two things naturally require our attention: 1. the ground upon which a sinner is said to be justified; 2. the connection which faith has in his justification.

Here observe that there are two ways in which a person may be absolved, or freed from legal charge: the one, where there has never been guilt incurred by the breach of any precept; the other, where though there has been a breach, yet full obedience has been rendered by the guilty person to the penalty. In the first sense, Adam had been legally righteous, had he never transgressed; in the second, he could not be after the fall, for the penalty incurred was death, which was nothing less, if sustained in his own person, than an unlimited duration of suffering. But if in any way an adequate obedience can be rendered to the penalty, and the life of the criminal saved, his acquittal is still possible. If he can in any way be put in possession of the rewards of that obedience which makes full reparation for his crime, his discharge is not only possible, but it follows of course.

Now, the penalty requires the life or blood of the transgressor, and its claims cannot terminate short of it or its equivalent. But the scriptures on this subject very clearly admit of substitution; for it is said, "without shedding of blood there is no remission," implying that by shedding of blood there is. And that this remission may and does take place by the blood of another being substituted in place of the criminal's, is clear from the same passage, for the Apostle alludes to the typical sacrifices under the law which were offered for sin. All the ancient sacrifices carry in their very aspect the scriptural doctrine of substitution. The offender

brought forward his victim, its blood was shed, and his sin was forgiven or remitted; but in what possible sense but as "the blood which is the life" had a reference to proper claims of the penalty. It is true these were typical sacrifices only, and possessed no efficiency in themselves to take away sin; yet they show the life of an innocent person may be substituted in the place of the guilty, and be accepted so that the original transgressor may be treated as if he had not transgressed. It also shows us the nature of the great antetype, the sacrifice of Christ, which on account of its value is sufficient to take away the guilt of sin.

Our time will not permit me to take a full view of all the scriptural arguments in favor of real substitution, and of the death of Christ being such and accepted as such in the stead of believers. Nor can I at present attend to any specious objections which may be alleged; but let us content ourselves for the present to know that it is scriptural. And what can be more fully expressed than this, in the following plain propositions. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." Certainly it was the punishment of our sins. And it is said again, "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." And in illustration of this, it is again said, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." And in reference to his death, it is said, "He was delivered for our offences." We cannot, without obvious perversion of scripture, understand these passages as having any other meaning than that Christ's death had a reference to the penalty which we had incurred; that it is accepted as an equivalent obedience, and that by virtue of it we obtain our discharge.

But this righteousness does not effect the justification of any but those who receive it, and it is received by faith. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." This leads us to consider the connection which faith has in our justification. On this part of the subject let it be observed, that the connection which faith has in a sinner's justification is instrumental. We are justified by faith as the instrument, because by it we receive or come in possession of that righteousness which does justify. And in connection with this, another reason may be offered. In order to the justification of a person there must be a plea. This plea must be real, and it must be presented. Our plea is the righteousness of Christ, which has been defined to be his real and satisfactory obedience to the penalty of the law in our stead. Faith not only seizes, but it presents this before the court of heaven, and obtains an acquittal. Accordingly, it is said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned;" meaning that he is justified, the former always standing opposed to the latter. But, again: we are justified by faith; because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers and to believers only. To impute righteousness is to reckon or account it in a legal sense. The person justified is reckoned, accounted, or resolved righteous, through the gift or imputation of Christ's obedience in his stead. It is reckoned to him as if he had rendered it himself, and it is to him properly and strictly an equivalent to his own personal and perfect obedience. But without inquiring into the reason why the transaction should be thus exclusive, (for with the divine sovereignty in the case we have no concern,)

this righteousness is imputed to none but believers; because the language is positive and unequivocal: "He that believeth on him is not condemned; he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed," &c. Now we are said to be justified by faith, because it is a means of justification, as well as an essential qualification in the person justified. Not, however, a meritorious qualification as is intended to be proved in the sequel, but one which the sovereignty of God, in the economy of grace, has rendered indispensable in this business.

This will serve to illustrate certain scriptures, which represent faith itself as imputed for righteousness; as for example, Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness; and it is also said that it shall be imputed to us if we believe. If we turn our attention carefully to the sacred scriptures, we shall find certain graces frequently used figuratively for the object of their exercise. Thus faith itself is used: "Thy faith hath saved thee;" yet certainly it was the power of Christ, upon which faith acted, that saved the man. Would time permit, other instances might be adduced, where love, joy, fear, hope, &c., are severally put for their objects, which would at once easily lead us to the conclusion that when faith is said to be imputed for righteousness, the meaning is, that the righteousness which faith receives is thus imputed: for as has been shown, it is imputed to the believer only.

I shall now proceed to an illustration of the negative part of the text, in reference to justification.

Justification by faith is here set in opposition to justification by works; but this opposition does not exclude works in our justification. Nay, the proposition itself

that we are justified by faith supposes them to be essential in a justified man. Faith itself is a work, according to Christ himself: "This is the work of God, that ye believe," &c.; and according to the definition given in the introduction, it is of a practical nature. James tells us "that a man is justified by works;" intimating to us that the work of faith is rendered imperfect and absolutely inconsistent without them. The exclusive particle in this place stands opposed to the merit of good works, as being an insufficient righteousness to justify. The judgment is according to truth; but as in every thing we offend, as the best works fall short of perfection, such a judgment, founded on them, would not be according to truth. Consequently, they cannot be the ground. Faith therefore, as a work, singly or as including other works, cannot be the meritorious ground of a sinner's being declared legally righteous. For the more particular illustration of this, take the following remarks.

The text itself plainly contradicts it; for the opposition is clear. But if it were the meritorious cause, it ought to be a perfect work; yet this it is not; and therefore, if it were the ground of a sinner's being declared righteous, the judgment would not be according to truth; which cannot be. Now, no subject of evangelic faith ever has or ever will plead its absolute perfection. On the contrary, the more faith, the more frank acknowledgment of imperfection. But, did it possess absolute perfection in itself, yet it would fail in rendering an adequate obedience to the penalty of the law. As justification, therefore, implies that the subject of it is in possession of the obedience required of him, though faith should include every other work in perfec-

tion, it would utterly fail in discharging the sinner from guilt or punishment.

But again: if the inherent holiness of faith were the ground of our justification, there is no reason why any other grace whatever might not be the ground of it. There are other accompanying graces, which possess at least equal holiness, such as hope and charity, which are ranked with it, and of which three charity is said to be the greatest. Upon the presumption, therefore, that the holiness of faith is the ground of this divine judgment respecting a sinner, why is it not charity which is greatest? There is no reason except that the inherent holiness of neither justifies the sinner.

And, farther, if the supposed doctrine were true, it would necessarily explode the scriptural doctrine of justification by the grace of God. Grace is an unmerited favor. Now, if it were by the holiness of faith, "grace would be no more grace; otherwise, work is no more work." But "it is by faith, that it might be grace." Here, the opposition which we contemplate as true, is very distinctly brought to view. Nay, farther; according to the apostle, the presumption being true, the offence of the cross would cease, and the sacrifice of Christ for sin be rendered null. It would leave us still in our sin, and undermine the whole system of salvation.

Once more. If the holiness of faith justifies a sinner, one of two things must be true, viz: either it is an equivalent obedience both to the penalty and precept of the divine law, or it is another law, accommodated to the natural weakness of our fallen nature, and taking effect either on account of a relinquishment of the claims of justice, or by their being cancelled through

the death of Christ. I flatter myself that the former has been demonstrated to be impossible in the nature of things. The latter is demonstrably false; for

1st. The claims of justice are as indispensable as the truth of God, and the supposed relinquishment cannot take place without reflecting signal disgrace upon the divine truth and honor. God abideth faithful, whether we speak in reference to his promise or his threatening.

2d. To suppose that the law, which was originally transgressed, had its accomplishment in the death of Christ, and then ceased as a law regulating human conduct, for ever, is reflecting disgrace upon it, as a useless thing; nay, it is rendering it mutable and really changed by the death of Christ; whereas Christ himself positively declares that he came for no such object; and at the same time urges this same law in every jot and tittle of it, as a rule of duty, while he discards from the number of his disciples the man who does not scrupulously regard it as such. The ground of the presumption therefore is evidently false and unscriptural.

3d. The doctrine professedly derived from this is like its sources; for while, on the one hand, there is no intimation in scripture that faith is a law of works, on the other hand, nothing can be more positively contradicted. As an evidence of it, witness the text when faith stands opposed to the merits of our own obedience. View it in whatever light we may, and it is still justification by works, than which nothing is more antiscip-tural. For it matters not what quantity of obedience this law requires, the obedience itself is a condition, and if fulfilled, is a pleadable one, and so the person obeying claims his acquittal as a matter of right. Thus boasting is not excluded by the law of faith, but esta-

blished. But the scriptures say it is excluded even by the law of faith.

It does not alter the absurdity of this in the least to say that though the righteousness of faith is less than the law of God requires, God graciously accepts of less in place of more; for while it reflects great dishonor upon the divine law, it still goes to establish an anti-scriptural doctrine; for it is justification by works. Faith becomes a condition, i. e. a legal condition, and when we believe, we claim the reward, not of grace, but of debt. Besides, if the obedience itself be but partial, a failure in one point is still transgression, and therefore the judgment of God in our justification, is not according to truth; which is daringly absurd.

This point has been noticed a little more particularly on the present occasion being a very plausible and popular error, and well calculated to put an end to the offence of the cross. It is hoped that no offence will be taken from a dispassionate examination of the subject.

I shall conclude with some general inferences from the foregoing remarks.

1st. From what has now been said, we may learn the propriety of a distinction usually made between a rational, historical, or speculative faith, and a justifying faith, and that the latter is the result of a special influence of divine grace. The former is in its nature simple, implying the rational conviction of the mind respecting the evidence of revealed truth. The latter, according to its scriptural definition, is more complex, including a practical effect upon the heart, affections, and will; hence, said to work by love. The former may be the unassisted act of the rational mind; but the

latter, implying delight in the truth believed, or a relish for what is overtured in the gospel message, cannot be; for the natural mind, being totally depraved, is destitute of such a principle. As well might we suppose a man, destitute of taste, to relish the sweetness of honey, or a sick man to have appetite for his food, as to suppose that the natural man, unassisted, is capable of saving faith. This faith is properly called the gift of God, for it is the product of his new-creative energy.

2d. From what has been said we learn that there is nothing meritorious in the exercise of faith. On the contrary, it pleads no merit, and is in reality an expression, on our part, of weakness and poverty. It is the hand which receives and appropriates the gracious gift of righteousness to ourselves. True, we are said to be justified by faith; and in the same sense the beggar may be said to be supported by the hand which receives the bounty of another. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith." Hence the doctrine of justification, of all others, is best calculated to humble the pride of the human heart, and to attribute all the glory of a sinner's salvation to the free grace of God.

3d. The justification of a sinner does not imply any infringement upon the regular order of distributive justice, but on the contrary it takes place by a strict reference to this order, so as highly to honor it. For, according to the doctrine of substitution, there is no need of any suspension of this order; no need of any infringement; no need of any violation, for the obedience required has been rendered; the penalty or threatening has been executed; the righteousness demanded has been wrought out; and so this order is fully

maintained, while "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other," in the justification of a sinner.

4th. This subject teaches us the absurdity of eternal justification; for if we are justified by faith instrumentally, we cannot have been justified eternally; faith could not act as an instrument before it had an existence. This, I think, is self-evident, and if so, the sentiment alluded to is self-evidently absurd. Besides, when a sinner is justified, he is at the same time pardoned. If therefore he was eternally justified, he must have been an eternal sinner, consequently he must have been eternal; or else he must have acted before he had an existence. The first presumption is putting him in possession of an incommunicable attribute of the Deity, while it is contrary to fact; the latter is a self-evident absurdity. And in addition to this, previous to faith believers are said to have been under condemnation: 'the children of wrath, even as others.' Justification is the opposite of condemnation. Now, for a person to be condemned, and at the same time acquitted, and that in reference to the same thing, is another palpable absurdity. The scriptures tell us, "He that believeth not is condemned already." Now, if there was a time (which is certainly the indisputable fact) when all believers were unbelievers, there was a time when they were condemned, and consequently not absolved from guilt.

This error no doubt results from a confounding of God's eternal decree and his act pursuant to that decree. His determination to act, is one thing; his act, is another. As "known unto God are all his works from the beginning," he eternally decreed to make man, yet

man is not an eternal being. He eternally decreed to create a world, yet the world was not eternally created. Surely that intellect must be dolefully eclipsed indeed, which cannot discover a distinction so clear, and at the same time detect the fallacy of the error alluded to.

5th. From what has been said, we discover the sufficiency of the atonement to justify any number of individuals. We need no arguments to prove this; excepting that the atonement was a perfect obedience; and consequently the perfect righteousness of the law. Adam, being the federal head and representative of his whole race, had he perfectly kept the law, would have secured the standing of all; because his perfect obedience constituted the righteousness of that law under which he was thus appointed. Any thing short of perfect obedience had failed of constituting that righteousness, and consequently had secured neither his own nor the standing of any of his offspring. Had the obedience of Christ, therefore, been any thing less than perfect, it had not been righteousness at all; and consequently could have procured the absolution of none; but, being a perfect obedience or righteousness, it is as unlimited in its capability of imputation as Adam's supposed obedience had been. Let it however be observed that the design of the atonement was limited by the will of God, and it had a special reference to those whom God, in his sovereignty, had determined to save.

6th. Lastly. We infer from what has been said, that all unbelievers are necessarily under condemnation. The fact the scriptures abundantly establish; the reason of it is obvious. There must be righteousness where there is an absolution from guilt, and this righteousness must be presented. It is imputed to none but believers.

Faith is the only instrument by which it is received and presented before the court of heaven. All unbelievers, therefore, are destitute of righteousness; consequently the charge of all their crimes stands full against them, as if no atonement had been made. "He that believeth not is condemned already," because he remains under the curse of the broken covenant; and his condemnation is increased "because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Finally perish, therefore, he must, under this augmented weight of condemnation, or believe in the atonement of Christ for righteousness. For his acceptance there is this day a tender made of the perfect obedience and righteousness of the Son of God. Sinner, unbeliever, wilt thou be saved by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Wilt thou be saved by a plan infinitely sufficient for thy ransom? Here is full redemption from hell, with all the blessed rewards of the Saviour's obedience and blood, tendered to you. And be assured, "he that believeth shall be saved;" while "he that believeth not shall be damned." Amen.

SERMON IX.

BY DAVID MONFORT, V. D. M.

CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY.

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

EPHESIANS i. 13, 14.

THE Apostle proves in the preceding context that Gentiles, as well as Jews, had been brought to the enjoyment of the common blessings and privileges of the Gospel, pursuant to the election of grace, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”

The Jews “*first trusted in Christ,*” because the Gospel which is the instrumental cause of faith was first preached to them; and this, we learn from the Saviour himself, was a part of the same eternal purpose. “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer—that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name—*beginning at Jerusalem.*” This privilege was guaranteed to them by God’s covenant with Abraham. Hence the chief advantage of Jews, according to the Apostle Paul was, that “unto them were committed the oracles of God.” The covenants, the giving of the law,

and the promises pertained to them. Though, by their unbelief and rebellion, they had forfeited their right to these privileges, yet when the commission was given to preach the Gospel to the whole world, in order that the truth of God might be established and abound, it was, by a positive command, first preached at Jerusalem, and Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, first believed in Christ.

This privilege, however, was not to be confined to the natural descendants of Abraham; for the Gentiles were to be "fellow heirs," and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel." And pursuant to the divine purpose, long foretold, yet recently more perfectly made known to Apostles and Prophets "*by the spirit,*" the Gospel had gone to the Gentiles, who also, as well as Jews, after they heard it, "*trusted in Christ.*" And having believed, they "*were sealed with the Holy Spirit,*" as heirs to spiritual blessings in common with believing Jews; and this sealing was to them an earnest or security of eternal salvation not yet in their actual possession.

In the sequel, the following things will claim our attention:

- I. What is meant by trusting in Christ?
- II. The sealing which those have who have trusted in him.
- III. The pledge or security, which this sealing furnishes of eternal salvation.

I. The word rendered trusting, is originally derived from a word which signifies "to persuade." The reason is obvious; because the act of trusting another, presupposes a conviction or persuasion in the mind, that he is entitled to confidence. The same word is trans-

lated believing, because believing is an act of confidence in the veracity of another. Trusting in Christ is a confiding in his ability and disposition to save sinners, and a giving of credit to the promises of grace and mercy through him. The same act is also denominated faith, because it denotes a firm belief in divine testimony, or in "the record that God has given of his Son." The instrumental cause of it is the word of God, for "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing of the word of God." The Ephesian converts believed "after they heard the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation."

This act is called a *saving act*, because by it the believing sinner becomes an *heir* of salvation. Hence the positive and unequivocal promises of the Gospel to him who believeth. "He that believeth on *him*, is not condemned—he that believeth shall be saved—Whosoever believeth in him *shall* not perish, but *shall* have everlasting life—He shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

It is important here that we should be guarded against a very natural error; which is, to suppose that faith secures salvation to us, on the ground of its own intrinsic worth. The Evangelist John teaches us that believing in Christ, and receiving him, are the same thing. "But as many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that *believed in his name*." Our excellent Catechism teaches us that "faith in Jesus Christ is that by which we receive him, and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the Gospel." All this shows, that faith is the humble act of the soul by which it receives the gracious gift of God—by which it receives the blessings of salvation freely bestowed, in view of the assurance

which the promises of the Gospel afford, that those blessings are secured to him who receives them. It is in other words, to count it, a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

In order that a sinner may thus act faith in Christ, it is necessary that he has a suitable conviction of his own state, as a sinner, and his absolute need of salvation. He must not only feel that he is a sinner, but he must also relinquish all confidence in his own competency, or in the competency of any other but Christ to save him. Hence a thorough conviction of his own sin, misery, and deplorable helplessness, is presupposed in the act of trusting in Christ. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." As none but those who are sick, and who are sensible of their danger, will employ a physician; so none but those who feel their sinfulness and perishing need of a Saviour, will humbly submit their wretched case to Christ, the physician of souls.

Observe, further, that trusting in Christ is an act of confidence in his ability to save. This the conduct of our Saviour, when here on earth, clearly confirms. Such was the confidence of the diseased woman, who touched the hem of his garment, and for which she was approved by our Lord. When the two blind men made application for the reception of sight, the Saviour expressly asked them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Other instances of the same kind might be adduced; but the case is a plain one. We cannot trust another, where we have not confidence in his ability.

The person, also, who trusts in Christ, confides in his *truth*, as well as in his *disposition* to save sinners. A

mere conviction of his ability to save, is not sufficient to inspire confidence in him as a Saviour. Power might be exerted for the destruction of the guilty; and this the convinced sinner would most naturally expect. But when the Gospel promises and invitations are presented to him, affording him the clear evidence, that the Saviour is disposed to save sinners; and that he will disappoint none who trust in him; this, connected with a conviction of his ability, inspires confidence in him. Hence it is said, "He that cometh to God must believe—that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hence faith realizes the truth of the Gospel promises, as altogether secure; therefore it is called, "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."

Faith or trusting in Christ, is always accompanied by an affectionate regard of its object. Therefore it is called "faith which worketh by love." The true believer has an admiring view of the supreme excellence of divine things, such as overpowers the allurements of sensual objects. Faith is called "the victory that overcometh the world." It is founded in an exalted sense of the infinite beauties of holiness, and it is always accompanied with an ardent desire to be like God. Hence it leads the believer continually to renewed endeavors after new obedience. He is not contented with any attainment short of complete sanctification or perfection in holiness. The fruits of faith will of course be good works; thus rendering the believer's profession and his life consistent with each other. But especially is he who trusts in Christ delighted with his character as a Saviour. In the estimation of such a one, "he is the chief among ten thousand and altogether

lovely." The twofold nature of the Mediator, renders him peculiarly an object of desire, because he is thus suited to his work; thus our nature is exalted, and the believer through him is enabled to claim relation to the throne of Heaven. In his character as a prophet he is amiable, because the believer being convinced of his own spiritual blindness and ignorance, sees his suitability in that character to his own desperate wants. As a priest, the Saviour is no less lovely; because the believer being convinced of his great guilt, of the indispensable claims of that law which he has transgressed, and of his own incompetency to meet those claims short of his suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; Christ, in the office of priest, having made full satisfaction to those claims by his sufferings, for all who believe in him, becomes an object of peculiar loveliness and desire. He is just such a Saviour as a law condemned sinner needs. Nay, he is the only possible Saviour; for none in Heaven or earth, except Jesus the Mediator, is able to make an adequate atonement for sin. The righteousness of God, in the forgiveness of sin, could not appear in any other way than through the sufferings of his own son. Here mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace embrace each other. Salvation from sin and from wrath is possible, while the claims of the divine government are perfectly sustained. God is "*just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*" The believer admires such a scheme of salvation, and often in the ecstasy and joy of his soul, he exclaims, Oh! the depths both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways, past finding out?"

Christ is also unspeakably lovely to the believer, in

his office as King. There is, in every good man, much sin to be mortified; much corruption and pride to be subdued—a work utterly beyond the power of man. The believer, in his own estimation, is sure to fail of salvation, provided this work depends upon himself. But the Saviour, as a King, subdues the pride and corruption of the human heart, and thus “he purifies unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” When Paul exclaimed, “Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” immediately he triumphed in the power of Christ; “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The believer’s confidence in Christ embraces him as a whole Saviour, for Christ “is made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

Again. Faith in Christ is, in its origin, *purely divine*. Paul testifies that “it is the gift of God.” He also calls it the “spirit of faith,” and for no other reason, we apprehend, than that it is a *spiritual exercise*, of which the Divine Spirit is the author. Christ, *by his spirit*, is the “*author and finisher* of our faith.” Faith is not the mere assent of the natural understanding to divine truth, but it contemplates the facts exhibited in the Gospel as lovely and acceptable. It does not merely admit that Christ came into the world to save sinners, but it accounts it a *faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation*. This supposes a *spiritual discernment* of the intrinsic nature of its object: but observe, “the natural man,” that is *the mere intellectual man*, “discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he *know them*, for they are spiritually discerned.” The viewing of an object as lovely, implies the pre-existence of a corresponding relish in the

soul; but such taste for divine beauties has no existence in the *mere intellectual man*, for he is carnal, and “the carnal mind is enmity to God.” “Faith that works by love” presupposes the “love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost,” for this love is its foundation—it is the divine spring of action to this holy exercise.

Let us now proceed to examine the second leading item suggested in the text, which is—

The *sealing* of those who have trusted in Christ.

We shall have occasion to show that the sealing of “the Holy Spirit of Promise” is the work of regeneration; the incipient state of sanctification in the heart of the believing sinner. It is perhaps not improper to observe by way of anticipation, that we have not time to examine minutely the question which seems to be naturally agitated here—whether faith precedes regeneration?—for the text says, “after that ye believed, ye were *sealed*.” Let it suffice to say, however, that independent of the Spirit’s illuminating influence, in taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to sinners, independent of his renewing the will and the affections, there is not, and there cannot be, an evangelic faith of that nature which has now been described. While, on the other hand, it is just as true that no covenant blessing is sealed to any one, until he is in Christ by faith. But because the instant a sinner believes he is in Christ, and whenever “he is in Christ he is a new creature,” faith and regeneration are, in fact, inseparable, as it regards time. No man is a believer without regeneration; nor is any one regenerated without faith.

With regard to the *sealing* of believers, it will perhaps not be out of place to be a little particular. Let

it be remarked that the language of the text is figurative, and taken from the custom of designating property by a mark or seal; or rather, perhaps, from the custom of conferring legal privileges, or confirming contracts, by affixing a seal or signature. Believers are God's special property marked, designated, or sealed with his own image upon their hearts. Hence they are called, "*his portion and the lot of his inheritance.*" The servants of God are said to be "sealed in their foreheads," and thus they are distinguished from the wicked, who are said "not to have the seal of God upon *their* foreheads." Saints are again represented as having "the Father's name written upon them." And after the consummation of all things it is said, that "they shall see his face and his name shall be in their foreheads," not only, we apprehend, as the evidence of God's claim to them as his people, but as his own signature, securing to them their privileges as such.

Again, Jehovah pledges himself to "put his law in *their* inward parts, and write it in their hearts;" and this is his signature to his covenant with them; for it immediately follows, "I will be their God and they shall be my people." They on their part, at the time they first trust in Christ, are represented by that act as "subscribing to the Lord, and naming themselves by the name of Jacob," and Jehovah is represented on his part as making his signature to the same covenant, by writing his name upon their foreheads, or, which is the same thing, his law upon their hearts.

A signature, whatever be its matter or form, binds the truth and integrity of the party making it to the performance of something stipulated. A seal is the security given of something conferred, or to be performed,

and such security it is, just in proportion as the truth and ability of the party making it is entitled to confidence. It is the *confirmation* of a promise or a privilege conferred, as a promissory note signed by an individual; a contract between two individuals mutually subscribed, or an instrument of writing by which a legal privilege is conferred and which has the seal of the court or state affixed to it.

That God has in different ages dealt with men on principles which have an analogy to our commercial and civil intercourse, is evident both from the Old and New Testament state. Thus in the covenant made with Abraham, in which he secured to Abraham and to his natural seed, the external privileges of his visible kingdom, the sign of circumcision was expressly given as the divine signature to that covenant, and this sign in the flesh of an Israelite was a pledge of God's truth which "*has abounded to many.*"

Now let it be observed that circumcision was an emblem of regeneration. This is evident from the command to "circumcise the heart;" and from the unregenerate being called "uncircumcised in heart." The regenerated are called "the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit"—are said to be "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." And why all this, but because circumcision which was an external sign of external privileges was an emblem of regeneration, which is an internal sign of invisible privileges. The first secured to the seed of Abraham, the written law, the promises, in a word "the oracles of God"—the latter secures to believers the blessings of eternal salvation through Christ. The first was a seal of a temporary

covenant; the latter of that everlasting covenant which is well ordered and sure. God promises to make with those who trust in him, "an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David." By trusting in Christ, they become one with him; partakers of his righteousness, and by virtue of such relation to him, they are accounted the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. The whole is expressed in that one passage already quoted. "To as many as received him, (Christ) to them gave *he* power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe in his name," and this power is confirmed and established forever by the Spirit's signature, or seal.

We proceed to the consideration of the third thing proposed, which is the security, pledge, or assurance which this sealing of the Spirit gives of future and eternal salvation.

It is said to be "*the earnest* of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." The purchased possession is that eternal salvation which the Saviour purchased by his death, and of which he is for this cause, "*the author* to all who obey him," or which is the same thing, trust in him.

Let us observe that an "*earnest*, is a part of a full sum to be afterwards paid, and is a positive security of the full payment to be afterwards made, in proportion as the person giving it is entitled to confidence. As to its moral obligation, it is equally binding with a formal signature, for it is a sign of something to be performed.

The beauty of the figure in this case appears from this simple fact. The earnest is in kind the same as the full sum, though not the whole of it. Regeneration is in kind the same as sanctification, yet it is only

the commencement of the work. In regeneration we commence our spiritual existence, being made new creatures; being renewed in the whole man after the image of God; but in every part imperfect. In sanctification we grow to the full stature of perfect men and women in Christ. The perfection of this work is "the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Now the doctrine taught is this; as the *earnest* is to him who has received it, the assurance that the full bargain shall be made good, so is the work of sanctification commenced in the soul, an assurance to him who possesses it, that this work shall be completed in his eternal salvation. The same apostle uses this remarkable and similar language. "Now he which establishes us with you in Christ is God, who hath also *sealed us* and given us the *earnest of the spirit* in our hearts." Again he calls this earnest of the Spirit "the first fruits of the Spirit." For as the first fruits were to the Jews, a pledge or assurance of a future crop, so is the work of sanctification in its commencement, a pledge on the part of its author, to the believing sinner, that he will complete this same work in his eternal salvation.

And why not? Does the eternal Jehovah give his signature to a covenant, and is his seal not to be depended upon? Can he forfeit his word? Is not his pledge, his integrity, his truth to be depended upon above all others? And is it possible for that inheritance to be held back, of which his work in the heart of a believer is the earnest, the seal, the first fruits?—Nay, to suppose it to fail, is to impeach the integrity of unerring truth. Men who enter into contracts; who solemnly pledge themselves to the performance of certain things promised, are liable to moral changes, or

changes of purpose; but God is of one mind and changes not. His "gifts and callings are without repentance," that is not liable to a change of mind or purpose in the giver.

But it may be said, that though God is unchangeable and never will forfeit his promises to his people, yet they, on their part, may cease to be his people, and thus forfeit their right to salvation. But we answer, that their ceasing to be his people would suppose at once a real forfeiture of the promise on the part of Jehovah; for the promise that they shall be his people is just as positive as that he will be their God. "*I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*" And again: "*And 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.*" To keep them from departing from him, is a part of the stipulation on his part, to which he gives his seal.

And why should it be otherwise? The new creation as much depends on the efficiency of divine power as the old; and why should we suppose such an exertion of divine efficiency to be made for nought? But this would be the fact, provided the sanctification of the soul should finally fall short of eternal salvation. Could the immutable purpose and wisdom of Jehovah be admired, in such an event? Surely not; and therefore the everlasting covenant, in which believers in Christ are, through grace, made parties, precludes the possibility of failure, by the most positive stipulations sealed with his own signature, on the part of God. "The redemption of the purchased possession" is to be "to the praise of his glory."

Inspiration informs us further, that “The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger;” that “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Our Saviour gives his people eternal life and declares, “*they shall never perish;*” and the Apostle John, speaking of apostates, declares, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.” They never had “trusted in Christ,” and of course they never had received that *seal* which is the “earnest” or certain pledge of eternal salvation.

The doctrine of the text may therefore be summed up in this brief scriptural proposition. “He that believeth *shall be saved.*” They who trust in Christ with a spiritual, living faith, receive in the same instant the seal of the great Jehovah, which secures to them for ever a right to eternal life.

I shall conclude with a few brief inferences.

1. Learn from this subject the value of Christ crucified. He, as our great high priest, who offered his own blood to atone for our sins, is the foundation of a believer’s confidence, and the source of all his privileges. Independent of his making a penal satisfaction for sin, there is no pardon, no acceptance with God, no right to eternal life. For without shedding of blood there was no remission; but by the shedding of *his* precious blood he has obtained “eternal redemption” for all who shall believe on him. Hence the importance of preaching a crucified Saviour; for there is no gospel without him. Hence those who deny his vicarious atonement,

who deny that he made a penal satisfaction for sin to the claims of the divine government, have no rational ground of hope for salvation. Let us, then, cleave to the atonement, on which all our hopes for eternal life depend.

2. This subject teaches the value of a *spiritual, living faith*. "Without faith, it is impossible to please God;" for all who do not believe are under the curse. Christ redeems from the curse those, and those only, who believe; for he is the end of the law for righteousness to none else. It is therefore in the act of trusting in Christ only that the sinner is freed from condemnation, for by it he is brought into the Saviour, and made a partaker of his righteousness. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. But such also as believe are the objects of divine complacency; because they are made his sons by the spirit of adoption. They have his name, his law, his nature, engraved on their hearts, as a privilege inseparable from faith. In short, all their spiritual privileges in Christ result from faith in him. By faith, they have all spiritual riches; without it, they are destitute, and must perish for ever. Hence the urgent nature of the exhortation, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" for "he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

3. This subject teaches us the astonishing love and condescension of Jehovah; his love, in giving his Son to die for his people, and his Holy Spirit to produce their faith and thus bring them to a living union with the Saviour. This is unparalleled love. But when we see him becoming a party in the everlasting covenant, in which his people are sharers, and exclusively benefited, when we see him write his name upon their

worthless hearts, and thus securing to them, by his unerring and immutable truth, the blessings of that covenant forever, we ought to feel ourselves constrained to cry out, What astonishing condescension! "Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him?"

Angels view this condescension with admiration, and extol the great Jehovah on our behalf; how much more should we admire, and adore, and praise!—We, who are thus raised from misery, degradation, and just wrath, to states of eternal exaltation and glory!

4. This subject, while it teaches us the absolute certainty of the believer's salvation, at the same time shows us that the doctrine, when well understood, is not liable to abuse. It is a doctrine honorable to God, honorable to his wisdom and his goodness, but especially so to his eternal truth. But when we understand how the believer's salvation is secured, the very security guards him against the supposed abuse itself. It is often objected to this excellent doctrine, that it is calculated to encourage the presumptuous to sin at the expense of divine goodness and forbearance; but when we learn that the divine security in this case is nothing less than his law, written upon the heart, his fear, implanted in the soul, and that this work secures his own kind interference, so that believers shall not depart from him, the subject is completely guarded against the alleged abuse. Whoever thus finally departs from God, no matter what his pretext may be, gives evidence to himself and all others, that he never was a child of the covenant; that he never had the fear of God implanted in his heart; for this fear, according to the promise, is to guard all who are the subjects of it from final apostacy.

2. This subject shows us clearly who, and who only are in covenant with God. They are such as subscribe unto the Lord and name themselves by the name of Jacob. By faith they are one with Christ. They are Christ's property, his sheep whom the Father gave him; and now the Saviour has *brought* them to himself, they have received his Father's name upon their hearts. And as the happy result of all, they have the same spirit, who wrote this name upon their hearts, "witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God." Hence, let Christians learn to examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, and never rest contented until they find the clear evidence within themselves, that they are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," which is the "*earnest*" of eternal salvation.

Finally. Let unbelievers learn how great encouragement is given them to trust in Christ. This encouragement is nothing less than the prospect of eternal salvation. And what greater motive can be presented than this? It is not earthly riches, nor honor, nor temporary pleasure; but it is glory, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life in heaven. And is not the object of sufficient importance? Is not the veracity and power of Jehovah entitled to your highest confidence? O come, and rest your souls on Christ, without an interest in whom your sins will destroy you forever. Come, and be a party in a covenant with God. Come, and have his seal upon your hearts. Come, and have that "*earnest*" of a heavenly inheritance, and thus be secure of "the purchased possession;" and then you shall also be monuments "*to the praise of his glory*" forever. Amen.

SERMON X.*

BY THE REVEREND REUBEN FRAME.

BLESSEDNESS OF JUSTIFICATION.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our
Lord Jesus Christ. ROM. v. 1.

THE Lord Jesus Christ is the grand centre of the gospel system. From him, as the sun of righteousness, emanate all the beams which enlighten the soul darkened by sin. Through him alone, the transgressor, far from God by wicked works, can be brought nigh. However much those who are strangers to themselves, and blind to their own lost condition may be disposed to rest upon their own works for salvation, he who is truly an heir of glory rests upon him *alone* who has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness, as the ground of acceptance with God. This remark is strikingly exemplified in the case of the apostle Paul. Before his conversion he was a proud, self-righteous Pharisee. Being a stranger to himself, and a stranger to the extent and spirituality of God's holy law, his hope of heaven, on the merit of his own works, was firm. He was alive without the law once. But no sooner had his mind been enlightened, no sooner had he been made sensible

* Delivered before the Presbytery of Cincinnati, as a part of trials for ordination, and now published by the particular request of some who heard it.

of his true condition, of his proper character, than all his former hopes vanished. "The commandment came, sin revived, and he died." Although before his conversion he showed himself a most violent persecutor, and despised a crucified Saviour, yet afterwards he could say, in the most emphatic language, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notwithstanding "he labored more abundantly than all the other apostles, and was in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft; of the Jews five times received forty stripes, save one; thrice was beaten with rods, once was stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day was in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by his 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;"—notwithstanding these great trials characterized his service in the cause of God, yet he renounced all confidence in his own faithfulness as meritorious of eternal life, and looked away both from his sinfulness and his services, to him who hung upon the tree, as "the way, the truth, and the life." Nor was he satisfied barely with receiving Christ as the Lord *his* righteousness; but being an apostle and preacher of the gospel, he labored to direct others also to the source from which his hope of heaven was derived.

Thus we find in the preceding part of this epistle, the apostle labors to show that *by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God, but that the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto*

all and upon all them that believe, is the robe which alone will screen sinners from the divine wrath, and be a suitable ornament in which to walk the streets of the heavenly city. After having stated and confirmed the doctrine of justification, the apostle proceeds, in the chapter of which the text is a part, to show the happiness of those who are justified. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is proposed, in this discourse, first, to speak more particularly of the nature and ground of the sinner's justification; and, secondly, of the blessedness of those who are justified.

I. The nature and ground of the sinner's justification.

The word *justify*, in a scripture sense, does not signify to make inherently holy, but is a forensic term, and signifies to declare just. This may be seen by a reference to different passages in the word of God. The first to be noticed of this kind is the 25th chapter of Deuteronomy, and 1st verse. "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall *justify* the righteous and condemn the wicked. In this passage are either expressed or implied a law, and judges, and persons arraigned for trial. The judges are not to form the characters of those brought before them, but merely to declare what their characters are. They are to pass upon the righteous the sentence of *justification*, and on the wicked the sentence of *condemnation*; or in other words to declare that the righteous are righteous, or that they stand acquitted according to law, and that the wicked are condemned according to the same law. Another passage which goes to show

that the word *justify* is used in the sense above mentioned, is found in the 17th chapter of the book of Proverbs, and the 15th verse. "He that *justifieth* the wicked, and he that *condemneth* the just, even they both, are abomination to the Lord." Now, the sentence passed by any man, whatever may be his authority, cannot make a person inherently either holy or unholy. But, understanding the words *justify* and *condemn* in a declarative sense, the import of the passage is plain. He that declares the wicked in the eyes of the law, to be *just*, and he that declares that the righteous man, by the same law, stands *condemned*, while at the same time he ought in justice to be acquitted, "even they both are abomination to the Lord." In the same sense is the word *justify* used when it is said, "Wisdom is *justified* of her children." The divine wisdom would be perceived, approved, and set forth in its proper light. And also when it is said of God, "That thou mightest be *justified* in thy sayings." God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and in all his doings and sayings infinitely just. But the apostle meant to say, that notwithstanding the unbelief of the Jews and their rejection of the Messiah, the faithfulness of God was *manifest* or *set forth*, in that he had fulfilled his promises.

The scriptural sense of the word *justify*, therefore, being to declare or manifest to be just or righteous, and this being the sense in which we are to use it when we speak of the justification of the sinner, the question now arises, how God can maintain his own truth and justice, and yet *justify* those who, by his righteous law, are condemned.

That all men have broken the law of God, and are consequently condemned, is perfectly evident from the

scriptures of truth. As it is written, "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." From this character of sinners none are exempt. "For," adds the apostle, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This being the case, it is utterly impossible for any to be *justified* in the sight of God, "by the deeds of the law." The condition of the law is, "The man that doeth these things shall live by them;" that is, he that obeys the law perfectly shall have eternal life as a reward for his obedience. But when the law is once violated, eternal life, by obedience to it, is no more possible; nay, those who have violated it are exposed to its curse. For "cursed is every one," says the word of God, "that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." This, in the nature of things, must be so. God cannot consistently pronounce the sinner just, without a perfect righteousness. His judgment is always according to truth; which would not be the case, if he would declare him who had violated his law to be righteous on account of his own obedience, because that obedience would be imperfect. Besides, the law of God is a just law, being given by a Being infinitely just. And the law being just, its penalty must be just, which is a

part of the law. The penalty being just, it would, of course, be just in God to inflict it. But if it would be just in him to inflict it, it would be manifestly unjust in him not to inflict it; otherwise, it would be just in God to pursue two courses of conduct directly opposite; which is preposterous. The justice of God, then, viewing the sinner as he is in himself, requires his condemnation. Nor can he do any thing to merit the favor of his offended Sovereign. Even should amendment of life take place, this cannot satisfy for past offences. The divine law requires perfect and perpetual obedience. We are bound, during our whole existence, to love God with all our hearts. If we should obey his will perfectly from a given period, this would not atone for sins before committed. It would be in vain for the culprit to plead his former obedience in extenuation of his crime. A thousand holy acts can be no excuse for one unholy deed. Nor if the sinner should exercise repentance for his sins, would this merit the favor of the Almighty. The law demands obedience, not repentance. Whatever connexion repentance has with our acceptance with God, it is not our Saviour. It does not merit the pardon of one sin, nor the least favor from our offended Creator. Let us apply this to human government. Would we consider the repentance manifested by a condemned criminal a sufficient reason why he should be set at liberty? Would we justify the chief magistrate for granting him pardon on this ground? Nay; if such a course were pursued, would we not feel that our property and our lives were in jeopardy? If, then, such a course is unjust in human government, would it not be in the divine? It is plain that when we have once violated the law of God, we

deserve to suffer its penalty. And if ever we are saved from this punishment, it cannot be on account of our obedience to the law, or any thing else that, of ourselves, we can perform. For it is by grace that we are saved, if saved at all. And if it be of grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.

Since, then, it is impossible for the sinner to work out a righteousness adequate to the claims of the law, and since these claims cannot be laid aside, the question still recurs, how can God be just and justify the sinner? In order to this, two things are necessary. As the law has been broken, and its penalty incurred, so the law must be obeyed and its penalty endured. The first, the sinner cannot do; and if the second is done by him, he is eternally lost. But a remedy is provided. "Lo, I come," said Christ, "in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." He came, and took upon him human nature, "was born of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law." The Lord Jesus Christ, the second person in the adorable Trinity, having condescended to be the substitute for the sinner, obeyed the law in his stead, and endured its curse. Thus he "magnified the law and made it honorable," and thus wrought out a righteousness which, when *imputed* to the sinner, is the ground of his justification before God. That this righteousness has been wrought out by Christ, that it is the proper and only ground of the sinner's justification, we shall now attempt to prove by the word of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ being the coequal and co-eternal Son of God and being God himself, could have been under no obligation to assume human nature and

become subject to the law which man was bound in duty to obey. Yet he did condescend to become man, to be "made under the law," as the Apostle expresses it, that he might render obedience to it in the place of the sinner. For says Christ himself, "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The law of God being holy, just, and good, it could never be laid aside. Its nature and its claims are as firm as the throne of Jehovah. But Christ has obeyed it perfectly. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled; and he has not only obeyed it actively, but passively. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, (or a sin offering, as it might be rendered,) condemned sin in the flesh." Here the object is expressed, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." In perfect accordance with this passage is 2 Cor. v. 21. "For he, (that is, God the Father) hath made him (that is Christ) to be sin (or a sin offering) for us, who knew no sin;" then the object is again expressed, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," or that we might be accepted as righteous in the sight of God, for the sake of what he did and suffered in our place. The same truth is also taught in the first epistle of Peter, iii. 18., where we are told that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." But again, it is said in the 13th verse of the 3d chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians,

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” By the curse of the law is doubtless meant the penalty of the law, or the punishment due on account of sin. From this penalty Christ has redeemed sinners by being made a curse for them, or by suffering, in their stead, the punishment which they deserved. I am aware that it is objected that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law, because he could not be the subject of remorse of conscience, and did not suffer eternally. But particular circumstances may be different in different cases, and yet in both, the penalty of the law may be endured. For illustration, suppose two persons, charged with wilful and deliberate murder, the one innocent, and the other guilty. The penalty of the law in this case is death. The one is convicted and condemned by fair testimony. The other is convicted by false testimony, and also condemned. They both are compelled to suffer death. It cannot be denied that they both suffer the penalty of the law. And yet the one could not suffer remorse of conscience, for he was innocent of the crime. So with the Lord Jesus Christ; being a holy Being, he could not suffer remorse of conscience; and the dignity of his nature rendered it unnecessary that he should suffer eternally. Christ, therefore, having obeyed the law, and endured its curse, has satisfied its claims, and thus wrought out a righteousness, which, being *IMPUTED* to the sinner, or *set to his account* forms the ground of his justification. Hence the apostle Paul, after showing that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in the sight of God, adds, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the

righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." So also, in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle is contrasting our fall in Adam with our restoration by Christ, says, "As by the *offence* of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the *righteousness* of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's *disobedience* many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of one shall many be [made righteous."—

These passages plainly teach the doctrine of *imputed righteousness*. And the great apostle to the Gentiles bears still further testimony to the same truth, when, notwithstanding he had so much to boast of as a Jew, he says, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." This righteousness, as may be seen by the passages already quoted, is received by *faith*. It is called "the righteousness of God, which is by *faith* of Jesus Christ," and the "righteousness which is through the *faith* of Christ," and in the text, "Being justified by

faith.” Faith is the instrument, the righteousness of Christ the ground of the sinner’s justification.

Nor is this plan of justification confined to the New Testament believers. It is witnessed, as the Apostle tells us, “by the law and the prophets.” The very object of the sacrifices, under the old dispensation, was to point their offerers to the Messiah that was to come, as “the Lord their righteousness.” “For the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin.” And the Prophet, speaking of the same Messiah, says, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. And elsewhere the same Prophet says, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”

Having thus attempted to show the nature and ground of the sinner’s justification, we come, in the

2nd place, to speak of the blessedness of those who are justified.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In this peace are included both reconciliation and consolation. Sin, the great cause of enmity between God and the sinner, having its guilt taken away by the sentence of justification, there is ratified between them a covenant of peace and friendship. The enmity of the sinner is taken away, and he is reconciled to the law and government and word of God.

He is reconciled to his law. It is perfectly evident

from the declaration of God and the conduct of the sinner, that in his natural state, his heart is at enmity to the divine law. His whole course through life is characterised by transgression of the commands of God. And it is written, "the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Their hearts are so depraved and so much opposed to the requirements of Heaven, that no act of theirs is in conformity to the divine law. But the sentence of justification being passed upon the sinner, his former enmity is taken away, and he becomes reconciled to God's holy commandments. The language of his heart is, "Oh! how I love thy holy law." He no longer desires that the requirements of the law should be lowered down to suit the evil inclinations of his heart, but wishes to have his feelings and conduct elevated to meet its claims. Hence he is engaged in the performance of one of the duties enjoined in the Gospel, "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts." And wherein he finds a failure of conformity to God's law, he laments as did the Apostle that *the things that he would, he does not, and the things that he would not he does*, and is ready to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

He is also reconciled to the government of God. Sinners, by their sinful conduct, not only show that they are opposed to God's law, but to his government. He who rebels against the sovereign of his nation, and wilfully opposes his authority, declares in language too plain to be misunderstood, that he is opposed to the government of that sovereign; so every sinner, by his

wilful and known violations of the divine law, shows that he is opposed to the government of God—that he desires that he should be removed from his throne, and that a different government should be established. But he who is justified by faith, rejoices in the fact that *God does his pleasure in the armies of Heaven and among the children of men. And can unite harmoniously in the song of the redeemed, ascribing glory and honor, might and dominion to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

He is moreover reconciled to the Word of God. There are many who profess to believe in a divine revelation, who nevertheless neglect some of its plainest declarations, because they are different from what they in their wisdom would have dictated, or from what their understanding can comprehend. Those, however, who are in a state of justification, are content to know, that the Bible is a revelation from Heaven. Knowing this, they submit themselves to God and put implicit faith in the declarations of his Word. They are perfectly reconciled to the sovereignty of God in the bestowment of his blessings—to the truth, that he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and that *whom he will he hardeneth*—to the truth that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons, exist in the Godhead; and not only humbly, but willingly and joyfully accept salvation as a free, unmerited gift, flowing from the rich and sovereign grace of God, abounding through his Son Jesus Christ.

Thus being reconciled to the divine law and government and word, they can look up to God as their father and friend, and enjoy the consolation that flows from this endearing relation.

He has "peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost." A great part of the sinner's misery here, is a corroding sense of guilt; and this no doubt will constitute a great part of his misery in the pit of eternal despair. But he whom God justifies may indulge the pleasing and well grounded hope that his sins are all pardoned—that his transgressions shall never more rise in judgment for his condemnation. He can look up to a reconciled Father, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The sinner may indeed enjoy a momentary peace, but soon the remembrance of some past sins will harrow up his soul, and fill him with awful forebodings. Or if his conscience has become so seared as that he has lost all sense of guilt, still the day of death and of judgment awaits him, when conscience will be roused from its slumbers, and prove an everlasting tormentor. "There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked. They are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." But the Lord speaks peace to his people and his saints—a peace that "passeth all understanding."

Moreover, those who are justified, may enjoy the consoling reflection that God is their Father, that they are members of his family. For *they are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.* They have been adopted into his family—have become the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Formerly they were the servants of sin and children of Satan, led captive by the great adversary of their souls at his will, and wandering in the ways of darkness and death. But God has interposed for their deliverance. He has snatched them as brands from the burning. He has taken their feet from

the horrible pit and the miry clay, and established their goings. The Lord now fighteth for them, so that all their enemies, however powerful, shall finally be vanquished. Jesus Christ is the captain of their salvation. Having triumphed over death and hell and the grave, he has gone before them to prepare for them mansions of peace and eternal blessedness.

This leads us to remark that the peace enjoyed by those who are justified by faith, is permanent and everlasting. When the Lord Jesus Christ was about to leave his disciples, and ascend to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God, there to remain as their intercessory High Priest, he left them a legacy. That legacy was true and lasting consolation. "Peace," says he, "I leave with you—my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Consolation of this kind was no small legacy, considering the state in which his disciples were to be left. For although they had peace with God, yet they were not free from enemies, or every thing adapted to cause sorrow. *For in this world they should have tribulation.* Those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. Their course through this world is a continual warfare. *They are called to wrestle, not merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* But in their warfare, they have the consolation that victory to them is sure. For God who is their friend, and who is infinitely more powerful than all those who are against them, has provided for them a suitable armor. So that *having their loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-*

plate of righteousness; their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and taking the shield of faith—the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, they shall be able to put all their enemies to flight, and obtain a glorious victory over all their spiritual foes. They are also called upon to endure the common ills of life. But while suffering these ills, they may enjoy the blessed consolation, that their afflictions are not the stripes of an angry Judge, but the friendly chastisements of a kind Father. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Whatever may be their allotment in this life, whether sickness or health, whether prosperity or adversity, they have the soul-enriching, and heart-consoling promise of Him whose promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Being clothed with a perfect robe of righteousness, they may confidently indulge the hope of a blessed immortality. For since God justifieth, “who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For 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.” Even when heart and flesh shall faint and fail—when all earthly comforts, which at

best are but momentary, shall be dried up forever—when we shall pass through the valley of the shadow of death—even then the rod and the staff of God shall comfort us—even then, while struggling with the last enemy, we may sing the triumphant and joyful song, “O Death! where is thy sting?”

Those, then, who are justified in the sight of God, enjoy permanent peace in this life; and in the life to come, their peace will be perfect and unending. Although “the righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come”—yet, says the prophet, “They shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds.” The body consigned to the grave, shall enjoy an uninterrupted repose till the resurrection morn—the spirit ascending to Heaven, shall enter upon the enjoyment of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. There the righteous shall rest from all their labors—“not a wave of trouble roll across their peaceful breasts.” Having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, sin, the great cause of enmity between God and the sinner, shall be taken away. The grand destroyer of peace shall himself be destroyed, and those who are clothed with the perfect and spotless robe of Immanuel’s righteousness, shall partake of that fulness of joy, and drink of those rivers of pleasure, which are at God’s right hand for evermore.—To conclude—

I. We learn from this subject the unspeakable obligations under which believers are laid, to love, serve, and glorify God. When they were ruined by the fall, exposed to eternal death, and when there was no created eye that could pity, no arm that could save, “God laid help”

for them, "upon one who is mighty." He "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He gave him "to become a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He gave him "to live a life of suffering, and to die the shameful and painful death of the cross," that those who deserved to die might have everlasting life. This boundless compassion was expressed towards creatures too, who were characterised by nothing adapted to call forth the love of a Holy Being. Nay, it was exercised towards those who had just such characters as an infinitely Holy Being must abhor. God cannot but abhor sin. And hence it is, that God is said to have *commended his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Remember, believer, the salvation which delivers you from death and hell, is a salvation of which you are entirely unworthy—a salvation which is wholly of grace. It originated in infinite love; was devised by infinite wisdom; and was executed by the eternal Son of God, "who although he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor that you through his poverty might be rich." Will you not then be induced by obligations so infinite to glorify God in your bodies and your spirits, which are doubly his—his by creation, and his by redemption? Is not every feeling of your soul in unison with the injunction of the Gospel, to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour; and can you for one moment be satisfied without letting your light so shine that others seeing your good works, may be induced to glorify your Father who is in Heaven?

2. We learn the awful situation of those who are not justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The wrath

of God, we are assured by his Word, abideth on them. They are exposed—justly exposed, to the curse of the divine law, which is eternal death. They are under the most awful sentence of condemnation. For “he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” And they are pursuing the course, the very course, adapted to bring destruction, swift destruction, upon their heads. By their unbelief, they are rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is “the only name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” If the sacrifice which he has made be rejected, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” They also, by their persevering wickedness, grieve and resist the Holy Spirit, and provoke God to swear in his wrath they shall never enter into his rest. O impenitent sinner! what is your situation? Think on your present condition, and be persuaded to fly, and that without delay, to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only “refuge from the storm and covert from the tempest of the wrath of God, which shall be poured upon the incorrigible sinner in one eternal storm.” I would persuade and earnestly entreat you by the terrors of the Lord and the love of Christ to be reconciled to God. In Him is pardon, peace, and eternal life.

SERMON XI.

BY THE REVEREND JOSHUA T. RUSSELL.

HEARERS CLASSIFIED.

Take heed, therefore, how ye hear. LUKE viii. 18.

THESE words were originally addressed by the Lord Jesus Christ to his beloved disciples, immediately after his lucid and interesting exposition of the parable of the sower. They were undoubtedly designed, by way of inference, to present to their minds a lesson of very great practical importance, and contain a peculiarly impressive and solemn caution against the neglect or abuse of divine instructions. Such a caution was *necessary*, even for the auditors of the Son of God; otherwise he himself would never have uttered it: for he spake not as man speaketh—he never spake in vain. This necessity, then, arose from the deep-rooted enmity of the carnal mind against God. And as the essential principles of the natural heart remain unchanged, the same necessity of solemn caution on this subject, still exists. The text is, therefore, applicable in all its original force, and extends to you. In illustration of the truth of the preceding remarks, and with a view of proving the present urgent necessity and practical importance of the caution and instruction contained in the text, I propose to show you,

I. *In what manner the gospel is actually treated by many nominal Christians; and*

II. *How the gospel ought to be received by all men.*

I. *Then, I shall endeavor to describe the manner in which the gospel is actually treated by many nominal Christians.*

By the very great variety and diversity of moral habits, tastes, and feelings, which are prevalent in almost every Christian community, the task I have now assumed, as you will readily conceive, is rendered extremely laborious and difficult. All I shall at present attempt in the discussion of this fruitful topic of remark will be a distinct classification of such hearers of the gospel as are most frequently to be found in our religious assemblies.

And the first class I name, as being the most prominent, because by far the most numerous, is that of the thoughtless and indifferent hearers of the gospel.

The age in which we live is unquestionably and emphatically an age of moral and mental light, enterprise, and improvement. For the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of natural, moral, and theological science, and for enlightened investigations of religious truth, greater advantages and facilities were probably never enjoyed, than those with which you are at present furnished. You possess, in your own native language, a translation of the living oracles of God, which has sustained, for more than two hundred years, without injury, the most rigid scrutiny of Biblical critics, and the rudest attacks of learned infidels and skeptics—a translation, the *general* accuracy, fidelity, and perspicuity of which are, at the present moment, questioned, by *none*, save those who are manifestly disqualified, by their own ignorance, pedantry, or prejudice, for forming an enlightened judgment respecting its intrinsic worth. You may also easily have access to many learned,

logical, systematic, and unanswerable disquisitions on the genuineness, authenticity, truth, and inspiration of the holy scriptures; and are furnished, in rich abundance, with critical annotations and practical commentaries on the sacred text. You may listen, from Sabbath to Sabbath, without interruption, in the sanctuary, to the instructions, arguments, and persuasions of living teachers, who have been variously endowed with gifts and graces, and sent forth as ambassadors for God. You enjoy, in a word, all those rich and invaluable sources of knowledge, and means of grace, which infinite wisdom has deemed necessary to your present happiness and future salvation; and you are prompted to a serious and diligent improvement of them, by all the sacred and powerful motives which even the omniscient spirit of inspiration could suggest. And yet, under all these solemn and interesting circumstances, it is greatly to be feared that not a few who peruse the scriptures, and frequent our religious assemblies to hear the gospel preached, are as entirely thoughtless and indifferent about the truths presented to their view, as if they were uttered in an unknown tongue, and designed exclusively for the inhabitants of another world. To all serious consideration and reflection, and to every species of intellectual effort, they seem habitually to cherish an aversion so settled and unconquerable, that they will, without hesitation, admit the truth of a doctrine which seals their damnation, or boldly discard that on which their everlasting happiness depends, rather than submit to the mental toil and labor of diligent research and candid investigation. Even in the sanctuary of Jehovah, their undisciplined and inconstant minds are so perpetually occupied with trifles,

and their roving imaginations are so incessantly employed in pilgrimage around the world, in search of earthly happiness, that the sublimest mysteries of redemption, although supported by the logical reasonings of Paul, and enforced by the chastened eloquence of Apollos, must inevitably fail to arrest and engage their attention, or to awaken in their volatile hearts a single emotion of pleasure, gratitude, or love. Like Gallio, they care for none of these things. They neither know, nor *wish* to know, whether the Bible is a fable, or the word of God; whether judgment, heaven, and hell are fictions of the imagination, or everlasting realities; whether the soul is material and perishable, or spiritual and immortal; or whether they are destined in futurity to glory or to shame. Strange infatuation! Yet not more strange than true! Yes, it is lamentably true. Such are the natural and common results of thoughtlessness and indifference on the subject of religion. It was so in the *first age* of Christianity, when the field was the world, and the Son of God the preacher. Countless thousands attended on his ministry, listened to his instructions, and *wondered* at his splendid miracles; and yet *comparatively few* were interested in his mission, or affected by his doctrines. He addressed them with all the tenderness, and affection, and solemnity, and eloquence of *God incarnate*; but the great mass of his auditors treated his sublime and melting messages as an idle and uninteresting tale, and even while *he wept*, they mocked at his anxiety, and sported with his tears. As those who lived before the flood had treated Noah, and, while *he preached*, were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not till the flood came and swept them

all away; so did the dwellers at Jerusalem and the inhabitants of Judea treat Jesus, the Son of God, the prophet of the world. To use his own similitude, many of his hearers were like the beaten and unfruitful *way-side*. "They *heard* his messages, and then came the devil, and took away the word out of their hearts;" just as the fowls of heaven had devoured the seed of the sower which had fallen by accident in the light and evanescent dust of the way-side. They were so gay, and volatile, and thoughtless, and indifferent, that even the words of Jesus could find no access to their understandings, and make no permanent impression on their hearts. And as it was then, so is it now. Human nature is the same, and there is still in every Christian congregation a certain class of sinners, who have eyes, but they see not; ears, but they hear not; neither will they understand. These are the very description of people, concerning whom Jehovah spake to his servant Ezekiel, when he said, "Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord." "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as *my people*, and they *hear* thy words, but they *will not do them*; for with their mouth they shew *much love*, but their *heart* goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not." Let the thoughtless and indifferent hearers of the gospel retire to their closets, and examine in the thirty-third chap-

ter of Ezekiel, the portraiture of their own character, as it has there been accurately and distinctly drawn by him who *knows* the human heart. Let them thence learn how they have hitherto treated the blessed gospel and its authorized ministers; and let them be deeply humbled for their ingratitude and impiety, and *put away* the evil of their doings.

2. *Another class of gospel hearers may be denominated skeptical and captious.*

The time *has* been when this class of gospel hearers was exceedingly numerous, bold, and formidable. It was thus in the days of Christ and his holy apostles. The vast majority of Jews and Gentiles viewed the gospel of Christ as a mere tissue of absurd, incredible, and contradictory fables and dogmas, and treated the Lord Jesus and his disciples as illiterate babblers, disturbers of the public tranquillity, and setters forth of strange doctrines. In more modern times, this moral infection has spread throughout entire communities, which were nominally Christian; and in the schools of philosophy men have been diligently taught not only to doubt the truths of the gospel, but also to question their own real existence, and the very being of a God. By such persons the gospel was never perused nor heard, except for the express purpose of discovering subjects of disputation, caviling, and ridicule. The claims of the Bible to truth and inspiration were hastily prejudged and discarded; and, as a natural consequence, its sacred doctrines and precepts were impiously rejected with scorn and contempt. But the reign of open infidelity has passed away, and its abandoned apostles and ministers have gone to their *own place*. An unholy leaven of their spirit, however, still *exists*,

and it is sometimes *exhibited* under a different and more specious form, even in the most favored Christian communities. Nay, I greatly fear *some* may be found within the walls of this very sanctuary, whose spirits have been withered, and paralyzed, and perhaps ruined, by this fatal contagion. For *some* there surely are among us, who hear the gospel, and that too with apparently fixed attention, whose habitual conduct clearly evinces their *total want* of all real and salutary convictions of its truth and excellence. They may not perhaps formally discard the scriptures, or *deny* their divinity; but still they voluntarily remain in a state of doubt and suspense, which is scarcely less criminal and dangerous, than open infidelity. They listen to a preached gospel just as they would listen to an elaborate essay on mere matters of opinion or taste; and regard its doctrines and precepts simply as the sentiments and maxims of those who exhibit them. They assume to themselves the prerogative of deciding upon the truth or falsity of the doctrines they hear, not according to the law and the testimony of God, but according to their own preconceived opinions, prejudices, and wishes, and they boldly claim the liberty of approving or condemning, of receiving or rejecting them at pleasure. Others there are, appertaining to this class of hearers, whose skepticism and captiousness are limited to *particular requisitions* and *doctrines* of the gospel. To *select portions* of the Bible they will cheerfully and cordially assent; and when these favorite portions are exhibited from the pulpit, they are satisfied and pleased: but to others they are most inveterately opposed; and when these are presented to their view, they are disturbed and irritated, and for relief from

their vexation, they have immediate recourse to the *cavilings* of the captious or the *doubts* of the skeptical, and in this manner they mutilate the sacred scriptures, reject the vital truths of the gospel, and bring upon themselves swift and inevitable destruction.

3. *Another class of hearers may be styled the formal and fashionable.*

Hearers of this description are found in every Christian congregation, and they are more or less numerous in any particular community, in exact proportion to the popular estimate of religion and its public services. Some, who belong to this class become regular attendants at the house of God, merely by the force of education and example. They hear the gospel preached, because they are taught by others that it is an imperious duty; and by a regular discharge of this self-denying and irksome duty, they fondly hope perhaps to make atonement for their sins, and merit for themselves the favor of Jehovah. Others of this class frequent the house of God, because religion is popular and fashionable, and because the public sanctuary has become the place of general resort; and affords them a favorable opportunity of exhibiting to advantage the beauty of their persons, the elegance of their dress, or the splendor of their equipage. In the messages of the gospel they feel not the least personal interest nor concern; and *before the altar of Jehovah* they would not (as they sometimes do) give *even a feigned attention* to the truths they hear, did they not deem such dissimulation necessary to save them from the charge of eccentricity and indecorum. The grand purposes of a preached gospel are, in their estimation, happily accomplished, when it has afforded them an opportunity to pass away a leisure

hour or a tedious Sabbath, in courting the idle gaze and admiration of the indevout and volatile, or in examining the forms and features, and habiliments of surrounding worshippers. Would to God there were not in this fallen world a solitary *original*, answering to the moral features now before you; but it is to be feared, alas, there are *many*, yes, *many*, who worship God only in *form*, and who hear the gospel simply to comply with a prevailing fashion. And it is very possible that I may at this moment address some unbappy individuals of this description. For in these sacred courts I have sometimes noticed with most painful emotions, the restless impatience, the significant smile, and the inquisitive glances which ordinarily characterize formal and fashionable hearers of the gospel. On this point, however, it is not my prerogative to decide. I leave you in the hands of a heart-searching God. Examine yourselves, therefore, and be not deceived; for none can mock God with impunity. But

4. *A fourth class of hearers may be designated inquisitive and curious.*

Connected with almost every congregation there are a few who bear a most striking resemblance to the ancient Athenians, who, according to the testimony of Luke, "spent their time in nothing else but to tell or hear some *new* thing. Such persons go to the house of God, not to be instructed and edified, but to be entertained and *amused*. Not content with the unexplored treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the scriptures contain, they are perpetually searching after some *new theory* in ethics and religion, or some modern improvements in the antiquated science of theology. The pure principles of the gospel are never acceptable

to them unless they are ingeniously interwoven with a long train of metaphysical speculations, or laboriously concealed beneath the useless lumber of learned criticism and classic lore. For the "*form of sound words,*" recommended by the apostle, they have not the slightest reverence, and in defence of the "*faith once delivered to the saints,*" they are unwilling to expend a single effort. In the language of Paul to Timothy, they "are proud, knowing nothing but doating about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings." They "are *ever learning,* and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." "Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." Of such hearers of the gospel, the number among us, I would fain believe, is comparatively inconsiderable; but I dare not even *hope* there are *none*, for if they were numerous and troublesome in the congregations of Timothy, we may certainly expect to find some in the congregations of those religious teachers of the present day, who are far less skilled in the knowledge and imbued with the spirit of the scriptures than he was, and who are therefore in far greater danger of exhibiting themselves, instead of Jesus Christ and him crucified, and thereby giving countenance and encouragement to the inquisitive and curious. But on this point I need not stop to reason. That such persons have lived in former ages is unquestionably true, because their character and conduct have been distinctly marked and recorded by the Holy Ghost. That such persons still exist in some portions of the Christian community is equally certain, because their

existence in the last days has been clearly and repeatedly predicted; and established facts, which have come within the sphere of your own observation, fully prove that these predictions are literally fulfilled. Yes, the precise period has already arrived, of which Paul the aged spake to his son Timothy, when he said, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." And doubtless in this assembly there are some who have already acquired a fondness for variety and novelty, which is truly alarming and dangerous; which unfits and indisposes them for the candid and serious investigation of the plain and simple truths of the gospel, and which may ere long prove fatal to their souls.

Again, 5th. *Another class of hearers may be termed critical and censorious.*

Among all the censurable infirmities, corruptions, and sins inherent in degraded human nature, there are none perhaps more deeply rooted in the heart, or more frequently exhibited in the lives of men, than vanity and pride; and the forms in which these hateful vices of our fallen nature *appear* are diversified and numberless. In the particular class of gospel hearers I am now describing, they are frequently exhibited in their hasty and unjust criticisms on the subject matter of the gospel itself, and in their severe and unmerited censures on the method, style, and manner of those who preach it. By the insidious but powerful influence of vanity of learning and pride of opinion, some of the

hearers of a preached gospel are almost entirely disqualified for receiving instruction, edification, and comfort in the house of God. In their own estimation, they are so much more profoundly versed in the science of theology than those whom God has sent to teach them, that they *cannot* be enlightened or informed; and while they should be devoutly employed in digesting and applying to their own souls the messages they hear, they are so laboriously engaged in treasuring up their critical remarks, and preparing their important censures, that they have no time left to seek for edification and comfort. In this numerous class of hearers there is very great diversity and opposition of taste and opinion. Some cannot relish a preached gospel unless it is very richly adorned with the tropes, and figures, and rounded periods and flowing diction of the orator and rhetorician; while others, in the opposite extreme, are equally disgusted with the slightest departure from the most rigid rules of unadorned simplicity. Some require the truths of a preached gospel to be exclusively addressed to their understandings and judgments, and supported by the clearest logical and philosophical demonstrations; while others as loudly demand powerful and pathetic appeals to the mere natural sympathies and passions of the heart. Some require, in the *herald* of the gospel, the loud and varied intonations, the energetic action, and the melting pathos of impassioned eloquence; while others will be satisfied with nothing but the most mild and chastened manner of address. Thus various and opposite are the tastes and opinions of those who hear a preached gospel, to criticise and censure. To the great majority of such hearers, it

will doubtless prove an offence and a stumbling block, a source of perpetual vexation, and ultimately a saviour of death unto death.

Again, 6th. *The last class of hearers I at present name, is the indiscriminating and passionate.*

In all Christian communities, and in very many of the visible churches of Christ, there are some to be found, who have not sufficiently accustomed themselves either to reading or reflection, to enable them to discriminate accurately between truth and error, or between minor and fundamental principles and doctrines. They hear the gospel merely to be moved and affected, and all kinds of preaching which are followed by a powerful effect upon their natural passions, are equally acceptable and pleasing; and they would be quite as likely to be charmed and captured with the wild and incoherent declamations of an ignorant fanatic, as with the perspicuous and edifying instructions of an authorized and able defender of the Christian faith. Whatever may be the means and facilities they enjoy for receiving instruction, such persons might hear the gospel for an hundred years, and die at last babes in knowledge. They are generally far more attentive to the sound of the preacher's voice, than to the solemn import of his messages from God; and are far more deeply interested in an incoherent rhapsody or senseless anecdote, calculated only to excite their *feelings*, than they are in the most lucid and instructive addresses, which are designed to impart light to their understandings—conviction to their judgments—and consolation to their hearts. In a word, they listen to a preached gospel, just as they would listen to a graceless fable or romance; and are generally as little benefitted by it, as they are

by the fictitious scenes of happiness or imaginary tales of wo, which are painted by the novelist. With this imperfect description of the manner in which the gospel is actually treated by many nominal Christians, I close my remarks on my first general topic of discourse. The general features of several distinct classes of the hearers of the gospel are before you, and the work of careful and impartial self examination, my hearers, now devolves on you. Go, then, I beseech you, to your closets, and search diligently and prayerfully for the lineaments of your own character. Bring yourselves seriously and strictly to the test which I have presented, and ascertain before God, the class to which you respectively belong. If you discover in yourselves the slightest resemblance to any of those hearers whose treatment of the gospel has been described, consider and confess your past impiety and ingratitude, and seek by immediate repentance, submission, faith, and prayer, the pardon of your iniquities, and the sanctification of your souls; and then return again to the sanctuary with a sincere desire to ascertain how you *ought* to hear the gospel, and with a fixed purpose of soul in the strength of Jehovah to enter, without delay, upon the faithful and conscientious discharge of that solemn and imperious duty. And now, may the Spirit of Jehovah descend upon you, and conduct you to a knowledge of yourselves. *Amen!*

SERMON XII.

BY THE REVEREND JOSHUA T. RUSSELL.

HEARERS INSTRUCTED.

“Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.” LUKE viii. 18.

IN a preceding discourse upon this subject, I attempted to describe the prominent features of six distinct classes of the hearers of a preached Gospel—1. The thoughtless and indifferent. 2. The skeptical and captious. 3. The formal and fashionable. 4. The inquisitive and curious. 5. The critical and censorious. And 6th, the indiscriminating and passionate. And having briefly considered the manner in which these various descriptions of persons ordinarily treat the gospel, according to the plan of discourse then proposed, the way is now prepared for a discussion of my second general proposition; and I shall now attempt to show—

II. *How the gospel OUGHT to be received by all men.*

To the investigation of this interesting subject, it becomes us, my dear hearers, to approach, with the deepest reverence and solemnity; for on the manner in which we treat the glorious gospel of the grace of God, the everlasting happiness or misery of our immortal souls depends. “Faith,” ordinarily “cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” and the gospel has been ordained of God to each of us, either as a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death. We never either read or hear it in vain. It

invariably produces an effect upon our moral characters either salutary or injurious, and will be followed in eternity by consequences felicitous or distressing, which will run parallel with our immortality. “*Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.*” To a proper reception of the preached Gospel, the first thing I name as pre-eminently requisite and necessary, is

I. *Serious and devout attention.* Of all the inquiries which ever occupied the mind of man, *that* which relates to the existence, attributes, and perfections of a Supreme Being, and the relations and duties of dependent creatures, is by far the most noble and sacred. It is a subject of investigation which *ought* to be equally interesting to the beggar and the prince—to the peasant and the sage—to the Jew and the Gentile, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free. It presents high, and imperious, and paramount claims to the earliest and most fixed attention of every rational and accountable being; for, on the results of this inquiry, all men are *dependent* for their first impressions respecting the force and extent of moral and religious obligations, and for the hope and prospect of immortality and life eternal. A special communication on this interesting subject from the Great God himself, must therefore be regarded as immensely important and desirable; and if it can be clearly and satisfactorily proved that such a communication has actually been made *to man*, then he is unquestionably bound to receive and examine it with the most serious and devout attention. You are not strangers, my hearers, to the numerous conclusive and unanswerable arguments by which it has already been proved to the world, that the Bible came from God, and actually contains such a communication. In view of

these various arguments, you are, therefore, sufficiently prepared to form an accurate and enlightened decision respecting the sacred claims of a preached Gospel. If you are not sufficiently ingenuous and humble frankly to *acknowledge*, I trust you are not so daring and skeptical as to *deny*, that it is the grand instrument, which God himself has expressly selected and ordained for the reformation and salvation of mankind. Authenticated facts, recorded on the pages of the sacred and profane historian, abundantly illustrate and confirm the following declaration of Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians. "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." Existing facts also prove that a preached gospel is still to some men a savour of life unto life, and to others a savour of death unto death. To the Jews it is a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. "But unto them which are *called*, both Jews and Greeks, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God." If seriousness and devotion, in intelligent and responsible agents are ever proper and becoming, they are peculiarly and pre-eminently so whenever such agents enter the sanctuary of Jehovah, to hear the messages of the gospel from his authorized ambassadors. The house of Christian worship is a hallowed place. It is the gate of heaven, and the habitation of God! And the truths which are there proclaimed are imperishable as the perfections of Jehovah, and solemn as eternity! It is incumbent on every attendant there, like Moses when he approached the burning bush, the symbol of Jehovah's presence, to put off the shoes from his feet, and to remember that the very *ground* he occupies is *holy*. It

is wickedness and presumption for hearers of the gospel to approach even the threshold of the sanctuary with any other feelings than those of the deepest reverence and awe. If they would not provoke the indignation of their Maker, and pollute his holy altars with unhal- lowed fire, they must dismiss from their thoughts and banish from their hearts the occupations, and cares, and pleasures of this sinful world. They must realize the presence, the omniscience, and the holiness of God, and yield to the instructions of his word their strict, solemn, and undivided attention. No recollections of past events, no anticipations of future scenes, no regard to surrounding objects, should be permitted for a mo- ment to interest the feelings, or divert the mind from the contemplation of the truth of God. No unnecessary movements of the body, no interchange of thoughts and sentiments should be suffered to interrupt the solemn stilness of Christian devotion. "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

Again, 2. *Intelligence and docility, in those who hear the gospel, are equally as necessary as serious and devout attention.*

It is through the understanding alone that the truths of the gospel make their way to the *heart*; and unless the former be informed and enlightened, it will be utterly impossible to make any permanent and salutary impressions on the latter. In order, therefore, to receive the gospel in a proper manner, and to derive from it all the spiritual benefits it is designed to convey, intelligence in the hearers is an indispensable prerequi- site. They should diligently and prayerfully search the scriptures daily for themselves, and by submitting to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, they should seek

and obtain a thorough knowledge of the primary and fundamental doctrines of religion, and acquaint themselves with God. In this way only will they be properly qualified to discriminate accurately between truth and falsehood, to separate the wheat from the chaff, the precious from the vile, and to bring the sentiments they hear from the pulpit to the sacred test of the law and the testimony. An intimate alliance and an inseparable connexion exists between *real intelligence* on religious subjects and that *docility* of spirit which ought ever to characterize the learner in the school of Christ. I say *real intelligence*;—but in this most desirable qualification I apprehend there is a very great and lamentable deficiency among the majority of gospel hearers, because there are comparatively few who are willing and anxious to be enlightened and instructed in the duties and doctrines of religion. There is no art or science taught among men in which *pedantry* is more injurious and offensive, and yet there is perhaps none in which it is more common and palpable, than in the sublime, and holy, and mysterious science of theology. Some there are, who would fain persuade us to believe that the Bible is altogether an unnecessary and useless volume, and that they are able, by a kind of intuitive knowledge peculiar to themselves, to grasp and understand at once the entire system of religion, and to decide with infallible certainty on all the moral and religious duties which it is proper for God to require, or his creatures to perform. And there are others, who profess to receive the scriptures as a divine revelation, but still neglect to study them with diligence and constancy, because they vainly imagine that they are endowed by the Holy Spirit with

a species of inspiration by which they are enabled to comprehend, without any mental application or effort of their own, the spiritual import of the oracles of God. *These* are the wide extremes of skepticism and superstition. Both are unspeakably irrational and dangerous, and it is difficult to decide which is most destructive to the souls of men. But of this we are fully assured, that those who are under the influence of either are totally disqualified for hearing the gospel in a becoming and profitable manner. They exhibit the fearful characteristics of those novices in religion, who have been lifted up with pride, and have fallen into the condemnation of the devil; and before they can become wise unto salvation, they must be convinced by a *divine power* that they are *without understanding*, and *need* to be taught "which be the first principles of the oracles of God."

But the minds of those who are really intelligent and skilful in the word of God are always fond of investigation and research, open to conviction, and eager and anxious to be corrected, and informed, and enlightened. To persons of this description, the gospel is rarely, if ever, preached in vain. They and they alone are genuine disciples. They shall certainly increase in knowledge and grow in grace; and, according to the promise of their Lord, they shall know of the doctrine they hear, "whether it be of God," or whether those who preach "speak of themselves."

Let those, then, who would receive the gospel as it *ought* to be received give themselves diligently, constantly, and prayerfully to the *study* of the word, and *search* for heavenly wisdom as they would search for hidden treasures. Let them bring to the ministers of

the sanctuary a humble, intelligent, and teachable mind; and, "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, let them earnestly desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;" and then shall they fully reap and enjoy, in their own happy experience, the invaluable blessings of a preached gospel.

3. *It is also requisite, to a proper reception of the preached gospel, that it be heard with LIBERALITY and CANDOR.*

By this I would not be understood to countenance or recommend that *stoical indifference to fundamental truth*, misnamed *liberality*, which characterizes the *disguised Deists* of the present day, nor that criminal disregard of ministerial talents and qualifications, which distinguishes the illiterate and fanatical reformers of our age, which is sometimes *improperly* called *candor*. These are both at an infinite remove from the Christian liberality and candor which the gospel demands of its hearers. But I would affectionately and solemnly enjoin it on all who hear the gospel to *remember* that the treasures of that gospel have been committed to *earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man; and that all men are therefore bound to receive their messages with a liberal and candid allowance for the diversity of their gifts, and the infirmities of their nature. We are not to expect from men, however learned or sanctified, the wisdom and perfection of angels; nor are we at liberty to neglect or despise their messages, because they are not marked with the intellectual energy of a Paul, or delivered with the manly and overpowering eloquence of

an Apollos. No! for on those who have been *truly called of God* to preach the gospel, *he* has bestowed natural talents and gracious gifts, differing in their nature and degrees, in exact conformity with his own sovereign pleasure; but to *each* he has said, "son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." When, in obedience to this divine injunction, any duly authorized minister of Christ announces to you the plain and simple truths of the gospel, you are under the most solemn obligations to receive him as a messenger of God; and if his talents be small, and his gifts limited, you are to regard both his matter and his manner with a liberal and candid spirit, and thus you will be prepared to derive some important benefits from every gospel sermon which is delivered in your hearing.

But the liberality and candor required of all who would hear the gospel properly, go still further than this. They imply a respectful deference to the sentiments and practices of those who may honestly differ from us in opinion, on minor points of doctrine, or unimportant forms of religious worship. They forbid us to reject a substantially evangelical sermon, or to censure with severity the man who delivers it, merely because the truth has been clothed in different language, or uttered in a different tone, from those to which we have been accustomed. Under such circumstances, Christian liberality would prompt to the exercise of forbearance and charity, and *candor* demands a "fair and impartial judgment on the opinions" and manner of the messenger. In the language of another, Let those who would hear the gospel in a manner

acceptable to God, and beneficial to their own souls, always enter the house of God "with a temper of mind unsoured by envy, unruffled by malice, and unseduced by prejudice, sweet without weakness, and impartial without rigor." Let them be "exempt on the one hand, from the dark jealousy of a suspicious mind; and no less removed, on the other, from that easy credulity which is imposed on by every specious pretence." Let them always carefully cherish and exhibit "that *generous expansion* of mind which shall enable them to look beyond all petty distinctions of party and system, and, in their estimate of *men* and *things*, to rise superior to narrow prejudices." Such are the liberality and candor which Christianity requires of all men, and these I do most earnestly entreat you to exercise at all times when you listen to a preached gospel.

4th and lastly. *That the gospel may be properly received, it should always be heard in the exercise of faith, and with a spirit of submission.*

To the ancient Hebrews who perished in the wilderness, essentially the same gospel was exhibited by Moses, which is now proclaimed to you. "But the word preached," says Paul, "did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." And if *they* were destroyed for their unbelief, on the very confines of the land of Canaan, because they did not fully accredit the promises of Moses, what think you will be the future punishment of those who refuse to believe what God has spoken unto us by his only Son, the appointed heir of all things? In the very words of our commission, we are implicitly instructed to say unto all men, "He that *believeth* shall be saved, and he that *believeth not*, shall be damned." There is no alternative between

faith and submission, and the penalty of death eternal. So plain and imperative is the obligation which lies upon all men cordially to believe the truths of the gospel, and unconditionally to submit to the terms of salvation it prescribes, that infinite wisdom and benevolence has solemnly decided that the simple *neglect* of this *single duty* is richly deserving of everlasting punishment. Well, then, may the sacred caution be repeated, and deeply should it be engraved on our hearts, "*Take heed how ye hear.*" Let those who would not enhance their own eternal miseries, by a voluntary rejection of light and abuse of privileges, beware how they treat the instructions of the ministers of Christ; for "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.*" Yes, the faithful ministers of the gospel are *all*, without exception, ambassadors from the high court of heaven; and in performing the work of evangelists, they officiate in *Christ's stead*; and therefore he has said, "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." To those who diligently watch, and labor, and pray for precious and immortal souls, it is comparatively a light matter to be judged, and censured, and persecuted, as *men*; but oh! when they are despised and rejected, as *ministers of Christ*, their agony of spirit is indescribable and overwhelming. For then, alas! they know that their gospel is *hidden*, and that they shall one day be summoned to the bar of judgment, as swift witnesses against those over whom their bowels of compassion yearn. Remember, then, that the heralds of the cross "have not followed cunningly devised fables, when they made

known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And if they rightly execute their commission, they come not to you "with excellency of speech, or of wisdom." "And their speech and their preaching is not with enticing words of man's wisdom; but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your *faith* should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Again, then, I say, in the words of the evangelical prophet, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." But if they exhibit to you distinctly Christ Jesus and him crucified, then they preach the gospel of the kingdom; and those who disbelieve their messages, and reject their overtures of mercy jeopardize their immortal spirits, and having been often reprov'd and hardened their necks, they shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Let all who listen to a preached gospel, then, be seriously warned against the soul-destroying sin of *unbelief*. In a dying hour, in a judgment day, and in a state of final retribution, it will avail them nothing that they dwelt in a land of Bibles, Sabbaths, and sanctuary privileges; or that they once heard the alarming threatenings of the law, and the melting invitations of the gospel. Nay, my unconverted hearers, so long as you continue to withhold your cordial assent to the truths of the blessed gospel, and refuse to submit to Christ, according to its righteous requisitions, and delay to repent of your transgressions, you are collecting fuel for the unquenchable flame, and are industriously treasuring up "wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to

them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, *eternal life*. But unto them that are *contentious*, and do *not obey the truth*, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." See, then, that ye "refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

Thus I have attempted briefly to describe the manner in which the gospel *ought* to be received by all men, and I have represented the following things as indispensably necessary in those who hear it, viz: Serious and devout attention, intelligence and docility, liberality and candor, and faith and submission. And now, suffer me to close my remarks with two or three inferences from the whole subject matter before us.

1. *I infer, from this subject, that the duties of a gospel minister are extremely arduous and difficult, and awfully responsible.*

He is commanded to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. To *meditate* upon these things; to give himself wholly to them; that his profiting may appear to all." He is solemnly charged before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom, to preach the word; to be instant in season, out of season; and to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. He is to "*study* to show himself *approved unto God*, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, but carefully shunning profane and vain babblings." In a

word, he is to know or make known nothing but Christ Jesus and him crucified. With these plain and explicit instructions before him, exemplified as they have been by Christ and his apostles, he must not consult with flesh and blood, respecting either the matter or the manner of his preaching. The Bible must be his only *rule*, and Christ his only pattern; and without regarding the various and conflicting opinions, or the diverse and often vitiated tastes of his auditors, he must strive incessantly to exhibit the unadulterated truths of the entire word of God, and that, too, with a perspicuity of style and a simplicity of manner, corresponding with the sacredness and responsibility of his holy office; to say nothing at present respecting the numerous and complicated labors of the pastoral office, when you carefully consider the subject which has now been discussed, embracing a view of the improper manner in which the gospel is actually treated by many, and a description of the various qualifications necessary in all hearers, how arduous, how difficult, how responsible are the duties of a faithful minister of Christ! Were he permitted to spend his whole time in the closet and the study, it would scarcely be sufficient to make such preparations for the pulpit as he himself deems desirable. This *privilege*, however, he *cannot* enjoy, without a very criminal neglect of other duties equally as necessary and indispensable. Yet *preach the word* he must, in season and out of season, and with an eye single to the glory of God, and with a heart *intent* upon the salvation of immortal souls. For his matter and his manner, he is held responsible to God, before the bar of final judgment. And who—"who is sufficient for these things?"

2. *Infer, that Christian ministers greatly need the tender*

sympathies and fervent prayers of all who have an interest at the throne of grace.

You have seen, brethren, how the gospel ever has been, and still is, abused by multitudes who hear it, and you have also seen how it *ought* to be received by all men; and now you may comprehend in some degree, the anxieties and fears, and distressing apprehensions of all faithful ministers. At the peril of their souls, they are forbidden to withhold any truth of God, however unwelcome or offensive to their hearers. They *must* declare to *all*, the counsel of God whether they will hear or forbear. And when, in the conscientious discharge of this duty, they bring upon themselves the unjust censures, persecutions, and ridicule of the wicked, and of self deceived and formal professors of religion, to whom can they look for consolation and encouragement, but to the Lord and the humble and devout followers of the Lamb. In the approbation of their own consciences, the smiles of God, and in the *tender sympathies and fervent prayers of the faithful*, they find their only sources of relief and comfort. Oh! withhold not, I pray you, for a moment, the sympathies and prayers, they deeply need and fervently implore. As Aaron and Hur supported the hands of Moses, so do ye, stay up the hands of those who minister at the altar. In the name of all who preach the Gospel, I beseech you *pray for us*.

3. *I infer the fearful doom of all unfaithful ministers, and of their misguided and unsanctified people.*

With God there is no respect of persons, and in the day of judgment, all men will be examined and sentenced, not according to specious and deceptive *appearances*, but according to their real moral characters, when stripped of false disguises. *Then*, the garments

of those ministers who have sacrificed their consciences on the altar of popular applause, and departed from the instructions of Jehovah, to avoid the displeasure, or to secure the favor of their hearers—then their garments will be found stained and polluted with the blood of souls, and they, with all the unhappy men they have deluded and betrayed, must perish in their sins together. That tremendous scene is full before me, and in anticipation of meeting you there, I cannot but fear and tremble both for you and for my own soul. By its dreadful solemnities, let us be warned, then, to take heed how we speak, and how we hear. For “we must all *appear* before the judgment seat of Christ;” and though I would speak to you with the tongue of men and of angels, and though you should listen to my messages with rapturous delight, yet if we should be found at last destitute of faith, hope, and charity, with hypocrites and unbelievers, we should perish from the presence of the Lord *eternally*.

SERMON XIII.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN MATTHEWS, D. D.

UNITY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

“And HE (Christ) is the head of the body, the *Church*.”—COL. i. 18.

ALL systems consist of parts, more or less numerous, connected together, and contributing, in subserviency to each other, in promoting one ultimate design. Of such systems we never can form correct ideas unless

all these parts are taken into view. But more especially would our ideas be imperfect, if the part omitted should be of vital importance, should be one on which all the others depend for their action and efficiency. All descriptions of the human body would be deficient, if the head was left out of view. This is not only a part of the system, but it is a vital part; that one on which all the others depend for life and motion. Each limb, muscle, and organ may be accurately described, and their appropriate functions pointed out; but if severed from the head, these functions in a moment will cease, and they will become lifeless, inactive masses. If the communication between the head and any other member should be interrupted, that member is deprived of activity, and remains useless, until this communication is restored. From this animal system, is derived a beautiful and instructing illustration of the Church, which is a community or system, organized by infinite wisdom, embracing a number of members, connected together by indissoluble bonds, in perfect subserviency and harmony, each contributing to one grand result, the manifestation of the divine glory. By the church, the manifold wisdom, the power, the goodness, the mercy, the long suffering of God are made known; and thus by the Church will his glory, even the *exceeding riches* of his glory be displayed. God, who organized this system, who created this body, has also given to it a Head, on which the whole body with all its members is dependent for LIFE and efficiency, for UNION and harmony, for DIRECTION and safety, for HONOR and happiness. Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, will, through that divine aid which we need, and which we implore, be the subject of our present consideration.

1. Christ, as head of the Church, is the source of vitality, the author, the giver of life to every member, and thus to the whole body collectively. Such is the head to the human body. The functions of other parts, the heart and the lungs, for instance, are essential to life; but it is rather as channels of communication, than as sources of vitality. They may remain perfectly entire, without the slightest injury, and yet if separated from the head their functions will instantly cease, and the principle of life in the body will be extinct. The smallest and the remotest part is as regularly supplied with nourishment from the head, as those which are more important and more nearly connected with the fountain of life. In like manner, spiritual life, emanating from Christ, the living head, pervades the whole body, quickening into animation and action every member, however obscure and unimportant such member may be in the estimation of the world.

There are two senses in which we are dead, in both of which Christ is emphatically *our life*. On account of our guilt, and in proportion to it, we are under the condemnation of the law; we have been weighed in the balance, and have been found wanting; sentence of death is pronounced upon us by the *Judge of all the earth*. Like the man who is condemned to suffer death for violating the laws of the state, the moment when this sentence is passed, is dead in the view of the law; he sustains no other relation to civil society than that of a condemned criminal. His animal existence may be prolonged for a few days, but he no longer enjoys the rights and privileges of a citizen; in a civil sense he is now dead. We, by nature, sustain to the moral Governor of the world no other relation than that of

condemned rebels; we have forfeited all the rights and privileges which belong to faithful and obedient subjects. Our natural life may, for a time, be preserved; but the *favor of God which is life* is lost; the sentence of death is solemnly pronounced upon us. Nor is it possible, by any sacrifices which we can offer, by any exertions we can make, to avert the stroke of justice to which we are exposed; to change our state of condemnation into a state of favour with God. Nothing but the pardon of all our sins can shield us from this deserved punishment, and restore us to the blessings enjoyed by the faithful subjects of the moral community. All the repentance which we can feel; all the reformation which we can accomplish; all the services which we can render, will never diminish the amount, nor change the nature of the guilt we have already contracted. For want of correct evangelical motives, while making these efforts, we are adding to this guilt. In this sense, Christ is pre-eminently our life. By his sufferings and death, he has made an atonement for sin, which procures pardon for all who believe in him. Mathematical demonstration is not more clear or convincing to the mind, than is the proof from the Bible that we are pardoned through his death, and restored to the divine favor through his righteousness, "imputed to us and received by faith alone." The Church, which is his body, *he hath purchased with his own blood. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Ye were redeemed, with the precious blood of Christ. Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood,* is the language of Heaven, where nothing but truth is spoken. It is literally true that *Christ died for our sins. Hence, we have redemption through his blood,*

even the forgiveness of sins; and God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us. We are not only pardoned, but also reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Justification includes not only the remission of our guilt, but also acceptance to the favor of God. For this purpose, he is made unto us, righteousness; and we are made the righteousness of God in him; that is, in him we obtain that righteousness which God requires in order to our acceptance. Our state is thus changed; we pass from death unto life. Our relation to God is changed from that of condemned criminals, to that of friends, and even of children, sharing in all the kindest affection of our Father. In Christ Jesus, we are restored to the society of Heaven, to all the rights and privileges of those who enjoy the favour of God.

There is another sense in which we are dead, and in which Christ is our life. We are, by nature, insensible to the claims both of the divine law and the gospel. The tenants of the grave are insensible to the interests and the active pursuits of life; the wealth, the honor, the pleasure of this world, no longer make any impression on them. So are we insensible to the real interests of eternity, to the intrinsic importance of spiritual things. *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; but it awakens no salutary, no practical fear. The goodness, the pardoning mercy of God is proclaimed; but no gratitude, no love is excited. The joys and glories of heaven are set before us; but not an effort is made to secure them. Promises, exceeding great and precious promises, are made; but no confidence is reposed in them. Our case, though in some respects it bears a striking resemblance to those who sleep in the grave, yet in others is widely*

different. They make no opposition to the active pursuits of life; nor does any blame attach to them on account of their insensibility. Not so, however, with us: we have eyes, but we see not, ears, but we hear not; hearts, but we perceive not. We have, indeed, all the intellectual faculties and moral powers which belong to rational beings; but they are devoted to the world; they are employed against God and his government. Instead of love, the heart is influenced by enmity against God; instead of repentance, there is hardness of heart; instead of faith, by which the Saviour is received, there is unbelief, by which, with all his blessings, he is rejected. We possess, indeed, all the natural faculties which God demands in his service; but we are without the moral power, we have not the disposition, the desire to employ them in his service. This want of disposition, instead of furnishing the shadow of excuse for our unbelief and impenitence, is the very essence of sin, the demonstration of our guilt.

Here, then, is work for Omnipotence itself. Here is not only insensibility to be quickened, but here is opposition, here is enmity to be destroyed. The art and the maxims of men may change, in some degree, the outward appearances, but they never can reach the seat of the disease; there it will remain, and there it will operate, after all that created wisdom and power can do. That power which can start the pulse of spiritual life within us must reach and control the very origin of thought, must change our very motives. Our case would be hopeless if our restoration depended on the skill and the efforts of created agents. Thanks be to God, however, there is a vital energy in Christ, which sends the tide of divine animation through every

one that is united to him by faith. When this world came into existence; when light sprang out of darkness; it was not at the request, but at the command of the Creator: so, at the command of the Head of the church, light and life pervade what was but just now a scene of darkness and of death. The soul, even when dead in sin, by the Spirit and the word of Christ, is quickened into life. It has new views of divine truth; its affections are placed on new and spiritual objects; and the whole man is animated by the vital principle of faith, and governed by the motive of love to God. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; or, there is a new creation.* New views, new thoughts, new affections, and new motives have changed the whole character, and clearly indicate a connexion with the Prince of Life.

By bestowing the gift of eternal life on each individual member, it is bestowed on the whole body collectively. The whole church is redeemed from the curse of the law, and restored to the favor of God, and to the community of heaven. The whole church is animated and controlled by the principle of spiritual life from Christ, the glorious and exalted Head. This life may be communicated through different channels, be preserved and increased by various means; but still it flows from the same inexhaustible fulness in Christ. He has given *pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of his body; the different members may be highly useful in comforting and strengthening each other, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.* These pastors and teachers, however, and these members, are but the servants of Jesus

Christ, qualified and placed in the church for this purpose. The ordinances of public worship, of reading the scriptures, of prayer, of the holy Sabbath, are eminently useful in animating and purifying the church; yet these are but means appointed by infinite wisdom; all their invigorating effects are from him who *giveth the increase*.

2. Christ, as head of the church, is the great bond of union; all the members are united to him, and in him, to each other. This is obviously the fact in the human body. All the members, varying as they do, in their functions, their location and their importance, are united to the head, by joints and bands, so as to make one body. From the head the principle of vitality is sent to the remotest extremities, and in consequence of this union, sensations of pleasure and of pain are sent from every part to the head; and thus the members sympathise with each other. "As the human body is formed by the union of all the members to each other under the head, and by the fitness of each member for its own office and place in the body; so the church is formed by the union of its members under Christ the head."

This is a spiritual union, of mind to mind, of heart to heart, without the loss of personality, or individual agency. It consists chiefly in faith, in affections, in spirit, in design: those who are alike in these respects are united to Christ, and in him, to each other.

No truth is more clearly taught in the Bible than that faith is the great bond of union between Christ and his people. By this faith they *hold*, or as it may be rendered, *firmly hold the head*. As the branch is united to the vine, so are all true believers to the

divine Saviour. By this faith, which consists in the knowledge and belief of his truth, *Christ dwells in their hearts*. By this faith, believers are not only united to Christ, but also to each other. There is but *one faith*. This is the faith in which Abel worshipped and died; in which Abraham, hoping against hope, obeyed God; in which Moses *endured, seeing him who is invisible*; which animated the heart of David and Isaiah; in which the publican prayed, and was justified; in which Paul labored and suffered; in which the martyrs bore testimony to the truth, and glorified God in their death. In this faith every member of the church, at this day, is living, and walking, and warring against the flesh and the powers of darkness. This faith imparts to all who cherish it the same views of sin, of the character of God and the Saviour, of the nature and necessity of holiness, of the law and service of God, of the happiness and glories of heaven. In all ages the Mediator, whether made known through the types of bleeding victims offered in sacrifice, or through the clearer revelations of the gospel, is the great object of this faith, the ground of confidence to the church universal. In all believers the effects of this faith are the same, purifying the heart, working by love, overcoming the world, giving peace, and not unfrequently joy and triumph in death. This is one of the strongest bonds by which the members of Christ's body are knit and compacted together. They all think alike concerning the great and fundamental doctrines of the Christian system. They may differ, as they frequently do, on minor points; they may differ widely on subjects having no connexion with religious belief; but respecting those

doctrines which are essential to spiritual life, they are of the *same mind*, and that is the *mind of Christ*.

This faith, which is the *work of God*, produces in the heart those devout affections which characterize the members of the church, and which unite them to their living head, and to each other. By love they are sweetly and powerfully drawn to the Saviour, and transformed into his image. They love him on account of his glorious character, because he has died for them, reconciled them to God by his death, ever liveth to make intercession for them, and will come again to receive them to himself. Nor does he withhold from them the strongest proof, the most encouraging assurances, of his love to them. His love, indeed, has this peculiarity, that it is an *everlasting love*, and therefore it *passeth knowledge*. His whole life was a manifestation of this love; but more especially the sorrows of Gethsemane, and the agonies of the cross. Numerous assurances are given in his word: *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.* If, at the close of our conflict, we are *more than conquerors*, it will be *through him that loved us*. There is not, within the widest range of human conception, a more joyous and sublime union than that of love, sincere and mutual love; and such is the union between Christ and every member of his body.

This love unites the different members to each other. *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* All the disciples of Christ bear more or less resemblance to him; it is this image which we

love, wherever it is impressed. The exercise of this devout affection is at once our duty and our privilege. *See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* This love gives us the same interest in our common Lord, in the prosperity and extension of his kingdom. It prompts us cheerfully to *bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ. If one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it; if one suffer, all suffer with it.* This love furnishes a key to unlock the secrets of other hearts. If it warms our bosom, we know the views of goodness and mercy, what recollection of past kindness filled the mind of the Psalmist, when he commenced one of the songs of Zion with this declaration: *I love the Lord, because he heard my voice and my supplication.* We know what were the thoughts and feelings of Peter's heart, when, interrogated the third time by his Saviour, he replied, *Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.* This is that *charity which is the bond of perfectness, which never faileth, which unites us to our common Head, and to all his friends on earth and in heaven.*

Evangelical repentance is another affection common to all the members of Christ's body. In this we cannot be said to resemble the Saviour; because he *who did no sin* cannot repent of it; yet, when for our sins we are *made sorry after a godly manner*, we thereby express our approbation of his will, and are thus united to him by this approbation, and this conformity to his will. So far as we are truly penitent, we think alike respecting

the nature and consequence of sin. If he has not wept for his own, he has wept for the sins of others with more unfeigned grief than we do for our own. Repentance is his gift, the reception of which gives us an important relation to the Giver. These feelings of contrition mark the commencement of our return to God, and therefore he rejoices over us, as sheep which were lost, now found and restored to the fold. This joy is a proof of the deep interest he feels in our safety and happiness; and of course that, even by repentance, we are united to him. While on earth, he felt a much more cordial and intimate connexion with the penitent, weeping for their sins, than with the self-righteous, who conceived that they needed no repentance: *and he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.*

This repentance, in its origin, its nature, and its effects, is the same in all the redeemed of the Lord. The moral vileness of sin is the cause of this sorrow; it is sincere, as that of one mourning for a first born, an only child; it is practical, reforming the heart and the life. When we perceive that others feel as we do, on the same subjects, we are thus far united with them. Our own experience is the best explanation of their thoughts and their feelings. When we hear the language of the royal penitent, *I acknowledge my transgressions; my sin is ever before me;* or of the publican, smiting on his breast, *God be merciful to me a sinner;* their words and their feelings are our own; we acknowledge them as brethren. We may not understand the language of the Hottentot, the Brahmin, the Sandwich Islander: but if told that their hearts are melting with sorrow for sin, then, by the aid of another language,

common to all true penitents, we understand their thoughts, we enter into their feelings, and thus perceive that we are one with them.

Such is also the nature of hope, another concomitant of faith and feature of the Christian character, by which all true believers are united to their Head. He is the foundation, the author, and the object of this hope. In every heart where the *hope of glory* is cherished, there is *Christ*; for *the Lord Jesus Christ is our hope*. There is *one*, and but *one hope of our calling*. Worldly distinctions may separate us widely from each other; but this hope, presenting the same objects to view, placing us in the same relation to Christ, brings us together on the same ground. The wealthy, the honorable, the learned, find that these distinctions avail them nothing in obtaining this balm of life, in securing this *anchor of the soul*. The poorest tenant of the cottage finds that his indigence and obscurity present no barrier to his obtaining this soother of human woe, this inheritance of the saints. *The poor hath hope*, as well as the rich. The hope of the publican, returning to his house justified, embraced every object, every degree of blessedness and glory, which the hope of David, on the throne of Israel, could embrace. The monarch may wear his purple on earth; but in heaven, if equal in holiness, the publican's robe will be as white as his.

By the spirit which they cherish all the members of the church are united to their Head, and to each other. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; and if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This is a spirit of zeal, of prayer, of humility, of meekness, of forbearance, of peace, of forgiveness, of bro-

therly kindness. This spirit distinguished our divine Master while on earth, and in every age, in a greater or less degree, characterizes the children of God. These dispositions naturally and strongly associate us with others who cherish them, and who live under their influence. Those who fail, when proper occasions occur, to exercise this spirit, prove themselves unworthy of their relation to Christ, and sever at least one of the bands by which the members of his body are united. Those who go farther, and yield to the spirit of the world, of pride, of irritation and resentment, renounce their connexion with the Saviour, disgrace and afflict his church with their "wrath, strife, and variance," which are "works of the flesh."

All Christians are connected with the Redeemer and with each other by their design. Every man has a paramount object in view, which he labors to promote and attain. The members of the church have their object; the glory of God. From the moment they join this spiritual community, a new design exerts a controlling influence over the exercise of their mind, and over the pursuits of life. Constrained by the love of Christ, they "live no longer to themselves, but to him who died for them." It is the supreme desire of their hearts that while they live they may "live unto the Lord;" that when they die, they may "die unto the Lord;" and that "whether they live or die, they may be the Lord's." Heaven itself can present to their faith and their hope nothing more desirable than as "vessels of mercy," prepared for the purpose, they may "show forth the riches of his glory," through an endless duration. This grand design lived and operated in the

heart of Jesus: to promote the glory of God, he labored and suffered, and died. It is, therefore, an interesting bond of union between him and his members.

Such is the body of Christ; and such are the bands by which it is united to the Head; by which all the members, of every age, of every region, are compacted and knit together into one spiritual community. The same faith, affections, spirit, and design pervade, animate, and combine the whole family. However diversified they may be in wealth, in station, in worldly circumstances, they are "all one," and but "one in Christ." These members sympathize with each other; because they belong to the same body, are parts of the same whole. When Elijah wept in solitude over the disasters of the church, we sympathize with him; because it was the sore afflictions of our own body which caused his grief. When the missionaries, laboring in heathen lands, rejoice in the success of the gospel, we rejoice with them; for this is the increase of our own body. We rejoice in the sure anticipations of that millennial day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ, when the church shall have no other limits than those of the habitable globe. Thousands of its members are now *working*, and thousands more will soon begin to *work, effectually*, we hope, through the "quickeningspirit," to "make this increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Such ought to be the church, united in peace, in harmony, in zeal, in Christian affection: but what do we sometimes witness? The body of Christ divided; the hand denying that the foot is of the body; the eye denying that the ear is connected with the head;

brother armed against brother with suspicion as cold as death, with jealousy and envy more cruel than the grave! Of this mournful and afflictive state of the church, we will only say, "an enemy hath done this!" This is not the work of the Prince of Peace; these are not the "fruits of the Spirit." From this painful scene let us, with joyous hope, look forward to that day when the "Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity;" when the church shall be a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

3. Christ, as Head, is the supreme Ruler of his church. In the animal economy, the head is considered as the seat of intelligence, by which all designs are formed for the government and protection of the body; so the church is indebted to Christ for her government and protection. He possesses every qualification for this high and important office. "All power in heaven and in earth" is given unto him. His wisdom, his knowledge, his goodness, his justice, his truth, are infinite. "Him," therefore, "God hath highly exalted; given him to be Head over all things for his body the church." That his government may be complete and universal, "angels and authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him." All the heavenly hosts are his "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

This government is particular, as well as general, extending to each individual, as well as to the church collectively. To be general, it must be particular. "The body is not one member, but many;" so the church has no existence, but as it is made up of indi-

vidual members. Each member is, therefore, a special object of attention, sharing in the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great Governor. The offices and stations in the church are appointed and filled according to his pleasure. One is called to preach the word, another to hear; one to rule, another to obey. Those events and circumstances which distinguish the life of one from that of another are all prescribed by infinite wisdom, and all with a special reference to the spiritual interest of the individual, and of the whole body. If one is elevated to stations of civil authority, it is that he may "rule in the fear of God." If wealth is entrusted to another, it is that he may "deal his bread to the hungry," that he may employ this wealth in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom. If any are afflicted, assailed with divers temptations, it is that "patience may have her perfect work," that they may recommend the religion of Jesus by the meek submission with which they suffer, that their faith may be tried and strengthened, and thus be found unto praise at the appearing of Christ. Each individual shares in the watchfulness and kind protection of the great shepherd of the flock. He sees all the stratagems, all the devices of Satan and of wicked men; these he restrains and controls with such wisdom and power, that not even the weakest of the flock shall perish. Job had his trials, severe and successive trials; but the "Lord was very pitiful," and he was sustained and delivered out of them all. Peter was sifted; but before this sifting commenced the Lord had prayed that his faith might not fail. Paul felt the buffetings from a messenger of Satan; from which he thrice prayed for deliverance. His prayer was answered, not by actual

deliverance, but by the kind promise of support; "my grace is sufficient for thee." This promise has done much greater good than immediate relief from these buffetings would have done: it not only sustained the apostle, but it has sustained thousands in every subsequent age, and will, to the end of time, be a refuge to the tempted. He in whom believers confide, is able and determined to succor those who are tempted, to protect, defend, and save them with an *everlasting salvation*.

Although, in every age, and under every form of administration, the church is ONE, yet for the sake of public and social worship, this one universal church consists of a great number of separate individual churches, embracing a greater or less number of members. Towards each of these, as we learn from the seven Asiatic churches, a special providence is employed. One, in answer to prayer, flourishes, abundantly blessed with the *increase of God*; another, as a reproof and punishment for coldness and negligence, is left to barrenness and declension. One is assailed with *fiery trials*; another is shielded from these trials. This guidance of the great Head embraces especially the pastors of the churches. The Lord may be provoked to remove that candlestick, whose light has been neglected. One is called to "preach the gospel to those who are at Rome, to the splendid, the populous, and wealthy city; another is sent to the mountains, to seek and bring to the fold the lost sheep. One is left for half a century to guide, instruct, and comfort the same people; another is sent *far away*, to proclaim salvation to those who are sitting in darkness. He who reigns supreme in heaven and in earth says to one, "go, and

he goeth, to another come, and he cometh, and to his servant do this, and he doeth it."

There are designs of infinite wisdom and goodness, requiring successive ages for their accomplishment, having a special reference to the advancement and protection of the church universal. Abraham was called to be a stranger in a strange land. His posterity were sent into Egypt that they might be redeemed with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, that the whole earth might be filled with the glory of God. The Chaldean empire was overthrown, that Israel, released from captivity, might "return and come to Zion with songs." What "overturning, overturning, overturning" of the nations took place, kingdom succeeding kingdom, the diadem of empire passing from head to head, to prepare the world for the advent of Messiah, whose right it is to reign. When the first preachers of the gospel received their commission, the world, by successive changes, was in that state most favorable to success. The spirit of persecution was soon raised against them; but the divine wisdom and power are clearly manifested in making this opposition "fall out rather to the furtherance of the gospel," than to impede its progress. Satan, when he "put it into the heart of Judas to betray his Master; the rulers of the Jews, when they obtained from Pilate the sentence of death, did not intend to advance, but to crush the cause of Christianity; yet such was the result of their designs. The cross is the pillar, the very fountain of life to the church. Could they have prevented the crucifixion, they would have extinguished the light of the world. At a subsequent day, while the church was yet confined to Jerusalem, these rulers excited a

great persecution against it. Stephen, indeed, is "carried out to his burial;" the other members, "except the apostles, were scattered abroad." But although compelled to leave Jerusalem, they carried in their hearts the love of the Redeemer, and a zeal to promote his cause. Therefore they "went every where preaching the word." The enemies of the church may partially succeed; but their success shall recoil upon themselves by advancing the cause which they intend to impede and destroy. "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

Such is the government which *Jehovah-Jesus* is exercising for the increase and protection of his church. It is wise, and good, and powerful. It embraces all events from the greatest to the least; all of which have a connexion, either direct or remote, with the interests of the church, or of its individual members. Those events which are too limited in their results to change the state of nations, may have an important influence on the state of particular churches; and those too limited to have this influence may yet have an important effect in diversifying the life of individuals. In one age, from very small beginnings may commence a series of events which, through revolving centuries, may ripen into measures of safety and extension to the church, at some future and far distant period. The present state of the church, in our beloved country, through an unbroken series of events, may be traced back to the hour when Columbus sailed in search of a new world. The changes now in progress, or now commencing, among the nations of the earth, may have an intimate connexion with the universal diffusion of the gospel, with the millennial prosperity of the Re-

deemer's kingdom. Many of the intermediate links in this chain of causes and effects may appear, in human view, to have little or no connexion with the church; they may be wholly of a political nature; they may even wear an aspect unfriendly to the cause of Christ; yet under the mighty control of him who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," they shall become instrumental in promoting the empire of truth. Those who live, during these intervening periods, while the design is yet advancing to maturity, cannot, of course, comprehend the meaning of passing events, or even conjecture what the Lord intends to bring out of them. To understand the wisdom and goodness of these progressive measures, some knowledge of the end which they are intended to accomplish, is indispensably necessary. Those who are connected with the church on earth when "the decree shall bring forth," when the design shall issue in its appropriate results, may, with pious admiration, perceive the wisdom of this long series of events. Or there may be designs so vast and comprehensive as to require the close or nearly the close of the mediatorial kingdom for their full completion; which cannot, of course, be understood until they are viewed in the clearer light of eternity. All this is strictly true respecting each individual member of the church; there is a series of events peculiar and adapted to each one. His present safety and progress in the divine life, may, through the Spirit, be the result of measures which commenced years ago, even before he was born. Events now passing, or now commencing, may have a connexion with his peace and comfort in future years. Changes which very deeply affect him now may be to preserve him

from temptations, from the designs of his enemies, of which he has not the least suspicion, and which never will be known to him in this life. But they are clearly seen and frustrated by his Saviour, through these very changes. He cannot therefore understand the design of these changes, unless he know those trials from which they shield him.

Indeed, in a government, the whole plan of which is drawn by infinite wisdom, and existed in the divine mind from all eternity, commencing at the creation, embracing all nations, marking out the path, with all its events, of each individual member of the church, extending through all ages, even to the last moment of time; in such a government there might be many dispensations, too vast and complicated, too dark and mysterious, to be comprehended, in this life, by our limited minds. This ought not, however, to disturb our peace, or to shake our confidence in the wisdom and rectitude of Him who guides and defends his church. With animating hope, let us wait till the *kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father*; then, if the knowledge of these dispensations will afford us greater degrees of love and joy, if it will raise our songs even one note higher, it will, if not instantaneously, yet gradually, be unfolded to our view. Then, with profound and heavenly admiration, we will say; *He hath done all things well!* He has brought the church, with all her members, in safety through every trial, and presented her, a glorious church, unto God, that *God may be all in all.*

4. Christ, as Head, is the Honor of the church, of all the members of his body. Such is evidently the case with the human body; the head is its most distinguished and honorable part. The crown, the badge of

royalty, is therefore worn on the head. Indignities offered to this part, are offered to the whole body; If the head is honored, so all the members are honored with it. So Christ is the honor and glory of the church.

The truth of this proposition will not appear to those who judge according to the maxims and customs of this world. In their estimation, Jesus Christ is *lightly esteemed*; he is *despised* as reproachful. A connexion with him, and a resemblance to him, confer no honor in their opinion. Wealth and power, in their view, are the chief sources of honor; to which some add splendid talents, and rich attainments in human science. The honor of Jesus did not consist in these worldly distinctions. His life was spent without the enjoyments procured by wealth; *he had not where to lay his head*. He possessed no power in political arrangements; nor did he seek an alliance with those who were invested with civil authority. His honor consisted in the supreme excellency of his moral character; in meekness, humility, gentleness, kindness, forbearance, forgiveness, and mercy; in love to God, and zeal to promote his glory. These moral qualities, these unobtrusive excellencies, carried out in all his intercourse with men, into every action of his life, were the transcendant honors and dignity of *the Son of God*.

This is the honor which Christ confers on every member of his body; not the honor which *cometh from men*, but the *honor which is from God*. He may not bestow on them the wealth or the power of this world; may not distinguish them with splendid talents and human science: or if these should be granted, they are not the marks of his peculiar favour, by which *all men shall know that they are his disciples*. But he calls them, by

his grace, to repentance, unites them to himself by faith, breathes into them his own spirit, imprints on their hearts his own image. This repentance, this faith, this spirit, this image, is their honor, the seal of God, the mark by which they shall be distinguished when *God shall make up his jewels*. By a blind and misjudging world they may be despised; but when the angels shall be sent to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, these, and these only shall be selected as the favourites of heaven. When the world, with all its distinctions shall *pass away with a great noise*, then shall they *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. Their own minds, their utmost stretch of thought may labor in vain to comprehend their future exaltation; that high and heavenly eminence to which they shall be raised. *They know not what they shall be; but they know that when Christ shall appear, they shall be like him; for they shall see him as he is*. Even their bodies shall partake in this honor. At the voice of the arch-angel, from the grave they shall come forth *spiritual, incorruptible, immortal bodies, fashioned like unto his glorious body*. Then, when the whole universe shall be assembled, they shall occupy the station of honor; they shall be placed on the *right hand* of the Judge. God the Father will honor them; they shall *enter into the joy of their Lord*; they shall receive a *crown of life*; they shall be with the Saviour, *beholding his glory*, and as they behold, shall be more and more *transformed into the same image, from glory to glory*; they shall *sit with him on his throne*; they shall be *kings and priests unto God*, and *reign with him for ever and ever*.

A few reflections, from the subject, will now claim our attention.

1. How powerfully calculated is this view of the subject to quench forever all inordinate desire for the honors and distinctions of this world. The moment is at hand when they shall vanish into perfect insignificance before the sublime glories of eternity. The day will come when earthly crowns and all the wealth of this world, wrapped in the flames of the conflagration, shall pass away; and those who set their hearts on them shall be destitute, disgraced, ruined; and shall call, and yet call in vain, to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb." Then shall come forth millions from the vale of obscurity, from indigence, from reproach, to riches in the heavens that shall never fade, to joys that are eternal. The distinctions of this world have their place and their value; but surely it is death, it is folly, to take them as the portion of the soul. Therefore, "be not envious at the foolish, when you see the prosperity of the wicked;" think of the slippery places on which they stand; think of their end; see them "brought into desolation as in a moment; utterly consumed with terrors. Be patient, therefore, brethren, establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. And when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." If you should be reproached for the name of Christ, because you belong to his body, and breathe his spirit, be neither dismayed nor afraid; rejoice in it as a proof that the "spirit of glory resteth upon you." Think of the purposes you are now preparing to answer; disgrace not your high calling, by setting your affections on things on the earth." Even now show forth the praises of him who calls you

to these celestial honors by "seeking those things which are above," where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

2. We infer from this subject the perfect safety of the church; which necessarily implies the safety of all her members.* For we repeat, the church has no existence, but as it is composed of individual members. That human body is not perfect which has lost part of its members, though they were the very smallest. The church has had and still has her enemies. Satan has laid his snares, has employed his devices, has shot forth his fiery darts; the whole power of the Roman empire has been exerted in bloody persecution; infidels have marshalled their hosts, and tried the force of ridicule, of sophistry, of philosophy, falsely so called; false friends, hypocritical professors have betrayed her interests, and threatened her with ruin: but still she lives, and increases, and triumphs. She has had her seasons of affliction, of despondency, and gloom; but has never been forgotten nor forsaken by her Saviour. At one time when idolatry had nearly extinguished her light in Judea, Josiah was raised up, and restored the worship of the true God. At another, Cyrus, although he "knew not the Lord," was made instrumental in building up the walls of Zion, and filling her courts with the voice of thanksgiving and praise. At a still later period, Luther and Calvin, with their coadjutors, checked and rolled back that torrent which threatened to sweep her into the vortex of ruin. These enemies, whether they be many or few fallen spirits or men, avowed infidels or professed friends, are all subject to his control who "loves the church." He says to them,

* The invisible church, composed of real believers.—ED.

as to the waves of the great deep, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. There is not a movement, not a revolution among the nations, that is not, either immediately or remotely, rendered subservient to the interests of his cause. Even the "wrath of man," bursting forth in war and bloodshed, "shall praise him," by opening a wider door for the spread of the gospel. The Lord from on high does not merely approve the struggles which the church is making for her own safety and extension; his own omnipotent arm is actively and constantly employed, aiding and directing these struggles. "The kings of the earth may set themselves in opposition; the rulers may take counsel together; the heathen may rage;" the prince of darkness may lead them on to the conflict: but he that "sitteth in the heaven shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." The spirit of life breathed into the church shall never be extinguished; the bands by which she is united to Christ shall never be severed. Her members may be removed by death; but others shall fill their places. They may have their buffetings, their siftings; but not one of them shall be lost. They may be *cast down*; but not one of them shall be *destroyed*. With all her members, the church, therefore, is **SAFE**. She will soon be the "church triumphant;" will soon come "to the heavenly Mount Zion, with songs, and everlasting joy upon her head."

3. How zealous and how diligent should every member of the church be in working out his own salvation, and in promoting the great interest of the body of Christ. In the human body every part has its peculiar function, and its appropriate end to accom-

plish. There is not a useless limb, muscle, gland, or fibre in the whole system. If one part becomes inactive or irregular in its functions, other parts connected with it, and dependent on it, necessarily become disordered, and fail in their object. From the derangement and failure of one single organ, disease may pervade the whole body; and unless that organ can be restored to a healthy state, death must be the consequence. But when every part is regular in its action, then the whole system enjoys perfect health, and is adapted to vigorous and useful efforts. Such is the body of Christ. The members are so connected and dependent on each other, that the criminal negligence and irregularities of one will affect others within the sphere of his influence; and thus the injury may extend from one to another, till whole sections of the church are affected by it. One member of a church, distinguished by his wealth, his station, or his talents, and especially the pastor, always distinguished by the high and sacred office which he fills, may, by his worldly spirit, unguarded, unchristian example, paralyze the whole church, this church may affect others; and these again others, still more remote from the source of this wide-spreading evil; until the whole, or nearly the whole church universal, becomes disordered and lifeless.* All this may not take place in a day or a year; the contaminating plague may extend and increase for ages, before it reaches these mournful results. Yet such is the tendency of every unchristian spirit and example. The influence of one single member, in its baleful effects, may extend widely around him, and descend to unborn generations. Who can tell with

* The visible church, mixed with nominal professors.—ED.

whom, or at what time, the lukewarmness in the Laodicean church commenced? Who can tell with whom or at what time that state of things commenced, against which Luther raised his voice? Let every servant "watch and pray," lest he should have the dreadful distinction of giving rise to a similar train of consequences.

On the other hand, when every member is faithful and zealous in the discharge of all religious duties, then will the whole body enjoy that spiritual health and vigor which tend greatly to the increase of itself. One single member, by keeping with diligence his own heart, by regulating agreeably to the word of God his own life, by embracing every opportunity of doing good, by breathing around him the spirit of faith, of love, and of zeal, may provoke others to love and to good works; and these again others; until large sections of the church shall feel a more animating pulse of divine life. One faithful, devoted servant of the Lord may exert a quickening influence on thousands, on millions, whom he will never meet, till he meets them at the right hand of the judge. Nor is there a single member excluded from the high privilege, or exempted from the solemn duty of enlarging the body, and promoting the kingdom of Christ. There are few, indeed, who cannot contribute of the substance which God has given, if it were but *two mites*, to the advancement of this cause; all can furnish the influence of a Christian spirit and a consistent example; all can offer the humble and importunate prayer of faith. The church must live; the church must increase; the church must embrace the whole world. But this increase depends, through the blessing of God, on the zealous

efforts of her own members. It is but the probability of success, in secular pursuits, which prompts the world to active exertions from year to year, and from age to age. How much more powerful is the motive derived from absolute certainty of success? Who, then, can be idle in the vineyard of the Lord, when so much remains to be done; when nearly the whole world is one extensive Macedonia, from which is breaking forth the loud and affecting cry, "Come over and help us!" Yes, come over, and come quickly, and help us! What member of the church, bought with a Saviour's blood, viewing by faith the joys and glories of eternity, can forget, and if he remembers, can avoid feeling the life-giving impulse of the sentence, "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." May every member of the church, through the help of God, resolve to be that servant!

4. Finally, we infer the great importance of being united to the church; not only in name, but in reality; not merely by profession, but by faith, by love, and by the spirit of Christ. The Redeemer wants not disciples to say, *Lord, Lord*, to honor him with their lips, while they quench his Spirit, and disobey his voice. Those, and those only will be acknowledged who give him their hearts, and obey his will. All such he has pledged himself to protect and save. But every perfection of his character, every principle of his government, every threatening of his word, proclaims destruction, deep and eternal destruction to all who are not united to him. If he is omnipotent to save, so is he also to destroy. If none are able to pluck the sheep

out of his hand, neither are any able to shield the finally impenitent from the stroke of his justice. It is not more certain that *glory, honor, and peace* await the one, than that *indignation and wrath, tribulation, and anguish* await the other. If those who believe in his name and obey his voice shall "inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world;" so surely shall those who close their life in unbelief and impenitence "depart accursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." It is in vain to ask, and more especially by way of excuse for the most criminal indifference, "May we not be saved without becoming members of the church?" It is impossible to be saved without being united to Christ; and those who are united to him are members of his body, which is the church: nor can this union exist but by faith. The judge has, therefore, kindly given us, for our consideration and profit, his decision on the subject; *He that believeth not shall be condemned.* How dangerous, then, is the state of thousands who *make light* of these things, who "neglect this great salvation," who "turn away from him who speaketh from heaven!" They may divert their attention with the pursuits and amusements of life; they may chase the wealth, the honor, the pleasure of this world; but *the wrath of God abideth on them.* Let all such hear the *glad tidings* that *Christ came into the world to save sinners*; of whom, if they are even the chief, yet they need not despair; if they will believe in his name, they *shall be saved.* And let every child of God, lifting up clean hands and a pure heart, pour forth the earnest and persevering prayer to the great Head of the

church, that he would gird on his sword, and ride forth *conquering and to conquer*, transforming his enemies into friends, thousand after thousand, million after million, until the *kingdoms of this-world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*.

SERMON XIV.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER M'FARLANE, A. M.

REDEMPTION.

In whom we have redemption through his blood. EPH. i. 7.

THE doctrine of redemption through the sacrifice and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ is of fundamental importance in the Christian religion; and consequently it has the highest claims upon our attention and regard. The conduct of *all* who, in any degree, make it a subject of inquiry, shows their sense of its importance: no part of revealed truth is cherished and defended with more anxious solicitude by its friends; none is pursued with more inveterate hostility by its enemies.

In those countries where Christianity has made but little advancement, men are not at the pains, to any considerable extent, of corrupting its doctrines, or perverting its precepts: in most instances, the whole is rejected without concern and without examination. It

is found, however, to be the case, that as the divine system of religion makes progress in the world, and obtains weight and character among men, many evince their enmity, not by professed infidelity, but by a presumptuous perversion of its essential principles. The doctrine of redemption has frequently been impugned, and no less frequently corrupted, by the enemies of the Christian faith.

As the redemption that is in Christ is the only foundation of your hope for eternity, it cannot be without interest to direct your attention to this doctrine, by considering its importance; its reality and nature; its sublimity; and its practical use.

I. The characteristic glory of revealed religion is the doctrine of redemption and salvation through the mediation of Jesus, the Son of God. In the temple of divine truth there is no part more excellent, important, and lovely, than this; and there is none more conducive to the beauty, grandeur, and stability of the whole. The entire superstructure of Christianity depends upon it, and cannot stand without it.

A great part of the ordinances and instructions given to the church under former dispensations, was designed to teach the necessity, the nature, and the benign effects of the revelation of the "Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world." To the comings and triumphs of the Messiah, patriarchs and prophets looked forward with high and joyful anticipations. Holy men of God lived and died in the hope of salvation through him. The whole tendency of the institutions under which they lived, was to lead them to trust in him as the God of their salvation; and to rejoice in the redemption he was about to accomplish for his people.

The ordinances of the church, previously to the coming of our Lord, were designed and adapted to prepare the minds of men for understanding the doctrine of redemption, through the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God, to be revealed in due time. Among these ordinances, that of animal sacrifice occurred most frequently, and was observed with most impressive solemnity. This institution was well adapted to teach the grand and peculiar doctrine of true religion, to wit, that pardon and eternal life can be obtained only through the expiatory sufferings and death of "Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

What is the view which we obtain of this subject from the New Testament? At every step the doctrine of redemption, through the ransom of Christ, is presented to our contemplation. In point of interest, this subject occupies the first place. The incidents of our Lord's life appear to have been preparatory and subservient to the solemn events, and glorious achievements of his death. He came into the world for the express purpose, that he might consecrate himself to God an atoning sacrifice for the sins of his people; and by one offering, "perfect forever them that are sanctified." It was to the decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, to the completion of the great work which the Father gave him to do, to the termination of his abasement by the consummation of our deliverance, that his thoughts appear to have been ever directed. And when we approach the scenes of our Lord's death what interest, what solemnity, what grandeur attach themselves to that mysterious event. Here we behold the fulfilment of types and prophecies, the finishing of

transgression, the destruction of Satan, the making of reconciliation, and the purchase of eternal redemption. Here we behold the most interesting exhibition of the love of Jehovah, and the most astonishing display of the condescending mercy of God our Saviour: here in the vicarious death of Immanuel, we find the only sure foundation on which to rest our hopes for everlasting life. Is it then surprising that the Christian should love the doctrine of redemption through the righteousness and death of Immanuel? that he should eagerly resist every attempt to cast it away, or to detract from its purity and integrity? Can any friend of the Church of God be unconcerned, when the inroads of the enemy are directed to the very citadel of our confidence and hope?

Every instruction could have been given by prophets, and every subordinate ministration could have been performed by angels and men; but for the expiation of sin, for the accomplishment of our redemption, it was indispensable that the Lord of glory should obey, and suffer, and die!

The superlative importance of the doctrine of redemption is further manifested by the institutions of the New Testament church; and by the language and conduct of those who were divinely appointed to order all her concerns. The ministers of the Gospel were ordained to preach Christ, and him crucified, "the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation." In the administration of baptism, purification from sin by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and our participation of the benefits purchased by our Lord's death, are clearly brought to view. In the Lord's supper, the most impressive exhibition is made

of this distinguishing truth of Christianity, "redemption through his blood." In this ordinance, the design, the nature, and the Divine efficacy of the death of Christ are strikingly illustrated. Here we perceive the transcendent excellence of the love of Christ; the glorious end to be accomplished by his death; the Divine merit of his oblation; and the complete security of all who were given to him by the Father, and for whose reconciliation with God and eternal salvation, he gave his body to be broken and his blood to be shed.

The language of apostles and evangelists shows their judgment of the importance of the doctrine of redemption. These holy and inspired men regard salvation through the obedience and death of Christ as the chief glory, and the grand peculiarity of Christianity. "God forbid that I should glory, says the apostle Paul, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." With the judgment of prophets and apostles, the belief of the church of God in every age has harmonized. All the redeemed in Heaven, have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb. By faith in this doctrine, saints have been enabled to surmount every difficulty, to overcome every enemy, and to endure every trial. Confiding in the righteousness and grace of their Redeemer, poverty and shame, imprisonment and exile, torture and death, have been borne with patience, and even with triumph.

Beloved Christian Brethren, are you prepared to discard from your creed the doctrine of redemption, through the vicarious obedience and sufferings of Jesus

Christ? Can you consent to receive every innovation, which the wild fancies and corrupt reasonings of men may suggest, in relation to this subject? Do you not know that a doctrine may be retained in name, in some of its incidental and unimportant circumstances, whilst all that is absolutely essential, its very characteristic nature, is rejected? We are constrained to say that the novel statements and metaphysical subtleties, employed by some in explanation of the doctrine of Atonement, amount to a radical departure from the faith of the church, and from the instructions of Scripture, on this subject. I beseech you, therefore, dear brethren, for your own sakes, for the sake of your children, for the honor of Christ, and the advancement of his truth and cause in the world, beware of countenancing speculations which subvert the glorious doctrine of redemption, and which substitute the visionary theories of men in its place.

II. In attempting to show the reality of redemption, by the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ, the only difficulty consists in selecting and arranging within moderate limits, a favorable specimen of the evidence which so amply abounds in the Sacred Volume. Nothing more than a short specimen can be here given. The grand theme of inspiration is the redemption of Christ. The sacred writers are the most frequent and strenuous assertors of this precious and fundamental truth—justification “through faith in his blood.”

Ist. The redemption to be accomplished by the condescending and gracious interposition of the Son of God, was, at different times, and in different ways, made known to the Ancient Church. The first promise made to fallen man excited hopes of the coming

and glorious triumph of our Redeemer. Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and believed in him as the promised "Seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed." Jacob predicted his coming under the character of "Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the people should be." Job, after all his afflictions and trials, could say in faith and triumph, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Moses, who was himself a great deliverer, spake to the people of the *Prophet like to himself*, whom the Lord should raise up of their brethren, and whom they should hear in all things. David and the other prophets rejoiced in him as the Redeemer of Israel, and the God of their salvation. Such language as the following was familiar to them: "And he shall *redeem* Israel from all his iniquities." "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will *save* them by the Lord their God." "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my *salvation* unto the end of the earth." "And the *Redeemer*, shall come to Zion." As if the happy events so often predicted, had already received their accomplishment, the prophet speaks in the following sublime strains: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath *redeemed* Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the *salvation* of our God." Is. lii. 3. 10.

The ancient church would have no difficulty in understanding such passages in the writings of their prophets. Their national history furnished numerous examples of redemption, deliverance, and salvation from temporal evil: such language, therefore, would

be perfectly intelligible when used in relation to their spiritual and eternal condition. Their redemption from the bondage of Egypt, and in numerous instances, from the power of the surrounding nations, would enable them to comprehend, by analogy, what was meant by redemption from sin, death, and hell, by the powerful interposition of Immanuel.

2. The redemption of Christ was prefigured by the offices and achievements of the most illustrious personages of the nation of Israel; of Moses, who delivered the people from the oppression of the Egyptians; of Joshua, who gave them victory over their enemies, and introduced them into the promised land; of the Judges and Princes, who were raised up of God to save them from their destroyers; of the Priests, who by offering sacrifices, according to divine appointment, obtained reconciliation and pardon for the people. These distinguished persons were types of Christ; and the deliverances accomplished by them, were designed to prefigure the more glorious deliverance to be accomplished by him. It would be a perversion of all reason to consider the work of the Antitype as less real, substantial, and complete, than that of the type.

3. Animal sacrifices were an important part of the religious service of the Church during former dispensations. They were ordained of God from the beginning; and the chief design of them was to prefigure, by the shedding of blood, and the destruction of life, the sufferings and death of Christ: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, to be a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and to make reconciliation for the transgressions of the people. In the observance of this institution, the believer acknowledged

his sin and desert of punishment; he expressed his faith in the great sacrifice of the Lord's appointment, and his desire and hope of being saved only through its powerful efficacy. In the rite of sacrifice, a forcible exhibition was given of some of the most important principles of the Gospel, of the substitution of the Lord Jesus in the room of sinners; of the imputation of our transgressions to him; of the expiation of sin and reconciliation with God, by his vicarious obedience and death; of the pardon of our iniquities, and the gift of eternal life, obtained through the merit of his death, "imputed to us and received by faith alone."

From animal sacrifices, we derive an invincible proof of the merit and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. If the sacrifice of an animal made an atonement and secured pardon, can you suppose that the sacrifice of Christ will fail of obtaining pardon and life to those for whom he offered himself? "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Shall we attribute less to the substance than to the shadow? to the offering of our Lord Jesus Christ, than to that of a mere animal? Shall we ascribe to the priest under the law the power of making reconciliation for sin, and deny this power to the great High-priest of our profession?

4. The doctrine of redemption is amply proved by the *works* and *names* ascribed to the Lord Jesus in the New Testament. "He gave his life a *ransom* for many." "In whom we have *redemption* through his

blood." "Being justified freely by his grace through the *redemption* which is in Christ Jesus." "Having obtained *eternal redemption* for us." "Who gave himself for us that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity." The Greek word which is used in these and similar passages, primarily signifies the redemption of captives taken in war, by the payment of a stipulated price; which was thence called the *price of redemption*, or the *ransom*. Now, we know that the elect, according to the pre-determination of God the Father, were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. This is the price of our re-redemption. This is the ransom which procures our deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan, from the power of death, and the wrath to come. As, therefore, ransomed captives returned to their own country, in consequence of the payment of the price of their redemption, so "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

Would it not be exceedingly incongruous, my brethren, to represent the blood of Christ, the price of our redemption, as less efficacious than such corruptible things as silver and gold? Can it be possible that this most precious ransom should fail of securing our final deliverance from sin, and death, and hell? Most assuredly not. The ransom has been paid, and accepted: final deliverance is therefore infallibly sure to all the promised seed; to all for whom the ransom has been paid and accepted.

5. The Church is said to be *purchased* or *bought* with the price of Christ's blood. "Feed the Church of God," says Paul to the Elders of Ephesus, "which he

hath *purchased* with his own blood." He tells the church at Corinth that "they were *bought with a price.*" In Heaven, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, the emblematical representatives of the whole Church, worship and praise the Lamb, "For thou wast slain and hast redeemed (or *bought*) us to God by thy blood." Rev. v. 9. The people of God are denominated a *purchased people*, 1 Pet. ii. 3; and Heaven is their *purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. The parties in the stipulation being infinitely just; and the price of purchase having been paid; we have no hesitation in believing that the final redemption of the purchased people, and of their inheritance, is infallibly certain.

6. By the death of Christ, as a *sacrifice* to satisfy divine justice, reconciliation with God is effected, and eternal life secured for all who are interested in this sacrifice of the Lord's appointment. This is the view, my brethren, which is most frequently and emphatically given in Scripture of the cause of salvation. The sacrifice of Christ is declared to be the substance and consummation of all former sacrifices. "Christ our Passover, is sacrificed for us." "By a sacrifice for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. viii. 3. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "Who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God." "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

The expiation of sin and reconciliation with God are effected, not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. By this precious offering

and sacrifice he has "finished the transgression and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." Dan. ix. 24. By faith in this divinely appointed and accepted sacrifice, we are enabled to "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement"—*obtained the reconciliation*. Rom. v. 11. Salvation is sure to all for whom the reconciliation has been made; "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

7. The name of *Saviour* is almost appropriated to the Lord Jesus in the New Testament. He is called *the Saviour*, by way of eminence. He is the great Anti-type of all who in the Old Testament were called saviours; as Joshua, the Judges, and Kings, who were employed by God in an extraordinary manner to deliver his people. The prophets marked him as a glorious and almighty Saviour; "The Lord shall send them a Saviour, says Isaiah, and a great one, and he shall deliver them." Before his birth, an angel directed his name to be called Jesus, which signifies Jehovah the Saviour, and the reason of the name is given, "For he shall save *his people* from their sins." Our Lord himself tells us that he "came to *save* that which was lost." The apostle Paul pronounces it "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*." To assert that Christ rendered salvation merely *possible and consistent*, is far from giving due honor to the great captain of our salvation, who, by the merit of his sufferings, and the conduct of his power and grace, actually brings many sons to glory. Heb. ii. 10.

8. The Lord Jesus Christ is called the *Deliverer*. "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer." He delivers us from the present evil world, from the power of darkness, and from the wrath to come. By the efficacy of his death, by the power of his Spirit, and by the direction of his providence, he absolutely secures our deliverance from the world, and sin, and hell; and our final participation of the joy and glory of heaven.

Such is a brief specimen of the evidence furnished by the scriptures in proof of the grand and essential doctrine of redemption. The sins of men, viewed in connexion with the divine majesty and holiness, rendered their salvation impossible without an atonement which it was not in their power to make. But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, by the shedding of his precious blood, has taken away our sins; by his obedience and death; as our surety, he has made satisfaction to divine justice for our offences, and purchased for us a heavenly and eternal life.

III. Having shown the reality of the doctrine of redemption; let us now, my brethren, consider the majesty and grandeur of this truth. The mind of man is framed for the contemplation of what is great and sublime in the works of nature, and in the conduct of intellectual and moral beings. With mingled emotions of wonder and admiration, we view the lofty mountain, the roaring cataract, and the wide-extended ocean. He does not possess the dignity nor the enjoyment of a rational being, who can pass, without interest, the manifestations of infinite power, wisdom, and greatness, so variously and so abundantly distributed through the Creator's works.

Moral sublimity is adapted to make a still deeper

impression. Examples of justice, veracity, fidelity, friendship, and patriotism, are found to occur in the history of the world, which fill every spectator with esteem and admiration. Some qualities which command respect have been found among the heathen; but it is under the influence of the word and Spirit of God, that we are presented with the more substantial and glorious exhibitions of moral grandeur. Who can read of the faith and obedience, the constancy and patience, the intrepidity and noble disinterestedness, of patriarchs and prophets, of apostles and martyrs, without feelings of high respect and veneration. We revere their magnanimity and firmness of purpose, their heavenly ardor and contempt of the world, their piety towards God, and their goodness towards men.

No transaction which has occurred in our world, can admit of comparison, for sublimity, with the work of redemption by the Son of God. When we consider the dignity of his person, the depth of his abasement, the intensity of his sufferings, the character which he sustained as our substitute, and the grandeur and vastness of the objects to be accomplished by his mediation, we cannot fail of being impressed with the profoundest sentiments of awe, amazement, and admiration. The person who obeys and suffers is the eternal Son of God, one with the Father and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all worlds, and entitled to universal and everlasting adoration. But notwithstanding his antecedent dignity and glory, he condescended to become a man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He took upon him the form of a servant, appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

It is manifest, however, that apart from the character sustained by the sufferer, there can be no merit, worth, or efficacy in mere sufferings. Pain and death are not desirable for their own sakes; nor can the pain and death of one avail for the exemption and release of another; unless the former be recognized as the substitute of the latter. That our Lord Jesus obeyed and died as the substitute and surety of his people, is undeniably true, and essentially important in the Christian religion. The ancient rite of sacrifice was intended to prefigure and illustrate the substitution of Jesus, the Lamb of God, for his people, the imputation of their sins to him, and the true character of his sufferings, as vicarious and expiatory. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah's prophecy furnishes a most impressive view of the nature and design of our Lord's passion; "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. For the transgression of my people was he stricken. By the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." Can we doubt that the prophet, in these expressions, regarded the Saviour as taking the place of his people; as suffering not merely for their benefit, but in their stead to make satisfaction to divine justice; and as securing, by the merits of his death, their justification and eternal glory? The same idea of substitution and vicarious suffering is presented in the New Testament; "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,

being made a curse for us." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." "He gave his life a ransom for many."

In the work of redemption by the mediation and death of our Lord, there is a reciprocal imputation. On the one hand, the sins of the elect were imputed to Christ; and in consequence of this, he suffered for sin, the just instead of the unjust: on the other hand, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to his believing people; and on this ground they are justified and adjudged to everlasting life. If this be not true, our hope of heaven and happiness hereafter is vain. If Christ did not suffer as our surety, and in our stead, our sins are yet accounted to us for *condemnation*, and we must expect to bear them forever, with all their tremendous consequences. But the pardon and salvation of believers, is an incontestable proof that Christ has paid their debt, and purchased the heavenly inheritance for them.

What Christian does not find his soul dilate with the sublimest emotions of gratitude and admiration, whilst contemplating the glorious work of redemption. We behold the eternal Father, giving up his beloved Son to the curse of the law, the ignominy of the cross, and the pains of death, for the purpose of delivering us from the condemnation of sin, and the perdition of hell. Often before had he given manifestations of the greatness of his love, and the terrors of his justice: but never did either shine forth so conspicuously, as when the Son of God hung on the accursed tree, and darkness covered the whole land. So great was the love of God to men, that for the sake of accomplishing their

redemption, he spared not *his own Son*. He was pleased to bruise him, to put him to grief, to make his soul an offering for sin, and to lay upon his blessed and beloved head a weight of wrath which would have sunk us down to everlasting destruction.

We behold also the Lord Jesus, whose antecedent dignity and transcendant glory made him equal with God, giving himself to the humiliation and sufferings of death, with the intention of effecting our redemption. We see the good Shepherd giving his life a ransom for the flock. We contemplate the Captain of our salvation bringing many sons to glory, by being made perfect through sufferings. We behold the Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world. We admire the divine love and condescending mercy of the Saviour, in submitting to the reproaches and cruelty of men, the assaults of the devil, and the accursed death of the cross for our sakes. We are filled with amazement at the exhibition furnished by the death of Christ, of the awful grandeur of divine justice. The everlasting destruction of wicked men and devils gives a strong display of this glorious but tremendous attribute; but in the sorrows and death of his Son, God has presented us with a far more impressive manifestation of its inflexible strictness, its terrific grandeur. That rebellious servants would be punished, might have been anticipated; but surely it might be expected that an obedient and beloved Son would be spared: yet "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

Where then shall we find so bright a display of the perfections of God, as in the salvation of sinful men by the expiatory sufferings and death of his Son? Is any event, which has ever transpired in our world, so

well adapted to fill our minds with profound admiration and solemn awe? Do not the most applauded achievements of men, the most interesting occurrences in the history of our race, sink into insignificance, when compared with the events of Calvary. Shall we admire whatever is beautiful and grand in the world of matter, shall we applaud the splendid and beneficent actions of our fellow creatures, but have no heart to admire and celebrate the love of God in giving his Son to be a propitiation for our sins? Have we no discernment of the superlative excellence and glory of the doctrine of Christ crucified for our salvation? The corrupt and blinded world may pronounce the doctrine foolishness; and some perhaps who profess Christianity may imagine that it needs improvement to suit the light and the liberality of the age; yet to all who are illuminated from above, it will appear the wisdom of God, and the power of God to salvation.

Christian brethren, a correct understanding of the doctrine of redemption will lead us to profound humiliation for sin, to assured confidence in the gracious Redeemer, and to admiring gratitude and unreserved obedience. This is the practical use which you ought to make of this grand and most important truth. Contemplate your former prostrate and ruined condition. Condemnation and spiritual death were incurred in Adam, your head and representative. Happiness and heaven were forfeited, and lost by that one transgression, which brought sin and death into our world. By the eye of God our race were looked upon as fallen, condemned, depraved, and miserable. Whence could you look for help? How could the guilty rebel remove the heavy curse which rested on his head? How could

he make an atonement for his many and aggravated iniquities? How could he restore the honor of the divine law, and give satisfaction to offended justice? Had you any good reason to expect that God, your offended Sovereign and Lord, would interpose for your deliverance? No such anticipation could be entertained, whether you considered the nature and desert of sin, committed as it is against a Being of infinite majesty, glory, and blessedness; or the antecedent dispensations of God towards those that had sinned. When angels sinned, they were cast down to hell, and reserved to eternal punishment. You had no right to expect that mercy, withheld from them, would be extended to you.

It is evidently your reasonable duty, to admire, and adore the love of God in providing salvation for sinners, at an expense so unspeakably great; and to receive with joy and readiness the word of this salvation. There is no other way in which you can be saved. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." "Neither is there salvation in any other." Every other ground of dependence for eternal life will be found delusive and vain.

We are often amazed in considering the apathy with which so many appear to regard the gospel of Christ. A multitude of worldly objects engage their attention and interest; whilst they treat with entire unconcern the great salvation purchased by the abasement and death of the Lord of glory. But the reason undoubtedly is, they are not duly convinced of the sinfulness, misery, and danger of their native condition. Their minds are kept in security and peace, by unscriptural and ruinous opinions concerning the natural condition

and character of man. They are far from looking upon themselves as sinners, without strength of their own, and exposed to eternal wrath. Whilst in this state of mind, it is impossible for them duly to appreciate the glad tidings of the gospel.

We rejoice in witnessing a salutary anxiety and concern among the people. Indifference about the salvation of Jesus Christ is to multitudes an evident token of perdition. To all who are desirous of knowing what they shall do to be saved, we say, in the language of the illustrious forerunner of our Lord, "Behold the Lamb of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." In him God enters into covenant with us, pardons our transgressions, clothes us with his righteousness, gives us a title, and makes us meet for the heavenly kingdom. Come, then, unto the Lord Jesus. He is worthy of your confidence. In him you will find deliverance from every evil, and be replenished with every blessing for time and for eternity.

Believers are under the highest obligations to love, honor, and serve their condescending and gracious Redeemer. To provide salvation for you, he emptied himself of his glory; and submitted to unparalleled abasement, ignominy, and suffering. What return is required and expected from you? Can you say, in the words of the beloved disciple, "We love him because he first loved us." Has your conduct, in time past, evinced your attachment to him, and your gratitude according to his unspeakable benefits? What are you now doing for him who has done so much for you? The true Christian, who duly appreciates the grace of

the Lord Jesus, will account no *adoration*, however exalted, no *obedience*, however laborious, no *self-denial*, however painful, to be *too much*, when prompted by love to him who came down from heaven, and gave himself to the accursed death of the cross for his REDEMPTION.

SERMON XV.

BY THE REV. JOSHUA L. WILSON, D. D.

THE SANCTUARY POLLUTED.

Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

ZEPH. iii. 4.

ZEPHANIAH was one of the Lord's prophets "in the days of Josiah, king of Judah." Zeph. i. 1. Josiah was placed on the throne of David, when a child; and before the years of manhood, gave decided evidence of true piety. In the twelfth year of his reign and eighteenth of his age, he began to "purge Jerusalem and Judah from idols," destroy the monuments of false worship among the ten tribes, and cause the temple to be repaired, which had been suffered greatly to decay. During the progress of the repairs, Hilkiah, the High Priest, found a copy of the law of the Lord, which had long lain in a state of disuetude. The contents of this sacred record was in a great measure unknown even

to the king. When the law was read to him, perceiving what a criminal and shameful neglect there had been of true religion—what gross idolatry and impiety had become prevalent—and the ruinous calamities which would most certainly befall the whole nation, unless timely repentance averted the righteous judgments of God, Josiah became deeply affected, rent his clothes for grief, and commenced a work of extensive reformation. A great revival of religion immediately ensued, and most of his subjects *professedly* turned to the Lord. Josiah, as long as he lived, was an eminent servant of God; but before his death a melancholy declension took place, and time disclosed the melancholy secret that most of the conversions during the revival, were the effects of temporary excitement or deliberate hypocrisy. Jeremiah and Zephaniah, contemporary prophets, have both told us this sad story. 2 Kings xxii. xxiii. 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv. The dark picture of the Church, drawn by the prophets of the Lord at that period, presents to our view a semblance of her polluted condition in subsequent ages. Look at this picture—

“Wo to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. *Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have POLLUTED THE SANCTUARY, they have done violence to the law.*”

“*Her Prophets*” were by education and profession the instructors and guides of the people—but they were

light and treacherous—unstable, inconsistent, ready to comply with the vain desires of corrupt minds, and shape their instructions and predictions to promote their own popularity. How earnestly, on a certain occasion, was a true prophet solicited to be as *light and treacherous* as were the deceivers. “Let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them.” 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14.

“*Her Priests;*” appointed and ordained to minister in holy things, to offer sacrifices for remission of sins, and to stand with holy hands as intercessors with God in behalf of the people, “polluted the sanctuary,” by perverting the ordinances of the Lord’s appointment, and uniting with the Prophets in “doing violence to the law”—wresting it from its true meaning, to suit their own convenience and please corrupt minds. The people concurred in these abominations, and hence the servants of God were defamed, disregarded, abused, and some suffered violent deaths. “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder—they wandered—of whom the world was not worthy.” Compare the treatment of Jeremiah with the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter xi., verses 36, 37, 38. The recorded testimony during this great declension is truly discriminating and impressive. “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, but ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble.” “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land, the Prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people *love to have it so*; and what will ye do in the end thereof?” Mal. ii. 7, 8. Jer. v. 30, 31.

In taking a view of the subject before us, I shall—

I. Inquire, what is meant by the SANCTUARY? and attempt—

II. To prove, that the *Sanctuary* has been polluted in every age, by the professed ministers and professing people of God.

I. I shall enquire, what is meant by the *Sanctuary*.

SANCTUARY is a refuge, defence, and protection. Thus, the Lord, affording encouragement to the remnants of Israel, whom he cast far off among the Heathen, said, “I will be to them as a little *sanctuary* in the countries where they shall come.” Eze. xi. 16. Com. Is. viii. 14 with Prov. xviii. 10.

SANCTUARY was the most holy place of the Tabernacle, which was divided into two partitions. The first was the *holy place*, the second the *most holy place*, or *Sanctuary*. In and at this Tabernacle, the Israelites, in the wilderness, and until the building of the first temple, performed the chief of their religious services, offered their sacrifices, and worshipped God. Com. Exo. xxv. xxvi. xxvii. and Lev. first nine chapters with Heb. ix. 1—10. As the Jewish *tabernacle* was a type of Christ’s human nature, and all true worship is performed in and through him; and as, from the *most holy place* or *sanctuary* of the tabernacle and temple, God gave answers to his people, when they called upon his name; so the term *sanctuary* was used in an extended sense to mean the people of God, sanctified and set apart from all the nations of the world to be his peculiar possession, and also for the place appointed for the public worship of the Lord’s people. Lev. iv. 6. Heb. viii. 2. ix. 11. Ps. iv. 1. lxxiii. 17. cxiv. 2. Is. lxiii. 18.

SANCTUARY means Heaven—the true *holy of holies*, or MOST HOLY PLACE, where the worship of God is pure and perpetual. “When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generations to come: and the people that shall be *created*, shall praise the Lord. For he hath looked down from the height of his SANCTUARY; from *heaven* did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groanings of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the Lord in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together and the kingdoms to serve the Lord.” Ps. cii. 16—22.

When I find *Zion* and *Jerusalem* used to signify the visible kingdom of our Lord on earth; and *Israel*, to denote his worshipping people, chosen from among all nations—when I find the *tabernacle* and *temple*, each of which contained the *sanctuary*, denoting any place properly dedicated to God’s service—when I find *heaven*, the glorious *temple* of God above, called his *sanctuary*, where the divine Majesty dwelleth and the most perfect worship is celebrated with perfect and unceasing devotion—I cannot hesitate to say that *the sanctuary* in its prophetic and evangelical import, signifies *any place* in the Church of God, where his people are allowed to offer to him public and social worship.

To *pollute the sanctuary*, in any period of the Church, means to corrupt the word and ordinances of divine appointment—depart from the purity of God’s precepts and the rules and examples of practical piety. I shall now attempt—

II. To prove that the *Sanctuary* has been, and still is,

polluted by the professed ministers and professing people of God.

The assailants of the Church have been numerous, subtle, and powerful; but their assaults have been permitted as a scourge for delinquency, and like fire, have purified her from dross rather than corrupted her doctrines, order and worship. Attacks from without have operated on the Church like pressure upon an arch. The materials are more compressed, united, and firm, in proportion to the weight on the key-stone. It is the sapping and mining by internal foes, which causes the edifice to totter. It is when the Ministry corrupt the word and ordinances of God, and "the people love to have it so," that the *sanctuary is polluted*.

I. OUR PROPOSITION IS SUSTAINED BY FACTS.

After the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness, Moses and Aaron had soon to contend with Korah, the Levite, and his rebellious company. In this controversy none escaped from the earthquake and fire of God's wrath but those who decidedly listened to the warning voice of Moses and separated themselves from the corrupters of Israel. But the sympathies of the people were excited in favor of the *ruined rebels* and "the congregation murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, *Ye have killed the people of the Lord.*" And "wrath went out from the Lord," and "they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah." Num. xvi.

Passing, at present, the corruptions of Israel, by the devices of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, (1 Kings xii. xiii.) and the conflicts of Elijah with false prophets, under the patronage of Ahab and Jezebel, (1 Kings

xviii. xix.) I will here repeat the testimony of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Micah. "My heart within me is broken because of the prophets; both prophet and priest are profane. I am against them, saith the Lord, that cause the people to err by their lies." "From the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, *peace, peace*, when there is **NO PEACE.**" Jer. vi. xxiii.

"The priests have violated my law and profaned my holy things." Eze. xxii.

"The prophets, that make my people to err, that *bite* with their *teeth* and *cry* **PEACE**; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even declare *war* against him." Mic. iii.

"The prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and *my people love* to have it so." Jer. v.

When the Son of God made his visit to earth to seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to introduce a dispensation by which his *other sheep* which were not of that fold, might be gathered in, did he find the *sanctuary* in a better condition? Did he have to contend *only* with Pagans and Samaritans? Who was it, that greatly erred, "not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God?" Who was it, that made void the law through their traditions? Who were blind leaders of the blind? Who had corrupted prayer, and alms, and every divine institution? Who had turned the very house of prayer into a den of thieves? The teachers of religion! "The people loved to have it so!" And the Son of God, on his errand of mercy to a revolted world, was hissed as a

gluttonous man and a winebibber, reproached as a Sabbath-breaker, persecuted as a colleague of the Prince of devils, crucified as a blasphemer, and sealed up in the grave as an impostor!! And all this, by whom? Ministers of the sanctuary! Priests, Doctors of Divinity, Masters in Israel, and the professed worshippers of Jehovah! "*He came to his own, and his own received him not!*"

When the apostles and disciples commenced the great work of evangelizing the heathen, what classes of men gave *them* the most trouble? I answer not this question by a reference to the falsehood of Annanias and Sapphira, the hypocrisy of Simon Magus, nor the persecutions raised by the unbelieving Jews, who were rejected, broken off from the olive tree; but by asking, who were they who said to the Gentiles, "except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved?" Who taught that the resurrection was past and overthrew the faith of some? Who said there was no resurrection? Who agitated the churches with the false notion that the day of judgment would immediately come? Who had corrupted the Lord's supper till ministers and professors of religion ate and drank damnation to themselves? Who denied the divinity, who rejected the humanity of the Son of God? Who introduced "**DAMNABLE HERESIES,**" and denied the only Lord God? Whom did Paul accuse of preaching another gospel? The answer to all these questions is this: professed ministers of Christianity! O, could angels weep, tears would flow in heaven, at every recollection of this dark picture.

Passing the apostolic age, we come down to a period of the church, the history of which has not been writ-

ten by the pen of inspiration. Yet such facts are attested as to confirm the proposition I am attempting to sustain. If so many errors were zealously propagated in the days of the apostles, might we not expect a great increase after their death? A little more than a century after the disciples of Paul and John and Peter had gone to their graves, the whole Christian world, which was then more extensive than the Roman empire, was agitated from its centre to its circumference, by the heresies of one man. Arius, a Presbyter of the church of Alexandria, denied the *eternal sonship* of Jesus Christ, taught that the Son of God was a created being, the instrument by which God formed the universe, and that the Holy Spirit was not God, but created by the power of the Son. Arius was first condemned as heretical at Alexandria, and afterwards by a general council of 380 Fathers. After long struggles and many vicissitudes, Arius died a sudden and unnatural death, "his bowels gushing out," at the very time when he expected a triumph over truth! But his doctrines did not die. They became the prevailing religion of the East, and spread through Italy, France, and Spain; and also became triumphant in many parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. But they sunk, almost at once, and were not again revived till the beginning of the sixteenth century; and ever since they have, in some form or other, disturbed the church of Christ and impeded the progress of truth.

Arius prepared the way for the grosser errors of Pelagius. These disturbed and distracted the whole Christian world about the close of the fourth century; but the orthodox African Bishops, with the famous Augustin, Bishop of Hippo, at their head, put an *extin-*

guisher on Pelagianism, and it remained for the churches in subsequent ages to be corrupted and disturbed by the same heretical system, modified and rendered plausible by the art of Cassian, a deacon of Constantinople. This heresiarch taught, that "No one is charged with Adam's sin—that Christ died for all men—that grace necessary to salvation is offered to all men—that God does not dispense his grace to one more than another, in consequence of predestination; but is willing to save all men, if they comply with the terms of the gospel; and that man, being born *free*, was *able* to resist the influences of grace, or comply with its suggestions."

These are the leading features of Semi-Pelagianism; a delusive scheme, which, down to the present hour, continues to perplex the church and destroy the souls of men.

The sect, called Unitarians, took their rise in the sixteenth century, and greatly flourished under the name of Socinians. But there is some difference between ancient and modern Socinians, the moderns being more erroneous. Ancient Socinians believed in the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ and admitted that he ought to be worshipped; both of which tenets are rejected by Unitarians. They teach that the Father is *alone* God—that Jesus Christ was a *mere* man—that the Holy Ghost is not a person of the Godhead, but an influence, that is, as I understand them, the directing and modifying power of God. They deny the doctrines of original sin, vicarious suffering, and imputed righteousness. They say that Jesus preached the truth, and set us an example of heroic virtue, by sealing his doctrines with his blood, that our acceptance with God depends on our return to him, by

repentance, like the prodigal, without any atonement or satisfaction being offered or made by the elder brother; and for this return we have competent powers or capabilities. Towards the close of the 15th and in the beginning of the 17th centuries, Arminius introduced a more specious and popular system of error, rendered acceptable to all, who love to establish a righteousness of their own, by extolling the *free grace* of God. Arminianism contains a mixture of wholesome truth and deadly poison. "A general atonement for all mankind, for one man as much as another, a conditional election of grace, natural corruption but not original sin, *imparted* but not *imputed* righteousness, regenerating but not persevering grace," are *potions* of the poison to which I allude.

There are perhaps a thousand modifications of these erroneous systems, which have afflicted and agitated, distracted and divided the church ever since the days of the apostles. I detain not even to name them here; but proceed to ask, who corrupted the visible church, till she became the mother of harlots, holding the *golden cup* full of abominations? The ministers of religion! Who was the disturber of Peace when 380 Fathers were called from their homes and their ministerial work to the general council of Nice? Arius, Presbyter of Alexandria! Who disturbed the whole Christian world with a system so absurd, that nothing saved it from oblivion but the modifications of Cassian, a Constantinople Deacon? Pelagius, the Abbot of Banchor! Who commenced the heresy which has degenerated into Unitarianism? The indefatigable Socinus, father of the Raronian Catechism, and founder of the *Polones Fratres*! Who succeeded in corrupting the Church

with the most specious and popular system ever yet invented, by extolling *free grace*, and proclaiming salvation by works? Arminius, the Pastor at Amsterdam and professor of Divinity at Leyden! And after the reformation in Scotland, who *polluted the Sanctuary*, by the “MYSTERY OF MODERATION,” when the fellow feeling for heresy was so kind and strong, and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith so dishonored, that Ministers accused or suspected of departing from “the form of sound words,” or deviating from sound morals, were extolled to the skies as men of “great genius, vast learning, and uncommon worth,” who must be “supported and protected” at all hazards, while the orthodox were reviled as “*implacable heresy hunters*” and stigmatized as sons of Belial? Ministers, Theological Professors, and Doctors of Divinity!* Who corrupted the Episcopal Church of England, by mutilating her Liturgy, and preaching against her doctrines, while they subscribed her articles of faith and enjoyed their ecclesiastical immunities? The Deacons, Priests, Presbyters, and Bishops!†

Who introduced Arminianism, Arianism, Semipelagianism, and Unitarianism into the Presbyterian Church, by which she has been rent and mangled, and bleeding, in this *great valley*, for the last thirty years? Ordained Presbyterian Ministers, four of whom joined the Shakers, and one continues to this day the apostle of the Western New Lights. Who have denied the *eternal sonship* of Jesus Christ—*original sin*—*vicarious suffering*—and imputed righteousness?—who have asserted conditional election, human ability,

* Witherspoon’s Characteristics.

† Dr. Scott’s account of Unitarianism in the English Church.

and indefinite atonement? Let Cumberland and New School Presbyterians and Professors of Theology from Andover to Lane Seminary answer!

Who have solemnly adopted Standards of Faith, which they have mutilated, impugned, denied? Let the Western Reserve, and Troy, and Oneida, and Philadelphia, and New Orleans, and Carlisle, and Cincinnati respond!

2. *Our proposition is sustained by PROPHECIES, WARNINGS, COMMANDS and COUNSELS, all mingled on the sacred pages.*

Our blessed Lord, in his sermon on the mount, after guarding his disciples against partial, selfish, and rash judgments, speaks in the following impressive manner about false teachers. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." Mat. vii. And on another occasion, "Take heed that no man deceive you—for many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many—behold I have told you before." Mat. xxiv.

Paul said to the Elders of Ephesus, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of YOUR OWN SELVES shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. *Therefore watch——.*" Acts xx.

Peter also sounded the alarm. "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in

damnable heresies—and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom *the way of TRUTH shall be evil spoken of.*” 2 Pet. ii. Paul’s heart was deeply affected, and hence we find him often touching this subject.

“I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and in the same judgment.” “Keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” “There is *one Lord, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one head, one body, one faith, one baptism, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL.*” “Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.” Why? “They serve not the Lord Jesus Christ—and by good words, and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” “I hear that there are divisions among you and I partly believe it.” Why? Because “there must be heresies among you that they which are approved may be made manifest.”

Our blessed Lord, in his intercessory prayer, shows the importance, unity in the faith, and order of the Church.

“Father, I have manifested thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the world—and they have kept thy word—I pray for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they *all* may be ONE.” And how kindly but impressively does the loving and beloved John speak on this subject.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. “For many false prophets are gone out into the world.” And to the elect Lady

he writes, "If there come any unto you, and bring not *this doctrine*, [the doctrine of Christ,] receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Why this injunction to a benevolent female? Because "Many deceivers are entered into the world," who went out from us, and he that biddeth a deceiver God speed "is partaker of his evil deeds." Jude also speaks kindly but impressively.

"Beloved, contend earnestly for *the faith* once delivered to the saints." Why? Because "there are certain men crept in unawares, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

I have omitted the predictions and warnings respecting that tyrannical, idolatrous, and intolerant *power Antichrist*, as it is a matter yet in debate between Papists and Protestants, whether that domination is to be looked for *in* or *out* of the Church. But the following passages will show how the head of the Church, abhors false doctrine. "Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan." "I have a few things against thee, thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam—so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants."

Thus it is evident that false doctrine, misdeeds, false profession; professing one thing when you are another, and lax discipline, are highly offensive to Jesus Christ.

I feel now prepared to say, that, if *facts*, numerous, well attested, palpable, and undeniable—if predictions and *warnings*, unequivocal—if injunctions, clear, defi-

nite, solemn, and pointed—if counsels, kind, authoritative and persuasive, be sufficient to prove any point in debate, then it is clearly shown that ministers in the church of God and God's professing people, have, from age to age, *polluted* the SANCTUARY, corrupted the word, institutions, discipline, and worship of God's house!

It seems proper here to say, that all the sentiments, systems, and practices, which I have condemned, are thus sentenced *only* on the *supposition* that the *system* which I have embraced is *true*; and that I am earnest in my profession of that system. For if the doctrines, ordinances, government, and discipline of the Presbyterian church be unscriptural, repugnant to the doctrine and order of the church of Jesus Christ, then the tables are turned against me, and I am heretical. In this discourse I have assumed, and not attempted to prove, the truth of the Presbyterian system, as expressed in the standards of the church. At the same time, the conduct of men can never be justified, who profess to believe this system and preach another gospel.

I trust I shall not exhaust your patience, by asking your attention to some closing remarks.

1. Our Lord, and his prophets and apostles considered every part of God's revelation as important and of solemn obligation.

On this subject, the Old and New Testaments speak the same language. "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him—*add* thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Prov. xxx.

"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall *add* unto him the plagues that

are written in this book: and if any man shall *take away* from the words of the book of this prophecy; God shall *take away* his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book." Rev. xxii. If it be true that "man shall not live by bread alone but by *every word* of God;" if "things revealed belong to us and our children that we may do all the words of this law; if "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul"—"the testimony of the Lord sure, making wise the simple"—"the statutes of the Lord right, rejoicing the heart"—"the commandments of the Lord pure, enlightening the eyes"—and "the judgments of the Lord true and righteous altogether;" then it may be *confidently* said, that the popular notion, which we often hear from the pulpit, that some *revealed* and *inspired* TRUTHS are *unimportant* and *non-essential* articles of faith, **MUST BE FALSE.** If there be any thing clearly a matter of *indifference*, let "the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please themselves;" but our Lord will undoubtedly frown on that man who shall "break *one* of the *least* of his commandments, and teach men so to do."

2. Our Lord and the inspired writers never *grant* nor *intimate* that the church of God cannot be of "one mind and one judgment." They always assume the fact that God has spoken nothing in vain, and that his revealed will cannot be mutilated nor enlarged, nor wrested nor denied, nor misinterpreted with impunity. They never tell us about "the facts of religion being one thing and the philosophy of these facts another." They never talk about the "large space of debateable ground lying between the borders of orthodoxy and the undefined limits of heresy." But they evidently teach that the

smallest departure from truth is error. They warn us against *worldly wisdom, vain philosophy, heresy and divisions*, and they tell us of *deceitful works*. They tell us that “all Christ’s people are taught of God,” and “if any man shall do his will he shall know of the doctrine,” and they beseech and command “all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus, to be of the same mind—to speak the same things, and to be perfectly joined together in the same judgment.” They urge the church to unanimity as one body, and fix an indelible mark of disgrace on the man who causes divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines they had taught. Nay, they would not spare even an angel from Heaven, if he preached another Gospel.

Every Christian, and especially every minister ought to say to the Head of the Church as David did to Jehovah, “Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto *all thy commandments*.” Let no one mistake me. I mean not to affirm that a person must know “all that has been written by inspiration of God” before he can be saved, or before he is fit to teach others, as far as he has learned himself; but what I affirm is, that whether a person be a babe, a youth, or a father in Christ—whether he be weak or strong in the faith—such is his simple reliance on God’s word, such his humility, such his teachable, childlike disposition, if he be united to Christ and led by the Holy Spirit of grace and truth, that so far as he *does know*, he speaks and acts in conformity with God’s revealed will, and where he *does not know* he has sufficient humility and candor to confess his ignorance; waiting at wisdom’s door, in the use of appointed means, that he may grow in knowledge and grace more and more to a perfect stature,

3. I beg your attention to the responsibility of those who are set apart for the express purpose of conducting others to Heaven.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” “But how can they hear without a preacher?”

A large majority of the human family are in such circumstances that if ever they arrive at Heaven, they must be guided there by a living ministry on earth. Multitudes cannot read, and multitudes more, from their abject circumstances and servile employments, have no time allowed them to search the Scriptures; while many, very many, who can read and might have time, are so little cultivated, possess so little mental discipline, they *cannot* distinguish between sophistry and argument, nor discern the wolf in sheep’s clothing. All these multitudes must and do place themselves under some man or set of men as their scriptural guides, and they who lead them are responsible for their souls. “If a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work;” but, if he assume this office, or others invest him with it, while he is destitute of the qualifications belonging to the office, his own soul, and all who receive him as a spiritual guide, are put in jeopardy. “If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch.” The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

No wonder Moses, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah shrunk from the responsible stations assigned them. No wonder Paul cried out in view of responsibility, “who is sufficient for these things?” and so often said, “brethren, pray for us.”

4. The true ministers of Christ must not be discouraged when false teachers are numerous and popular.

When the magicians with their enchantments were

numerous and popular at the court of Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron stood firm, and left the time and manner of "truth's triumph" to the God of Israel. When the false prophets were more than eight hundred to one, Elijah put them to a test which proved their overthrow. And when Paul had perils among false brethren; when those turned against him who once would have plucked out their own eyes for his sake; when all Asia forsook him; and no man stood with him at his first answer before Nero; none of these things moved him. He could say, "the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever."

Let no man who is *sound in the faith* and *apt to teach* be discouraged when false teachers are multiplied, nor when they are surrounded and applauded by gaping crowds of men of corrupt minds. But let them watch and pray, and teach, and warn, night and day, with tears.

6. Seeing there is but *ONE true religion*, but *ONE right way*, but *one Lord*, *one faith*, *one baptism*; and as it is true that there are *many deceivers*, who shall *deceive MANY*; you are ready to ask me with deep emotion and solemn interest, what shall we do? One answer is given to all. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and *lean not to thine own understanding*. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." "Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil"—it shall be the life, and health, and strength of thy soul. Prov. iii.

In addition to this general answer, I say, to you who cannot investigate for yourselves, you must either neglect religion and perish, or you must put yourselves under the direction and become the companions of those whom you believe to be the ministers and people of the Most High God.

Look! O earnestly look to God for direction; for if you are taught, like the centurion, by a Peter, who will tell you words by which you and your house may be saved; or, like the eunuch, by a Philip, who will preach Jesus; or, like Lydia, by a Paul, who will glory in nothing but the cross of Christ; you are safe. Go on your way rejoicing; but if you misplace your confidence, if you choose blind guides, you are ruined, lost forever.

To them who can examine for themselves I say, "Search the Scriptures," in prayer, in simple dependence on heavenly wisdom. Interpret scripture by scripture, and not by art and man's device. "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, false teachers, should not a people seek unto their God? To the *law* and to the *testimony*: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii.

To such as bear rule in God's house I say, "Try the spirits, whether they be of God." If any profess not to walk with us, not to belong to our denomination, "Let them alone." If they do good, hinder them not; but rejoice. If they do evil, be not partakers. To their own Master they stand or fall. They have made their election; so have you. Your choice is made for eternity; and the judgment day will disclose the right and the wrong. Every sect must abide by their own choice.

If any profess to walk with us, if they say they are Presbyterians, belonging to or under the care of the Gen. Assembly, and cause divisions and contentions by departing from our standards, forsaking our institutions, and deceiving and unsettling the hearts of the simple and unwary; I beseech you, brethren, mark them as false brethren, and avoid them. This you can do. This is the least you ought to do when you have not official strength to inflict upon them deserved rebuke or merited suspension.

I feel that I stand before you in solemn and trying circumstances. If I am true and faithful, and you neglect the great salvation, I shall save my own soul; but you must perish. If I am a blind guide, and you are led by my false counsel, we must perish together. Such is the state of the Presbyterian church *now*, that no man can be indifferent, no tongue can be silent, no hand idle. It remains yet to be seen whether we, as the *polluted sanctuary* of God, shall be *cleansed*, or whether, when the *sanctuary* is cleansed, we shall be swept away with "the besom of destruction." *Solemn thought!*

In our context Jehovah says, "My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn the people to a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, and serve him with ONE CONSENT." Happy unanimity. But who can bear the "fire of his jealousy?" "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will *burn up the chaff* with UNQUENCHABLE FIRE."

SERMON XVI.

BY THE REV. JOSHUA L. WILSON, D. D.

THE SANCTUARY CLEANSED.

And he said unto me, 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*' DAN. viii. 14.

DANIEL, one of the Lord's prophets, saw clearly and greatly lamented the pollutions of the sanctuary. The desolations of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the captivity of the Lord's people were ever present to his thoughts, as the dreadful effects of corrupting the worship of God, and presented before him a dark emblem of long desolations, in after ages, when the "holy city should be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, forty and two prophetic months."† The calamities then endured and those disclosed to him in the visions of God, were subjects of his solemn meditation, anxious inquiry, deep humiliation, and fervent prayers.

His investigations were not in vain; his prayers were not unanswered. And when he discovered 'by books,' that the end of the Babylonish captivity was near, he was *consoled*, in relation to distant events, around which prophecy had cast her mysterious mantle, by the kind assurance that he should rest and stand in his "lot at the end of those days." Dan. ix. 2, 3; xii. 13.

* For the import of the term sanctuary, and its pollutions, see the foregoing discourse.

† Rev. xi. 2, 3; xiii. 5, 7. 1260 years.

That the *sanctuary* means the church of God, or visible kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, on earth; that the church has been greatly corrupted in all ages, by her own professed ministers and members; and that her purification will take place at the time appointed by Jehovah, are not now matters of discussion. The text places before us plainly two subjects of inquiry.

I. What is implied in the declaration, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed?"

II. When shall this cleansing be accomplished?

I. What is implied in the declaration, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed?"

The inspired writers have cherished in the bosom of the church an expectation, that at some period, remote from their times, she shall enjoy a season of transcendent purity, peace, and prosperity on earth.

Solomon, in his Song of Songs, makes this beautiful and sublime inquiry concerning the church,—“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” Cant. vi. 10. And David had said before, speaking of Messiah’s kingdom, “There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth; his name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.” Ps. lxxii. 16, 17.

The prophet Isaiah closes a touching description of the triumphs of the church, with this remarkable declaration: “Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the

Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Isa. xxx. 26.

And again, speaking of the *villany*, and *iniquity*, and *hypocrisy*, and "ERROR AGAINST THE LORD," which had caused the land to be overrun with thorns and briers, and the palaces to be forsaken, he declared that this state of things should continue "until the Spirit be poured upon *us* from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest; then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Isa. xxxii. 15, 16, 17. And when it is foretold that venomous animals shall become harmless, and domestic cattle lie down in safety with beasts of prey, the delightful picture of *peace* receives the finishing touch of the divine pencil with this inimitable delineation: "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." Isa. xi. 9. And the Lord said by the prophet Malachi, "From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen; saith the Lord of Hosts." Mal. i. 11.

We are also taught to expect *this time of blessedness*, in the kingdom of our Lord, AFTER the *cleansing* of the sanctuary. Nebuchadnezzar's dream, embracing the existence, duration, and destruction of a great, bright, and terrible image, commenced with the head of gold, and ended with the stone cut out of the mountain, with-

out hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth—meaning a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, which should triumph over all opposition, and stand forever. Dan. ii. Daniel's vision of the four beasts and little horn ends in the people of the saints of the Most High possessing this kingdom. Dan. vii. 27. His vision of "THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH," including the overthrow of Persia, Greece, Egypt, and Syria, and the hopeless, helpless end of the "*wilful king*,"—explained by some to mean Napoleon, ends in the time of BLESSEDNESS. [See Cooper's Crisis, and Dan. x. 21; xi. 36—45; xii. 12.]

The vision of the ram and he-goat ends in the cleansing of the *Sanctuary*. Dan. viii. All these visions direct the eye of faith down through the vista of time, to one happy, grand, and glorious result—"THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD."

The prophecies of Ezekiel respecting the judgments of God upon Gog, terminate in this consolation: "Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Eze. xxxix. 29.

Joel finishes his description of the return of the Jews and the gathering of all nations, with this interesting assurance: "So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." Joel iii. 17. And Zechariah closes his prediction of God's judgments upon them, who oppose his people, with this cheering assurance: "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the

altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be *holiness unto the Lord of Hosts*, and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts." Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

That this period of predicted glory to the church, is yet future; that many believe it will never come; that the sanctuary was greatly polluted in the days of the prophets, of Christ, and of his apostles; that corruptions have been multiplied and greatly increased, by the "Mystery of iniquity," which then began to work, (2 Tim. ii. 7.) and that "*errors against the Lord*" are rapidly spreading at the present hour; are facts *undenied* and **UNDENIABLE**. But what said the second Elijah concerning *him* who must increase, until his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth?" John iii. 30; Zech. ix. 10. "He that cometh after me is mightier than I; whose *fan* is in his hand, and he will thoroughly *purge* his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Mat. iii. 11, 12. And what said the Master himself? "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and *them* which *do* iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear." Mat. xiii. 41, 42, 43. This means, as Christ tells us, "the end of the world," and no doubt *includes* the grand and public separation of the wicked from the righteous, at the day of Judgment; yet it certainly does not *exclude* that predicted purifying process by which the church shall gain a righteous triumph

over the whole earth; and it affords *us* a clue, by which we may arrive at a correct solution of the question before us. I say then, the cleansing of the sanctuary means the removal, from Christ's kingdom, of all *things that offend*. I am not here speaking of the conversion of the Jews, nor of the "fulness of the Gentiles," nor of the destruction of Mahometans, nor of the ruin of infidels. I am speaking of the purification of the visible church of God; of those, and those *only*, who in some way belong to that great visible, mixed, diversified society, denominated Christian—the Christian world—the church catholic. This is *the sanctuary polluted*. This must be cleansed before the day of blessedness.

I. THE MINISTRY MUST BE PURIFIED.

The ministers of religion have been the first and most efficient agents in corrupting the church; and they must be the first subjects of reformation. Jehovah of hosts said by his servant Malachi, "The Lord shall suddenly come to his temple! But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall *purify* the sons of LEVI,"—the appointed ministers of the sanctuary; "and *purge them*, as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. iii. 1—3. [See Pool and Scott on this passage.] This fiery trial shall burn up those who corrupt the word and worship of God, and thoroughly purify such as are called of God to minister immediately in the services of the Christian church. They shall be vessels of honor, purified *indeed* for holy employments, offering "unto the LORD an offering in

righteousness; who can say in truth, "We are not as **MANY** who corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, speak we in Christ." 2 Cor. ii. 17. No doubt there have been some "good men and *true*," in every period of the church. But the number has hitherto been small, compared with the "**MANY** who *corrupt* the word of God." If the church was preserved by the salt and directed by the light of grace, when she had but **ONE true prophet**, and *only seven thousand true worshippers*, what will be her increase and blessedness when her multiplied ministers shall all offer instruction, prayer, praise, and alms, in truth, purity, righteousness, and peace? Then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by Isaiah, "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations.————Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of our God." Isa. lxi. 4—6.

Then shall be sung in Zion, this song: "We will go into his tabernacles; we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength; let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy." Ps. cxxxii. 7—9.

As the words of the **PURE** are pleasant, and when fitly spoken, are like *apples of gold in pictures of silver*, we may confidently expect that, in the cleansing of the sanctuary, the Lord will fulfil to his Church that which he promised by his servant Zephaniah: "I will turn to the people a *pure language*, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to *serve him with ONE CONSENT*." Zeph. iii. 9. What a delightful and splendid exhibition shall be made in the *sanctuary* when "a live coal from the altar" shall be laid upon every mouth, and it shall be said to every minister of reconciliation, "Lo,

this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged!" Is. vi. 6, 7. Zion's watchmen shall no longer be *blind*, nor dumb, nor greedy; no shepherds shall remain in her that cannot understand. Their feet shall be beautiful upon the mountains, because they publish salvation. They 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." Is. lvi. 10, 11. Com. ch. lii. 7, 8. As every vessel in the Lord's house and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy, (Zech. xiv. 20, 21,) so all who minister in holy things shall be holy—"a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by JESUS CHRIST. I Pet. ii. 5.

2. THE CHURCH SHALL BE PURIFIED IN HER ARTICLES OF FAITH.

When the sons of Levi are purified, all radical errors must be blotted out from church creeds. When there is *one Lord* and his name *One*, acknowledged and obeyed by *all* who "*minister and serve the altar*," there must be *one system of faith* and *one mode* of Christian administration. Where this "*one faith*" is now to be found among church creeds which shall stand the fiery trial of purgation, and be subject to the fewest razures, it is not my prerogative to decide. I have identified my name and interests with a defined and published system, by which I must stand or fall. I feel confident that if I have embraced and taught a system not sustained by the word of God, I am utterly undone. Until I can see a better way, I must honestly pursue that which I have chosen, should it land me in perdition. I know "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death." Prov. xiv. 12.

xvi. 25. And I know also that a system *given* by “inspiration of God,” to which none can add, from which none can take away, with impunity—a system *made profitable* for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness—a system *designed* by infinite wisdom to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, cannot possibly contain adverse schemes of doctrine and contrarieties in modes of worship, ordinances, and discipline. Men may call it liberality, or charity, or what name they please, to suppose that all doctrinal theories and practical administrations under the Christian name, are alike safe, provided their votaries be sincere; but, in the end, they will find multitudes destroyed by deriving hope from false systems and vain theories. Can it be *possible* that Protestants and Papists, Trinitarians and Unitarians, all varieties of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, High and Low Churchmen and Episcopalians, all kinds of Methodists and the endless grades of Baptists, can *all* stand, when the sanctuary shall be cleansed? Without stopping now to name hundreds of sects, whose systems are more absurd, and some of them more impious, than any I have mentioned, I ask *emphatically* can *any two* of the whole number stand, when “every thing that offends” shall be removed from the sanctuary? particularly when a *corrupt* ministry and all *false* creeds are utterly destroyed? No, no! is the only consistent answer to this question. How solemn is the thought that *He* whose *fan* is in his hands “*will thoroughly PURGE HIS FLOOR!*”

3. EVERY CHURCH MEMBER WILL KNOW, LOVE, AND OBEY THE TRUTH.

When the Sanctuary is cleansed, the ministry of

reconciliation being all “pastors after God’s own heart,” all feeding his flock with knowledge and understanding—all false articles of faith being expunged, and all erroneous modes of worship abandoned—a corresponding improvement must take place in the visible holiness of Zion’s citizens. It is written, “I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy gates praise——*Thy people also shall be all righteous.*”* Our attention is called to this delightful prospect by a prefatory announcement, no less cheering. “The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit which is upon thee and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed; nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever.” Isa. lix. 20, 21. And the prediction closes with this divine consolation—“Thy people shall be *all righteous*; they shall inherit the land forever, *the branch of MY PLANTING, the work of MY HANDS, that I MAY BE GLORIFIED.* A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will *hasten* it in his time.”† The proof texts

* Isa. lix. 17—22. If this prediction relates to the restoration of the Jews and the salvation of the Gentiles; still it proves the point before us, that the church must be pure and peaceable, greatly improved in practical piety, when the Sanctuary is cleansed. Read the 60th chapter through and see.

† Isa. lix. 21, 22. Compare chap. iv. and lii. 1. on the blessedness of Christ’s kingdom. There will then be no dispute about who does the work.

on this animating subject are numerous; but I shall adduce only one or two more. Paul tells us that "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25—27. And Peter says, to the church—"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 his marvellous light." I Pet. ii. 9. From these and similar passages, we may confidently expect, that, when *the sanctuary is cleansed*, and the people are *all righteous*, and all *know the Lord*, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them" the church will *do whatsoever she hath "learned and received, and heard, and seen"* by the *purified ministry of reconciliation*, and that whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, will be themes of meditation, topics of discourse, and matters of practice, throughout the whole church.*

4. *Whilst the purifying process is advancing, and shortly before the work is completed, we are taught to expect A DAY OF UNCOMMON TROUBLE!*

Before Isaiah was permitted to dip the pencil of peace in the rainbow of mercy, he was commanded to brandish the forked lightnings and hurl the thunders of heaven. "None calleth for justice nor pleadeth for truth—they hatch cockatrice eggs and weave the spider's web—transgression is multiplied in lying against

* Jer. xxxi. 31—34. Com. Heb. viii. 11. and Phil. iv. 8, 9.

the Lord and departing from our God—we stumble at noon day as in the night—we roar like bears and mourn sore like doves—and judgment is turned away back, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street and equity cannot enter, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment, and he saw there was no man and wondered there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him; for he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmit of salvation upon his head; and he put on the *garments of VENGEANCE for clothing*, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, FURY to his *adversaries*, RECOMPENSE to his *enemies*.” Isa. lix.

When Jeremiah was led, by the Holy Ghost, with joy to predict the latter day glory of Immanuel’s kingdom, he was required also to perform the painful duty of declaring the righteous judgments of God. “And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them and he shall approach unto me, saith the Lord; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” But—“BEHOLD! the *whirlwind* of the Lord goeth forth with *fury*, a *continued WHIRLWIND*; it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: IN THE LATTER DAYS ye shall consider it.” Jer. xxx.

Zechariah has declared that in the period of the church’s prosperity, “The Lord shall be king over all

the earth. In *that day* there shall be *one* Lord and his name *ONE*." But in the same breath he denounced the judgments of God, and predicted a day of unprecedented trouble. "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people, that have fought against Jerusalem—their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in *that day*, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them." Zech. xiv.

When Malachi foretold the purification of the ministry and the pleasant offering of God's people "in righteousness," he recorded also Jehovah's declaration of judgment. "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorceress and against the adulteress, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn away the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts." "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. iii. 5. iv. 1.

Our blessed Lord having predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews among all nations, (Luke xxi. 20—24,) carried the minds of his disciples forward to a day of his "*power* and **GREAT GLORY**." In this connexion he told them of "distress of nations" upon the earth, "with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for

fear, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken;" and he added, "Verily I say unto you, this *generation* shall not pass away till all be fulfilled."*

The progeny or race of the Jews has been so wonderfully preserved—they *have not passed away*, notwithstanding their dispersion has continued for nearly eighteen hundred years. We believe that "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but Christ's words shall not pass away."

Since the destruction of the old world by water, great calamities have taken place, dreadful evils have been endured. They have been occasioned by wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences, and a few signal, *supernatural* displays of divine vengeance. But all these have been local, partial, and circumscribed, in comparison of the *distresses* which are predicted in connexion with the cleansing of the sanctuary. These will be unparalleled in extent and diversity, but short in duration.

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." "Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: But the transgressors shall fall therein." Dan. xii. 1. 10. and Hosea xiv. 9. I now proceed to enquire—

II. *When shall the sanctuary be cleansed?*

The time is specified in our text. "And he said unto me *until two thousand and three hundred days*, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

* Luke xxi. 25--33. *Generation*--Gr. *genea*; Lat. *progenies*; Eng. progeny, or race.

In an attempt to ascertain the beginning and end of these *prophetic days*, it is necessary to make a prophetic computation, counting "a day for a year." Ezek. iv. 6. The period, then, is 2300 Jewish years, each year containing 360 natural days, and of course the conclusion of the calculation will differ from our dates just as much as the Scripture date differs from the common or vulgar chronology. Besides this long period of 2300 years, the visions of Daniel disclose two other periods of time, which are very remarkable. "Seventy weeks" or 490 years, (Dan. ix. 24.) and "a time and times and the dividing of time," (Dan. vii. 25,) or 1260 years. One week is 7 days, and 70 weeks are 7 times 70 days, make 490 days or years. "A time, and times and half a time," or "the dividing of time" is a period of "a thousand two hundred and three score days," that is, 1250 years. Rev. xii. compare the 6th and 14th verses. This period is also called "forty and two months." Com. Dan. xii. 7, with Rev. xii. 2. Forty two months of thirty days each, Jewish time, are 42 times 30—1260 Jewish years. These two shorter periods of "seventy weeks" (490 years) and "a time and times and the dividing of time," (1260 years,) are, as I shall show, comprehended in the long period of "two thousand and three hundred days" (years.) The "seventy weeks" being the beginning, and the "time, times and a half," the end, leaving a middle period of 550 years from the end of the 70 weeks, till the beginning of the forty-two months—that is, as I understand it, from the time of the calling of the Gentiles till the commencement of the reign of Antichrist. If this be correct, the downfall of Antichrist will be complete when the sanctuary is cleansed.

Having thus premised, or given my method of computation, I undertake to show—That Daniel's "70 weeks" is the beginning or first part of the "2300 days," allotted for cleansing the sanctuary; that Daniel's "time, times, and a half" is the last or concluding part of the "2300 days;" that the "70 weeks" commenced 453 years before the birth of Christ and ended in A. D. 37; that the "time, times, and dividing of time" or 1260 years began in A. D. 587 and shall end with the termination of the "2300 days" or years, in 1847.*

When the angel Gabriel explained this vision to Daniel, he gave the following statement. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." Dan. ix. 24. Whatever difficulty any may have found in explaining this verse, all evangelical commentators must agree in these points of interpretation; that within 490 years from a date not stated here, Messiah, the Most Holy, should *come*, and by means of an effectual offering for sin, supersede the legal sacrifices and terminate the Jewish dispensation. "*Thy people and thy*

* It is not a little remarkable, that William C. Davis, of South Carolina, Th. R. Robertson, of Indiana, and Wolf, the Jewish Missionary, in calculating the times specified in the Books of Dan. and Rev. all have fixed the end of the 2300 days, in 1847. Mr. Davis, thought this would be the "commencement of the Millennium;" Mr. Robertson viewed it as "the downfall of the Pope;" and Mr. Wolf confidently expected "Christ's personal appearance in Jerusalem." How far these men were indebted to each other, I cannot tell. I am indebted to them all—not for the expectations mentioned, but for pointing out a clue by which I can arrive at certainty as to the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

holy city" must mean the Jewish church. "To finish the transgression and make an end of sin," or as Gabriel explained it, "to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness," means the atonement of the cross. "To seal up the vision and prophecy" means to accomplish and fulfil what was written in the law and prophets concerning Messiah. "To anoint the Most Holy or Holy of Holies;" this was the name of the Sanctuary or inner part of the temple, a pattern of heaven, into which Christ entered when he had offered himself a sacrifice for sin, and sprinkled the most holy place with his own blood. The name Most Holy, or Holy of Holies is here properly given to Messiah, who was greater than the Temple, because in him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead, and God anointed him: Christ is God's holy and anointed one.

Thus we plainly see that the "seventy weeks" were to continue till the close of the Jewish dispensation and no longer.

The angel having given this general statement, proceeded to particulars, and divided the 70 weeks into three parts. "Know therefore and understand, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build (Heb. *build again*) Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, SEVEN WEEKS (49 years) and THREE SCORE AND TWO WEEKS, (434 years,) and *after* 62 weeks shall Messiah be cut off; and he shall confirm the covenant with many, *for* (during) ONE WEEK (7 years) and in the *midst* (middle) of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," (Dan. ix. 25, 26, 27,) that is, supersede the legal dispensation by the one offering of himself on the cross. Let us note the specifications of the angel in the order of time.

	<i>years.</i>
Part 1. <i>Seven weeks</i> , to build again Jerusalem,	49
“ 2. <i>Sixty-two weeks</i> , till the public inauguration of Messiah,	434
“ 3. One week, Messiah cut off in the midst,	7
Total, <i>Seventy weeks</i> ,	490

We know that Jerusalem was built again in 49 years, (seven weeks,) “the street and the wall,” “even in troublous times,” as the angel said.*

Messiah was publicly inaugurated when he was 30 years old, (Luke iii. 23.) 434 years (62 weeks) after the rebuilding took place.

In the middle of the *one week* or last 7 years which remained of the whole 70 weeks, Messiah was cut off by the death of the cross. The last half of this week was spent by the apostles and others in preaching the gospel to the Jews *only*, (Acts viii. 4. com. xi. 19.) who were first converted to Christianity; and thus, by the public ministry of Christ, during three years and a half, by his death at that predicted period, and by the preaching of the gospel to the Jews, the remainder of the week, three years and a half, “beginning at Jerusalem,” (Luke. xxiv. 47.) Messiah “confirmed the covenant with *many*† for *one week*,” which evidently ended in A. D. 37. This ended the Jewish dispensation, and

* Vide Ezra and Nehemiah. The Jews said 46 years, John xi. 20; but they must, if they spoke accurately, have left out the years in which the work was hindered by Artaxerxes, Ezra, iv. 21, 24.

† Acts. xxi. 20. Thou seest, brother, how *many thousands* of Jews there are who believe. Gr. *posai muriades*; Lat. *quot decem millia*; Eng. how many myriads or tens of thousands. Com. Acts ii. 41—there were added three thousand—iv. 4. Many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand, vi. 7. And the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

the gospel was preached to the Gentiles.* And then followed what was stated by Gabriel, (Dan. ix. 26, 27,) *the people of a prince should come for the destruction of Jerusalem, and bear down all before them, like a deluge of waters; for unto the end desolations were determined.*

That the 70 weeks was the beginning of the 2300 days, is evident, 1st. Because the angel gave the explanation of these weeks as a clue to the interpretation of the whole vision, which was to extend till the cleansing of the sanctuary. 2. Because these 70 weeks or 490 years, closing three years and a half after the death of Christ, must have commenced 453 years before his birth; this, of course, included the Grecian empire, next to the Persian, and a considerable part of the Roman, which was in its glory in the time of our Saviour, Augustus Cæsar being on the throne of the empire. So that the design of introducing the 70 weeks was to designate the first part of the vision.

3. Because the angel considered both as one vision, (V. 26.) “And the vision of the evening and of the morning, which was told, is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision: for it shall be for many days.”

Now, that “the time, times and a half,” or 42 months, making 1260 years, was the end of the vision, is evident from these facts: that the antichristian power, which should arise after the ten kingdoms of the fourth beast, should begin and end with this period of 1260 years; that his dominion, at this appointed time, should be consumed and destroyed; “and the kingdom and do-

* See the conversion of Saul to be the apostle of the Gentiles, Acts ix. Peter preaching to Cornelius, Acts x; and the address of Paul and Barnabas to the Jews. Acts xiii. 46, 47.

minion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," (Dan. vii. 23—27;) so that it is perfectly manifest that the end of Antichrist (whoever he be) and the end of the cleansing of the sanctuary occur at the same time.

Here then is the grand clue. 1. The whole vision contains 2300 years. 2. It is impossible, by the most accurate dates we have in history, to find the beginning of those years, nor can we tell by our best chronological tables, whether the "commandment," mentioned, "to build again Jerusalem," was the decree of Cyrus, Darius, or Artaxerxes; all of which are recorded by Ezra. Ezra i. 1—4; vi. 8—12; vii. 11—15. But, 3. We have found that the 70 weeks or 490 years ended A. D. 37. 4. We can now calculate exactly, either backward or forward, and so form an intermediate point, ascertain with mathematical exactness, both the beginning and the end. 5. By this method we find precisely the times of the rise and fall of Antichrist. 6. This will demonstrate that the sanctuary shall be cleansed when Antichrist goes to perdition.

Now see the calculation.

TABLE I.

	<i>years.</i>
Daniel's 70 weeks, each 7 days, a day for a year,	490
These ended A. D. 37: Messiah being inaugurated A. D. 30; cut off in the middle of the last week, A. D. 33½; the gospel preached to the Jews 3½ years—end the Jewish dispensation, A. D.	37
Subtract 37 from 490—leaves	453
before the Christian era; the time of the decree to build again Jerusalem.	
Subtract 453 from 2300, the whole time of the vision, and you have the end A. D.	1847
From 1847, the end of the vision, subtract a "time, times and a half," 1260, the period marked for the reign of Antichrist, and you have the beginning of his reign, A. D.	587

TABLE II.

	<i>years.</i>
From the first of the vision to the birth of Christ,	453
From the birth of Christ to the beginning of the reign of Antichrist,	587
Antichrist reigns 42 months, and falls,	1260
These added make the whole time of the vision	2300

From the above tables, you see that “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,” to the birth of Christ, were 453 years. From the birth of Christ to the end of the Jewish dispensation and the calling of the Gentiles, were 37 years, which closed Daniel’s 70 weeks or 490 years. From the birth of Christ to the beginning of the reign of Antichrist, 587 years; from thence to his downfall, 1260; which brings the overthrow of Antichrist and the cleansing of the sanctuary to the same point of time, A. D. 1847. This is according to the scripture date, and may vary a year or two from the vulgar date; but as it rests on the correct account of the Bible, it may be relied on as authentic. We must not conclude that the Bible has given us descriptions and numbers for nothing. If any think that to calculate is arrogant, let him look at the *data* fairly, and not hastily suppose that things cannot be known because great and good men have made mistakes. Daniel was directed to “go his way and rest,” (Dan. xii. 13;) but before the 70 weeks expired, many anxiously expected the Lord to come *suddenly* to his temple, (Mal. iii. 1;) and when Messiah, *in the midst of the last week*, by his death, confirmed the covenant, and caused “the sacrifice and oblation to cease,” the church had a clue by which she might have calculated, with perfect precision, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the rise and fall of Antichrist.

There is an obvious reason why the cleansing of the sanctuary and the downfall of Antichrist form a synchronism. We are not taught to look for Antichrist *out of* the church, but *in the church, sitting in the temple of God.* 2 Thes. ii. 4. His distinguishing features are *hypocrisy, tyranny, idolatry, and intolerance.* Dan. vii. 21. 25; Rev. xix. 20. This antichristian power *was to rise* within the limits of the Roman empire, after pagan Rome was taken out of the way, (Dan. vii. 24; com. 2 Thes. ii. 7;) *was to arise* within the church, with all "deceivableness of unrighteousness," 2 Thes. ii. 10;) and *was to fix* the seat of ecclesiastical domination in the city of Rome. Rev. xvii. 9. 18, and Hurd on the prophecies, Sec. vii. viii. Boston ed., 1809.

We know that such a power *did arise.* After the downfall of the Western Empire, the Bishop of Rome reared his head, and amidst the ruins of that mighty power, found means to advance himself into the sovereignty of Rome, and of the Christian world; fixing his residence, not in the "chair of St. Peter," but in the very seat and throne of the Cæsars.

The papal power rose to its height in the 11th century, when Berengarius, a man of note, called the Church of Rome *the seat of Satan*, an apocalyptic name of Antichrist. In the preceding century, Arnulphus, Bishop of Orleans, speaking of John XV., who then governed the church of Rome, appealed to the whole council in these words: "What think ye, Rev. Fathers, of this man, seated on a lofty throne, and shining in purple and gold? Whom do ye account him to be? Surely, if destitute of charity, and puffed up with the pride of science only, HE IS ANTICHRIST, sitting in the

temple of God, and showing himself that he is God." Pascal II. sat upon the papal throne, in the beginning of the 12th century; at which time the marks of Antichrist were so visible, that St. Bernard, the most eminent person of that age, said, that "The beast of the apocalypse had seated himself in the chair of St. Peter."*

You all know the opinions of the Reformers on this subject; and you all must see, that as Antichrist took his rise and has continued his domination in the church, pretending to be the successor of Peter, and the Vicar of Christ, the cleansing of the sanctuary is not accomplished till the downfall of Antichrist is complete. This long looked-for period is just at hand. This event, so long the subject of prophecy and promise, of prayer and expectation, must take place within a period less than twenty years.† I make allowance for the difference between the Bible dates and the vulgar dates.

And now, with godly fear, and an unshaken faith in the scriptures of truth, I say, in the name of Christ, to the church, WATCH and PRAY, lest that day come upon you as a snare. Luke xxi. 34—36.

Some will say, "the time is too short. There is too much yet to be done before the sanctuary is cleansed. Popery, with all its errors, superstitions, impieties, and horrors, to be destroyed! Intemperance, Sabbath-break-

* Hurd, pp. 184, 185. St. Bernard was under a mistake. Peter was never at Rome. See an unanswered and unanswerable argument on this point, published in the PANDECT, vol. i. 1828—9. See also Paul's epistle to the Romans, ch. xvi., in which he sends his love to every body but Peter. If Peter had been Bishop of Rome, would Paul have overlooked him?

† 14 years, if the Bible date and the vulgar date agreed.

ing, slavery, freemasonry, idolatry, war, and all erroneous creeds to be eradicated and blotted from the church of God! Oh! it cannot be done in twenty, no, not in fifty years!" No, my brethren, if these were works for man to accomplish, it could never be done. But Jehovah has said, "I the Lord will hasten it in his time." Isa. lx. 21, 22. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Gen. xviii. 14. Remember that haughty unbeliever who fell in the gate of Samaria! 2 Kings vii. 2. 17. 20. Behold! See! Shall not the church of Jesus Christ be suddenly surprised with his fiery indignation against his enemies, and the smiles of his countenance on all his friends! But I must remind you that the angel discovered to Daniel two other periods *after* the cleansing of the sanctuary, of great importance to the church. The first is 1290 days or years from the time that "the abomination that maketh desolate shall be set up," and the second period is 1335 days or years from the same time. Dan. xii. 11, 12. We know that "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet," was the power of Rome, pagan, when Jerusalem was compassed with armies, (Mat. xxiv. 15, Mark xiii. 14; compare Luke xxi. 20,) in the siege and destruction of that devoted city by Titus. But we know also that invasion and desolation was but an emblem of the power of Rome papal, "wearing out the saints, given into his hand, a time, times, and the dividing of time," during which period of three years and a half, forty and two months, or 1260 years, "Jerusalem should be trodden under foot of the Gentiles." It is plain then that these two periods both begin with the commencement of the reign of Antichrist. The first extends beyond the time of the

cleansing of the sanctuary, 30 years; the second extends beyond these, 45 years more. These two periods together make 75 years, which, added to the 1847, the time when the sanctuary shall be cleansed, carries us down to the year 1922, for the day of blessedness, or rather the dawn of the Sabbatical thousand years of the world; the sunrise of which, as I anticipate, will be at the close of 6000 years from the creation, and two thousand after the birth of Christ. My expectation is founded on the present calculation and the scriptural use of the number seven. Be this as it may, the two periods of 30 years and 45 years, after the cleansing of the sanctuary, are fully sufficient for the conversion of the world, Jews and Gentiles; and this must be evident to all who consider what changes have taken place in the last thirty years.* It is evident the world cannot be converted to God till the sanctuary is cleansed, (John xvii. 21. 23,) and then the progress of the gospel will be attended with very signal and rapid effects. Its light and truth will go forth conquering and to conquer. Papists, infidels, Jews, and nominal Christians must all yield to its divine energy, or be broken in pieces, like a potter's vessel. All churches that are radically wrong shall tumble to ruin. All founded on bigotry shall be lost in disgrace. All having combustible matter mingled with truth shall be purged as by

* The calculation is thus made :

	<i>years.</i>
Reign of Antichrist is - - - -	1260
Which deduct from 1290, (Dan. xii. 11,) and you leave -	30
for the conversion of the Jews.	
Again, take 1290 from 1335, and you leave - -	45
for the "fulness of the Gentiles," and the dawn of the brighter time of blessedness. "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days."	
Dan, xii. 12.	

fire, and perhaps the very best shall have some parts of their venerated creeds crossed and condemned! All nominal Christians must turn to God, or be suddenly destroyed by Jehovah's vengeance!

Who among us is prepared for the signal displays of the divine power and glory? "Gird up now thy loins;" "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." Sleep not, but *watch*. Do you not feel the tremendous earthquake which now shakes the whole world? Is not *every* political, *every* ecclesiastical community shaken to its centre? Is not truth fallen in the streets and equity cannot enter? Do you not see the drying up of the great river Euphrates—the Ottoman empire? Floods, fires, tornadoes, famines, earthquakes, in divers places; the pestilence, walking in darkness; the destruction, wasting at noon-day, have all spoken, and still speak, in the ears of this generation!

What is our duty as Christians in this solemn crisis? If we would avert from our country and from our beloved Zion, those judgments which are coming on the earth; if we would secure the divine favor and protection in the time of unprecedented trouble, already commenced; let us with unabated zeal *protest*, solemnly *protest* against the corruption of the church and the impieties of the state. Let us fortify ourselves against the insidious attempts which are artfully made to render error plausible, by an improved spirit and amended character. Let us remove to a greater distance and show more decidedly by our conduct, that we have come out and are separate from those who *corrupt the word of God*, and from those also who use their political power to promote the desecration of Christian institutions, and elevate to honor and influence the ministers

of Antichrist. Let us more diligently disseminate at home and abroad the Oracles of God. Let us strive to enlighten and instruct mankind in the truth of the Gospel by a *form of sound words*. Let us spread around us the principles and blessings of genuine liberty, by moderating the violence of political animosities, and of religious dissensions; by breaking every yoke and letting the oppressed go free; by increasing our efforts in the cause of injured humanity, till we have purged away the foulest blot remaining on our national honor and Christian character. Let us permit and teach the degraded and demoralized slave to rejoice in the privileges of a freeman and a Christian. Let us put away all our iniquities, act up to our Christian principles, being instant, constant, and fervent in prayer for the church of God, her purity, peace, and prosperity, and for our beloved country, that she may not be swept away in the day of God's vengeance.

Let us wait in expectation of the approaching day of our Lord, that it may be said of us, "Because thou hast made the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee"*—"in the shadow of his wings shall be thy refuge, until these calamities be overpast."†

P. S. The substance of this sermon was delivered in the 1st Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, in the summer of 1828. It was repeated in three churches in Philadelphia, twice by request, in 1831. It has since been preached, by request, in Wheeling and Louisville. A request was made two years ago for its publication; but the author had no time then to prepare it for the press, having delivered it from short notes. He now has written it out—and he gives it to the Church with his fervent prayers, that those

* Psalm xci. 9, 10. The Security of the Godly.

† Psalm lvii. 1—11. A psalm of David when he fled from Saul.

who read may understand. The uninspired authors to whom he is indebted are Mede, Hurd, E. Cooper, W. C. Davis, Th. R. Robertson, and J. Wolf.

If there be any thing incorrect in this discourse, the grateful acknowledgments of the writer shall be tendered to any one, who, in a proper manner, will point out his mistakes.

It is proper to apprise our patrons, that in regard to subjects and the manner of discussing them, there has been no concert among those, who have furnished sermons for this little volume. Thus it is evident, that without conference or correspondence, or even personal acquaintance, there are ministers in the Presbyterian Church, who *can* and *do* speak the same things—who *can* and *do* speak the language of the *true reformers* in all ages. May the Lord increase their number, purity, piety, zeal, and success, till “the light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun as seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.” Isa. xxx. 26.

THE END.

APOLOGY.

Our patrons had reason to expect in this volume, a greater number of sermons from the pen of Dr. Wilson. The publishers have inserted all which he has been able to furnish, in the midst of his numerous and pressing obligations, and it has been highly gratifying both to him and them, that so rich a variety of important discourses have been received from other quarters to fill up the vacant places.

In looking over the index, our subscribers may perhaps feel disappointed; but if they will read the book through, they will bless God, that, by this disappointment, a reproach is wiped away from the church: for it has been a current remark that "no two men agree;" but here are a greater number than was requisite for the safety of Sodom, (Isa. i. 9,) who "speak and mind the same things," and whether the things they speak be *truth*, they, whose duty it is to "try the spirits," must judge. The reader will be so kind as to correct the following errors of the press:

P. 270, line 2 from bottom, for *Raronian*, read *Racovian*; p. 275, 10th line from top, for *earnest*, read *honest*; p. 280, bottom line, for *their*, read *its*.

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